

Secreted Desires

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Hopkins, Pater and Wilde*



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**Brno, Czech Republic:
Masaryk University, 2006**

**Print Version — Copyright © 2006 —
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**First published in 2006 by Masaryk University
ISBN: 80-210-4126-9**

**Electronic Version — Copyright © 2006 —
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First published in 2006 by the Author

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Citing This Volume:

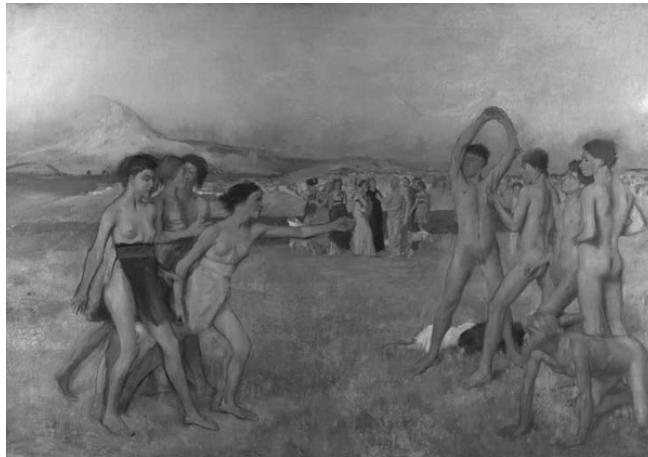
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- **APA Citation Style:**
Kaylor, M. M. (2006). *Secreted desires: The major Uranians: Hopkins, Pater and Wilde*. Brno, CZ: Masaryk University Press.
- **Chicago and Turabian Citation Styles:**
Kaylor, Michael M. 2006. *Secreted desires: The major Uranians: Hopkins, Pater and Wilde*. Brno, CZ: Masaryk University Press.
- **MLA Citation Style:**
Kaylor, Michael M. *Secreted Desires: The Major Uranians: Hopkins, Pater and Wilde*. Brno, CZ: Masaryk University Press, 2006.

Die Knabenliebe sei so alt wie die Menschheit, und man könne daher sagen, sie liege in der Natur, ob sie gleich gegen die Natur sei. Was die Kultur der Natur abgewonnen habe, werde man nicht wieder fahren lassen; es um keinen Preis aufgeben.

Paederasty is as old as humanity itself, and one can therefore say that it is natural, that it resides in nature, even if it proceeds against nature. What culture has won from nature will not be surrendered or given up at any price.

— A comment by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 7 April 1830



Young Spartans Exercising
Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas (1834-1917)
Oil on canvas, ca. 1860
National Gallery, London, UK

— Preface —

Few modern writers, when they speak with admiration or contempt of Platonic love, reflect that in its origin this phrase denoted an absorbing passion for young men.

(J. A. Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics*)¹

The title I have chosen — *Secreted Desires: The Major Uranians: Hopkins, Pater and Wilde* — is intentionally provocative, prompted by my belief that literary criticism has shied away from or distorted any direct engagement of the paederastic elements within the lives and works of these Victorians, even in those instances where literary criticism has been bold enough to consider the homoerotic elements. In what follows, I will attempt a corrective interpretation, hoping to demarcate the distinctly paederastic elements often hidden beneath the complex surfaces of their texts, texts that are highly nuanced and intended primarily for a select group of readers (perhaps a subculture), fittingly labelled ‘Uranian’ by Timothy d’Arch Smith in *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English ‘Uranian’ Poets from 1889 to 1930*.

To forestall criticism in this regard, let me stress from the outset that this volume is unapologetically monothematic: its singular aim is to demarcate the distinctly paederastic elements in the lives and works of a few writers whom I have chosen to dub the ‘Major Uranians’. In *no* regard is it an attempt to suggest that Gerard Manley Hopkins, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, or the aesthetic creations they produced can be reduced to a single motive or motif, however laudatory or anathematical that motive or motif. Since writers of this calibre may rightly be said to ‘contain multitudes’, an encompassing perspective on their lives and works requires a legion of considerations and approaches distinct from, as well as complementary to the monothematic engagement to follow. I fully recognise that, in order to accentuate the paederastic elements within the lives and works of these individuals, I have been forced to diminish other aspects that are equally or perhaps more vital, and I hope that my readers will pardon those occasions when, in what amounts to a veritable tug-of-war against almost all previous scholarship, I have pulled too forcefully in my own argumentative direction. Whether what follows is ultimately deemed an overdue corrective to previous scholarship or merely an exploration of a minor element within the lives

The ‘Inspiration’ — a comment by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 7 April 1830 — is quoted in the ‘Third Dialogue’ of André Gide’s defence of paederasty, *Corydon*, trans. by Richard Howard (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001 [1924]), p.91.

¹ John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion* (London: Privately printed, [1901]), p.54.

and writings of those being considered, I feel that the project is a novel one and worthy of my own investment as well as that of my readers, for the Uranians and the culture they strove to actualise offers insights into a rarely considered aspect of the human condition.

However, I readily concede that to demarcate the distinctly paederastic elements in the lives and works of the ‘Major Uranians’ is to open myself to attack as a mere apologist, especially given the change of environment since Timothy d’Arch Smith’s *Love in Earnest* appeared, as Donald H. Mader explains:

Thirty years have passed [...] [and now] all erotic relationships between adults and minors are ‘abuse’; relations which cross class or racial lines are regarded as deeply suspect or rejected, socially if not by law, not because of the inequalities of the individuals involved, but because they are prisoners of social structures. A new paradigm, essentially political and not psychological, is in place, an ideal standard of equality, mutuality and reciprocity, which looks not to the dynamics of the relationship, but to the circumstances surrounding it. [...] Once this idea that sexual and social relations must be between equals was widely enough accepted, it became a tool for the acceptance of socially ‘reciprocal’ homosexual relationships too, and at the same time for the reclassification of age-structured sexual or erotic relations from merely being ‘immorality’ to being exploitation and ‘abuse’.¹

Nevertheless, let me assert from the outset that I am neither mounting an apologia nor aspiring to suggest that such paederastic desires are laudatory, necessarily unique, or represent a legitimate field for physical expression. In the pages to follow, I aspire merely to mark and elucidate the salient features, dynamics, disparities, considerations, avoidances, and silences that surround an aspect of human existence, the aesthetic, emotional, and erotic expression of which, even today, properly warrants the title Lord Alfred Douglas bestowed upon it over a century ago: ‘The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name’.² I hope that this

¹ Donald H. Mader, ‘The Greek Mirror: The Uranians and Their Use of Greece’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 49.3-4 (2005), pp.377-420 (p.411). On a number of points, Mader’s article serves as a corrective to Timothy d’Arch Smith’s *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English ‘Uranian’ Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970).

² His phrasing adjusts William Blackstone’s expression of abhorrence for ‘the infamous crime against nature’, which is ‘a crime not fit to be named; *“peccatum illud horribile, inter christianos non nominandum”* [that horrible crime not to be named among Christians]’ — *Commentaries on the Laws of England: A Facsimile of the First Edition of 1765-1769*, 4 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), IV, pp.215-16. That such a phrase was a cultural as well as a legal and religious bludgeon, consider the concluding paragraph of one of the first reviews of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* — [Rufus W. Griswold], *Criterion*, 1 (10 November 1855), p.24:

In our allusions to this book, we have found it impossible to convey any, even the most faint idea of its style and contents, and of our disgust and detestation of them, without employing language that cannot be pleasing to ears polite; but it

disclaimer will not be interpreted as merely a flourish, rhetorical diversion, self-protection, or disingenuousness when weighed against what follows. I have attempted throughout to retain that ‘strict indifference’ that Pater considered the first principle of scholarly engagement: hence, what follows contains *no* value judgments about paederasty, whether as practice or as desire. Readers are certainly free to speculate about my personal views, but they will find *no* specific instances where I express them.

From a sociological or anthropological perspective, the Uranians can be said to have constituted a distinctly subversive ‘subculture’ within Victorian society. ‘Subcultures exist’, explains Mike Brake, ‘where there is some form of organised and recognised constellation of values, behaviour and actions which is responded to as differing from the prevailing sets of norms’.¹ From a distanced, less-Uranian, less-histrionic perspective, this group can be seen in this light, as ‘a marginal group of writers, publishing in fringe journals’,² as a group whose most cogent solidifier, Walter Horatio Pater (1839-94), established ‘a calculated affiliation of his aestheticism with homoerotic subcultures that still remain shadowy in recent social and literary histories of Victorian England’.³ However, I have deliberately eschewed the label ‘subculture’, for reasons.

The Victorian society in which the Uranians navigated never even countenanced the existence of ‘the paederastic’, except in vague religious, judicial, and (later) medical terms, which means that gauging the ways Victorian society interacted with, reacted to, facilitated, or thwarted ‘the paederastic’ is difficult, perhaps impossible.⁴ One can provide such analyses for topics as wide-

does seem that some one should, under circumstances like these, undertake a most disagreeable, yet stern duty. The records of crime show that many monsters have gone on in impunity, because the exposure of their vileness was attended with too great delicacy. ‘Peccatum illud horribile, inter Christianos non nominandum’.

¹ Mike Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain, and Canada* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p.8.

² Julia F. Saville, ‘The Romance of Boys Bathing: Poetic Precedents and Respondents to the Paintings of Henry Scott Tuke’, in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, ed. by Richard Dellamora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp.253-77 (p.254).

³ James Eli Adams, ‘Gentleman, Dandy, Priest: Manliness and Social Authority in Pater’s Aestheticism’, *ELH*, 59.2 (1992), pp.441-66 (p.454). In *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Sarah Cole similarly asserts: ‘This group, often dubbed “the Uranians”, worked in painting and photography, as well as literature, [and] developed a recognized artistic subculture with a coded language of its own’ (p.28).

⁴ Since ‘paederasty’ derives from *paederastia*, a Latin word arising from the Greek word *paiderastês* (παῖδραστής) — *pais* (παῖς) ‘boy’ + *erastês* (εραστής) ‘lover’ — ‘boy-love’ is merely a literal, modernized translation of the word I have chosen to employ. Since

ranging as female suffrage, the attitudes of soldiers during the Boer Wars, the frequenting of Kew Park, or views on suicide and masturbation. However, with ‘the paederastic’ and ‘the homoerotic’ — sins ‘not even to be named’ — there was simply no topicality for/within Victorian society at large. This is what legitimately allows Michel Foucault and his followers to establish a certain rhetorical space for arguing that various Victorian public discourses, notably the psychiatric and the legal, fostered a designation or invention of the ‘homosexual’ as a distinct category around 1870. However, the rhetorical space that Foucault demarcates does not become in any way tangible until Wilde’s trials, accounting for the cardinal role Wilde plays in the drama of ‘homosexuality’. As for the paederastic (*not* homosexual) Uranians, the rhetorical space is quite different.

It would be at least as difficult to consider how external/internal power dynamics influenced the Uranians as it would for a secret society like the Freemasons, to which they are compared by Trevor Fisher: ‘[The Uranians had] a culture in which the inhabitants maintained a more than masonic secrecy to survive in a hostile environment’.¹ Fisher’s phrasing — *more than masonic secrecy* — is crucial, for at least the Freemasons have a range of established customs (such as handshakes), group meetings (even if only in secret), and a range of canonical texts (however esoteric). The Uranians had none of those features common to even a secret society, which is why, at best, they can be vaguely labelled a ‘fellowship of paederasts’, a ‘fellowship’ that was, in most cases, entirely textual, traceable only through bookplates, inscriptions, dedications, and acceptance letters, evidence that they had *some* interaction. Only in rare cases are there details validating that these individuals were more than textual acquaintances. As Nicholas Edsall explains, although the Uranians constituted ‘something approaching an identifiable group’, they were far too ‘ephemeral’ actually to be labelled as such:

The heyday of what have come to be called the Uranian poets was brief, lasting only from the late 1880s until the persecution of Oscar Wilde sent them scurrying for cover. They did not resurface until more than a decade later, and then more cautiously [...] Their existence as something approaching an identifiable group would likely have been ephemeral in any case. Their audience was, to say the least, a highly specialized one, and they were entirely dependent on a handful of publications for encouragement and support.²

most of the prominent Uranians were Oxford graduates in Classics, they tended to use the term ‘paederasty’, though they employ both terms indiscriminately and synonymously, often in the same sentence, as Symonds does in the following: ‘What the Greeks called paiderastia, or boy-love, was a phenomenon of one of the most brilliant periods of human culture’ — *Greek Ethics* [1901], p.1. Because of their emotive nature, as well as clinical and legal ring, I have avoided the terms ‘paedophilia’ and ‘ephebophilia’ throughout.

¹ Trevor Fisher, ‘Oscar Wilde: The Myth of Martyrdom’, *Historian*, 77.2 (2003), pp.30-38 (p.32).

² Nicholas C. Edsall, *Toward Stonewall: Homosexuality and Society in the Modern Western World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), p.158. In *Strangers:*

Edsall's claim that the Uranians were 'entirely dependent on a handful of publications for encouragement and support' is, in many ways, hyperbolic, especially given that the history of their publication in periodicals can be summarised in a single paragraph.

For a seven-year period, the Victorian Uranians attempted to promulgate their ideas through a few periodicals — *The Artist*, *The Spirit Lamp*, and *The Chameleon*. From 1888-94, *The Artist and Journal of Home Culture*, then under the editorship of Charles Philip Castle Kains Jackson (1857-1933), 'printed Uranian material in profusion'.¹ In fact, Kains Jackson literally 'employed the magazine as a front for purveying Uranian material',² though he did so tactfully, more often than not only printing Uranian verse when it was occasioned by a review of an artist such as Henry Scott Tuke (1858-1929). Discreetly hidden within *The Artist's* closely printed columns, this Uranian material remained relatively unnoticed, except by those anticipating its presence. Such was not the case at Oxford University, where several undergraduates were attempting to trumpet the virtues of paederasty in a way that was anything but discreet.³ Under the editorship of Lord Alfred Douglas (1870-1945), a friend of Kains Jackson, *The Spirit Lamp: An Aesthetic, Literary and Critical Magazine* published Uranian material in 1893, the most infamous of its fare being the 'Hyacinth' letter sent to Douglas by Oscar Wilde, a love-letter that was recast as a sonnet by the French writer Pierre Louis Louÿs in an attempt to forestall its use as blackmail, the original having been lifted from Douglas's possession during an assignation with a male prostitute.⁴ However, Douglas soon passed the paederastic lamp to a far-

Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Norton, 2004), Graham Robb writes:

The sheer variety of these groups and coteries makes it hard to identify anything like a coherent 'gay community'. Some groups were exclusively working class; many were open to homosexual and bisexual men and women, others were tightly closed. Some of the most influential groups, like the Cambridge 'Apostles' or the coterie at Exeter College, Oxford, that published *The Chameleon*, were groups of friends rather than spontaneous expressions of gay culture. [...] The only real homosexual 'subcultures' in which established customs survived from one generation to the next were institutional — prisons, brothels, navies, or the American hobo subculture. (Pp.167-68)

In the earliest assessment of the Uranians (or 'the Calamites'), Walter Breen, under the pseudonym of J. Z. Eglinton, labels them 'a Victorian Paidophilic Poetaster Clique', a label that, at least for the minor Uranians, would be difficult to challenge. See J. Z. Eglinton, *Greek Love* (New York: Oliver Layton, 1964 [London: Neville Spearman, 1971]), pp.375-405: 'The Calamites: A Victorian Paidophilic Poetaster Clique'.

¹ D'Arch Smith, p.17. *The Artist and Journal of Home Culture* was published in London by William Reeves.

² D'Arch Smith, p.60.

³ *The Spirit Lamp* was published in Oxford by James Thornton; *The Chameleon*, in London by Gay & Bird.

⁴ See Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, rev. edn (New York: Knopf, 1988), p.393.

more-daring undergraduate, John Francis Bloxam (1873-1928), under whose editorship *The Chameleon: A Bazaar of Dangerous and Smiling Chances* appeared in December 1894, containing such infamous fare as his own story 'The Priest and the Acolyte' and Douglas's poem 'Two Loves', both of which would later serve as evidence for the prosecution during Wilde's trials. Not surprisingly, *The Chameleon* did not survive into a second issue: once its contents became known, the authorities of Oxford University stepped in to suppress the magazine. A quarter of a century would pass before the appearance of another Uranian periodical, one rivalling *The Chameleon* in longevity. Under an anonymous editor, a single issue of *The Quorum: A Magazine of Friendship* was circulated in January 1920, about which d'Arch Smith writes: 'A sample number was printed and circulated to members of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology and to the copyright libraries, but for some reason, financial or other, no other number appeared'.¹ A single paragraph is indeed sufficient to encapsulate the entire history of Uranian periodical publication.

The history of Uranian organizations can be summarised in half that space, for only one organization ever existed, the one mentioned above in connection with that solitary issue of *The Quorum* — The British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology (or the BSSSP). Founded in London in 1913 by figures such as Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), George Cecil Ives (1867-1950), and Laurence Housman (1865-1959), the BSSSP held its inaugural meeting on 8 July 1914. For the next three decades, the BSSSP attempted, through its meetings and publications, 'to enquire into all forms of sexual pathology and psychology but, on the evidence of several ex-members, it was in truth little more than a cabal of homosexuals'.² 'The importance of the Society', according to d'Arch Smith, 'is that it was the only official organization that the Uranians ever formed'.³ However, Lesley A. Hall is unconvinced that the evidence supports such a claim:

It has been suggested that 'the concerns of male homosexuals' dominated the Society, and among contemporaries there was a persistent impression [...] that it 'concerned itself almost exclusively with the homosexual question'. The actual interests and activities of the Society do not really bear this out.

The Society seldom seems to have engaged in activism, consistent with its agenda of combining 'insistent investigation' with 'suspension of judgement': it promoted an attitude of debate and enquiry rather than any 'cut and dried method' for dealing with problems.⁴

¹ D'Arch Smith, p.140. *The Quorum: A Magazine of Friendship* has been reproduced in a facsimile edition, with intro. by d'Arch Smith (North Pomfret, VT: Elysium Press, 2001).

² D'Arch Smith, p.137.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Lesley A. Hall, "'Disinterested Enthusiasm for Sexual Misconduct": The British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology, 1913-47', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30 (1995), pp.665-86 (pp.671; 676). I would like to thank Dr Hall for providing me with a copy of this article.

Whether truly ‘Uranian’ or not, since the BSSSP was not founded until two decades after Wilde’s trials, it has no particular bearing on the considerations of this volume, save to display that the Uranians had *no* formal organisation to speak of during the Victorian period — and, if Hall is correct, *no* formal organisation afterwards either.

Given the near-impossibility of establishing a public venue for expressing their ideas and desires — a venue such as a sustained publication or an official organisation — the Uranians might appear prime candidates for Harris Mirkin’s analysis of the general pattern of sexual politics, according to which ‘battles about sexual ideologies occur in two phases’, the first of which is a period of ‘pre-debate’ in which the struggle exists ‘before the issues become politically visible’. Such was the phase in which the Uranians lived. Mirkin asserts that, in this ‘pre-debate’ phase, material evidence and formulated arguments are ‘harder to detect’, because ‘dominant groups deny that there is anything to discuss, asserting that existing arrangements are self-evident and intuitively good’. The second phase, on the other hand, involves ‘a visible political fight’. ‘The battle to prevent the battle’, according to Mirkin, ‘is probably the most significant and hard fought of the ideological battles. At issue is the question of the legitimacy of the subordinate groups, since illegitimate groups are not recognized as putting forth valid claims’. The mechanisms employed to ‘prevent the battle’ require that ‘sexual dissidents (deviants) are not heard by the dominant society’, a refusal to hear that is tied to the fact that, during the first phase, ‘sexual issues are not viewed as legal conflicts. Sex is viewed as separate from politics, and the deviant group is not seen as being entitled to legal or political rights’. Because of this, the legal system ‘rarely challenges the dominant ideology [...] and does not protect deviant sexual speech and action’. Such a legal stance allows for ‘sharp limits [to be] placed on [the deviant group’s] speech and art on the grounds that they are disgusting, pornographic, dangerous to the social order and seductive of the innocent’. In essence, such ‘deviants’ are refused the very mechanisms of speech — whether those involve words or images — for the only *legitimate* form that such speech can take is that which affirms ‘the correctness of the dominant paradigm, demonizing and ridiculing those who question it and trivializing their arguments’.¹ Although the Uranians

¹ These passages are quoted from a manuscript copy — sent to me by Dr Harris Mirkin, Associate Professor and Chair of Political Science at the University of Missouri, Kansas City — of what became his controversial ‘The Pattern of Sexual Politics: Feminism, Homosexuality and Pedophilia’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 37.2 (1999), pp.1-24. Given the public, political, and academic outcry against his article, to Dr Mirkin’s playful comment that ‘It should be fun teaching in the Czech Republic. Do they have the same sexual panics as we have here?’ (E-mail from 27 Nov 2005) — I can only hope the answer is ‘No’.

It must be admitted that Mirkin’s claims presuppose that the ‘sexual dissidents (deviants) [...] not heard by the dominant society’ feel safe enough ‘to speak’. This is probably not the case, especially since the ‘dominant society’ expects these ‘sexual

clearly fall within this period of ‘pre-debate’ — since paederasty, according to Mirkin, has yet to reach the second phase in modern Western society — I have deliberately eschewed his phasal analysis, for the same reason I have eschewed the label ‘subculture’.

The problem with labelling the Uranians a ‘subculture’ or with employing Mirkin’s aptly delineated ‘phases of sexual politics’ is that Pater and his fellow Uranians would have argued vehemently against such a label or such a pattern, histrionically believing instead that

the Hellenic element [which they represented] alone has not been so absorbed, or content with this underground life; from time to time it has started to the surface; culture has been drawn back to its sources to be clarified and corrected. Hellenism is not merely an absorbed element in our intellectual life; it is a conscious tradition in it. (Pater, *Renaissance* 1893, p.158)¹

In essence, the ‘Uranians’ — whose Hellenic appellation derives from both the ‘heavenly’ love described in Plato and the birth of Aphrodite as described in Hesiod² — were marginal only in the sense of Anaxagoras’s audacious statement

dissidents (deviants)’ to identify themselves and to advance their claims within the discourses and other structures commanded and policed by the ‘dominant society’. This point is at the core of the following comment made recently by philosopher Daniel Dennett: ‘If people insist on taking themselves out of the arena of reasonable political discourse and mutual examination, they forfeit their right to be heard’ — Gordy Slack, ‘Dissecting God’ [an interview with Daniel Dennett], *Salon* (8 February 2006) <<http://www.salon.com/books/int/2006/02/08/dennett>> [accessed 8 February 2006]. Self-preservation necessitated that the Uranians *not* put themselves into ‘the arena of reasonable political discourse and mutual examination’: theirs was a sanguine choice to forfeit ‘their right to be heard’ by the ‘dominant society’ rather than to forfeit ‘their right to be’.

¹ About ‘Greek love’ and ‘Hellenism’ commonly implying some form of homoeroticism during the Victorian period, Eldrid Herrington notes: ‘It is odd that this sense remains unrecorded in the *OED*’ — ‘Hopkins and Whitman’, *Essays in Criticism*, 55.1 (2005), pp.39-57 (p.47).

² In *Classical Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Mark P. O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon write:

Plato’s *Symposium* [...] claims that Aphrodite Urania, the older of the two, is stronger, more intelligent, and spiritual, whereas Aphrodite Pandemos, born from both sexes, is more base, and devoted primarily to physical satisfaction. It is imperative to understand that the Aphrodite who sprang from Uranus [...] becomes, for philosophy and religion, the celestial goddess of pure and spiritual love and the antithesis of Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus and Dione, the goddess of physical attraction and procreation. This distinction between sacred and profane love is one of the most profound archetypes in the history of civilization.

(P.171)

In *Theogony*, lines 154-210, Hesiod describes the dethronement of Uranus — who is castrated by his son Cronus — and how, from the semen of his severed phallus,

after being banished to Lampsacus: ‘It is not I who have lost the Athenians, but the Athenians who have lost me’. Not unlike Anaxagoras, the Uranians saw themselves as the proud, defiant maintainers of *the* culture — not a *subculture* — the maintainers of the Greco-Roman tradition, the very font of Western culture. Hence, it was not they who had ‘lost the Athenians’:

Writers like the Uranians invoke the textual authority of classical precedent, supplemented by a select tradition of post-classical works (the Bible, Shakespeare, Montaigne) and in that sense point to a trans-historical phenomenon, a continuous history of male love from Homer to Hopkins. This combination — historicity in tandem with an ideal of historically extensive male community — takes us straight to the organizations which in many ways governed normative ideas of masculinity during the nineteenth century: the public schools and the universities.¹

The Uranians’ histrionic perspective on themselves and their role in Western culture is also diametrically opposed to Mirkin’s insistence that ‘during a Phase I sexual debate the overwhelming majority of the deviant group accepts the dominant group’s negative judgment [of them and their practices]’.²

The Uranians’ pride and defiance was assisted by the fact that the ‘Hellenic element’ — at least in its tamer manifestations — had indeed ‘started to the surface’ during the Victorian period, its flow partly facilitated by far more famous advocates of the Grecian. Amidst their attacks on bourgeois society and their attempts to institute university reform, Matthew Arnold (1822-88), John

Aphrodite Urania is born, a coupling of the deity of the sky with the sea. In ‘Aestheticism’s True Colors: The Politics of Pigment in Victorian Art, Criticism, and Fashion’, in *Women and British Aestheticism*, ed. by Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999), pp.172-91, Alison Victoria Matthews points to a semantic play in J. A. Symonds’s *In the Key of Blue*: ‘Blue would also seem a natural color for a Uranian poet, since the appellation is derived from the Greek *Ouranos*, or sky’ (p.185). Given that the prominent Uranians were trained Classicists, I consider ludicrous the view, widely held, that ‘Uranian’ derives from the German apologetics and legal appeals written by Karl-Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-95) in the 1860s, though his coinage *Urnig* — employed to denote ‘a female psyche in a male body’ — does indeed derive from the same Classical sources, particularly the *Symposium*. Further, the Uranians did not consider themselves the possessors of a ‘female psyche’; the Uranians are not known, as a group, to have read works such as *Forschungen über das Räthsel der mann männlichen Liebe* (*Research on the Riddle of Male-Male Love*); the Uranians were opposed to Ulrichs’s claims for androphilic, homoerotic liberation at the expense of the paederastic; and, even when a connection was drawn to such Germanic ideas and terminology, it appeared long after the term ‘Uranian’ had become commonplace within Uranian circles, hence was not a ‘borrowing from’ but a ‘bridge to’ the like-minded across the Channel by apologetics such as Symonds.

¹ Cole, p.31.

² From Mirkin manuscript copy.

Stuart Mill (1806-73), and Benjamin Jowett (1817-93) had already altered public opinion, to some degree, towards Hellenic values:

The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the essential character of human perfection [...] [It is] this wonderful significance of the Greeks [that has] affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it. (Arnold)¹

There is a Greek ideal of self-development, which the Platonic and Christian ideal of self-government blends with, but does not supersede. It may be better to be a John Knox than an Alcibiades, but it is better to be a Pericles than either; nor would a Pericles, if we had one in these days, be without anything good which belonged to John Knox. (Mill)²

Of the Greek authors who at the Renaissance brought a new life into the world Plato has had the greatest influence. *The Republic* of Plato is also the first treatise upon education, of which the writings of Milton and Locke, Rousseau, Jean Paul, and Goethe are the legitimate descendents. [...] He is the father of idealism in philosophy, in politics, in literature. And many of the latest conceptions of modern thinkers and statesmen, such as the unity of knowledge, the reign of law, and the equality of the sexes, have been anticipated in a dream by him. (Jowett)³

Through such statements, the Victorian ‘Greek chorus’ — Arnold, Mill, and Jowett — *unwittingly* facilitated a ‘suspect’ aspect of the ‘Hellenic element’ that assisted in the emergence of the Uranians as a group, a ‘suspect’ aspect that linked the ‘essential character’ and ‘wonderful significance’ of the ancient Greeks to their celebration of paederastic love and its attendant pedagogical practices. Arnold, Mill, and, to a lesser extent, Jowett seem never to have foreseen the Uranian claim that paederastic love came enmeshed with their own neo-Grecian values — if they had, they would probably have hoped, alongside Constantin Ackermann, that Socrates would be recognised as ‘endeavour[ing] by his pretended paederasty to supplant the common and shameful vice, and to kindle in its stead, in their youthful souls, an enthusiastic love for all the beautiful and good’.⁴ Put simply, the Uranians found the Grecian values of Arnold, Mill, and

¹ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), in ‘*Culture and Anarchy*’ and *Other Writings*, ed. by Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.66-67.

² John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859), ed. by Kathy Casey (New York: Dover, 2002), p.52.

³ Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato Translated into English with Analyses and Introductions by B. Jowett, M.A. in Five Volumes*, 3rd edn rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892), III: *The Republic, Timaeus, Critias*, p.iii.

⁴ C. Ackermann, *The Christian Element in Plato and the Platonic Philosophy*, trans. by Samuel Ralph Asbury (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1861 [1835]), p.174.

Jowett advantageous and malleable for paederastic purposes that were not 'pretended'. In fact, according to Mader, those Grecian values, encapsulated in words and images, became a 'culture' of sorts through the Uranians' constant allusions to them:

Although in 1970 d'Arch Smith was at pains to dismiss any consideration of the Uranians as a movement — and I would agree that one must not overstate their degree of organization — thirty years on I propose that we must re-evaluate the Uranians' use of these [Greek] allusions, not as a means of evasion [as d'Arch Smith argues] but precisely as a very conscious and deliberate strategy for a sexual cultural politics through art. [...] Far from a means of evasion, allusions to the Greeks were a tool for valorization in a strategy for social acceptance.

Surveying the allusions, one sees that they are largely to asymmetrical relationships, either clearly age-structured, or between a god and a mortal, or a warrior/hero and his protégé [...], or various combinations of these. [...] Such relationships today are regarded as inherently morally culpable, paternalistic and patronizing at best, exploitative or even 'abuse' at the worst; to hold up such relationships as an ideal is accordingly viewed either as self-justification on the part of the 'superordinate' party, or hypocrisy. Yet this inequality is part of the objective outline that Uranians saw in their Greek mirror; the Greek relationships were asymmetrical, and the Uranians saw themselves in this outline and filled in their own features.¹

When the Victorian Uranians looked in the 'Greek mirror', they saw not only gods and their beloveds (Zeus and Ganymede, Hercules and Hylas, Apollo and Hyacinth, Pan and Daphnis) and heroes and theirs (Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades), but also a plethora of concrete paederastic figures and images. Had not Alexander the Great (the lover of Hephaestion) been the student of Aristotle, the student of Plato (the lover of Aster), the student of the Socrates (the 'idealised' lover of Alcibiades)? Had not Alexander, at Chaeronea, defeated the Theban Sacred Band, that 'invincible' army of paederastic lovers, a battalion of one hundred and fifty warriors, each aided by his beloved charioteer? Had not Alexander returned to the Agora the statue group of the paederastic lovers Harmodius and Aristogeiton, a statue group sculpted by Antenor in commemoration of their overthrow of the tyrant Hippias and their establishment of Athenian democracy, a statue group that had been stolen by the Persian occupiers of Athens? Had not Alexander become 'God of the meridian' as he 'mingled Grecian grandeur' with the Eastern body of his beloved Persian eunuch Bagoas? These were the sorts of questions a Uranian would have asked himself, though confident that, however histrionic and self-justifying his views, Grecian paederasty had been sanctioned by the gods, had seeded Western philosophy, had spurred military bravery, had inspired the highest arts, had cradled democracy. In aesthetic terms, he would have questioned, Had not Apollo himself taught Orpheus, the first paederast, to play the lyre? These questions and their attendant

¹ Mader, pp.388-90.

answers — both of which arose from pondering the depths of the ‘Greek mirror’ — served also to emphasise for the Uranians the disparity between the values of the Victorian culture in which they were forced to navigate and those of the ancient Greeks.

Despite the generalised, laudatory praises of Grecian values emanating from the likes of Arnold, Mill, and Jowett, it is a statement by Arthur Christopher Benson (1862-1925), one of Pater’s first biographers, that captures the dilemma that not ‘losing the Athenians’ posed for the Victorians, and is tied to the educational value attached to the ‘essential character’ of the Greeks and their sanctioned practice of paederastic pedagogy:

But if we give boys Greek books to read and hold up the Greek spirit and the Greek life as a model, it is very difficult to slice out one portion [the paederastic], which was a perfectly normal part of Greek life, and to say that it is abominable etc. etc.¹



Harmodius and Aristogeiton Slaying the Tyrant

Greek (attributed to the Copenhagen Painter)

Red-Figure terracotta stamnos (vase for wine), ca. 470 BCE

Martin von Wagner Museum

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Würzburg, Germany

The freshmen of Oxford — especially those Etonians who had just left the ‘Hellenic’ tutelage of William Johnson (*later* Cory) and Oscar Browning — often arrived to university with Grecian desires that, despite being labelled ‘abominable’ by the society at large, would find further expression within their

¹ David Newsome, *On the Edge of Paradise: A. C. Benson: The Diarist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.192.

college walls or in the surrounding fields.¹ In 1880, Charles Edward Hutchinson anonymously published and circulated at Oxford *Boy-Worship*, a pamphlet acknowledging how common this ‘one portion, which was a perfectly normal part of Greek life’, was at Oxford and beyond:

Men of all tastes become boy-worshippers. It is not only Sayge Greene who goes into ecstasies over a boy’s face and figure, (he may, it is true, express himself more eloquently than some of his more robust brethren,) but the devotees of the cricket and football fields have ere now furnished many an ardent follower.²

For the Uranians and those who shared their desires, there were primarily two forms of erotic positioning in relation to this ‘boy-worship’ — as well as the fulfilment and outcome of such an erotic attachment — one ‘conciliatory to social orthodoxies’, the other ‘pervasively dissident’.³ The three individuals allocated chapters in this volume represent different responses to this ‘boy-worship’: Gerard Manley Hopkins sublimated most, if not all of his paederastic desires; Walter Pater seems to have actualised his paederastic desires only once, threatening his academic position so thoroughly that he sublimated thereafter, a choice that later matured into an appreciation for such sublimation; Oscar Wilde actualised most of his paederastic desires, a ‘madness for pleasure’ that ruined many lives, and not just his own.

Since Pater had engaged in both sublimation and actualisation, it is understandable that his writings should most cogently demarcate these two forms of erotic positioning, though he himself increasingly advocated the former. After the publication in 1873 of his *Renaissance* — for the Uranians, a quasi-sacred text — the Uranians diverged in opinion about its import, but not its importance, diverged into those who imbibed from it ‘a sort of chivalrous conscience’ and those who imbibed from it ‘a madness for pleasure’. According to Denis Donoghue, Pater’s own position advocating conciliation with social orthodoxies was ‘consistent with his antinomianism’, for ‘the artist is neither for nor against the law, he stands aside from it’,⁴ maintaining a conciliatory form of ‘discretion’ that often involves a conscious split into a private self and a constructed, public

¹ A fascinating account of those ‘suspect’ pedagogical practices and their impact is provided in ‘Paideia and Power: William Johnson (Cory), Oscar Browning and Their Sackings from Eton’, an unpublished paper delivered by William C. Lubenow to the North American Conference on British Studies Meeting, held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on 17 October 1998.

² As quoted in Billie Andrew Inman, ‘Estrangement and Connection: Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett, and William M. Hardinge’, in *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp.1-20 (p.14).

³ Peter Swaab, ‘Hopkins and the Pushed Peach’, *Critical Quarterly*, 37.3 (1995), pp.43-60 (p.50).

⁴ Denis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995), p.132.

self: ‘In the middle world one may choose to live by nearly any values, so long as one doesn’t overtly challenge the dominant forces in law and government. Or one can divide one’s life into two parts, public and private, and live differently in each’.¹ This seeming duplicity was necessary for Pater and his Uranians, for theirs was ‘a culture in which the inhabitants maintained a more than masonic secrecy to survive in a hostile environment. Nevertheless, despite the intense hostility of the Victorian Moral Majority to anything which looked like unrespectable behaviour, discreet homosexuals could follow their inclinations with few consequences’.² On the other side of this Uranian divide, Wilde and his coterie, finding little gratification in such a ‘discretion’, opted instead for a flamboyant dissidence that, although aggressively buoyant, nonetheless proved strikingly reminiscent of Nero’s fiddling while Rome was aflame: ‘Wilde’s trial [was] a tragedy we can conceive only as the sacrifice of male homosexuality to male homophobia’.³ These two Uranian paths — the conciliatory and the dissident — are the concern of the present volume, though I will focus primarily on the more ‘elevated’, conciliatory path taken by Pater and Hopkins.

If what follows is, in some ways, a ‘cultural study’, it is only so in regard to ‘Uranian culture’, for I have refrained from elaborating on larger implications, particularly concerning the Victorian culture that enveloped the Uranians. The various ways that Victorian culture (re)formulated and erotically engaged ‘the problem of the boy’ has already been explored with acumen by scholars such as James R. Kincaid, whose *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* could be read in conjunction with this volume. The present volume has purposes other than Kincaid’s, the first of which is explicit, the second implicit. Explicitly, I am attempting throughout to verify and elucidate the presence of paederastic elements within the lives and writings of several major Victorian writers — Hopkins, Pater, and Wilde — and, by doing so, to expand exponentially the minor literary canon of the Uranians, allowing it and its issues to enter the pantheon of English literature with the full pomp they deserve.⁴ This endeavour may, at times, leave my readers wondering whether I am engaged in literary criticism, social history, or sexual psychology, though I must admit to focusing on all three, believing all three necessary for verifying and elucidating the presence of paederastic elements in the lives and writings of the Major Uranians. Implicitly, I am attempting to defy a dare — a cultural dare that I refrain from discussing the Uranians and their paederastic love, that I ‘dare not speak its name’. In what follows, I will, as is my nature, ‘dare to speak’, for scholarship should ever attempt to grasp ‘the truth’, irrespective of its social, medical, ethical,

¹ Donoghue, p.317.

² Fisher, p.32.

³ William F. Shuter, ‘The “Outing” of Walter Pater’, *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 48.4 (1994), pp.480-506 (p.506).

⁴ My endeavour will, especially in regard to Hopkins, counter Mader’s claim that ‘Even at its best, on neither side of the ocean did the group contain any figures of signal importance to the development of modern poetry’ (p.382).

religious, legal, political, scholarly, and familial implications. Those implications are certainly important to consider ... but elsewhere. In regard to this very issue, Percy Bysshe Shelley observes, in his *Discourse on the Manners of the Antient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love*, that ‘there is no book which shows the Greeks precisely as they were; they seem all written for children, with the caution that no practice or sentiment highly inconsistent with our present manners should be mentioned, lest those manners should receive outrage and violation’.¹ Replace ‘Greeks’ with ‘Uranians’, and Shelley’s comment would be my own. Hence, what follows will attempt to be that book, to show the Uranians ‘precisely as they were’ — nothing more, but certainly nothing less.

For obvious reasons fully appreciated by Shelley, ‘the paederastic’ (whether actualised, textualised, or merely conceptualised) poses an inherent threat to modern Western society, for it posits a form of love, intimacy, and/or erotic expression that society’s ‘legitimate’ powers — social, medical, ethical, religious, legal, political, scholarly, and familial — have deemed maladjusted, psychotic, immoral, sinful, unlawful, fringe, objectionable, and/or intrusive. Put simply, it is utterly Decadent. The result is that ‘the paederastic’ remains ever an eccentric positionality that can be exploited and explored as a critique, variant, alternative, or challenge to more accepted modes of love or physical intimacy, more so than ‘the homoerotic’ or ‘the queer’ for which David Halperin constructs this very argument in his *Saint = Foucault*.² However, unlike ‘the homoerotic’ and ‘the queer’ — positionalities that have often, especially since Wilde’s trials in 1895, confronted marginality with forms of overt dissidence, posing a radical critique of normative values — ‘the paederastic’ has usually opted, simply and discreetly and categorically, to refuse to engage normative values and their attendant dynamics of power. If one’s ‘positionality’ is — as Alison M. Jaggar

¹ John Shawcross, ed., *Shelley’s Literary and Philosophical Criticism* (London: Henry Frowde, 1909), p.37. Tellingly, the most controversial work of recent Classical scholarship — William Armstrong Percy III’s *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996) — became controversial because of embracing this Shelleyan approach: ‘We must be prepared to approach Greek pederasty on its own terms, that is, both free from confusion with androphilia and replete with the values that fostered it and that it in turn fostered’ (p.10).

² David Halperin, *Saint = Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.62:

Unlike gay identity, which, though deliberately proclaimed in an act of affirmation, is nonetheless rooted in the positive fact of homosexual object-choice, queer identity need not be grounded in any positive truth or in any stable reality. As the very word implies, ‘queer’ does not name some natural kind or refer to some determinate object; it acquires its meaning from its oppositional relation to the norm. Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. [...] ‘Queer’, then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative — a positionality that is not restricted to lesbians and gay men but is in fact available to anyone who is or feels marginalized because of his or her sexual practices.

asserts for ‘standpoint’ — ‘a position in society from which certain features of reality come into prominence and from which others are obscured’,¹ then the Uranians sought their own obscurity and refused to accept ‘a position in society’.

In a passing comment on Matteo Palmieri’s poem *La Città di Vita* (1464), Pater demarcates a ‘position outside of society’ for himself and his Uranian followers by lending symbolic virtue to the human ‘incarnation of those angels who, in the revolt of Lucifer, were neither for Jehovah nor for His enemies’ (‘Sandro Botticelli’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.42), those scurrilous free spirits whom Dante relegates to the Vestibule of Hell as ‘unworthy alike of heaven and hell [...] [occupying instead] that middle world in which men take no side in great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make great refusals’ (p.43).² Dante, ever the acute taxonomist, seems bewildered by these angels whose antinomianism is embodied in a refusal to play the ‘spiritual game’; hence, the only option available is to banish them to that obscure vestibule, a grey space that disrupts his bland dichotomy between good and evil, white and black. The positionality of ‘that caitiff choir of the angels who were not rebels, nor faithful to God, but were for themselves’ is a conundrum in Dante’s *Inferno*, for ‘the heavens drove them forth, not to be less fair, and the depth of Hell does not receive them lest the wicked have some glory over them’ (*Inferno*, III, lines 37-42).³ As Pater fully recognised, the unique positionality of the Uranians would similarly remain that of the ultimate outsiders (barring some monumental cultural shift, a shift greater than Foucault’s ‘ruptures’ between ‘epistemes’): the Uranians would likely remain, partly of their own accord, banished to the vestibule of Western society, if not of Hell.

In fact, this resonates with another passage, one in which Pater considers those who must needs be banished from Plato’s ideal state because of their dangerous ‘aesthetic’ proclivities, proclivities like his own:

What price would not the musical connoisseur pay to handle the instruments we may see in fancy passing out through the gates of the City of the Perfect, banished, not because there is no one within its walls who knows the use of, or would receive pleasure from, them [...] but precisely because they are so seductive, must be conveyed therefore to some other essentially less favoured neighbourhood, like poison, say! moral poison, for one’s enemies’ water-

¹ Alison M. Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983), p.382. In ‘Feminist Politics and Epistemology: The Standpoint of Women’, in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. by Sandra Harding (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.55-66, Jaggar provides verbatim the same definition for ‘standpoint’ (p.60). I am employing the term ‘positionality’ in a similar sense.

² See Donald L. Hill’s explanatory notes for this passage, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 4th edn, ed. by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp.336-38.

³ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, trans. by John D. Sinclair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), p.49.

springs. A whole class of painters, sculptors, skilled workmen of various kinds go into like banishment — they and their very tools; not [...] because they are bad artists, but very good ones. (*Platonism*, p.275)



Walter Pater

Elliott & Fry

Half-plate copy glass negative, 1890s

National Portrait Gallery, London, UK

Seen in retrospect, this decision to accept banishment was shrewd. Despite subsequent efforts to legitimise homosexual desires in Britain and elsewhere, paederastic desires have, in many ways, been further de-legitimised since the Victorian period. Seen in its own contemporary context, this decision's shrewdness can be gauged by comparing the apolitical approach of Walter Pater with the more political approach of John Henry Mackay (1864-1933), a Scottish-German who, in the early stages of the German homosexual movement, wrote a series of pseudonymous works collectively titled *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe* (*The Books of Nameless Love*; ca. 1906-26). Mackay, known to his contemporaries only as 'Sagitta', began as naively idealistic, 'envisag[ing] a much more mediated relation in which the retreat [of paederasts and homosexuals] from the public sphere is merely tactical, intended only "so long as it is possible for one group of people to control through force not only the actions but also the thoughts of another and so to influence arbitrarily the course of culture"'.¹ Nevertheless, Mackay's initial optimism increasingly shaded towards disillusionment: he began to realise that, even if the homosexual movement ultimately achieved its political and social goals, paederasts like himself would, by necessity, be forced to 'retreat from the public sphere'. Hampered by

¹ Andrew Hewitt, *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism, & the Modernist Imaginary* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.149. See Hubert Kennedy, *Anarchist of Love: The Secret Life of John Henry Mackay*, 2nd edn (San Francisco, CA: Peremptory Publications, 2002); E-text at <<http://home.pacbell.net/dendy/AoLove.pdf>>.

‘prejudices against the paederasts within the homosexual movement’¹ and by the pseudonymity required for his own subversive writings, Mackay could only decry, in print, as ‘Sagitta’, the repeated attempts by the German homosexual movement ‘to eradicate the paederastic form of love that interests him’.² The ultimate impact of Mackay’s clandestine efforts was marginal at best: the leaders of the German homosexual movement, such as Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935), remained unfazed by Mackay’s assertions that homosexual apologists were increasing ‘guilty — in their desire to decriminalize homosexuality in its more acceptable forms — of a sacrifice of the paederast to criminal legislation’.³ Besides, this attempt to sever the link between homosexuality and paederasty was not distinctly a Germanic impulse residing with Hirschfeld and his *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* (Scientific-Humanitarian Committee). Even in France, where sodomy had been decriminalised since the Napoleonic *Code civil des français* almost a century before, there were burgeoning attacks on all things paederastic, with French apologists such as Julian Viaud (1850-1923), who wrote under the pseudonym of ‘Pierre Loti’, ‘careful to distinguish between adult homosexual desire and pederasty [...] and to condemn the latter’.⁴

Meanwhile, in Britain — which lacked even a concerted political call for the decriminalisation of homosexuality — the paederastic Uranians remained apolitical, accepting their position as ‘twice-removed from the political process’. While Mackay and others propagandised to the masses, the apolitical Uranians became insular, vacillating between self-loathing and ironic acquiescence, between ironic acquiescence and aesthetic defiance, between aesthetic defiance and criminality. On this continuum, the ‘elevated’ Uranians usually hovered somewhere between ironic acquiescence and aesthetic defiance, as is displayed in a poem by Pater’s friend Lionel Pigot Johnson (1867-1902), a poem that impishly constructs a scenario in which the fringe positionality advocated by Pater has moved to the centre:

But their excellent intentions, and remarkable inventions,
 To a place of four dimensions turned the earth: and lo!
 There was neither wrong nor right, there was neither black nor white,
 There was neither day nor night, neither yes nor no.

And the glorious muddle grew, till the Devil himself looked blue;
 There was nothing he could do, and his keen face fell:
 With so strange a bag of tricks, he felt wholly in a fix;
 For mankind were heretics both to Heaven and Hell.

¹ Hewitt, p.145.

² *Ibid.*, p.141.

³ *Ibid.*, p.143.

⁴ Richard M. Berrong, *In Love with a Handsome Sailor* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p.25. ‘Despite the legal tolerance of homosexuality, France was more dangerous for homosexuals than England’ (Robb, p.28).

'Tis a melancholy story — but the Thinkers and their glory
 Went to neither Purgatory, Hell nor Paradise.
 For the earth which they'd bedevilled, and indecently dishevelled,
 By the Thought wherein they revelled, and their Virtuous Vice,

Floated off into the Void of the Cosmic Unemployed,
 And in Chaos it enjoyed a pure Nothingness.¹

However mischievous such a paederastic, Ptolemaic fantasy, neither Lionel Johnson nor Walter Pater were ever deluded into countenancing its possibility, or even the possibility that paederastic sentiment would someday become 'legitimate'. For this reason, I should forewarn my readers that my claim that *the Uranian positionality can serve as a critique, variant, alternative, or challenge to accepted modes of love or physical intimacy* does not imply that it does so in order to 'de-legitimise' the normative values of standing powers — social, medical, ethical, religious, legal, political, scholarly, or familial. Few, if any, have made this point better than Walt Whitman:

I hear it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions,
 But really I am neither for nor against institutions,
 (What indeed have I in common with them? or what with the destruction
 of them?)
 Only I will establish [...]
 Without edifices or rules or trustees or any argument,
 The institution of the dear love of comrades.²

Nevertheless, the unique positionality of the Uranians does continue to challenge, by its very existence, those 'legitimate' powers *en masse*. By declining to participate in or even to recognise the normative values attached to the modern Western conception of love and intimacy, by declining to leave the Vestibule of Hell — 'the Void of the Cosmic Unemployed' — the Uranians and their 'great refusal' continue to fulfil Foucault's defiant exclamation: 'No! Let's escape as much as possible from the type of relations that society proposes for us and try to create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities'³ — though these 'new relational possibilities' that the Uranians establish(ed) are, as

¹ Lionel Pigot Johnson, 'A Sad Morality', in *Poetical Works of Lionel Johnson* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), lines 33-46.

² 'I Hear It Was Charged Against Me', from *Calamus*, in *Leaves of Grass: Comprehensive Reader's Edition*, ed. by Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p.128.

³ Michel Foucault, 'The Social Triumph of the Sexual Will' (1981), in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. by Paul Rabinow, trans. by Robert Hurley, et al. (New York: New Press, 1998), pp.157-62 (p.160).

Dante recognised about the neutral angels, ‘for themselves’ alone. Donoghue aptly elucidates this Paterian ‘No!’:

Pater interpreted the passage [about the neutral angels] in the *Inferno* differently [than George Eliot did] and turned it to another purpose. He did not share Eliot’s conviction that the work of politics must be displaced in favor of the work of religion. He had no interest in politics: ‘his blind side’, as [George] Saintsbury said of him. But he wanted to make space not for religion but for art and aesthetic criticism, both ‘undisturbed by any moral ambition’. The forms of personal and civil life he speaks up for are those in which art and aesthetic criticism have a chance of thriving. They cannot thrive in competition with the zeal of moral or political ambition. Pater’s aim is [...] the justification of ‘that middle world in which men take no side in great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make great refusals’. These are difficult issues, as we know from arguments about countries that remain neutral during an apparently just war, or about the validity of conscientious objection. It is easy to present the inhabitants of ‘that middle world’ as pusillanimous, like the neutral angels, and to drive them out of public recognition. In his quiet way, Pater set himself against that masculine rectitude.¹

While considering an eccentric, Uranian positionality like Pater’s, I recognise fully that the ‘legitimate’ powers of contemporary Western society prefer a paederastic subject upon a psychiatric couch or behind prison bars (or, dare I say, upon a morgue table) — Vestibules of Hell that are easily controlled — and that labelling Gerard Manley Hopkins, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, William Johnson (*later* Cory), and Digby Dolben as paederasts, even if only on the level of desire, is to heap condemnations countless upon their heads — or, to embellish this with Christian phrasing, to tie millstones about their necks before casting them into a sea of infamy and sin.

However, the writers named above were all fluent in things Greek — and the Greek heritage, both theirs and ours, tells other tales, makes other claims, posits other realities than we do. As the Uranian poet and art historian John Addington Symonds (1840-93) observes in his *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion*: in contrast to the current Western view, for the ancient Greeks ‘it was reckoned a disgrace if a youth found no man to be his lover’.² Symonds’s observation is indeed problematic — an observation deemed best banished to a discreet footnote in an archaeology or history book, or a principled warning in a university lecture or Sunday sermon; or, better still, expurgated completely from our thoughts, texts, and lives — an implicit cultural command to ‘Dare Not Speak Its Name’. What contemporary Western society finds most problematic and irreconcilable is that, as Symonds dares to remind us, ‘what the Greeks called paiderastia, or boy-love, was a phenomenon of one of the most brilliant periods of human culture, in one of the

¹ Donoghue, pp.316-17.

² Symonds, *Greek Ethics* [1901], p.14.

most highly organised and nobly active nations'.¹ Especially at a time such as 2004 CE, as the world's media heralded that 'all eyes are turned to Athens' for the Olympic Games, we hoped not to be reminded that 'paiderastia at Athens was closely associated with liberty, manly sports, severe studies, enthusiasm, self-sacrifice, self-control, and deeds of daring, by those who cared for those things'.² We 'Moderns' tend to bare some things, drape others, and can conceive of neither the motive nor the relevance for an ancient Athenian in his enjoyment of the Olympic spectacle as a blend of paederasty and manly sport, as a voyeuristic spectacle of nude, oiled youths 'sporting about' while garlanded by his admiring gaze and the gazes of his contemporaries from the farthest reaches of the Hellenic world. Those appreciative gazes, a garland of laurel, and the immortality of sculptured marble — the Greek form of paederastic permanence — marked fame for such youths. For us, on the other hand, such an Olympic spectacle and its attendant residues would be beyond maladjusted, psychotic, immoral, sinful, fringe, objectionable, and/or intrusive: it would be unthinkable.



The Bowlers

William Blake Richmond (1842-1921)

Oil on canvas, 1870

Downing College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

¹ Symonds, *Greek Ethics* [1901], p.1.

² *Ibid.*, p.44. For this link between paederasty and sport, see Thomas F. Scanlon, *Eros and Greek Athletics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), chapter 3: 'Athletics, Initiation, and Pederasty'; Thomas Hubbard, 'Himeros Pindar's Tenth Olympian and Athlete-Trainer Pederasty', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 49.3-4 (2005), pp.137-71. This link, present throughout the Greco-Roman period, is depicted in the painting *The Bowlers* by William Blake Richmond (1842-1921), a friend of the artist Simeon Solomon. I would like to thank Karen Sherry, Assistant Curator of the American Art Department, Brooklyn Museum, for her kind assistance with the details of *The Bowlers*.

Nevertheless, the Victorian Uranians did think of such things, did celebrate them and make them laudatory, did consider them stable, reflective, honourable, pure, pivotal, innocuous, and/or welcome. In the face of stringent opposition — social, medical, ethical, religious, legal, political, scholarly, and familial — this group established an elaborate *Weltanschauung*, a way of being in the world that told other tales, made other claims, posited other realities than those of their contemporaries or of our own. This is their eccentric positionality worthy of consideration: it is also the eccentric positionality of the pages to follow, as I attempt to engage their lives and writings from a ‘Uranian’ perspective.

My reason for doing so is eight-fold: firstly, except in the scholarship of Timothy d’Arch Smith over thirty years ago, a sustained ‘Uranian approach’ has never been attempted, and certainly not with writers of the calibre of Hopkins, Pater, and Wilde.¹ Secondly, current scholarship employs four strategies that blatantly attempt to quell any meaningful consideration of ‘the paederastic’, strategies that attempt to forestall a ‘Uranian approach’: scholarship engages in absolute avoidance of this form of love, intimacy, and/or eroticism; claims its anachronism; heightens its ‘homosocial’ aspects; or disguises it as ‘homosexual’. These rather misleading strategies need to be reconsidered and perhaps jettisoned. Thirdly, the voyeuristic posturing of the Uranians — a proximity to the object of desire without that distance being defeated, at least artistically — constitutes a temperament unique in English letters, a temperament worthy of exploration on purely aesthetic and psychological grounds. Fourthly, the arguable immorality and assured illegality of their desires resulted in a form of self-fashioning no less marked than that of their Elizabethan predecessors, though taking a different stance, a stance gilded by an astonishing degree of secrecy, a secrecy that makes the Uranians a scholarly challenge to engage. Fifthly, the Uranian rejection of the system of controls over the body that Victorian culture attempted to instil (and ours still does) serves to draw into question many of the established tenets of Victorian culture (and those of today).² Hence, the Uranian affront serves to front issues that would normally be taken as intrinsically categorical and would remain unnoticed. Sixthly, the frequent Uranian sublimation of sexuality into

¹ It should be noted that, in the introduction to his anthology of paederastic and homoerotic writings, *Sexual Heretics: Male Homosexuality in English Literature from 1850 to 1900* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), Brian Reade does provide much the same ‘Uranian approach’. Since Reade’s introduction was published in the same year as d’Arch Smith’s volume (and by the same publisher), my point that 1970 was the last time such an approach was attempted still holds.

² At least aesthetically, Saville makes this point as well: ‘Whether we, as readers, are comfortable with the particular form of eros proposed by the Uranians is perhaps less to the point than how the dialogue between poetry and painting circulating around the image of the adolescent boy gradually opens up a space in Victorian aesthetic culture in which the nude male figure can become the subject of a homoerotic discourse’ (‘Romance’, p.272).

poetry and prose (which, in the case of Hopkins, is often acute)¹ reveals a number of strategies for fulfilling what-cannot-be-fulfilled amid denials, scrupulosities, and beliefs; amid ethical, legal, and religious restrictions; amid the concern of Western society (in general) and Victorian society (in particular) to limit physical intimation and actualisation of homoerotic and paederastic desires.² These Uranian strategies — involving a continual movement between what Hopkins labels ‘overthought’ and ‘underthought’ — lend to Uranian writing a stylistic complexity, a multi-faceted psychology, an uncanny audience-awareness, and a sense of daring and irony uncommon for English letters of that time. Seventhly, since these writers were all educated at Eton and/or Oxford in a ‘Greats curriculum’ based on the close reading of Greek and Latin texts, they had a shared appreciation for a Greco-Roman world in which ‘paiderastia, or boy-love, was a phenomenon of one of the most brilliant periods of human culture’. Hence, even at their most oblique, these writers were Classically allusive enough to have been understood by their Oxford-educated coterie, a coterie to which they were often responsive, a coterie that can rightly be said to have constituted a ‘fellowship of paederasts’. The importance of this ‘fellowship’ to what follows is that, by elucidating the paederastic elements in one of these writers and his texts, the lives and expressions of the others become less oblique in turn. And finally, a point more practical than academic: Hopkins, Pater, Wilde, Johnson, and Dolben were neither dull nor facile, personally or aesthetically, which is important in a lengthy project or a lengthy read. For this reason, in all eight of its aspects, a ‘Uranian approach’ seems a rather apt method for engaging this unploughed-yet-fertile field, a field that — despite its weeds and stones, inherent or planted there by others — can yield unique insights into a little tended aspect of the human condition.

For their kind assistance with various points of scholarship, I wish to acknowledge Timothy d’Arch Smith, Claire Allan Dinsmore, Roberto C. Ferrari, Steve Gertz, Dr Lesley A. Hall, Liz Hamilton, Philip Healy, Fr John Humphries, Oliver Hunt, Prof. Stanton J. Linden, Laurel McPhee, Dr Harris Mirkin, Prof. Gerald C. Monsman, Julie Ann Noecker, Dr Rictor Norton, Barbara Obrist, Fred Roden, Prof. James M. Saslow, Karen Sherry, Prof. Robert Shoemaker, Isobel Siddons, Reena Suleman, Don Swanson, and Suzanne Tatian. I wish especially to thank Prof. Eric Birdsall of the Department of English, Buchtel College of Arts

¹ In ‘Motives for Guilt-Free Pederasty: Some Literary Considerations’, *Sociological Review*, 24.1 (1976), pp.97-114, Brian Taylor argues that, for the Uranians, this is less a sublimation than a justification: ‘Far from writing their verses in order to sublimate their love [as d’Arch Smith has argued], I want to consider the possibility that they were written to justify and to motivate the enactment of that love’ (p.101).

² In ‘Jowett and Pater: Trafficking in Platonic Wares’, *Victorian Studies*, 37.1 (1993), pp.43-72, Lesley Higgins writes: ‘Reading Pater, one can quickly become aware of his various strategies for articulating what would seem to be directly unsayable’ (pp.59-60).

and Sciences, University of Akron, Ohio, for his scholarly assistance, friendly encouragement, and sense of humour (to Prof. Birdsall I owe more intellectually than I can ever express). I wish to thank Petr Kurečka, a Czech photographer now living in London, whose photograph *Pain* he kindly allowed me to use for the cover. I wish to thank my friend and colleague Dr Libora Oates-Indruchová, my intellectual chess-partner, for enriching this in many ways. I wish to thank my colleagues, particularly Jeffrey Vanderziel, at the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno, and my former colleagues at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Pardubice, for their encouragement. I wish to thank my doctoral advisor Dr Sarolta Marinovich-Resch, as well as Prof. József Pál, Dr Bálint Rozsnyai, Dr Attila Kiss, and the other members of the Faculty of Arts, University of Szeged, Hungary, for warmly welcoming me into their doctoral program. This volume, which arose from my doctoral dissertation, owes much to their support and criticism. I wish to thank my parents for their constant support (though handled with Baptist prudence) and for acquiring, as a gift to me, a portion of the personal library of Prof. Norman White, Hopkins's foremost biographer, whose marginalia has served as a biographer's education.

Above all, I wish to thank my beloved, Miroslav Tobiášek, who tolerated my scattered books, late nights, and constant babble about long-dead Victorians. Combining tender attention with rolled eyes, he serves ever to remind me that 'reality' is not always contained within books. To Mirek, my *Divo Amico* (no longer *Ignoto* and only *Desideratissimo*), all of this is lovingly dedicated.



Jeune Zéphire se balançant au-dessus de l'eau

Pierre-Paul Prud'hon (1758-1823)

Oil on canvas, 1814

Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

— Table of Contents —

List of Abbreviations	xxxi
Introduction 'During My Long Studies I Have Come to Admire': Penetrating Intimate Victorian Passages	1
Chapter One 'That World in Which Others Had Moved with So Much Embarrassment': Victorianists and the Taxonomies of Desire	25
Chapter Two 'Problems So Beautifully Ingenious': Hopkins and Uranian Problematics	101
Chapter Three 'Beautiful Dripping Fragments': A Whitmanesque Reading of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion'	161
Chapter Four 'A Sort of Chivalrous Conscience': Pater's <i>Marius the Epicurean</i> and Paederastic Pedagogy	207
Chapter Five 'Paedobaptistry': Wilde as Priapic Educationalist	297
Conclusion 'The Daring of Poets Later Born': The Uranian Continuum, 1858-2005	373
Appendices, Bibliography, Use of Images, About the Author	423



Love Locked Out

Anna Lea Merritt (1844-1930)

Oil on canvas, 1889

Tate Collection, London, UK

— List of Abbreviations —

- Appreciations*** Walter Pater, *Appreciations: With an Essay on Style*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1890)
- Balloon*** Guy Davenport, *The Jules Verne Steam Balloon: Nine Stories* (San Francisco, CA: North Point Press, 1987)
- Desire*** Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo), *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*, ed. with intro. by Andrew Eburne (New York: Braziller, 1994 [1934])
- DNB*** *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online version (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-06)
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>
- Dolben 1915*** *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, ed. with 'Memoir' by Robert Bridges, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1915)
- Dorian 1890*** Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine: A Popular Journal of General Literature, Science, and Politics*, 46 (July 1890) [Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott], pp.3-100
- Dorian 1891*** *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994 [1891]), pp.17-159
- Facsimiles I*** *The Early Poetic Manuscripts and Note-books of Gerard Manley Hopkins in Facsimile*, ed. with annotations, transcriptions of unpublished passages, and intro. by Norman H. MacKenzie (New York: Garland, 1989)
- Facsimiles II*** *The Later Poetic Manuscripts of Gerard Manley Hopkins in Facsimile*, ed. with annotations, transcriptions of obscure words, and intro. by Norman H. MacKenzie (New York: Garland, 1991)
- Greek*** Walter Pater, *Greek Studies: A Series of Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1908)

- Ionica 1905*** William Johnson (*later Cory*), *Ionica* [Parts I and II], by William Cory, with biographical intro. and notes by Arthur C. Benson (London: George Allen, 1905)
- Journals*** *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. by Humphry House, completed by Graham Storey (London: Oxford University Press, 1959)
- ‘King’** ‘The Young King’, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994 [1891]), pp.213-22
- Letters I*** *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. by Claude Colleer Abbott, 2nd imp. rev. (London: Oxford University Press, 1955)
- Letters II*** *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, ed. by Claude Colleer Abbott, 2nd imp. rev. (London: Oxford University Press, 1955)
- Letters III*** *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Including His Correspondence with Coventry Patmore*, ed. by Claude Colleer Abbott, 2nd edn, rev. and enlarged (London: Oxford University Press, 1956)
- Maisie*** Henry James, *What Maisie Knew* [New York edn], in *Novels 1896-1899* (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp.395-649
- Marius*** Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*, Library edn, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1921)
- Marius 1885*** Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*, 1st edn, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1885)
- Miscellaneous*** Walter Pater, *Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays*, 1st edn (London: Macmillan, 1895)

- OED*** *Oxford English Dictionary*, 12 vols, and *Supplement* with 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927-86)
- OET*** *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. by Norman H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)
- Platonism*** Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures*, Library edn (London: Macmillan, 1920)
- Renaissance 1873*** Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, 1st edn (London: Macmillan, 1873)
- Renaissance 1893*** Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 4th edn, ed. by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980 [1893])
- Sermons*** *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. by Christopher Devlin, S.J. (London: Oxford University Press, 1959)
- SM*** Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, in *Leaves of Grass: Comprehensive Reader's Edition*, ed. by Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley (New York: New York University Press, 1965), pp.28-89

Unless placed within brackets, all ellipses are original.

For a full list of works cited, see 'Bibliography'.

Regarding the illustrations, see 'Use of Images'.



Jeune garçon avec un chat
Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919)
Oil on canvas, 1868-69
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France

— Introduction —

**‘During My Long Studies I Have Come to Admire’:
Penetrating Intimate Victorian Passages**

Is Boy-Love Greek? Far off across the seas
The warm desire of Southern men may be:
But passion freshened by a Northern breeze
Gains in male vigour and in purity.
Our yearning tenderness for boys like these
Has more in it of Christ than Socrates.

(Edwin Emmanuel Bradford, from *The New Chivalry*)¹

In his ‘Postscript’ to *Appreciations*, Walter Pater asserts that ‘the habit of noting and distinguishing one’s own most intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds’ (p.266). One of the individuals whose ‘recesses’ Pater enters most fully is Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-68), a German archaeologist and art historian whose analysis of ancient Greco-Roman culture derived its impassioned quality partly from his strong affinity with Grecian paederastic (or boy-love) traditions, an affinity Pater considers intrinsic to both Winckelmann’s nature and approach to life.

Pater observes that ‘this key to the understanding of the Greek spirit, Winckelmann possessed in his own nature’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.175), later suggesting that any nature, including a nature like Winckelmann’s, has laws that must be respected — for ‘natural laws we shall never modify, embarrass us as they may’ (p.185). In fact,

that world in which others had moved with so much embarrassment, seems to call out in Winckelmann new senses fitted to deal with it. He is in touch with it; it penetrates him, and becomes part of his temperament. [...] He seems to realise that fancy of the reminiscence of a forgotten knowledge hidden for a time in the mind itself; as if the mind of one, lover and philosopher at once. (Pp.154-55)

These ‘new senses’, senses that constituted a new ‘temperament’, took on an almost phrenological dimension that others could easily recognise in

¹ Edwin Emmanuel Bradford, *The New Chivalry and Other Poems* (London: Kegan Paul, 1918), p.31, as quoted in Timothy d’Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English ‘Uranian’ Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p.3.

Winckelmann: ‘the quick, susceptible enthusiast, betraying his temperament even in appearance, by his olive complexion, his deep-seated, piercing eyes, his rapid movements, apprehended the subtlest principles of the Hellenic manner, not through the understanding, but by instinct or touch’ (p.154). Instinctively, Winckelmann longed ‘to touch’ — but in a ‘Hellenic manner’ — and he was fully cognizant of this: ‘The protracted longing of his youth is not a vague, romantic longing: he knows what he longs for, what he wills. Within its severe limits his enthusiasm burns like lava’ (p.148), lava that needs must find an outlet, for ‘the Hellenic element alone has not been [...] content with this underground life; from time to time it has started to the surface’ (p.158).¹ Pater explains that this enthusiasm, ‘in the broad Platonic sense of the *Phaedrus*, was [...] dependent [...] to a great degree on bodily temperament, [and] has a power of reinforcing the purer emotions of the intellect with an almost physical excitement’ (p.152).² Initially, Winckelmann found the ‘object of his longing’ amid the titillations of poetry: ‘Hitherto he had handled the words only of Greek poetry, stirred indeed and roused by them, yet divining beyond the words some unexpressed pulsation of sensuous life’ (p.146). Later, Winckelmann was stirred and roused by sculptural depictions of that ‘sensuous life’: ‘Suddenly he is in contact with that life, still fervent in the relics of plastic art’ (p.146), for ‘Greek sculpture deals almost exclusively with youth, where the moulding of the bodily organs is still as if suspended between growth and completion’ (p.174). Later still, Winckelmann found this ‘moulding of the bodily organs’ in something far more solid than poetry, far less frigid than marble:

That his affinity with Hellenism was not merely intellectual, that the subtler threads of temperament were inwoven in it, is proved by his romantic, fervent friendships with young men. He has known, he says, many young men more beautiful than Guido [Reni]’s archangel. These friendships [brought] him into contact with the pride of human form. (P.152)

As to the manner of Winckelmann’s ‘contact with the pride of human form’, it must be remembered that ‘nothing was to enter into his life unpenetrated by its central enthusiasm’ (p.144). Especially because of the intrusive ‘he says’, Pater seems to suggest that Winckelmann had ‘known [...] many young men’, had ‘known’ them in a rather biblical sense, with Pater employing the language of Genesis 19.5 — ‘And [the men of Sodom] called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them’ (KJV) — or, in more modern phrasing, ‘Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them’ (NIV). The implication of this is that Winckelmann had been ‘bringing him[self] into contact’ with these youths in a

¹ Laurel Brake claims that Pater’s essay ‘unmistakably portray[s] Winckelmann’s advocacy of the Hellenic and the homoerotic’ (‘Walter Horatio Pater’, *DNB*).

² In Uranian texts, the word ‘purer’ is often a play on *puer* (Latin and French for ‘boy’).

very penetrative way, for apparently ‘nothing was to enter into his life unpenetrated’, including these youths.

Whether Pater had only surmised this actualised paederasty, or boy-love, from Winckelmann’s art criticism¹ or had had access to the anecdote from the memoirs of Giacomo Casanova (1725-98) in which Casanova ‘claims to have entered Winckelmann’s study in Rome in December 1760 and discovered him in a sexual encounter with a young boy (un jeune garçon)’² will probably never be known.³ One thing is certain though: Pater was right. After Casanova had burst

¹ In ‘The Discreet Charm of the Belvedere: Submerged Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century Writing on Art’, *German Life and Letters*, 52.2 (1999), pp.123-35, Jeff Morrison provides a description that helps explain how Pater may have deduced this from Winckelmann’s art criticism:

More interesting from our point of view is then the matter of how Winckelmann presents his material in his well-known purple passages; it is certainly clear that his presentation of art is substantially different from that of his contemporaries. The language has a different character, partly because he was inventing a German language for aesthetics as he was going along, but above all because it was driven by a different force: sex. (P.124)

² Thomas Paul Bonfiglio, ‘Winckelmann and the Aesthetics of Eros’, *The Germanic Review*, 73.2 (1998), pp.132-44 (p.141). For the primary source, see Giacomo Casanova, *History of My Life*, vols 7-8, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp.194-95. See also Jeffrey Morrison, *Winckelmann and the Notion of Aesthetic Education* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp.34-68. In ‘Winckelmann and the Anti-Essentialist Thrust in *Dorian Gray*’, in *Oscar Wilde: The Man, His Writings, and His World*, ed. by Robert N. Keane (New York: AMS Press, 2003), pp.149-62, Ann Herndon Marshall writes: ‘Winckelmann’s homoeroticism was no secret in Wilde’s time. Casanova’s memoirs include it. [...] In the spring of 1900, the letter to Robert Ross from Rome refers to the figure of Winckelmann in an erotic context which Wilde knew his old friend Ross would understand’ (pp.151-52).

³ It seems *unlikely* that Pater knew this anecdote. Although published three decades after his anonymous ‘Winckelmann’, even *The Memoirs of Jacques Casanova de Seingalt*, a widely circulated English translation by Arthur Machen, does not contain such passages. Arthur William Symons (1865-1945), that friend of Pater whom Donoghue dubs ‘Pater’s ephebe’ (p.73) — a friend who was an infant at the time ‘Winckelmann’ appeared — later lamented that

The Memoirs of Casanova, though they have enjoyed the popularity of a bad reputation, have never had justice done to them by serious students of literature, of life, and of history. One English writer, indeed, Mr. Havelock Ellis, has realised that ‘there are few more delightful books in the world’, and he has analysed them in an essay on Casanova, published in *Affirmations*, with extreme care and remarkable subtlety. But this essay stands alone, at all events in English, as an attempt to take Casanova seriously, to show him in his relation to his time, and in his relation to human problems. [...] [*The Memoirs*] manuscript, in its original state, has never been printed. Herr Brockhaus, on obtaining possession of the manuscript, had it translated into German by Wilhelm Schutz, but with many omissions and alterations, and published this translation, volume

unwittingly into the room and Winckelmann ‘had straightened his trousers and the young man he had been surprised with had beat a hasty retreat’,¹ Winckelmann provided Casanova, his *coitus interruptus*, with the following explanation:

You know I am not only not a pederast, but for all of my life I have said it is inconceivable that such a taste can have so seduced the human race. If I say this after what you have just witnessed, you will think me a hypocrite. But this is the way it is: During my long studies I have come to admire and then to adore the ancients who, as you know, were almost all buggerers without concealing it, and many of them immortalize the handsome objects of their tenderness in their poems, not to speak of superb monuments [...] I found myself, at least as far as my love life was concerned, as unworthy of esteem, and not being able to overcome this conceit by cold theory, I decided to illumine myself through practice. [...] Thus determined, it has been three or four years that I have been working at this business, choosing the cutest Smerdiases of Rome.²

‘The cutest Smerdiases of Rome’ is an allusion to an exquisite Thracian boy given by his ancient Greek captors to Polycrates,³ and J. A. Symonds’s description of the poet Anacreon’s fascination with that particular boy, among others, is equally befitting of Winckelmann and the tone of his writings: ‘Of the genuine Anacreon we possess more numerous and longer fragments, and the names of his favourites, Cleobulus, Smerdies, Leucaspis, are famous. The general tone of his love-poems is relaxed and Oriental, and his language abounds

by volume, from 1822 to 1828, under the title, ‘Aus den Memoiren des Venetianers Jacob Casanova de Seingalt’. [...] In turning over the manuscript at Leipzig, I read some of the suppressed passages, and regretted their suppression.

The above is from Arthur Symons, ‘Casanova at Dux: An Unpublished Chapter of History’ (1902), added as introductory material to Giacomo Casanova, *The Memoirs of Jacques Casanova de Seingalt: The Rare Unabridged London Edition of 1894 Translated by Arthur Machen to Which Has Been Added the Chapters Discovered by Arthur Symons* (London: [n.p.], 1894) <<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/c/casanova/c33m/introduction1.html>> [last accessed 20 May 2006]. This essay also appears in Arthur Symons, *Figures of Several Centuries* (London: Constable, 1916). Even in French, the only non-pirated edition, Jean Laforgue’s *Histoire de ma vie* (1826-38) — the edition upon which Machen’s translation was based — suppresses such erotic details. The first time the *Histoire de ma vie* was published fully unabridged was the Edition intégrale, 12 vols in 6 (Paris: F. A. Brockhaus and Librairie Plon, 1960-61).

¹ Denis M. Sweet, ‘The Personal, the Political, and the Aesthetic: Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s German Enlightenment Life’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 16.1-2 (1988), pp.147-62 (p.149).

² As quoted in translation in *ibid.*, pp.149-50.

³ See Maximus Tyrius, *Dissertationes*, ed. by Michael B. Trapp (Stuttgart, Germany: B. G. Teubner, 1994), diss. xxvi. See also William Armstrong Percy III, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), pp.157-160.

in phrases indicative of sensuality'.¹ Whether or not Casanova, frequenter of a legion of bedrooms, accepted Winckelmann's explanation for 'buggering' his own 'Smerdias' is irrelevant here: what *is* relevant is that Walter Pater has equally demonstrated, through his essay on Winckelmann, an ability to burst into the room, to penetrate 'the intimate recesses of other minds', in this case the mind of a paederast who frequently penetrated *un jeune garçon*.² Pater was not required to know this anecdote, for Winckelmann, as Jeff Morrison explains, had left behind a residue of similar materials, a blend of art and life that would have allowed for such a Paterian penetration:

At times it can be difficult to distinguish whether Winckelmann is talking about art or life, such is the degree of shared vocabulary. Many of the benchmarks for art and life appear to be shared. I am thinking here of Winckelmann's interest in the boy Niccolo Castellani. [The boy] was based in Naples and Winckelmann asked his friend [Baron Johann Hermann] Riedesel to report back to Rome on the current state of his looks. The boy is presented almost as an art-historical phenomenon — his beauty analysed in stylistic and historical terms — and yet the subtext is clear enough for it to be hard to accept, as Winckelmann would have us believe, that 'keine Neigung war so rein als diese' [no inclination was as untainted as this].³

Despite similar appeals to clarity and untainted motives (appeals to Hopkinsian 'overthought'), Pater shared Winckelmann's textual and subtextual techniques (a relish in 'underthought'), as well as the desires that infused those techniques and that those techniques strove to render opaque. This is understandable; for, as David Hilliard notes, 'It is unrealistic to expect documented proof of overt homosexual behaviour [during the Victorian period], for if sexual activity of any kind occurred between male lovers in private the fact is unlikely to have been recorded'.⁴

¹ John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion* (London: Privately printed, [1901]), p.25. For a modern translation of Anacreon by an author and Classicist given to paederastic expression, see *7 Greeks* [Archilochos, Sappho, Alkman, Anakreon, Herakleitos, Diogenes, Herondas], trans. by Guy Davenport (New York: New Directions, 1995). Davenport is considered in my 'Conclusion'.

² Richard Dellamora has also traced the erotic implications of Pater's 'Winckelmann'; see *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp.113-16.

³ Morrison, pp.131-32. 'The documentary evidence of Winckelmann's sex life / sexual preferences is not plentiful but is clear. His preferences ranged from young adults like von Berg through young boys such as Niccolo Castellani to prepubescent girls such as a young dancer mentioned on a number of occasions' (p.124, note). The translated passage is my own.

⁴ David Hilliard, 'Unenglish and Unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality', *Victorian Studies*, 25.2 (1982), pp.181-210 (p.186).

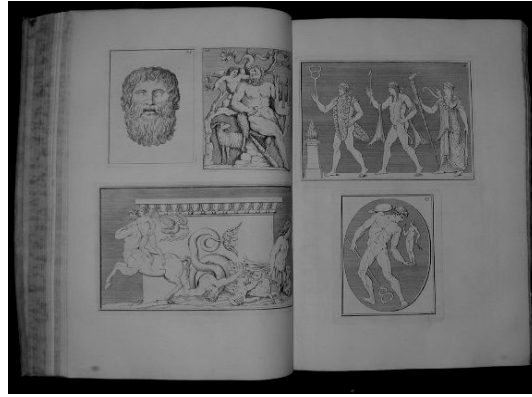


Johann Joachim Winckelmann

Artist unknown

Engraving

The History of Ancient Art, vol. 1
(London: Low, Marston, Searle,
& Rivington, 1881)



Copperplate Engravings

Artist(s) unknown

Monumenti antichi inediti, spiegati ed illustrati
by Johann Joachim Winckelmann
(Rome: Privately printed, 1767)

To penetrate Pater's own opaque passages, to enter into the recesses of Pater's own mind in order to discover the paederastic and homoerotic elements concealed there, to burst into the room, one must tease from his texts 'the subtler threads of temperament [...] inwoven in [them]', the hidden lines of argument and 'underthought' that lead through the labyrinth of his own desires (as was partially done, in the preceding paragraphs, with the labyrinth of most of 'Winckelmann').¹ This task is not a straightforward one, nor did Pater intend it to be, as Kenneth Burke suggests in *Counter-Statement*:

Pater's audience is expected to bring somewhat the same critical appreciation to bear, watching with keen pleasure as the artist extricates himself from the labyrinths of his material — a process which Pater loves so greatly that he often seems to make his labyrinths of his extrications.²

¹ In *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), Linda Dowling writes: 'The crucial text for any account of Pater's tacit recovery of the paiderastic dimension of Western culture thus becomes "Winckelmann"' (p.95). 'It was this vitality and immediacy, something which had been present at the beginning of our culture, which the Uranians, looking through the lenses of Pater, Winckelmann and the Renaissance, saw reflected in the Greek mirror' — Donald H. Mader, 'The Greek Mirror: The Uranians and Their Use of Greece', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 49.3-4 (2005), pp.377-420 (p.391).

² Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement*, 2nd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p.12. In *A Commentary on the Complete Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), Paul Mariani describes Hopkins's poetry with the same term, labelling it 'labyrinthine coils of gold' (p.xxvii). This textual

Unlike Winckelmann, but like most Victorians of his ‘inclination’, Pater was unlikely to be caught with his pants down by an intrusive Casanova, providing that much desired ‘definitive proof’ for modern scholars and biographers: Pater hid his own arousal beneath ‘the labyrinths of his material’.¹ It is through those labyrinths of material that this volume will proceed, Theseus-like, hoping not to lose ‘the subtler thread of temperament’, the thread that others, such as David M. Halperin, have attempted to sever: ‘The aim of my book [*One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*] [...] was to snip the thread that connected ancient Greek pederasty with modern homosexuality in the minds of modern historians’.² The present volume, on the other hand, attempts to grasp tightly, rather than to sever that thread.

This is not an easy task, since, as Denis Donoghue asserts, ‘Pater approached these themes [“boy-love, pederasty, and ‘the early Greek enthusiasm”] far more obliquely than [John Addington] Symonds did; he chose to write about Winckelmann rather than about himself, while enjoying the warmth of homosexual motifs’.³ In *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*, Linda Dowling elucidates the challenge that this Paterian obliqueness provides:

To uncover the full homoerotic implicativeness of Pater’s writing would thus be to comb the complex surfaces of his prose with an analytical patience and insight at least equivalent to his own deliberate brilliance in its composition. The larger significance of such an undertaking, however, would be to reveal the way in which Pater accepts the transcendent Plato of the Greats curriculum [at Oxford] but does so on thoroughly ‘critical’ or historicist terms, allowing his readers to see that the paiderastic dimension to Plato’s thought is no mere figure of speech, as [Benjamin] Jowett had been wont to maintain, but instead a constitutive element of that thought, and thus of the Western tradition itself.⁴

complexity has also been observed in Wilde’s novel. In ‘*The Picture of Dorian Gray: Wilde’s Parable of the Fall*’, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray: Authoritative Texts, Backgrounds, Reviews and Reactions, Criticism*, ed. by Donald L. Lawler (New York: Norton, 1988), pp.422-31, Joyce Carol Oates asserts: ‘While in one sense *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is as transparent as a medieval allegory [...] in another sense it remains a puzzle: knotted, convoluted, brilliantly enigmatic’ (pp.422-23).

¹ ‘It remained for biographers, critics, historians, and novelists in the twentieth century to piece together the elusive traces of [Pater’s] life, much of which had been withheld or destroyed by his family and friends, and to claim him variously as an important early modernist, and writer of gay discourse’ (Laurel Brake, ‘Walter Horatio Pater’, *DNB*).

² David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p.4.

³ Denis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995), p.42.

⁴ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.95. It was not uncommon for Victorian Classicists to treat ‘Athenian pederasty as a “figure of speech” for the educational process (as Benjamin Jowett called it in a letter cited by J. A. Symonds in his letter to E. Gosse, dated 25 January 1890, and now in the Duke University Library, Special Collections)’ — John G. Younger, ‘Gender in the Parthenon Frieze’, in *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality and*

Taking Dowling's comments as a spur, the pages that follow will 'comb the complex surfaces' of a number of oblique literary texts with 'analytical patience', though without the assurance of an 'insight at least equivalent to [their writers'] own deliberate brilliance' — for Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89), Walter Pater (1839-94), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), William Johnson (*later Cory*) (1823-92), and Digby Mackworth Dolben (1848-67) were masters of 'complex surfaces', and needed to be. For these writers, 'the paiderastic dimension [...] is no mere figure of speech' — and neither their time period nor that of today is particularly congenial to the homoerotic, let alone the paiderastic, even as a 'mere figure of speech'. About some things, we prefer silences.



Allegory with Venus and Cupid

Agnolo Bronzino (1503-72)

Oil on wood, ca. 1540-50

National Gallery of Art, London, UK

Although rich in analysis of this Victorian world (or underworld) of Hellenism tinct with the homosocial and homoerotic, even Linda Dowling's writings exhibit a tendency towards an avoidance of 'the paiderastic', a tendency

Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology, ed. by Ann Olga Kolowski-Ostrow and Claire L. Lyons (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.120-53 (p.147). In 'Pater, Wilde, Douglas and the Impact of "Greats"', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 46.3 (2003), pp.250-78, William F. Shuter stresses: 'It proves more difficult to divorce Pater the man of letters from Pater the don when we recognize the extent to which his published writings reflect, or have their origin in, the intellectual culture of which Greats was the centerpiece and the formal embodiment' (p.251).

that she shares with Denis Donoghue, though his tendency manifests itself in a different way. In *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls*, after making the pregnant suggestion in chapter three that ‘mostly [Pater] saw in those [Renaissance] paintings an ideal human image, the love of a man for a beautiful boy’,¹ Donoghue ends that chapter and abandons the idea forever. Given the import of Donoghue’s passing comment, one envisions Pater standing before Agnolo Bronzino’s *Allegory with Venus and Cupid* (placed in The National Gallery of Art, London, in March 1860), contemplating its naked Cupid with more interest than most, though with enough discretion not to expound textually on this ‘beautiful boy’ whose posterior is exposed erotically for all posterity.²

Pater often exercised such discretion in choosing the subjects he would consider textually. One of the most salient of Pater’s discretionary avoidances involves the painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610), an avoidance that is especially noteworthy given that Pater would have recognised in Caravaggio and his oeuvre the potential for a grand Paterian contemplation of beautiful boys, music, Greco-Roman imagery and mythology, shadow and greyness, as well as the portrayal of an adventuresome life that blends Roman Catholicism with paederasty, the sacred with the profane. However, engaging Caravaggio was unfeasible: Caravaggio would have entered Pater’s published pantheon far too soiled from having trod the paths of scandal, as John Ruskin (1819-1900) liked to emphasise at every available opportunity. As the foremost Victorian art historian and critic — hence, the principal formulator of Victorian aesthetic perceptions — Ruskin was a formidable cultural opponent, and Pater had to choose either to engage, perhaps enrage him or to avoid him. Pater chose avoidance, recognising that expressing a laudatory or sympathetic view of Caravaggio and his art would have been impossible without overly scandalous repercussions. To appreciate the taint Pater avoided by leaving Caravaggio untouched, consider six of Ruskin’s expressions of antipathy towards that Baroque painter:

We find others on whose works there are definite signs of evil desire ill repressed, and then inability to avoid, and at last perpetual seeking for, and feeding upon, horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin; as eminently in Salvator and Caravaggio, and the lower Dutch schools, only in these last less painfully as they lose the villainous in the brutal, and the horror of crime in its idiocy.³

¹ Donoghue, p.31.

² I am thankful to Isobel Siddons, Archivist, The National Gallery of Art, London, for providing me with details regarding the acquisition and exhibition of this painting (E-mail from 27 July 2004).

³ John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin on CD-ROM* [‘Library Edition’, originally in 39 vols, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903-12)] (Cambridge: Ruskin Foundation, Cambridge University Press, 1995) — this quote is from vol. 4, p.213. The ‘General Index’ of Ruskin’s *Works*, vol. 39, p.101, reveals this antipathy very cogently:

[In his ranking of artists, Ruskin consigns Caravaggio to Hell:] Teniers and Salvator, Caravaggio, and other such worshippers of the depraved [are] of no rank, or as we said before, of a certain order in the abyss.¹

Vulgarity, dullness, or impiety, will indeed always express themselves through art in brown and grey, as in Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Salvator.²

Poussin is really a great man, but wickedly, or rather brutally, minded, and therefore approaches a sacred subject with utter distaste and incapacity for it. I call him brutally rather than wickedly minded, because he has none of the love of crime and pain for their own sake which Salvator and Caravaggio have.³

[In a review of Lord Lindsay's *Christian Art* published in the *Quarterly Review* in June 1847, Ruskin quips:] Does [Lord Lindsay] — can he for an instant suppose that the ruffian Caravaggio, distinguished only by his preference of candlelight and black shadows for the illustration and reinforcement of villainy, painted nature — mere nature — exclusive nature, more painfully or heartily than John Bellini or Raphael? Does he not see that whatever men imitate must be nature of some kind, material nature or spiritual, lovely or foul, brutal or human, but nature still? Does he himself see in mere, external, copiable nature, no more than Caravaggio saw?⁴

There are some ideas of vulgarity or of crime which no words, however laboured, would succeed in suggesting to a gentle heart or a pure mind. But the brutal painter has the eyes at his mercy; and as Kingliness and Holiness, and Manliness and Thoughtfulness were never by words so hymned or so embodied or so enshrined as they have been by Titian, and Angelico, and Veronese, so never were Blasphemy and cruelty and horror and degradation and decrepitude of Intellect — and all that has sunk and will sink Humanity to Hell — so written in words as they are stamped upon the canvasses of Salvator and Jordaens and Caravaggio and modern France.⁵

Ruskin would never have envisioned that, in the twentieth century, prior to architectural Euros, Caravaggio's portrait and artworks would adorn Italy's 100,000 lire banknote: had Ruskin known, he would certainly have altered his own definition of 'filthy lucre'.

Particularly in the case of a 'filthy' figure like Caravaggio — the practitioner of a 'crime which no words, however laboured, would succeed in

Caravaggio (painter), 4, xxxv.; black slave of painting, 15, 202; blackguards, painting of, 1, 147, 12, 202; features and shadow in, 8, 237; morbid brutality of, 4, 213, 12, 458; renders evil only, 10, 223; sombre colour of, 5, 328; ugly subjects of, 5, 56, 12, 202.

¹ Ruskin, *Works*, vol. 5, p.56.

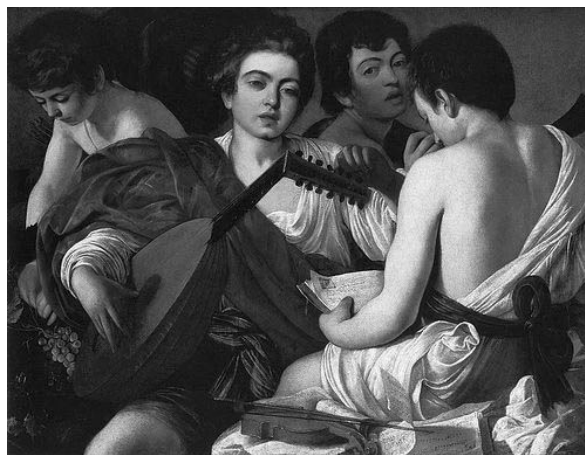
² *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p.328.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p.324, note.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 12, p.202.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 12, p.458.

suggesting' (a clear allusion to Caravaggio's paederasty) — such an avoidance was an act of necessary discretion, and hence understandable, for Pater. Such an act of avoidance was very 'Victorian'. As Pater phrases this himself: 'In literature, too, the true artist may be best recognised by his tact of omission' (*Appreciations*, p.15). On the other hand, Donoghue's avoidance of lingering with Pater while he contemplates such 'beautiful boys' and their artist-admirers, artists with paederastic desires similar to those of Caravaggio, is not: Donoghue's avoidance is less an act of scholarly discretion than an act of scholarly evasion, evasion of the paederastic import vital to an understanding of Pater's life and writings — as well as the lives, writings, and artworks about which he wrote and of those who constituted his literary and artistic circle.



The Musicians

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610)

Oil on canvas, ca. 1595-96

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA

Regarding Pater and his circle, Dowling handles her own evasions a tad differently than Donoghue does. Seemingly unable — or more likely, unwilling — to differentiate adult homoeroticism from paederasty, she blurs the two as though they were interchangeable, apparently hoping to hide the more 'suspect' paederastic in the shadow of the larger homoerotic, though not in total darkness, as Donoghue does. Dowling's surface argument seems to be that Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, redirected the tradition of the Tractarian tutorial towards a Platonic Hellenism for which he himself provided the impetus and the example, *via* his persona, his translations, and his expansion of Oxford's 'Greats curriculum'. Hence, wittingly or not, Jowett assisted in the emergence of the early 'homosexual' apologetics by providing 'a space for its

discourse', a space that encouraged his former students Symonds and Pater to propose a far more paederastic tutorial.¹



Victorious Amor
 Michelangelo Merisi
 da Caravaggio (1571-1610)
 Oil on canvas, ca. 1601-02
 Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen
 Berlin-Dahlem, Germany



Youth with a Ram (St John the Baptist)
 Michelangelo Merisi
 da Caravaggio (1571-1610)
 Oil on canvas, ca. 1602-03
 Pinacoteca Capitolina
 Rome, Italy

In her analysis of Pater's prose style — Pater's own 'space for its discourse' — Dowling writes:

Pater's mode is never that of outright statement or even suggestion. It is one, rather, of a constantly beckoning and receding suggestiveness, as homoerotic themes — most often Platonic ones — are constantly either raised to visibility or veiled in their explicitness within the richly various materials of Pater's prose.²

¹ For a consideration of how this 'Hellenism' provided various opportunities for 'homosexual' apologia, see Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.28, 31, 35, 66, 73, 76, 78-80, 97, 115, 135-36, and 152-53. For the possibility of Oxford tutorials becoming tinged with paederastic nuances and implications, particularly for Symonds and Pater, see pp.28, 81, 83, 88, 102-03, 124-29, 134, 137, and 150.

² *Ibid.*, p.94.

However, ‘veiled in their explicitness’ describes Dowling’s own prose style better than Pater’s, for hers constantly displays a subtle-yet-striking shift in argumentative centre of gravity, an attempt to veil Pater’s explicitness through a shift in primary terms, a shift from those terms denoting ‘the paederastic’ (boy-love) to those denoting ‘the homoerotic’ (man-love). Dowling’s methods of veiling are evident in the following oblique passage:

The rebellion against this crucifixion of the senses would be given symbolic expression, most significantly, in the Oxford cult of ‘boy-worship’ which was already beginning to surface, as we have seen, by the time of William Johnson’s classic paean to romantic paiderastia, *Ionica* (1858). With its rites of admiring contemplation and pursuit — whether at Magdalen Chapel or the river bathing spot known as Parson’s Pleasure — and its attendant conventions of epistolary address — by which the fervors of public-school romance merged into the headlong emotional avowals of Tractarian friendship — the cult of boy-love would find its literary expression in ‘Uranian’ poetry. This poetry, celebrating that Uranian or ‘heavenly’ love between males described in Plato’s *Symposium* 180e, first appeared at about this time in Oxford and, as Timothy d’Arch Smith has so extensively documented, would continue to be written there and elsewhere in England into the 1930s.¹

A précis of this passage might appear thus:

By 1858, the Oxford cult of ‘boy-worship’ (‘boy-love’) had begun to express symbolically ‘the rebellion against the crucifixion of the senses’ through ‘admiring contemplation’ and ‘pursuit’ and ‘epistolary address’ and ‘Uranian’ poetry celebrating that ‘heavenly’ love between males described in Plato’s *Symposium*.

Dowling’s core claim seems to be:

By the 1860s, some at Oxford had begun to express banned paederastic desires through voyeurism, flirtation, letters, and Classically-inspired verse.

The above also serves as a core claim of this volume: By the 1860s, some at Oxford had begun to express paederastic desires through voyeurism, flirtation, letters, and Classically-inspired verse (though this volume recognises far more physicality than that). Nevertheless, Dowling adjusts this straightforward claim, attempting to minimise the paederastic content at its core. She achieves this minimising in a multitude of ways, seven of which are illustrated below.

Firstly, Dowling attempts to spiritualise the paederastic desires of these Oxonians by framing the passage with the words ‘worship’ and ‘heavenly’: the ‘cult of “boy-worship”’ becomes the ‘cult of boy-love’ becomes the “‘heavenly” love between males’. The more suspect ‘boy-love’ is mitigated both before and

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.114.

after by ‘cult’, ‘worship’, and ‘heavenly’ — phrasing that minimises the inherent erotic potential. Secondly, these paederastic desires are seen as merely the ‘symbolic expression’ of what she vaguely calls ‘the rebellion against this crucifixion of the senses’ — in essence, she diminishes all acts to symbolic ones, a rebellion against Christian morality and its modern offshoots. Thirdly, by placing rhetorical emphasis upon the ‘cult’ of paederastic desires and by suggesting that its ‘rites’ were mostly voyeurism (‘admiring contemplation’) and flirtation (‘pursuit’), Dowling stresses that these desires could never have moved much beyond voyeurism and flirtation, especially in the public venues in which she has chosen to allow them an outlet, ‘whether at Magdalen Chapel or the river bathing spot known as Parson’s Pleasure’. Hence, the paederastic Uranians are transformed into a group of voyeurs merely flirting with choristers and young bathers. Fourthly, these Oxonian ‘rites’ also included the writing of romantic letters (‘epistolary address’), letters held within the ‘conventions’ of a literary form that allowed ‘the fervors of public-school romance’ to combine with ‘the headlong emotional avowals of Tractarian friendship’ — the passions of the first developing into the religious sentiments of the second, becoming passionate friendships, both intellectual and emotional, based on ‘avowals’ (including, undoubtedly, certain Tractarian vows, internal or expressed, not to debase ‘heavenly’ friendship by giving it physical expression). Fifthly, these Oxonian ‘rites’ also included ‘literary expression’, Uranian poetry ‘celebrating’ a love that, because its name derives from the ‘heavenly’ love of Plato’s *Symposium*, must indeed have been a spiritual or ‘heavenly’ love, not a love bountiful in sexual stimulation or gratification. In *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, Symonds, one of those Uranians, notes the disparity between the elevated rhetoric of paederastic love and its actual practice, a disparity that reveals Dowling’s naiveté:

[The Greeks] worshipped Erôs, as they worshipped Aphrodite, under the twofold titles of Ouranios (celestial) and Pandemos (vulgar, or *volvivaga*); and, while they regarded the one love with the highest approval, as the source of courage and greatness of soul, they never publicly approved the other. It is true [...] that boy-love in its grossest form was tolerated in historic Hellas with an indulgence which it never found in any Christian country, while heroic comradeship remained an ideal hard to realise, and scarcely possible beyond the limits of the strictest Dorian sect. Yet the language of philosophers, historians, poets and orators is unmistakable. All testify alike to the discrimination between vulgar and heroic love in the Greek mind.¹

With the baser form of paiderastia I shall have little to do in this essay. Vice of this kind does not vary to any great extent, whether we observe it in Athens or in Rome, in Florence of the sixteenth or in Paris of the nineteenth century; nor in Hellas was it more noticeable than elsewhere, except for its comparative publicity.²

¹ Symonds, *Greek Ethics* [1901], p.6.

² *Ibid.*, p.7.

(For an example of ‘Pandemotic’ erotica by an anonymous Late Victorian, see ‘Appendix One’.¹) Sixthly, Dowling further mitigates the paederastic by shifting rhetorically from ‘boy-worship’ to ‘boy-love’ to ‘love between males’, even though the last term, given pride-of-place by appearing last, is not necessarily synonymous with the earlier two and is more commonly used to denote androphilic desire (the homoerotic) rather than man-boy desire (the paederastic). These six adjustments display Dowling’s techniques for blurring the homoerotic and the paederastic, for hiding the paederastic in the shadow of the larger homoerotic, for diminishing its sexual component by attempting to spiritualise its discourse. Lastly, this passage makes reference to Timothy d’Arch Smith’s monumental work on the Uranians, Dowling attempting to bastion her own arguments by referential proximity, though d’Arch Smith does not agree with her arguments, as he expresses in a letter to me:

I think you have treated the Uranian motif most carefully and I am in thorough agreement with your footnote 18 [in your article in *Victorian Poetry*]. The gay scholars have completely ignored the facts and turned the writings to their advantage. ‘Uranian’ is now synonymous with ‘gay’ which, to avoid just such a conflation, is the reason I (historically incorrectly) labelled them ‘Uranian’. Never mind. The other myth that has got about is that ‘earnest’ was a code-word for ‘gay’ when all I said was that Wilde and Nicholson used the same pun on a name. Ah these academics (yourself excluded and Jim Kincaid who talks admirable sense).²

¹ In “‘A Race of Born Pederasts’: Sir Richard Burton, Homosexuality, and the Arabs’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 25.1 (2003), pp.1-20, Colette Colligan writes: ‘By the early 1880s, fiction published by William Lazenby began to feature sodomy. Stories preoccupied with sodomitical acts were serialised in his periodicals *The Pearl* (1878-81) and *The Cremorne* (1882)’ (p.3). One of those ‘sodomitical’ stories from *The Pearl* appears as ‘Appendix One’.

² Letter from Timothy d’Arch Smith to me, 14 October 2001 (included as ‘Appendix Two’). In his ‘Introduction’ to *Love in Earnest*, d’Arch Smith writes:

Adult homosexuality, indeed, has little to do with the themes of the poets here treated who loved only adolescent boys and it is for this reason that I have deliberately eschewed the word ‘homosexual’. It is unpleasantly hybrid and modern psychiatrists would give another term to the boy-lover. This word, ‘paederast’, I have also decided not to employ, not only to remove from the poets the smear which it would undoubtedly place on their blameless lives but also because it is not in common use outside the analyst’s consulting-room and the textbook which treats of aberrant behaviour. [...] The word ‘Uranian’ was chosen because it was much used in the circles in which our poets moved and because it is free from the nuances of ‘homosexual’, ‘paederast’, and ‘calamite’.

(P.xx)

I am in agreement with d’Arch Smith’s comment about the concept of the ‘homosexual’ and its inapplicability to the dynamics of ‘boy-love’. On the other hand, for my own part I have chosen to employ the term ‘paederast’, though usually in the form of a more tentative ‘paederastic desire’ (as with ‘homoerotic desire’, where appropriate). Given the

Although much of the content of my ‘footnote 18’ — to which d’Arch Smith refers — has already appeared in the pages prior, it is presented in full below to display exactly which parts of my argument concerning Donoghue’s and Dowling’s distortions d’Arch Smith considers himself to be ‘in thorough agreement with’:

A clear elucidation of the relationship between *erômenos* and *erastês* (‘hearer’ and ‘inspirer’) can be found in K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), p.91. For an analysis of this relationship dynamic as used by Oxonians like Pater, see Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1994), particularly pp.83, 102. Dowling’s book is rich in analysis of Jowett, Symonds, and Pater, as well as their world of Hellenism tinct with the homosocial and homoerotic. The book is well written and often insightful. Nevertheless, Dowling exhibits the same tendency as Denis Donoghue in *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995). After making the pregnant suggestion that ‘mostly he saw in those [Renaissance] paintings an ideal human image, the love of a man for a beautiful boy’ (p.31), Donoghue leaves the chapter and the idea forever, a textual technique reminiscent of that used to cloak young Miles’s seduction of his governess at the end of chapter 17 of *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James, whose chair at New York University Donoghue holds. Erotic love in relation to a boy often breeds such silences, though more befitting of a novel than a scholarly biography. In the case of Dowling, we have evasion of another kind. Seemingly unable — or more likely, unwilling — to distinguish adult homoeroticism from pederasty, she blurs the two as though they were interchangeable, hoping to hide the pederastic in the shadow of the larger homoerotic. This seems a fashion among Gay Studies critics, since pederastic labels are politically and morally destructive, given the present environment, to their arguments for Hopkins and other Decadents as early ‘homosexual liberators’. To those readers aghast at my classification of Hopkins as a Decadent, let me ask where they would have placed the poem [Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’] — if it had been published directly after being written —

cultural and scholarly changes of the thirty years since d’Arch Smith published the above volume, ‘paederasty’ now seems far more Classical, linguistically pure, and neutral (especially in the sphere of literary and art-history scholarship) than a term like ‘paedophilia’ (part of the polemics of current psychiatry and law) or ‘boy-love’ (part of the polemics of current fringe apologists such as the North American Man-Boy Love Association, or NAMBLA). Besides these, the other available choices are simply too unwieldy, as with ‘intimate intergenerational relationship’, phrasing advocated in Theo Sandfort, Edward Brongersma, and Alex van Naerssen, eds, *Male Intergenerational Intimacy: Historical, Socio-Psychological, and Legal Perspectives* (Binghamton, NY: Haworth, 1991). While d’Arch Smith might have been duly and aptly followed in his use of the term ‘Uranian’, I have chosen instead to employ ‘Uranian’ mainly to refer to ‘fellowship’ within the Uranian group or an accordance with that group’s themes. ‘Paederasty’, even if it does suggest erotic actualisation, nonetheless serves decently to capture the nature of the desires being considered here, a point that will be explored more fully in ‘Chapter One’.

otherwise than beside ‘Ballade of Boys Bathing’ by Fr. Rolfe (Frederick Baron Corvo), appearing in the [fourth] instalment of *Art Review* (April 1890), that Decadent vehicle, often of pederastic expression, published just two years after the ‘Epithalamion’ was written? Rolfe would have had no hesitation in classifying Hopkins’s poem with his own, so why do we?¹

It has indeed been a prevailing custom among Gay Studies critics and Queer Theory practitioners (not that Donoghue or Dowling could be properly bracketed as such) to transform the paederastic Uranians and those like them into homosexual ‘founders’ or ‘liberators’ or ‘martyrs’, a transformation that has led to many things, though not to much scholarly honesty, as d’Arch Smith relates: ‘In an age saturated with adult homosexuality, the boy-lover has, perforce, to be quietened for the sake of the reputation of the adult invert’.²

It must be admitted that, for the Victorians themselves, there *was* a rather blurred overlap between ‘the paederastic’ (boy-love) and ‘the homoerotic’ (man-love); and that often, as in Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’, their literary and other creations included elements of both, a feature acknowledged by both James Kincaid and d’Arch Smith.³ However, what John Pollini notes about Greco-Roman paederasts is equally true for their Victorian counterparts: ‘What mattered most was not so much the chronological age of an adolescent but how long he was able to maintain his boyish good looks and, most important, a smooth and hairless body and face’.⁴ As the Uranian writer Frederick William Rolfe (Baron Corvo; 1860-1913) relates about one boy:

¹ Michael M. Kaylor, ““Beautiful Dripping Fragments”: A Whitmanesque Reading of Hopkins’ “Epithalamion””, *Victorian Poetry*, 40.2 (2002), pp.157-87. This article, in an expanded form, constitutes ‘Chapter Three’.

² D’Arch Smith, p.xxi.

³ See James R. Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.176. In the letter to me in ‘Appendix Two’, d’Arch Smith writes: ‘It’s fair to say, of course, that at the time they were writing [...] there was no distinction made between the homo. and the uranian [...] and in psychological medicine all inverts were lumped together (unless age group fell drastically). Today as you say there are only expressions of horror’. In *Love in Earnest*, d’Arch Smith writes of Symonds and Edward Carpenter: ‘Neither they nor their readers cared to differentiate between the liaisons of adults and of men and boys, the latter of which nowadays appear by far the more culpable of the two and present an entirely different social problem’ (p.12).

⁴ John Pollini, ‘The Warren Cup: Homoerotic Love and Symposial Rhetoric in Silver’, *Art Bulletin*, 81.1 (1999), pp.21-52 (p.34). This argument is also made in M. Ashley Ames and David A. Houston, ‘Legal, Social, and Biological Definitions of Pedophilia’, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 19 (1990), pp.333-42. Ames and Houston argue that ‘true pedophilia’ should not be defined as an attraction to a certain chronological age, but to a certain pre-pubescent body type. In *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, Percy notes: ““Greek love” therefore means men loving pubescent boys. Because almost all erastai preferred adolescents between the ages of twelve and eighteen, or until body hair sprouted and the beard became heavy, we would classify them as pederasts rather than pedophiles (those

He'll be like this till spring, say 3 months more. Then some great fat slow cow of a girl will just open herself wide, and lie quite still, and drain him dry. First, the rich bloom of him will go. Then he'll get hard and hairy. And, by July, he'll have a moustache, a hairy breast for his present great boyish bosom, brushes in his milky armpits, brooms on his splendid young thighs, and be just the ordinary stevedore to be found by scores on the quays.¹

This attraction to the qualities of 'boyishness' rather than the qualities of 'manliness' was (and probably still is) the principal distinction between 'the paederastic' and 'the homoerotic', a distinction that is central to the arguments of this volume. For the Uranians, a nineteen-year-old who retained the qualities of a twelve-year-old was far more desirable than a twelve-year-old who was nineteen in all but age. Although defining 'paederasty' (or boy-love) in this way may seem too imprecise, the Uranians' writings, artworks, and biographical details will bear this out, and the legal and psychological alternatives are fraught with greater problems, at least in terms of the Victorian Uranians.

As has been elaborately chronicled by psychiatrists from Sigmund Freud to Jacques Lacan, and by sexologists from Richard von Krafft-Ebing to Alfred Kinsey, desires and their manifestations rarely accord with legislation — hence, to differentiate 'the paederastic' from 'the homoerotic' by way of 'age of consent' legislation seems of little practical use, especially given the drastic alterations of the concept of 'consent' during the Victorian period. From 1861-1875, the 'age of consent' (at least for girls involved in heterosexual relationships) was twelve; from 1875-1885, thirteen; from 1885 onwards, sixteen. Brushing aside the illegality of same-sex eroticism for a moment and applying the same standard as for heterosexual activity: If one were to use 'age of consent' to demarcate 'the paederastic' from 'the non-paederastic', then sexual intimacy with a boy of thirteen would have been legal, hence non-paederastic, before 1875; would have been barely legal, yet not quite paederastic, in the decade between 1875 and 1885; would have been illegal, hence paederastic, after 1885. Given such an equation, most of Hopkins's erotic desires, despite their consistency, were not paederastic while he was an undergraduate at Oxford; were nearly paederastic while a Jesuit in training; were fully paederastic while a professor in Dublin. Consequently, the answer to whether or not Hopkins's desires were paederastic would be 'no', 'maybe', 'yes' — depending not on the nature of those desires but on the calendar. (The legal dimensions surrounding Victorian paederasty are explored more fully in 'Chapter One'.)

Equally fraught with pitfalls would be an attempt to demarcate the paederastic from the homoerotic by employing Victorian 'psychology'. As one would expect from both their religious bent and pre-Freudian worldview, 'the

loving the prepubescent) or ephebophiles (those loving eighteen to twenty-two year olds)' (p.8).

¹ Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo), *The Venice Letters*, ed. with intro. by Cecil Woolf (London: Cecil & Amelia Woolf, 1974), p.37.

source of this corruption' was believed to originate in aberrations of the soul rather than the mind, resulting in a 'pseudo-psychological, Judeo-Christian approach' in which our contemporary, scientific arguments involving 'nature' *versus* 'nurture' were conceived of as 'human nature' and 'sinful nurture' *versus* 'Divine nature' and conformity to its dictates, as in the following passage from Constantin Ackermann's *Das Christliche im Plato und in der platonischen Philosophie* (1835):

The source of this corruption was threefold, founded in the threefold spiritual activity of men, and in this also ever finding the greatest susceptibility; from the desire for pleasure had sprung paederasty; from irascible strength of mind had been engendered intriguing and ambitious politics; and the intellectual delight of dismembering and refuting was the origin of fine-speaking and sophistry. Since now the lustful, ambitious, and contentious forces of the soul exist in every man, it is easily understood why the Paederasts, Politicians, and Sophists met with such easy success in attracting young men, and in exercising a powerful influence over them. This influence Socrates desired to counteract vigorously, to remove it even, and substitute his own wholesome influence in its place, by apparently joining himself to these destructive tendencies, in order to procure intercourse with the young men, and be able to operate on them the more unostensibly. He endeavoured by his pretended paederasty to supplant the common and shameful vice, and to kindle in its stead, in their youthful souls, an enthusiastic love for all the beautiful and good.¹

This is a passage in which Michel Foucault would have revelled, for it posits that *all* men are 'susceptible' to 'this corruption', since paederasty arises 'from the desire for pleasure'. Or, as Ackermann so cogently explains: '[Since] the lustful [...] forces of the soul exist in every man, it is easily understood why the Paederasts [...] met with such easy success in attracting young men, and in exercising a powerful influence over them'. Ackermann's phrase 'destructive tendencies' still has resonance today, since the current 'Judeo-Christian approach' to psychology continues to champion abstention from 'pleasure', a rhetoric that links the homoerotic and the paederastic to corruption and addiction:

Finding a genetic link to homosexual proclivity would still fail to prove the inclination any less immoral and unacceptable than did the genetic proclivity towards alcoholism. Certain human tendencies are inherently self-destructive and must be denied regardless of genetics.²

¹ C. Ackermann, *The Christian Element in Plato and the Platonic Philosophy*, trans. by Samuel Ralph Asbury (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1861 [German original, 1835]), pp.173-74. For an overview of the medical-psychological engagement of homoeroticism in the 19th century, see Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 2004), pp.40-83.

² Dr Keene F. Tiedemann (D.M.), *All Hail the Death of Truth! The Advent of the Postmodern Era* (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, 2005), p.43.

The same reasoning holds true for homosexuality. God created us male and female. Some people have, to be sure, homosexual behaviors, feelings, and tendencies, but that is not who they are. Establishing a true identity is the first step in overcoming homosexuality. The adage ‘Once a sinner, always a sinner’ is not true if you understand and believe the gospel, nor is ‘Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic’ or ‘Once a homosexual, always a homosexual’.¹

After brushing aside the Victorian versions of such ‘pseudo-psychology’ — all those interpretations bastioned by Judeo-Christian polemics — one is left with little else in the nineteenth century, save for research published by various doctors, sexologists, and social reformers on the Continent. In Britain, on the other hand, there was either silence or sermons. In fact, the first ‘medical’ volume on the subject in English was co-authored by one of the Uranians, John Addington Symonds, and by a doctor, Havelock Ellis (1859-1939). This co-authored work, *Sexual Inversion*, ‘followed in the style of Continental sexologists, describing homosexuality in both men and women, and demonstrating that it was but another manifestation of the sexual instinct: itself a natural process’.² Hence, it was not a disease, an immoral behaviour, or a crime ‘against nature’. However, there are several reasons why that volume, the first of its kind in English, has minimal if any bearing on the considerations of this volume: firstly, since *Sexual Inversion* was not published until 1897, it postdates the period being considered here; secondly, since a bookseller was prosecuted in 1897 for stocking the volume, it is clear that it did not have wide circulation, hence had minimal, if any, impact until after the Victorian period³; thirdly, since one of the co-authors was himself a significant Uranian author, it serves less as a scientific study and more as an apologia, for, among other things, ‘*Sexual Inversion* sought to present the Renaissance as an atmosphere of intellectual and social freedom, a time when homosexuality burst into view’.⁴ The Renaissance had always been as much of an interest for Symonds as it had been for Pater,

¹ Dr Neil T. Anderson (D.Min.), Dr Terry E. Zuehlke (Ph.D.), and Julianne S. Zuehlke (M.S.), *Christ Centered Therapy: The Practical Integration of Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), pp.92-93.

² Ivan Crozier, ‘Striking at Sodom and Gomorrah: The Medicalization of Male Homosexuality and Its Relation to the Law’, in *Criminal Conversations: Victorian Crimes, Social Panic, and Moral Outrage*, ed. by Judith Rowbotham and Kim Stevenson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), pp.126-39 (p.135). About the collaboration between Ellis and Symonds, see Wayne Koestenbaum, *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp.43-67.

³ About the legal problems surrounding the publication of *Sexual Inversion*, see Jeffrey Weeks, ‘Havelock Ellis and the Politics of Sex Reform’, in Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis* (London: Pluto Press, 1977), pp.141-85 (p.154).

⁴ Allen J. Frantzen, *Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from ‘Beowulf’ to ‘Angels in America’* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p.117.

leading to the seven volumes of his *Renaissance in Italy*.¹ Barring this single ‘medical’ volume, as well as those spurious ‘spiritual’ analyses, the Victorian period had nothing ‘psychological’ to suggest about either pederasty or homosexuality, which partially accounts for the absence of any distinction being made between the two.

Even if there was, for the Victorians, a blurred overlap between ‘the pederastic’ and ‘the homoerotic’, a distinction between them needs and must be (re)drawn — especially since present discourses (social, medical, ethical, legal, political, familial, and scholarly) stigmatise, criminalize, or ignore the pederastic side of that overlap.² This is true even with its earliest manifestations, except perhaps for cultures labelled historically as ‘ancient’ or dismissively as ‘primitive’.³ In the case of the scholarly (for purposes here, Victorian scholarship), the choice has almost always been avoidance, an avoidance that has taken four forms: absolute avoidance, claims of anachronism, dismissal as ‘homosocial’, or adjustment and incorporation into the ‘homosexual’. The result of this overall avoidance in the critical sphere, a sphere Pater would have described as ‘that world in which others had moved with so much

¹ John Addington Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, 7 vols (London: Smith, Elder, 1875-86).

² My goal is an inherently Uranian one, grandly formulated by the Uranian poet and apologist Edward Perry Warren (writing under the pseudonym of Arthur Lyon Raile) in *A Defence of Uranian Love* — vol. 1, *The Boy Lover*; vol. 2, *The Uranian Eros*; vol. 3, *The Heavenly Wisdom and Conclusion* (London: Privately printed, 1928-30). In *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, Percy encapsulates this:

Despite this quite firm distinction in attitude among the Greeks, homophile investigators, beginning with [Heinrich] Hoessli and [Karl-Heinrich] Ulrichs, have often conflated Greek pederasty with modern androphilia. Edward Perry Warren, using the pseudonym Arthur Lyon Raile, first among writers in English drew the line of demarcation clearly and accurately between the pederasty of Greco-Roman civilization and the androphile homosexuality that pervades modern Europe and North America. However, his three-volume *Defence of Uranian Love* (1928-30) apparently proved too shocking for his contemporaries. To this day, not one American public library counts Warren’s title among the books in its collection. (P.9)

³ One of those cultures considered ‘primitive’ was the Hawaiian. See Robert J. Morris, ‘*Aikane: Accounts of Hawaiian Same-Sex Relationships in the Journals of Captain Cook’s Third Voyage (1776-80)*’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 19.4 (1990), pp.21-54. Why this has relevance here is that Hopkins’s father, Manley Hopkins, was appointed in 1856 Consul-General in London for Hawaii (a post he retained for thirty years). This appointment inspired him to write what was then the standard text on the subject — *Hawaii: The Past, Present, and Future of Its Island-Kingdom* (1862). It seems likely that Hopkins’s father had access to these details from Captain Cook’s voyage, though it seems unlikely he would have shared them with his son, unless it were to voice his disgust at primitive ‘depravity’ or to warn against the ‘vice’ the Hawaiians historically had in common with the ancient Greeks (remembering that his son had strong aesthetic and rather ‘unmanly’ interests, and was studying Classics at Oxford).

embarrassment', is that the first major analysis of this 'Hellenism [...] not merely intellectual' — Timothy d'Arch Smith's *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930* — still remains, thirty years after its publication, the most comprehensive and daring study of what Dowling dubs 'the paiderastic dimension'. With that in mind, what follows is a belated attempt to expand exponentially the relatively minor 'Uranian' canon that d'Arch Smith considers, by including within its bounds writers of major standing, particularly Gerard Manley Hopkins, Walter Pater, and Oscar Wilde. About the lives and writings chronicled in his own volume, d'Arch Smith admits:

The dichotomy has to be borne between the uniqueness of the [Uranian] theme and the poverty of the verse, but the latter does at least give an insight into a little-known aspect of human psychology. Moreover, I find no other cohesive group nor such well-expressed philosophies as in England between 1880 and 1930, and these are my reasons for concentrating on such a short period and on such minor literary figures, without attempting, usually, to compare the work with others greater than they.¹

In what follows, the goal is to do just that: to consider the works of 'others greater than they', others who also embraced, experienced, and expressed the 'Uranian theme'.

Since each of the texts that this volume will engage in detail — Hopkins's 'Epithalamion', Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*, Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, Johnson's *Ionica*, and Dolben's *Poems* — was written by either a significant Victorian personage or, in the cases of Johnson and Dolben,² someone rarely analysed in the critical sphere, a consideration of how each has been dealt with in regard to various issues relating to homoerotic and paiderastic desires (or supposed homoerotic and paiderastic desires; or mistakenly supposed homoerotic and paiderastic desires) would be beyond the scope of this volume, especially since it needs to be bound in boards. Because of this, the initial section will be limited to criticism surrounding issues of homoeroticism and paiderasty in the life and writings of Hopkins, though it delineates connections to the others where appropriate. In skeletal form, this volume has five chapters divided in the following way: 'Chapter One' considers recent critical engagement of Hopkins in regard to homoeroticism and paiderasty; 'Chapter Two' considers Hopkins's unique, scholarly problematics; 'Chapter Three' is a close reading, in the

¹ D'Arch Smith, p.xxi. In *Toward Stonewall: Homosexuality and Society in the Modern Western World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), Nicholas C. Edsall also notes the 'poverty of the verse': '[Most Uranian poetry consists of] mawkishly sentimental, effusive variations on an endlessly repeated theme' (p.159).

² 'Johnson remains [...] someone probably known to few general readers. His main influence has been exerted through a large number of distinguished pupils, and through a chain of gifted teachers who knew him and were inspired by his writing' (Tim Card, 'William Johnson Cory', *DNB*).

traditional literary sense, of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion'; 'Chapter Four' considers the details and the implications of the paederastic pedagogy advocated in Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*; 'Chapter Five' considers the breach between Pater and Wilde, partly facilitated by Pater's review of Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*. To draw a general 'Conclusion', it ends with a consideration of the influence of Johnson, whose paederastic pedagogy and collection of verses *Ionica* inspired many an Etonian such as Dolben, providing lessons in paederastic pedagogy, elevated friendship, erotic dalliance, and thwarted love, lessons that serve to elucidate the paederastic continuum stretching, unbroken, from Greco-Roman times to the present, a continuum that is then contemporised through the fiction of Guy Davenport.



Zeus Courting Ganymede

Greek (attributed to the Penthesilea Painter)
 Red-Figure terracotta kylix (drinking cup), ca. 450 BCE
 Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy



Ganyমেদে

Bertel Thorvaldsen (ca. 1770-1844)

Marble, after 1816

Hermitage, St Petersburg, Russia

— Chapter One —

**‘That World in Which Others Had
Moved with So Much Embarrassment’:
Victorianists and the Taxonomies of Desire**

His erotic tendency,
condemned and strictly forbidden
(but innate for all that), was the cause of it:
society was totally prudish. (C. P. Cavafy, ‘Days of 1896’)¹

In the ‘Preliminaries’ chapter of his *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls*, Denis Donoghue makes the following assertion about his own method:

In this book I assume, unless contrary evidence is irresistible, that the constituents of Pater’s work are there because he invented them. If a detail in the work is also known to correspond to something in the life — Marius the Epicurean dreaded the sight of copulating snakes, and so did Pater — I don’t regard the correlation as embarrassing.²

The serpentine correlation that Donoghue does regard as embarrassing is between Pater and paederasty, illustrated by his aforementioned avoidance of the implications of his own claim that ‘mostly [Pater] saw in those [Renaissance] paintings an ideal human image, the love of a man for a beautiful boy’. As a result, Donoghue avoids, in Pater’s case, ‘the problem of the boy’, a problem that Michel Foucault elucidates in the final chapters of his *History of Sexuality*.³ In order to avoid this ‘embarrassing’ correlation, Donoghue shifts the centre around

¹ C. P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*, trans. by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard, ed. by George Savidis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p.146 (lines 1-4).

² Denis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995), p.10.

³ Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1986). See the end of volume three, where Foucault considers three Classical texts, one each from Maximus of Tyre, Pseudo-Lucian, and Plutarch, concluding from these that ‘thus there begins to develop an erotics different from the one that had taken its starting point in the love of boys, even though abstention from the sexual pleasures plays an important part in both. This new erotics organizes itself around the symmetrical and reciprocal relationship of a man and a woman, around the high value attributed to virginity, and around the complete union in which it finds perfection’ (p.232).

which Pater's desire coils, from 'love of a man for a beautiful boy' (paederasty) to 'love of a man for a beautiful man' (homosexuality), a rhetorical shift that is manifest in his analysis of Pater's essay 'Winckelmann'.

About Winckelmann being murdered before the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) had an opportunity to make his acquaintance, Donoghue writes: 'The loss is not sustained by "German literary history", which can hardly feel it, but by the fellowship of homosexuals from Plato's academy to Pater's Brasenose'.¹ This claim shifts the centre around which Pater's desire coils, since it should read 'the fellowship of paederasts', especially concerning Plato's Academy. Although Donoghue does occasionally bring Pater and his circle into proximity to paederastic desire, he attempts rhetorically to keep these individuals untainted by any association with its actualisation, 'dread[ing] the sight of copulating'. This is particularly noticeable in the following: 'Like many Victorian homosexuals, [John Addington] Symonds derived immense satisfaction from talking and writing about boy-love, pederasty, and "the early Greek enthusiasm"'.² For Donoghue, 'derived immense satisfaction from talking and writing about boy-love, [or] pederasty', stops shy of claiming that J. A. Symonds,

¹ Donoghue, p.158. In *The Life of Goethe: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), John R. Williams writes: 'In Leipzig Goethe caroused as a freshman (or *Fuchs*), studied little enough law, frequented the theatre, studied drawing seriously with Adam Friedrich Oeser, who had taught Winckelmann himself, and cultivated intense and varied friendships with the gregarious and almost violent affability that was to become the youthful Goethe's salient and most discussed (or deplored) characteristic. [...] Winckelmann was murdered [...] in Trieste just as Oeser and his pupils, Goethe included, were excitedly preparing to welcome him in Leipzig' (pp.7-8).

About Goethe's interest in 'idealized forms of pederasty', see Lawrence Kramer, *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.119, note 59. See also Hans Rudolf Vaget, 'Introduction' to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Erotic Poems*, trans. by David Luke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Robert Deam Tobin writes: 'In the final analysis, pederasty is for Goethe always part of the cure: a pharmakon, with all the medical connotations of that word, the drug that endangers many of the characters of Goethe's world, but also cures them' — *Warm Brothers: Queer Theory and the Age of Goethe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p.115. In 'Classicism and Its Pitfalls: *Death in Venice*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*, ed. by Ritchie Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.95-106, Ritchie Robertson writes:

There is [...] a more specific association between Aschenbach and Goethe. Goethe's visit to Venice in spring 1790 gave rise to the *Venetian Epigrams*. [...] Several epigrams celebrate a group of street acrobats, including a preternaturally agile girl called Bettina. [...] Bettina's appeal comes partly from her boyishness. She reminds him of the 'boys' in paintings by Bellini and Veronese; when she stands on her hands with her legs (and bottom) pointing skywards, Goethe pretends to fear that the sight will attract Jupiter away from his boy-lover Ganymede. [...] It has been suggested that a homosexual encounter formed part of his sexual awakening on his Italian journey. (Pp.103-04)

² Donoghue, p.42.

Walter Pater, and their fellows shared or indulged in such desires, or even possessed, like Winckelmann, ‘the early Greek enthusiasm’. The final turn of the rhetorical screw is Donoghue’s decision to categorise these individuals solely as ‘Victorian homosexuals’ rather than ‘Victorian paederasts’. Most literary critics and biographers manage, in a similar fashion, to avoid ‘the problem of the boy’, by employing one of four strategies: attempting absolute avoidance, claiming anachronism, heightening the ‘homosocial’, or labelling as ‘homosexual’.

The first part of this chapter will consider these four strategies, particularly as they pertain to Hopkins scholarship. However, rather than tracing the historical development of a ‘homoerotic’ consideration of Hopkins — a consideration that spans from a passing allusion by W. H. Auden in 1936 to present-day Queer Theory, a consideration that has already been dutifully delineated by Denis Sobolev in his recent ‘Hopkins’s “Bellbright Bodies”: The Dialectics of Desire in His Writings’ (2003)¹ — the following will instead delineate several recent avoidances of a ‘paederastic’ consideration of the poet.



The Snake Charmer

Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904)

Oil on canvas, ca. 1870

Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA

¹ Denis Sobolev, ‘Hopkins’s “Bellbright Bodies”: The Dialectics of Desire in His Writings’, *TSSL*, 45.1 (2003), pp.114-40. In this article, Sobolev traces how Hopkins scholars have dealt with the ‘homoerotic’ elements within the poet’s life and writings; therefore, for me to do so again would be merely to tend the same ground. I am in agreement with Sobolev’s assertion that ‘in the analysis of Hopkins’s writings such terms as “homosexual”, “gay”, “queer”, and “identity” must make way for “homoerotic”, “masculinist”, “discourse”, and “desire”’ (p.133) — though the word ‘paederastic’ should be added to this list.

**Absolute Avoidance:
'Not to Be Talked About'**

There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say [...] There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.

(Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*)¹

In *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*, James Kincaid suggests that 'perhaps the Victorian code of action was one thing and that of speech was another: "Certain things were not to be talked about; that was really all that was asked"'.² Whether Kincaid's speculation was true or not for the Victorians is not at issue here: what is at issue is whether his claim was, and often still is true for modern scholars dealing with one of those Victorians, Gerard Manley Hopkins. While 'critics from [Robert] Bridges onwards have charged Hopkins with decadence, perversion, and impurity',³ what is meant by such a charge is unclear and open to a variety of approaches and appraisals, one of which has traditionally been to ignore such a charge outright. In 1949, a decade after W. H. Auden and F. O. Matthiessen had both made passing allusions to Hopkins's 'homosexuality', W. H. Gardner quipped that 'there is nothing [...] to suggest, let alone prove, that Hopkins was tainted with any serious homosexual abnormality', further claiming that any charge that he was so tainted has arisen from 'certain uninformed or misguided critics'.⁴ In retrospect, it becomes evident that, except for 'certain critics' such as Gardner, *all* critics were 'uninformed and misguided', though this was not accountable to any scholarly deficiency on their part: they were deliberately 'uninformed and misguided' by 'certain critics' who decided, for various social, political, religious, and personal reasons, to abscond the truth. Maintaining a façade of normalcy for Hopkins involved blatant lies that reinforced themselves through a deliberate avoidance of manuscript evidence, given that one even had access to that evidence.

¹ Michel Foucault, *An Introduction*, vol. 1 of *The History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1986), p.27.

² James R. Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.37.

³ Charles Lock, 'Hopkins as a Decadent Poet', *Essays in Criticism*, 34 (1984), pp.129-54 (p.129). The first to make these claims was Robert Bridges, in his 'Preface' to *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. with notes by Robert Bridges (London: Oxford University Press, 1918). In the section on 'Mannerism', Bridges accuses Hopkins's poetry of 'some perversion of human feeling', and of sometimes being a 'naked encounter of sensualism'.

⁴ W. H. Gardner, *Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89): A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition*, 2 vols (London: Secker and Warburg, 1944 and 1949), II, p.85.

For a quarter of a century, Gardner's forceful fallacy resulted in the absolute avoidance he hoped to foster. After the canonization of Gardner's fallacy, the reception history of Hopkins's erotic desires passed through four stages, as Sobolev describes. Although 'until the mid-1970s almost nothing had been written on the subject',¹ it was subsequently explored in some depth by Wendell Stacy Johnson, Bernard Bergonzi, Paddy Kitchen, John Robinson, and Michael Lynch. However, 'in the 1980s the pendulum swung back, and the question of Hopkins's sexual orientation became marginal once again', with critics focusing instead and more safely 'on the general sexual overtones of his language'² — critics such as John Ferns, Linda Dowling, and John B. Gleason. The only striking exception was Byrne R. S. Fone, who claimed that 'for Gerard Manley Hopkins, the homosexual discourse was one that exerted considerable fascination and produced no inconsiderable pain and evasion'.³ In 1989, erotic explorations began anew, after the publication of the first volume of the facsimiles of Hopkins's manuscripts, as Sobolev explains:

In 1989 Norman MacKenzie published the most guarded materials of Hopkins criticism: his early notes and diaries, whose carefully censored fragments were earlier published by Humphry House. [...] This publication has changed the atmosphere of Hopkins criticism. If in 1983 [David Anthony] Downes was still able to dismiss the question of Hopkins's homosexuality as complete nonsense, such a dismissal is no longer possible; as [Robert B.] Martin writes, 'in totality [Hopkins's notes] indicate that his susceptibility was largely homoerotic'. An unprejudiced reader can hardly disagree with this conclusion; as far as we know, Hopkins was attracted to male rather than female beauty.⁴

To put it another way, Hopkins was anything but ignorant about his erotic tendencies: his notes indicate an acute awareness of the homoerotic nature of his leanings, regardless of the fact that the term 'homosexual' (let alone 'homoerotic') had not yet been coined.⁵

In summary, Sobolev considers that 'the dismissal of Hopkins's latent homoeroticism is no longer possible',⁶ which is attested to by criticism since 1989, including that of Richard Dellamora, James W. Earl, Joseph H. Gardner, Renee V. Overholser, Andrew Holleran, Joseph Bristow, Robert Bernard Martin, Norman White, Jude V. Nixon, Peter Swaab, Julia Saville, Simon Humphries, myself, and Sobolev. Not surprisingly, the erotic disclosures contained in those facsimiles have occasioned the scholarly necessity for another façade, a façade no

¹ Sobolev, p.115.

² Ibid.

³ Byrne R. S. Fone, 'This Other Eden: Arcadia and the Homosexual Imagination', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 8.3-4 (1982-83), pp.13-34 (p.27).

⁴ Sobolev, p.120.

⁵ Ibid., p.121.

⁶ Ibid.

less disingenuous than absolute avoidance: Hopkins's desires have been recast and tacitly relegated to the more politically correct 'homoerotic', lest they be recognised as primarily 'paederastic'. Without such a façade, Hopkins risks being dismissed as merely another paedophilic priest enfolded into the Roman Catholic fold.

Even if, given the publication of those formerly suppressed materials, an absolute dismissal of Hopkins's desires is no longer possible, other avoidance strategies remain available to Hopkins scholars, one of which stems from the convenient detail that the term 'homosexual' had not yet been coined — hence, is anachronistic in regard to Hopkins and his contemporaries.

Anachronism: 'The Love That Dare Not Speak'

Invent me a language of love. *You* could do it.
Bewilderdly, All yours, Clyde
(Closing of a letter from Clyde Fitch to Oscar Wilde)¹

Ah! dear, learn this, that love has many names.
(Marc-André Raffalovich, *Cyril and Lionel*, 1884)²

Although Benjamin Jowett translates one of Socrates' statements in the *Phaedrus* as 'Every one chooses the object of his affections according to his character, and this he makes his god, and fashions and adorns as a sort of image which he is to fall down and worship',³ many critics, particularly those following Michel Foucault's lead,⁴ would insist that this translated passage employing 'choice',

¹ As quoted in Gary Schmidgall, *The Stranger Wilde: Interpreting Oscar* (New York: Dutton, 1994), p.178.

² Marc-André Raffalovich, *Cyril and Lionel, and Other Poems: A Volume of Sentimental Studies* (London: Kegan Paul, 1884), p.27.

³ Plato, *On Homosexuality: Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1991), p.71.

⁴ In *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, p.43, Foucault explains the distinction he sees between the 'sodomite' (an individual committing criminal acts) and the 'homosexual' (an individual with 'a singular nature'). See also vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure*, pp.187-246. Similar comments are made by David M. Halperin in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality, and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p.8. In 'New Pedagogy on Ancient Pederasty', *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, 11.3

‘affections’, and ‘character’ is merely a modern response, an imposition of cultural constructions that arose only recently in Western, capitalistic, bourgeois society. According to this view, ancient Greco-Roman concepts of and discourses on ‘Love’, such as those of Socrates, were quite distinct from those of an Oxford don like Jowett in Victorian England, despite his being a professor of Greek. Further, both an ancient Greco-Roman and a donnish Victorian had a strikingly different concept of ‘choice’, ‘affections’, and ‘character’ than we possess today, especially in regard to sexuality:

For example, in contemporary American society, an adult male who has sex with a fourteen-year-old boy would be considered a child molester and, if caught, would be prosecuted. In ancient Rome, by comparison, it was legal and generally socially acceptable for an adult Roman male to have homosexual relations with another male, whatever his age, provided that, first, the other male was a slave, freedman, foreigner, or male prostitute (who would have been a slave, foreigner, or former Roman citizen), and, second, the Roman male citizen was the active, not the passive, sexual partner in the relationship.¹

However, this ‘historic sense’ that current scholarship prides itself in possessing and that the above passage illustrates is a sensibility shared with the nineteenth century — for, as Pater writes, ‘the scholar is nothing without the historic sense’ (*Appreciations*, p.12). This ‘historic sense’ is already fully evident in a work like Joseph Ritson’s *Memoirs of the Celts or Gauls*, published in 1827:

(2004), pp.13-14, Beert Verstraete comments on the line of descent from Foucault to Halperin, as well as Halperin’s link to ‘quasi-feminist ideology’:

In the two decades following Dover’s book [*Greek Homosexuality*], social constructionism established itself as the dominant discourse of scholars about (homo)sexuality in classical antiquity, with the American classicist David Halperin as its leading spokesperson in the English-speaking world, a position he reaffirms in his most recent collection of essays, *How to Write the History of Homosexuality* (2002). Halperin is still very much a disciple of one of social constructionism’s founding thinkers, the late Michel Foucault. [...] Halperin has not entirely abandoned his quasi-feminist ideology of a near-victimization model of Greek pederasty, according to which the younger partner could not have derived, or was not at all expected to derive, any sexual pleasure himself from the relationship. (P.14)

About ‘the historical shift in the conceptualizing of “homosexuality” from a behaviour to an identity’, Jonathan Dollimore writes: ‘In the nineteenth century a major and specifically “scientific” branch of this development comes to construct homosexuality as primarily a congenital abnormality rather than, as before, a sinful and evil practice’ — *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.46.

¹ John Pollini, ‘The Warren Cup: Homoerotic Love and Symposial Rhetoric in Silver’, *Art Bulletin*, 81.1 (1999), pp.21-52 (pp.22-23). Pollini notes that ‘the Roman poet Lucretius, writing on the human condition in his *De Rerum Natura*, speaks of a “normal” adult male’s love for “either a boy or a woman”’ (p.24).

Though the Gauls had very beautiful women among them, yet they little valued their private society, but were transported with raging lust to the filthy act of sodomy; and, lying, upon the ground, on beasts skins spread under them, they there tumbled together, with their catamites, lying on both sides of them: and that which was the most abominable is, that, without any sense of shame, or regard to their reputation, they would readily prostitute their bodies to others upon every occasion: and they were so far from looking upon it to be any fault, that they judged it a mean and dishonourable thing for any thus caressed to refuse the favour offered them.¹

Given the contents of this account, it seems that the Gauls and the Romans had much in common, at least on the level of erotic desire, and that, had they met on beasts skins rather than on the battlefield, the history of ancient Britain might have been quite different. However, this was not to be, and the subsequently Christianised peoples of ancient Europe came to embrace different values, values that, for several millennia, have provided a tone of disgust in regard to ‘the filthy act of sodomy’ that, according to Ritson, the Gauls considered a ‘mean and dishonourable thing’ to refuse. For Ritson, those homoerotic acts revealed the Gaul’s ‘choice’, ‘affections’, and ‘character’, however vile; for Social Constructionists like Foucault, those erotic acts on beasts skins reveal nothing of the sort — that is, prior to discourse embellishing such acts with self-reflective ‘meaning’ about forty years after Ritson’s comments above.



Man Fondling a Boy

Greek (attributed to the Brygos Painter)
Red-Figure terracotta tondo (plate), ca. 490 – 470 BCE
Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

¹ Joseph Ritson, *Memoirs of the Celts or Gauls* (London: Printed for Payne and Foss, by W. Nicol, 1827), p.127.

Following in the tradition of Foucault, scholars such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and David Halperin have argued that various Victorian public discourses, notably the psychiatric and the legal, fostered a designation or invention of the ‘homosexual’ as a distinct category of individuals, a category solidified by the publications of sexologists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840-1902) and Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), sexologists who provided an almost-pathological interpretation of the phenomenon in rather Essentialist terms, an interpretation that led, before 1910, to hundreds of articles on the subject in The Netherlands, Germany, and elsewhere. One result of this burgeoning discourse was that the ‘homosexual’ was often portrayed as a corrupter of the innocent, with a predisposition towards both depravity and paederasty — a necessary portrayal if Late-Victorian and Edwardian sexologists were to account for the continuing existence of the ‘paederast’ in a world that had suddenly become bountiful in ‘homosexuals’.

What is key for Foucault, Sedgwick, and Halperin is that this discourse resulted in the actual *creation* of the ‘homosexual’, a socially constructed category, not an intrinsic one — a state of affairs that makes it both linguistically and philosophically anachronistic to refer to desires or individuals before the 1870s, at the earliest, as ‘homosexual’. In contrast to the claims of anachronism levelled by Foucault and his followers, the rather Essentialist claims of Amy Richlin, John Pollini, and Timothy d’Arch Smith seem far more sensible and practical:

What is to gain from a model that says there was no ‘homosexuality’ in antiquity? Such a model allows us to stress the difference between ancient societies and our own, to explain what they did have in their own terms. This move, however, when it comes up against Greek and Roman invective against male-male love emphasizes its political use, its quality of ‘bluff’: homophobia tends to disappear along with homosexuals. And this model makes it very hard to talk about real *cinaedi* [men considered ‘effeminate’]. What, on the other hand, is to gain from a model that uses ‘homosexuality’ as a category for analyzing ancient societies? A gay history analysis [...] which stresses continuity rather than difference [...] [an analysis which] would emphasize what ancient invective has in common with homophobia, and would focus on real *cinaedi*, both on their oppression and their possible subculture. (Richlin)¹

As a result of this concern about anachronistic usage, some have replaced ‘homosexual’ with such faddish and cumbersome designations as ‘male-to-male’ and ‘female-to-female’ to describe same-sex relationships. [...] To say that we cannot use *homosexual* with reference to sexual behaviour in antiquity would be equivalent to maintaining that we cannot speak of *propaganda* in antiquity because this term was not coined until the seventeenth century. Although the

¹ Amy Richlin, ‘Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law Against Love Between Men’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 3.4 (1993), pp.523-73 (p.571).

ancients had no specific word for propaganda, they certainly engaged in various forms of it. (Pollini)¹

It would be absurd to suggest that homosexuality was a novel invention, like the telephone or electricity, on which the forward-looking Victorian had stumbled and had placed into society as an innovationary development in the arena of human experience. Rather, it was a road along which humans had always travelled, sadly, for it was often snared with pitfalls or barricaded by religious and secular authorities alike who believed it to lead to the gates of hell, and those who ventured along it did so silently and secretly. (D'Arch Smith)²

Given that libraries abound with volumes on the perhaps irresolvable debate between 'nature' and 'nurture' — a debate mirrored in the divide between Essentialist and Social Constructionist arguments about the intrinsic or extrinsic causes of 'homosexuality' — that debate will be considered no further here. Despite the Essentialist arguments seeming more sensible and practical, henceforward the present volume will concede the field of victory to the Social Constructionists by accepting Foucault's basic claim about the modernity of 'homosexuality', for the considerations of the present volume do not involve, in any serious way, the dynamic that occasions that debate. As regards 'homosexuality', the following readily concedes the field of victory to the Social Constructionists; as regards 'paederasty', it does not.³

Even a moot acceptance of Foucault's basic claim about the modernity of 'homosexuality' does not alter the verity that his argument is undercut by historical evidence as far as 'paederasty', not broader 'homosexuality', is concerned. Notice that Pollini, who made one of the Essentialist claims above, has reservations about employing 'homosexual' or 'homosexuality' as nouns in criticism:

Although we can speak of homosexuality or homosexuals in general discussions of biological conditions, the use of the term *homosexual* as a cultural determinant in antiquity is essentially useless in view of the fact that we cannot identify specific individuals as homosexuals in the modern sense of the word precisely because ancient sexual constructs are very different from those used today. Therefore, while it is perfectly legitimate to use *homosexual* or *heterosexual* adjectivally to describe sexual acts between individuals of the same

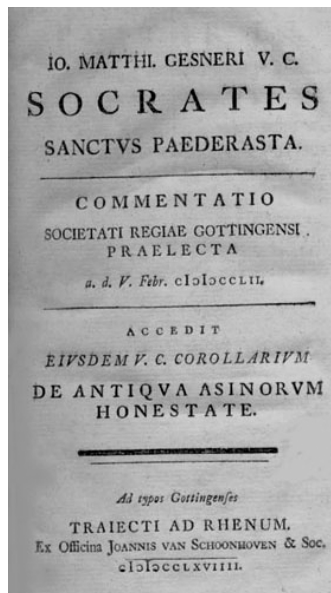
¹ Pollini, pp.23-24.

² Timothy d'Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p.1.

³ 'As [Kenneth J.] Dover recognized when he persisted in using the term "Greek homosexuality", the evidence from ancient Greece does not unequivocally support the viewpoint of such Foucault-inspired social constructionists as David Halperin' — William Armstrong Percy III, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), p.9.

or opposite sex, these same terms as nouns ought to be avoided in their application to those engaged in sexual behaviour or acts in the ancient world.¹

However, Pollini reveals no such scruple about employing ‘connoisseur pederasts’ or ‘pederasty’ as nouns, since these arise from Greco-Roman texts and contexts; he emphasises that *paederasty* derives ‘from the Greek *παιδεραστειν*, meaning, “to be the lover of *paides* (boys)”’.² While Foucault and his followers have indeed established a certain rhetorical space for arguing that various Victorian public discourses,³ notably the psychiatric and the legal, fostered a designation or invention of the ‘homosexual’ as a distinct category around 1870, they have not done so in relation to the ‘paederast’, a category that was, at the latest, an ancient Greek invention. It is no mere coincidence that ‘the problem of the boy’ is the last thing Foucault addresses in his *History of Sexuality*, for it is a lingering problem that his followers have yet to solve or account for adequately.



Socrates sanctus paederasta

Johann Matthias Gesner (1691-1761)

2nd edn

(Utrecht: Joannis van Schoonhoven, 1769)

¹ Pollini, p.27. Pollini further suggests that ‘the fact that nowhere in the corpus of Latin and Greek literature can males be specifically identified as exclusively homosexual suggests that they were assumed to be attracted to both sexes’ (p.28).

² For representative examples of this usage, see *ibid.*, p.36.

³ I am employing the word ‘certain’ here in most of its senses: ‘definite’, ‘assured’, ‘dependable’, ‘indisputable’, ‘noticeable’, ‘calculable’, etc.

Put concisely, the lingering problem for Foucault is that antiquity did possess, as historian Kenneth J. Dover details in *Greek Homosexuality*, abundant terminology for paederastic ‘inclinations’ and ‘preferences’, terminology that suggests that the Classical world had a concept of sexual attraction that was not drastically different from that now held, particularly in regard to the ‘love’ between a man and a boy.¹ This is most clearly demonstrated in Dover’s discussion of Xenophon’s use of the word *tropos* (meaning ‘way; character; disposition; inclination’), a word that Xenophon uses to describe the behaviour of the extravagant paederast Episthenes of Olynthus.² While the last portion of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* does engage Classical sources such as the later Roman counterparts of Plato’s *Symposium*, Foucault does not address the disparity or rift that these sources — sources that Dover had earlier considered — seem to reveal in his own arguments (though his death may have prevented him from subsequently doing so). However, even if one forgoes the Classical and merely consigns oneself to evidence more recent, the title of a 1769 volume by Johann Matthias Gesner suggests that a *tropos* (way, character, disposition, or inclination) was assigned to at least one individual: *Socrates sanctus paederasta* (or, *Socrates: The Holy Paederast*). A title like ‘The Holy Paederast’ reveals that a *tropos* could be and was assigned — even if only to ‘paederasts’ and not to ‘homosexuals’ — exactly a hundred years before same-sex eroticism had, according to Foucault, anything resembling a *tropos*.³ Gesner’s title *Sanctus paederasta* points to a substantial hole in Foucault’s argument, as well as the Social Constructionist arguments of his company, a hole that arises from ‘the problem of the boy’ and the symposial discourses surrounding it.⁴

¹ K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp.51-52.

² *Ibid.*, p.62. Dover provides a more historical account of Episthenes on p.51. For Xenophon’s praise of the valour of Episthenes, see Clifford Hindley, ‘Xenophon on Male Love’, *Classical Quarterly*, 49.1 (1999), pp.74-99 (p.76). For the account of his valour in saving a beautiful boy on the battlefield, see Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 7.4.7-11. See also David Leitao, ‘The Legend of the Sacred Band’, in *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. by Martha C. Nussbaum and Juha Sihvola (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp.143-69 (pp.152-54).

³ Karl-Maria Kertbeny (1824-82), an Austrian-born journalist and human rights advocate, is credited with the neologism ‘homosexual’, coined in his two anonymously published pamphlets of 1869: *§143 des Preussischen Strafgesetzbuchs und seine Aufrechterhaltung als §152 des Entwurfs eines Strafgesetzbuchs für den Norddeutschen Bund* (Paragraph 143 of the Prussian Penal Code of 14 April 1851 and Its Reaffirmation as Paragraph 152 in the Proposed Penal Code for the Norddeutscher Bund) and *Das Gemeinshädliche des §143 des Preussischen Strafgesetzbuches* (The Social Harm Caused by Paragraph 143 of the Prussian Penal Code). For criticism of Foucault’s claim, see footnote 8 (p.223) of Ari Adut, ‘A Theory of Scandal: Victorians, Homosexuality, and the Fall of Oscar Wilde’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 111.1 (2005), pp.213-48.

⁴ In ‘Pæderasty in the Western Mind’, *The Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review*, 6.4 (1999), pp.16-19, William Armstrong Percy III writes: ‘In a paper read in 1752 to the Royal

Although planted and cultivated during the age of Episthenes and Socrates, the symposial approach to paederasty continued to flower occasionally in Imperial Rome, Renaissance Florence, and Victorian Oxford, watered by conversational insinuations, textual allusions, visual representations, and a shared *tropos*. One object that serves to link the paederastic symposiums of the Greco-Romans to those of the Late Victorians was acquired by one of the most outspoken of the Uranian poets, a member of Pater's coterie who would later encapsulate the Uranian sentiment most strikingly, under the pseudonym of Arthur Lyon Raile, in his privately printed *Defence of Uranian Love* (1928-30; in 3 vols), the initial section of which is titled 'The Boy Lover', emphasising the term 'boy-love', a term christened by Symonds and still employed today.¹

After graduating from Harvard University in 1883, the anglophile Edward Perry Warren ('Ned'; 1860-1928), son of a wealthy American paper-manufacturer, was drawn to Oxford University in the hope of studying under or at least being near Walter Pater, his idol.² After matriculating on 12 October 1883, Warren became a member of New College, Oxford, and received his B.A. in 1888. In the year of his Oxford graduation, his father died: as a result, Warren found himself with a bountiful inheritance, an inheritance that he preferred to have managed by a trust. This decision provided him with both freedom and £10,000 a year (at his death, his wealth amounted to \$1.2 million, roughly £250,000), affording him the time and means to travel and to acquire artworks and antiquities at his own volition.³ Whether for himself or under the auspices of prestigious museums, Warren, the pre-eminent collector of antiquities of his day, made a multitude of acquisitions, both antiquarian and modern, acquisitions that were the choicest possible, often despite their scandalous subject matter,⁴ as with

Society (today the *Akademie der Wissenschaften*) in Göttingen but published in Holland only after his death under the title *Socrates sanctus pæderasta* (*Socrates the Holy Paederast*), the philosopher J. M. Gesner attempted to demonstrate [...] that Socrates' love for boys had always been chaste' (p.17). See also Percy's comments on the publications of M. H. E. Meier and Heinrich Hössli, 1836-38 (p.19).

¹ See *Paidika: Journal of Paedophilia*, 1.4 (1988), pp.12-27, for excerpts from *The Boy Lover* — vol. 1 of Arthur Lyon Raile (pseudonym of Edward Perry Warren), *A Defence of Uranian Love*, 3 vols (London: Privately printed, 1928-30).

² Warren was a close friend of Lionel Johnson, a fellow student at New College, Oxford.

³ I wish to thank Julie Ann Noecker of the History Faculty Library, Oxford University, for providing me with information from *Alumni Oxonienses 1775-1886* regarding Warren's Oxford details (E-mail from 27 July 2004). All other details are gleaned from David Sox, *Bachelors of Art: Edward Perry Warren and the Lewes House Brotherhood* (London: Fourth Estate, 1991), checked against Sox's entry for Warren in the *DNB*.

⁴ See Stephen L. Dyson, *Ancient Marbles to American Shores: Classical Archaeology in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp.137-38. In 'Homeroptic Art Collection from 1750 to 1920', *Art History*, 24.2 (2001), pp.247-77, Whitney Davis writes:

[What is noteworthy is] the ancient erotica acquired by Warren as an art dealer [...] such as some of the phallic and homosexual vases now in the Boston

Auguste Rodin's *Kiss*, which he commissioned the artist to make a version of in 1900. That sculpture, now in the Tate Modern, London, is slightly larger than the original in one anatomical detail: Warren insisted that, unlike the original commissioned by the French government, 'the genitals of the man must be complete'. No matter how rare, scandalous, or priapic, Warren could, given his buyer's finesse and fortune, acquire just about anything — even the paederastic 'Holy Grail'.



The Warren Cup

Roman (said to be from Bittir [ancient Bethther], near Jerusalem)
 Silver, ca. mid 1st century CE
 British Museum, London, UK

One of the antiquarian objects Warren acquired for himself — an object later loaned to the Martin von Wagner Museum, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Würzburg, Germany,¹ and now residing in the British Museum — is a silver *scyphus* dubbed 'the Warren Cup'. Considered the most important acquisition by the British Museum in thirty years, the Warren Cup was purchased

Museum of Fine Arts, which Warren represented overseas, and possibly the extraordinary Roman silver goblet whose unusual scene of anal sex between youths at a pederastic symposium has been extensively studied. Without Warren we would know much less than we do about homosexuality and classical art.

(P.248)

¹ For information on the Warren Cup's provenance, see John R. Clarke, 'The Warren Cup and the Contexts for Representations of Male-to-Male Lovemaking in Augustan and Early Julio-Claudian Art', *Art Bulletin*, 75.2 (1993), pp.275-94 (p.276).

in 1999 for £1.8 million (£300,000 coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund), and is now on permanent exhibition in the Wolfson Gallery of Roman Antiquities (Room 70):

One of the most exquisite works of toreutic art to have been created in the early Roman Imperial period is a silver ovoid *scyphus*, or drinking vessel, approximately 6 inches (15 centimeters) high, known as the Warren Cup, so-named for the American collector Edward Perry Warren, who originally acquired it in the early twentieth century. [...] The Warren Cup is remarkable especially for its representation of two homoerotic scenes, each featuring an older, idealized male ‘pedicating’ (that is, anally penetrating) a younger male. Unlike scenes of heterosexual intercourse, those of a homoerotic nature are relatively uncommon in Roman art, with the Warren Cup providing the only known representation of homosexual copulation in the medium of decorative Roman silver.¹

John R. Clarke suggests that such Roman vessels were ‘meant to entertain the guests [of a wealthy individual] with their engaging imagery and fine craftsmanship’;² and John Pollini, that ‘a *scyphus* of the high quality and costliness of the Warren Cup would undoubtedly have been owned by a wealthy individual who had his own slaves, including quite likely his own special “reserve stock” of *pueri delicati* [pretty boys for erotic and other intimate services]’.³ Beyond its craftsmanship and costliness, the Warren Cup has ‘engaging imagery’, imagery that stretches the full breadth of paederastic desire, as Pollini explains:

Significant, too, is the age range of the two boys being pedicated on the Warren Cup. The younger boy appears to be about twelve to thirteen years old; the older, about seventeen to eighteen. Each would, therefore, represent the opposite poles of the age range of boys whom connoisseur pederasts judged to be ‘ripe’ for anal penetration, as [...] cited in the passage from Strato [below].⁴

I delight in the prime of a twelve-year old, but a thirteen-year old is far more desirable. He who is fourteen is a still sweeter flower of the Loves, and one who is just beginning his fifteenth year is even more delightful. The sixteenth year belongs to the gods, and as for the seventeenth year not for me is it to seek, but for Zeus. But whoever desires still older ones is no longer playing, but seeking a lover who says ‘Now let me do it to you’ (i.e., a Homeric phrase here connoting a demand for the active role as well). (Strato, *Greek Anthology*, XII, 4)⁵

¹ Pollini, p.21.

² Clarke, p.279.

³ Pollini, p.36. See also Clarke, p.290.

⁴ Pollini, p.36.

⁵ As translated by Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, p.1. This passage is also translated by Pollini, p.32. Strato was a ‘significant Greek poet of Nero’s day’ who was ‘the author of a collection of epigrams in celebration of paederasty [...] His poems, while alluding to

Although these comments by Strato of Sardis (ca. 1st or 2nd century CE) may serve to clarify the pedicated boys depicted on the sides of the Warren Cup — especially the reason for their difference in age — the pre-pubertal boy who is playing voyeur in the doorway (depicted on side A) is far more problematic to clarify. He becomes the Warren Cup's 'problem of the boy', as Clarke and Pollini explain:

The detail of the boy in a tunic entering the room is more difficult to interpret. He may fit into the broad category of the so-called onlooker. [...] Another possibility is that the scene takes place in a brothel, and that the entering boy is an attendant — or another possible partner for one of the men. (Clarke)¹



On side A of the cup a small, curly-haired, tunic-clad boy stands by a half-opened door peering in on the couple making love. [...] His size and apparent age clearly indicate that he is still a prepubertal boy and therefore not yet 'ripe' for pedicating. His unbelted tunic may also signify his future passive sexual role, since to be *discinctus* (wearing an unbelted tunic) was often synonymous with being effeminate. [...] At a symbolic level, his presence would signify the first stage in the education of a slave boy, while the approximately twelve-to-thirteen-year-old adolescent on side B would represent the second phase of *ars amatoria*, in which a master enjoys penetrating a slave boy who has just reached

the grossest improprieties, display an elegant and cultivated style' — *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, ed. by P. E. Easterling and Bernard M. W. Knox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.92. 'The twelfth book of *The Greek Anthology* [was] compiled at the court of Hadrian in the second century A.D. by a poetaster Straton' — Daryl Hine, trans. with intro., *Puerilities: Erotic Epigrams of 'The Greek Anthology'* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.ix. There is some disagreement as to whether or not Strato of Sardis (Strato) and the Straton who partially compiled *The Greek Anthology* were, in actuality, the same individual.

¹ Clarke, p.293.

the age of puberty. And finally, the presumably more experienced youth in his late teens represents the last phase of service as a sex slave. As an experienced sex slave, this older youth demonstrates the sort of advanced skills that the tunic-clad boy behind the door would be called on to perform in the not too distant future. (Pollini)¹

However, neither of these interpretations is entirely convincing. For all of his pre-pubescence and the decadence associated with positing or positioning him as a sexual object (especially for modern historians), this tunic-clad lad might well have suggested an ever-present potential for the men at a Roman symposium, most of whom either had pre-pubescent slaves who could be treated as *pueri delicati* or had sufficient fortunes to acquire them if they so chose (at least such guests as would have attended grandiose symposiums with trappings like the Warren Cup).² Even if, for the Romans, there was a degree of decadence associated with pedicating a boy not conventionally or normally thought of as ‘ripe’, it must be remembered that decadence is not always considered a negative quality, particularly in a privately commissioned, privately owned, and privately used object like the Warren Cup. While the boy’s unbelted tunic seems to demarcate him as both available and prepared, the missing belt only *intimates* his erotic potential: the image does not *dictate* it, as it does in the case of the nude boys being pedicated. His state of partial undress seems to reveal a degree of aesthetic and cultural tact, merely opening the door for this pre-pubescent boy to enter (as he does literally on the Warren Cup) into the symposial discourse. Conversationally at least, the Roman symposial guest was free to strip away the boy’s tunic — if such was his desire and if his audience was adequately select — or else to leave the boy clad and untouched, a fruit left to ‘ripen’, to observe the ‘arts of love’. According to Joseph A. Kestner, this tunic-clad, Greco-Roman lad would have had particular, decadent appeal for Victorian Uranians like Warren, Uranians who would not have quibbled much about the boy’s chronological age, Strato’s comments, or conventions regarding ‘ripening’: ‘The Uranian [...] construction of the beloved boy, however, in the strictest sense embraced

¹ Pollini, pp.38-39.

² The degree of Western divergence from that Greco-Roman atmosphere and perspective can be measured by the following from *BBC News*: ‘Czech Man Admits Assaulting Boys: A Czech Labourer Who Claimed He Got Carried Away Celebrating His First Hogmanay in Scotland Has Been Placed on the Sex Offenders Register’: ‘Pavel Fulercik attempted to kiss a 13-year-old boy as well as squeeze the buttock of another boy, aged 11. At Perth Sheriff Court, the 28-year-old admitted assaulting the youngsters in the Perthshire village of Dunning. He claimed he became caught up in the joyous drunken atmosphere and was simply hugging and kissing passers-by. [...] Sheriff Peter Paterson said he had no alternative but to conclude that there was a “significant sexual element” to the offences’ — 14 July 2006 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/scotland/tayside_and_central/5180756.stm> [last accessed 14 July 2006].

practices (anal and oral sexual intercourse) which would not have been sanctioned in the ancient Greek model except with male prostitutes'.¹

For an Imperial Roman, as for a Classical Greek, an erotic object like the Warren Cup would have served as a pictorial prompt, inviting him, as a member of a symposium, to praise, expound upon, or (re)consider 'the paederastic' — a particular form of love, desire, and/or preference that would never, during the Greco-Roman period, have been referred to as 'The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name'. In fact, this cup's blatant eroticism was a literal invitation to speak, as Pollini emphasises:

I would like to propose a range of possibilities in which a hypothetical ancient symposiast, taking visual clues from the scenes on the Warren Cup, might have directed his conversation, drawing analogies, making allusions, punning, or employing a host of other literary tropes, while peppering his discourse with quotes from past and/or contemporary authors on the nature of love and its pleasures. These suggestions are by no means all-inclusive; the possibilities would have been limited only by a symposiast's knowledge of the subject and, most likely, his own personal experiences and preferences.²

For the present consideration, what is vital is not what Pollini's Greco-Roman symposiast would have said about paederasty and its depictions on the Warren Cup, or what a Renaissance symposiast would have said about paederasty and its Greco-Roman and contemporary depictions, but what Greco-Roman and Renaissance paederasty and its depictions meant to a distinct group of Victorian writers, artists, and thinkers, most of whom, like Warren, had some connection to Oxford University, its Greats curriculum, and Walter Pater, remembering ever that Pater's culture is directed towards 'a small band of elite "Oxonian" souls'.³ It is to that particular group of Victorians — those elite 'Oxonian souls' into whose hands Greco-Roman paederastic culture had passed, as would the Warren Cup — that the following now turns its attention, particularly to Gerard Manley Hopkins and Walter Pater, both of whom would have had much to say about the Warren Cup. Presented with its tunic-clad lad, Hopkins would have 'eyed him

¹ Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot, Hants, UK: Scholar Press, 1995), p.249. Kestner's claim is correct for the Uranians; however, it diminishes the sexual intimacy of the Greek model, an intimacy that is brashly asserted by Strato (*Greek Anthology*, XII, 245): 'Every dumb animal copulates in one way only, but we, endowed with reason, have the advantage over animals in this — we invented anal intercourse. But all who are held in sway by women are no better than dumb animals' — as quoted in Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, p.55.

² Pollini, p.37.

³ David J. DeLaura, *Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold, and Pater* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p.230. 'A small band of elite "Oxonian" souls' seems to allude to the Theban Sacred Band, an elite military force in ancient Greece, a force comprised of paederastic lovers. See also Clay Daniel, 'The Religion of Culture: Arnold's Priest and Pater's Mystic', *Victorian Newsletter*, 72 (1987), pp.9-11.

[...] making [his] play / Turn most on tender byplay' ('Brothers', lines 14-16); Pater would have eyed him as 'an ideal human image, the love of a man for a beautiful boy'. Hopkins and Pater would each have had something profound and curious to say — in Greek, in Latin, or in English — about the paederastic *tropos* captured aesthetically on this Roman vessel, despite what modern scholars might assert by drawing attention to the tarnish of age rather than the purer (*puer*) silver beneath. In fact, Hopkins had a habit of seeing himself and his passions reflected in polished silver: 'in smooth spoons spy life's masque mirrored: tame / My tempests there, my fire and fever fussy' ('[The Shepherd's Brow]', lines 13-14). That Hopkins and Pater, like those Greco-Roman symposiasts, would have had much to say regarding the *tropos* captured artistically on the Warren Cup draws into question Foucault's Structuralist claims, be they Classical or Victorian, that such individuals lacked sufficient vocabulary or notions to do so.



Man and Boy Preparing for Anal Sex

Greek (attributed to the Dinos Painter)

Red-Figure terracotta calyx krater (wine bowl), ca. 420 BCE

British Museum, London, UK

In 'Ruskin's Pied Beauty and the Constitution of a "Homosexual" Code' (1989), Dowling writes: 'Given the fragmentary biographical materials we possess about both Hopkins and Pater, any assertion about the "homoerotic" nature of their experience or imagination may seem at best recklessly premature and at worst damnably presumptuous'.¹ Nevertheless, just a few years later, in *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (1994), Dowling is less reserved about making such an assertion, though she tends to recast much of the

¹ Linda Dowling, 'Ruskin's Pied Beauty and the Construction of a "Homosexual" Code', *Victorian Newsletter*, 75 (1989), pp.1-8 (p.1).

‘homoerotic’ into ‘perfervid friendships’¹ or the ‘homosocial’ (as in her consideration of Tractarian friendships, derived from Sedgwick).² Having embraced the Social Constructionist argument that language and its discourses are vital for ascertaining and asserting one’s own experiences and imagination, Dowling employs a full range of fashionable ‘vocabulary of erotic sensuality’, assuming that the fine distinctions she is drawing between ‘perfervid friendships’ and ‘masculine desire’ — between the ‘homosocial’, the ‘homoerotic’, and the ‘homosexual’ — allow her to name the ‘previously unnameable’ in a way that the Victorians she is considering would have been unable to do for themselves, at least before the Late-Victorian apologists:

In these [Uranian] poems, beginning with such works as J. A. Symonds’s privately circulated poems of the later 1860s and culminating with Lord Alfred Douglas’s *Poems* (1896), published in Paris in the aftermath of the Wilde scandal, we see that vocabulary of erotic sensuality [...] being deliberately inverted in ways that are able now to give a name to previously unnameable masculine desire.³

What Dowling fails to explain convincingly is why or to what extent these ‘masculine desires’ were ‘unnameable’. Her rhetorical claim seems to stem from a Foucauldian belief that it is anachronistic to consider ‘masculine desire’ as ‘nameable’ prior to 1869 at the earliest, and that even Victorians like Hopkins and Pater had a genuine and generalised inability ‘to give a name’ to the manifestations of their own ‘masculine desires’, rather than an obvious fear of labelling themselves in a hostile environment like that in which they were then living (though, in many ways, little has changed in this regard for those whose desires are paederastic). Besides, this hostile environment was not a recent development; it had been accruing emotive knowingness and *prima facie* stability since the thirteenth century, a span of time that must be examined if the Victorian Uranians are to gain a proper context.

According to John Boswell’s *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, homoeroticism and paederasty — both as acts and as subcultures — were tacitly tolerated in the West until the thirteenth century,⁴ a claim that corresponds to the fact that ‘sodomy’ was not mentioned as a crime in English jurisprudence until *Fleta: seu Commentarius juris Anglicani* (ca. 1290), a work attributed to an anonymous jurist in the court of Edward I, a jurist who

¹ Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.86. Dowling’s term ‘perfervid friendships’ (from Latin *perfervidus*) implies that these friendships were driven by emotions that were overwrought or exaggerated; hence, it deprives them of their authenticity.

² *Ibid.*, pp.43-44, 65, and 114.

³ *Ibid.*, p.26.

⁴ John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

recommended that convicted ‘sodomites’ be buried alive.¹ A decade later, the treatise *Britton*, attributed to John le Breton, recommended that they be burned alive instead (though it seems that neither this nor the punishment decreed in *Fleta* was ever seriously or extensively implemented, as the first statement of the next piece of legislation seems to suggest). Little changed legally for the convicted ‘sodomite’ until 1533, when Henry VIII oversaw the enactment of the Buggery Act (25 Henry VIII, c.6), the first secular legislation in Europe to criminalize ‘sodomitical’ practices, practices that became a felony punishable by hanging, as well as by the immediate forfeiture of all lands, property, and hereditary rights to the Crown:

Forasmuch as there is not yet sufficient and condign punishment appointed and limited by the due course of the Laws of this Realm for the detestable and abominable Vice of Buggery committed with mankind or beast: It may therefore please the King’s Highness with the assent of the Lords Spiritual and the Commons of this present parliament assembled, that it may be enacted by the authority of the same, that the same offence be from henceforth adjudged Felony and that such an order and form of process therein to be used against the offenders as in cases of felony at the Common law. And that the offenders being hereof convict by verdict confession or outlawry shall suffer such pains of death and losses and penalties of their goods chattels debts lands tenements and hereditaments as felons do according to the Common Laws of this Realme. And that no person offending in any such offence shall be admitted to his Clergy, And that Justices of the Peace shall have power and authority within the limits of their commissions and Jurisdictions to hear and determine the said offence, as they do in the cases of other felonies.

In 1562, Elizabeth I’s second Parliament re-enacted and made permanent the Buggery Act of 1533 (5 Elizabeth I, c.17), legislation that remained relatively unchanged until 1828, when some of the subsidiary points of the Buggery Act were revoked — though keeping in place the death penalty. In 1861, the death penalty for ‘sodomy’ was formally abolished, replaced by lengthy imprisonments spanning from ten years to life (with the length and form of incarceration left to the discretion of the courts). Such was the hostile environment that had developed in England, the environment and cultural residue that confronted those Victorians whose desires were paederastic and/or homoerotic, at least those considered of sufficient age to be held ‘criminally culpable’.

¹ This and all other legislative details are gleaned from Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longmans, Green, 1955), pp.145-52; augmented by H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Love That Dared Not Speak Its Name: A Candid History of Homosexuality in Britain* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1970); Byrne R. S. Fone, *Homophobia: A History* (New York: Metropolitan, 2000). For a historical overview of this legislation, see Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 2004), pp.17-39.

While such was the relevant legal thought — both in statute and in treatise — actual implementation of that thought was something quite different, and posits an environment that, although outwardly and officially hostile, was nonetheless surprisingly permissive or at least tolerant in practice. Since the evidence required for proving sodomitical practices and intent could not be circumstantial, it seems that the actual mechanisms of law were designed to thwart a conviction rather than to foster one:

[Sodomy was defined as] anal or oral intercourse between a man and another man, woman, or beast. In order to obtain a conviction, it was necessary to prove that both penetration and ejaculation had occurred, and two witnesses were required to prove the crime. Both the ‘active’ and ‘passive’ partner could be found guilty of this offence. But due to the difficulty of proving this offence, many men were prosecuted with the reduced charge of Assault with Sodomitical Intent. [Sodomitical Intent, a misdemeanour,] was levelled in cases of attempted or actual anal intercourse where it was thought impossible (or undesirable) to prove that penetration and ejaculation had actually occurred.¹

To examine the records of the Old Bailey for the century between the 1730s and the 1830s is to see neither overt nor covert surveillance into the realms of actualised homoerotic and paederastic practices: a locked door seems to have been sufficient to establish a clear distinction between the public and the private. ‘Legality’, for all practical and practicable purposes, seems to have been barred entrance unless one of the partners in a sexual situation brought charges against the other for a demonstrable instance of rape or attempted rape. This was not the case for sodomitical acts committed in ‘the public eye’ — be that a park, a cemetery, or a public house such as that famously run by Mother Clap.² In instances of consensual homoerotic or paederastic acts committed in private — whether those acts constituted ‘sodomy’ (oral or anal intercourse that led to ejaculation) or ‘sodomitical intent’ (everything from foreplay to oral and anal intercourse that had not led to ejaculation) — the law ‘turned a blind eye’.³

¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* <<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org>> [last accessed 15-17 January 2006]; abbreviated as *OBP*.

² Margaret Clap, or ‘Mother Clap’, kept a ‘molly house’ in Field Lane, Holborn, a place where men who were erotically interested in other men (or ‘mollies’) met ‘especially on Sunday nights, when more than forty men regularly gathered to sing and dance together, engage in camp talk and bawdy behaviour, and sometimes have sex in a back room. Clap’s premises were officially a coffee house (she had to go to a pub next door to fetch liquor)’ (Rictor Norton, ‘Margaret Clap’, *DNB*). For a contemporary account of sodomitical escapades at a ‘molly house’ in London, escapades that resulted in six men being convicted and pilloried in 1810, see Robert Holloway, *The Phoenix of Sodom, or the Vere Street Coterie, etc.* (London: J. Cook, 1813).

³ Adut writes: ‘Homosexuality norms were rarely and reluctantly enforced in Victorian England. [...] The police looked the other way’ (p.214).

The *Proceedings* of the Old Bailey are perhaps the best evidence of the legal system in practice, and often read, well into the second half of the 1700s, as if the compilers had been schooled by John Cleland, as in the following case of a man tried and subsequently executed for raping his apprentice:

Gilbert Laurence, of the Precinct of St. Brides, was indicted, for that on the 11th Day of July last, not having the fear of God before his Eyes, but moved by the Instigation of the Devil, he did on the Body of Paul Oliver, a Male Infant, of the Age of fourteen Years, make an Assault, and violently and wickedly, and against Nature, did Bugger the said Paul Oliver.

Paul Oliver depos'd, That he was an Apprentice to the Prisoner, who was by his Trade a Gilder, that he had been with him about six Weeks, that at the time mentioned in the Indictment, being Saturday Night, they went to Bed, and about Two o'Clock in the Morning he jump'd upon him, and held him down, that he was almost stifled, his Breath being almost gone; that he strove what he could, but he kept him down; that he cry'd out what he could, but though there were People in the House, they were so far off they could not hear him; and that he hurt him so much, he thought he would have killed him. He being ask'd, what he did to him? He answer'd, He put his Pr – y M – r into his Fundament a great way. Being ask'd, If he perceiv'd any Thing to come from him? He reply'd, Yes; there was Wet and Nastiness which he wip'd off with the Sheet, and what he was ashamed to tell; that he had tore him so, that he could not tell what to do, and could not do his Needs. Being ask'd, If he had us'd him so before? He said, No; he had made offers two or three Nights before, but did not put it in. He being ask'd, How his Master us'd him otherwise, if he had us'd him severely in any Thing before? He reply'd, No. Being ask'd, When he complained of this Usage? He reply'd, The next Day, as soon as he could get out, he went Home to his Mother, and made his Complaint to her.

Oliver, his Mother, depos'd, That the Sunday following, her Son, Paul Oliver, came to her, complained he was very sore, and said his Master had used him very barbarously, and he was afraid to go Home to him again; that on Monday Morning she took him to Justice Blaney, and he sent for a Surgeon, and examined him.

This was confirm'd by Justice Blaney.

Jean Barbat, the Surgeon, depos'd, That upon examining the Lad, he found his Fundament quite open; that it had been penetrated above an Inch, and much lacerated; that there was a Hole, in which a Finger and Thumb might be put, and that the Fundament was Black all round, and appear'd like that of a Hen after laying an Egg.

The Prisoner having nothing to say in his Defence, but that he was elsewhere at that time, and could prove it, but never call'd any one Witness to that nor any Thing else; and the Fact being substantially proved, the Jury found him Guilty of the Indictment. Death.¹

¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings*, 28 August 1730, Trial of Gilbert Laurence (t17300828-24).

However, the legal requirement that there be proof of both penetration and ejaculation (or at least an attempt at penetration) as well as corroboration of these details by two witnesses was often impossible to garner, as in the following:

William Nichols, was indicted for that he not having God before his Eyes, &c. on Thomas Waldron did make an Assault, and him did carnally know, and upon him, that detestable Crime call'd Buggery, did commit and do, against the Form of the Statute, &c. Oct. 28.

Thomas Waldron, aged 13. About the latter End of October last, the Prisoner and I lay in the same Bed in St. Martin's Work-House, and about two o'Clock in the Morning, when all the People were asleep, he used to give me Small-Beer and Bread, and then he, &c.

The Witness here gave a particular Account of the Prisoner's Behaviour, and being ask'd a Question which the Law in such Cases makes necessary, answer'd in the Negative.

James Robinson lay in the same Bed with Waldron and the Prisoner, and confirm'd some Part of the above Deposition.

Ann Waldron, the Boy's Mother, gave an Account of his Complaints; but there not being sufficient Evidence to convict the Prisoner upon this Indictment, he was acquitted, but was ordered by the Court to remain in order to be tried for the Assault.¹

A further impediment to conviction was often, in the case of a boy, the boy's inability to comprehend fully the implications of the rape charge he was bringing:

William Williams was indicted for making an assault on Thomas Smith, an infant about twelve years of age, and him, the said Thomas, did carnally know, by committing upon him that detestable crime call'd sodomy, &c. April 2.

There were only two witnesses examined, Mary Smith, the mother, and Margaret Stevenson, a neighbour.

The first deposed, the prisoner and child used to lie together in one bed in her house, the prisoner being a lodger there; her neighbour corroborated her in this, that the child made much complaint, and they examined his fundament, and found it disorder'd in an extreme bad way, but could say no more than what they heard the child say.

The child was examined as to the nature of an oath, but by its answers it appearing to have no knowledge of the consequence of false swearing, the prisoner was acquitted.²

A curious point is that, even when an indicted party was acquitted, the compiler of the Old Bailey entry sometimes felt morally compelled to have his say in the

¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings*, 28 April 1742, Trial of William Nichols (t17420428-19). 'Law enforcers ran into difficulties in substantiating guilt [for homosexual offences]. Prosecutors had to rely upon accomplice witnesses who were either unlikely to cooperate or who were deemed noncredible according to the English law of evidence' (Adut, p.215).

² *OBP*, 13 July 1757, Trial of William Williams (t17570713-35).

matter, as if attempting to rectify the legal impossibility of a conviction by at least soiling the reputations of those involved:

EDWARD DAWSON, Esq. and JOHN HALL were indicted, the first, for that he, on the 6th of March, upon the said John Hall did make an assault, and then and there wickedly and diabolically, and against the order of nature, had a venereal affair with the said John Hall, and then and there carnally knew the said John, and committed detestable and abominable crime, among Christians not to be named, called buggery, with him the said John Hall; and that he the said John Hall was consenting with the said Edward, and permitted the said Edward carnally to know the said John, and committed the detestable and abominable crime of buggery.¹

JAMES FOX and HENRY PROBY were indicted, the first, for that he, not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil, upon Henry Proby, wickedly and feloniously did make an assault, and that he diabolically, and against the order of nature, had a venereal affair with the said Henry, and then and there did carnally know him, and did perpetrate that abominable and detestable crime, called sodomy; and the other, for feloniously, wickedly, and diabolically consenting with the said James Fox, and permitting the said James carnally to know him, and commit the said detestable and abominable crime, called sodomy.²

These two entries are anomalies, for they still bespeak the ‘fire-and-brimstone’ flavour of many of the entries of the eighteenth century; however, a drastic change in length and tone is noticeable in the entries from the 1780s onwards: the Cleland quality and the moralistic rhetoric — that fabulously duplicitous ‘an abominable crime, among Christians not to be named, called buggery’ — have been replaced by a minimalism that draws into question Foucault’s claims about the growing necessity for ‘talk’.³ From the 1780s onwards, the details of the sodomy trials at the Old Bailey (the ‘Central Criminal Court’ after 1834) seem to have been left to the popular press to elaborate upon, for such details were no longer retained in legal documentation, as is revealed by the following entries quoted in their entirety:

¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings*, 18 April 1798, Trial of Edward Dawson and John Hall (t17980418-77).

² *OBP*, 14 July 1802, Trial of James Fox and Henry Proby (t18020714-25).

³ For corresponding with me regarding this issue, I wish to thank Prof. Robert Shoemaker, Head of the History Department, University of Sheffield, one of the directors of *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online Project*, and Dr Rictor Norton. About this change, Adut writes: ‘When the home secretary recommended the closing of parks to halt their use by homosexuals in 1808, he requested that these measures be taken “without divulging to the Public the disgraceful occasion of them”. [...] At a homosexuality trial in Lancaster, the judge expressed grief that “the untaught and unsuspecting minds of youth should be liable to be tainted by hearing such horrid facts” and prohibited note taking and the presence of young people in the courtroom’ (p.223).

METHUSELAH SPALDING was indicted for an unnatural crime.
GUILTY, Death.¹

LOUIS DARNEY was indicted for an unnatural crime.
GUILTY, Death, aged 35.
First Middlesex Jury, before Mr. Justice Heath.²

THOMAS WHITE, and JOHN NEWBALL HEPBURN, were indicted for an unnatural crime.
WHITE, GUILTY – DEATH, aged 16.
HEPBURN, GUILTY – DEATH, aged 42.
First Middlesex jury, before Mr. Justice Grose.³

Before Mr. Baron Vaughan.
MARTIN MELLETT & JAMES FARTHING were indicted for b-gg-y.
MELLETT – GUILTY – DEATH. Aged 19.
FARTHING – GUILTY – DEATH. Aged 19.⁴

Before Mr. Justice Gazelee.
ALEXANDER NORMAN was indicted for b-g-y.
NOT GUILTY.⁵

The entries from the 1780s onwards not only lose the prurient gratuitousness evident in the following entry from 1727, but also the historically significant details and circumstances that resulted in someone like Charles Hitchin being fined, pilloried, and sentenced to six months in prison:

After the [Richard Williamson's] Return, the prisoner took him to the Rummer Tavern, and treated him with two pints of Wine, giving him some unnatural Kisses, and shewing several beastly Gestures. After this he persuaded him to go to the Talbot Inn, where he called for a Pint of Wine, and order'd the Chamberlain to get a Bed ready, and bring a couple of Nightcaps: Here they went to Bed (where the Writer of this paper would draw a Curtain, not being able to express the rest with Decency, but to satisfy the Curiosity of the Reader let this suffice, he did all that a beastly Appetite could prompt him to, without making an actual penetration).⁶

¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings*, 30 November 1803, Trial of Methuselah Spalding (t18031130-60).

² *OBP*, 11 April 1804, Trial of Louis Darney (t18040411-53).

³ *OBP*, 5 December 1810, Trial of Thomas White and John Newball Hepburn (t18101205-1).

⁴ *OBP*, 11 September 1828, Trial of Martin Mellett and James Farthing (t18280911-234).

⁵ *OBP*, 5 July 1832, Trial of Alexander Norman (t18320705-15).

⁶ *OBP*, 12 April 1727, Charles Hitchin (t17270412-41, s17270412-1). For such an entry given in its entirety — 5 December 1718, John Bowes and Hugh Ryly (t17181205-24) — see 'Appendix Three'.

The fact that, from the 1780s onwards, the compilers of the *Old Bailey Proceedings* drew ‘a Curtain, not being able to express the rest with Decency’ has decreased the potential of such legal documentation being brought to bear on the nineteenth century. The result is that one is left to deduce legal opinion on various points, one of which is the age at which a boy would have been held ‘criminally culpable’ for willingly participating in a homoerotic or paederastic act, rather than merely labelled ‘a victim’ in a rape prosecution.

Slowly and often ambiguously, the age of ‘criminal culpability’ was solidified in the eighteenth century by various legal treatises, treatises such as the anonymous *The Infants Lawyer* (1697), William Hawkins’s *A Treatise of the Pleas of the Crown* (1724-26), Mathew Hale’s *The History of the Pleas of the Crown* (1736), and William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-69).¹ Taken as a whole, these treatises suggest that fourteen was increasingly regarded as the standard age of discretion and accountability, as the moment a child enters adulthood, which Hale labels ‘*ætas pubertatis*’.² Children below ten-and-a-half years are, according to Hale, ‘regularly not liable to capital punishment [...] but this holds not always true’.³ Both he and Blackstone suggest that a person even younger may be held culpable for a capital crime, though, as Hawkins suggests, this is dependent on whether or not ‘an Infant under the Age of Discretion could distinguish between Good and Evil, as if one of the Age of nine or ten Years kill another, and hide the Body, or make Excuses, or hide himself, he may be convicted and condemned, and forfeit, as much as if he were of full Age’.⁴ Blackstone concurs that ‘hiding manifested a consciousness of guilt, and a discretion to discern between good and evil’.⁵ In such cases, Hale suggests that the determination of whether or not the child should be held liable should reside with the judge, based on ‘the circumstances of the case’,⁶ circumstances that are, according to Edward Hyde East, difficult to ascertain from the testimony of someone under twelve, requiring additional proof of

¹ Anonymous, *The Infants Lawyer; or, The Laws (Both Ancient and Modern) Relating to Infants [...]* (London: Printed by the assigns of R. and E. Atkyns, Esquires, for Robert Battersby, 1697), 1A, *Early English Books, 1641-1700* (Microform) (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1984). William Hawkins, *A Treatise of the Pleas of the Crown; or, A System of the Principal Matters Relating to that Subject, Digested under Their Proper Heads* [Reprint of 1724-26 edn] (New York: Arno Press, 1972). Mathew Hale, *Historia Placitorum Coronae [The History of the Pleas of the Crown]* [Reprint of 1736 edn], with intro. by P. R. Glazebrook (London: Professional Books, 1971). William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England: A Facsimile of the First Edition of 1765-1769*, 4 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

² Hale, p.18.

³ *Ibid.* Most of these treatises concur that, for statutory rape, ten was the lowest age of the victim; those younger than ten were considered incapable of or unlikely to have given knowing consent.

⁴ Hawkins, Book 1, p.2.

⁵ Blackstone, IV, pp.23-24.

⁶ Hale, p.18.

‘concurrent testimony of time, place, and circumstances, in order to make out the fact’.¹ So, if a ten-and-a-half-year-old or younger boy had willingly engaged in a homoerotic or paederastic act that had led to ejaculation *via* oral or anal contact, and if two witnesses had corroborated the event — that boy could have been held ‘criminally culpable’, but only if he had attempted to make excuses or to hide the details of the crime or himself. A boy judged to have given consent would therefore have been judged ‘culpable’ for his actions. Despite this distinction, these treatises make a point of emphasising that, even if convicted of a sexual crime, a child should receive a punishment different in type and degree than that of an adult who had committed the same. However, this line of legal argumentation is moot, for there are no records from the period (at least as evinced by the *Old Bailey Proceedings*) of a boy of this age being convicted or even indicted for ‘sodomy’ or ‘sodomitical intent’.

Given the illegality of paederastic and homoerotic acts, English Common Law had only ever specified the ‘age of consent’ for females involved in heterosexual acts — not for males involved in ‘buggery’² — therefore, it is only possible to speculate about *how the Victorian period would have perceived and evaluated ‘criminal culpability’ on the part of a boy* by examining the relevant female legislation, which is as follows: In 1861, Parliament passed the Offences Against the Person Act (24 & 25 Victoria, c.100), solidifying the age of consent as twelve and stipulating that erotic acts with a girl under the age of ten would constitute a felony, between ten and twelve, a misdemeanour. In 1875, amendments were added to the Offences Against the Person Act (38 & 39 Victoria, c.94), raising the age of consent to thirteen. However, later events would alter this legislation significantly, particularly *via* the journalism of William Thomas Stead (1849-1912).

On 6 July 1885, W. T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, began publishing a series of provocative articles titled ‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’, claiming that England was rife with child prostitution and white slavery, claims bastioned by evidence gathered by the newly founded Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, a society that was established in 1884 and given royal patronage. However, this full-blown interest in the welfare of children becomes ironic when brought into proximity with the detail that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals had been founded in 1824 and given royal status by Queen Victoria in 1840 — forty-four years before its equivalent for children — suggesting that the English either had an excessive moral concern for the welfare of farm animals and domestic pets or a widely held belief that children were not as vulnerable and innocent as we assert today (certainly less so than Queen Victoria’s numerous terriers), a topic brilliantly

¹ Edward Hyde East, *Pleas of the Crown* (London: Professional Books, 1972), p.441.

² The same claim is made in Carolyn A. Conley, *The Unwritten Law: Criminal Justice in Victorian Kent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.116.

explored by James R. Kincaid in his volumes *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* and *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting*.¹

Sparked by Stead's journalistic 'investigations' — including his supposedly effortless 'purchase' of a thirteen-year-old girl, sold to him for £5 by her mother, an event duly publicised by or staged for his newspaper — the Criminal Law Amendment Act (48 & 49 Victoria, c.69) became law on 14 August 1885, repealing sections 49 and 52 of the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861 (as well as the subsequent amendments of 1875) and raising the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen. Despite the fact that this legislation instantly raised the age of consent by three years, there were voices still calling for further increases, the most prominent being that of William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98), who had recently resigned as Prime Minister after the military debacle at Khartoum: 'In my opinion the protected age might properly be advanced beyond 16 in the Criminal Law Amendment Bill [...] I personally should have been glad if the Government had found it consistent with their views to name 18, rather than 16, as the protected age'.² Whether Stead's sensational journalism provoked the Victorians to open their eyes to exploitation and abuse or instead to revel in hysteria is a cultural consideration better left to Kincaid: for purposes here, it should merely be noted that, after Stead's articles, this prior lack of concern was suddenly replaced by moral outrage.

From the evolving legislation above, it is possible to speculate that the Victorians would have considered a boy in his mid-teens 'criminally culpable' for erotic acts with another male (whether his peer or older) and worthy of the full repercussions of such erotic acts under British Criminal Law. Although 'age of consent for males' was not specifically addressed by this legislation, it seems to have been on the mind of at least one parliamentarian, Henry du Pré Labouchère (1831-1912), who oversaw the deft insertion, into the final draft, of an amendment that was later nicknamed 'the Blackmailer's Charter', an amendment that, due to the furious pace by which this legislation had been rushed through Parliament, remained undebated and only obliquely mentioned by politicians and the press. This addition, which criminalized the vague crime of 'gross indecency' between males, was the legislation that would eventually spell Wilde's doom. Although homoerotic and paederastic acts were no longer capital offences punishable by hanging or felonies punishable by imprisonment for ten years to life, the Criminal Law Amendment Act nonetheless contained Labouchère's spurious addition:

¹ James R. Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992); James R. Kincaid, *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

² M. R. D. Foot and H. C. G. Matthew, eds, *The Gladstone Diaries*, 14 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968-94), vol. XI (July 1884 – December 1886), p.378.

Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and, being convicted thereof, shall be liable, at the discretion of the Court, to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years with or without hard labour.¹

Although this legislation greatly reduced the severity of a criminal conviction, such a conviction, even when it led to police supervision rather than imprisonment, inevitably spelled one's doom as far as reputation, career, and relationships were concerned — even when one was not as famous as an Oscar Wilde. A conviction for committing 'an act of gross indecency' was, for the Victorians, equivalent to the brand of Cain.² However, the implications of the Labouchère addition were far more encompassing than just for 'sodomy': it provided a legal instrument for overt or covert surveillance — hence its dub, 'the Blackmailer's Charter'. No longer was a locked door sufficient to establish a clear distinction between the public and the private; no longer was circumstantial evidence barred; no longer were the mechanisms designed to thwart a conviction rather than to foster one: 'Through the Labouchère amendment the [Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885] created the legal wedge for invading late Victorians' sexual privacy with a new level of moral-legal violence'.³

That this legislation immediately provided a 'legal wedge for invading late Victorians' sexual privacy' is evinced by publicised arrests in the year following. A prime example of why the Labouchère addition was labelled 'the Blackmailers Charter' can be seen in the case of Charles Alfred Burleigh Harte, a twenty-eight-year-old clergyman who 'was brought up on remand charged with inciting a lad named William Humphreys to the committal of an unnatural offence'.⁴ Although the erotic proposition Harte made to the boy seems to have

¹ As quoted in Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, rev. edn (New York: Knopf, 1988), p.409, note. See F. B. Smith, 'Labouchère's Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill', *Historical Studies*, 17.67 (1976), pp.165-73; Nicholas C. Edsall, *Toward Stonewall: Homosexuality and Society in the Modern Western World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), pp.111-14.

² See also Harry G. Cocks, 'Trials of Character: The Use of Character Evidence in Victorian Sodomy Trials', in Rose Melikan, ed., *Domestic and International Trials, 1700-2000*, vol. 2 of *The Trial in History*, 2 vols (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp.36-53; for the period just prior, see Harry G. Cocks, 'Safeguarding Civility: Sodomy, Class and Moral Reform in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 190.1 (2006), pp.121-46.

³ John Maynard, 'Sexuality and Love', chapter 30 of *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman, and Antony H. Harrison (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), pp.543-66 (p.546).

⁴ 'The Charge Against a Clergyman', *Weekly Dispatch* (23 May 1886), p.11. Much the same article appears in the *Weekly Dispatch* (9 May 1886), p.11; the *Weekly Dispatch* (16 May 1886), p.10; and the *Daily News* (27 May 1886), p.2.

involved only verbal and nonverbal display, this display was now sufficiently 'criminal' to allow for his arrest. According to an article in the *Weekly Dispatch* on 2 May 1886, Humphreys, 'who appeared to be about fifteen years of age', claimed that Harte had tried various ruses to get him alone and beyond his father's hearing, and that, once this was achieved, 'made a disgusting remark to him, and acted grossly. Harte then offered him threepence'. At this point, Humphreys claims that he 'ran out and told his father. [...] His father went after the prisoner [...] [and] called him a dirty beast'. Confronted by the angry father, Harte is claimed to have said: 'I can see what you want. You want to extort money. I suppose if I were to give you a sovereign it would be all right'. Local authorities, summoned by the father, took Harte into custody.¹ Such an arrest — on the grounds of merely 'inciting a lad' to commit a sodomitical act — would have been legally unwarranted and untenable before August 1885, especially since a conviction for *sodomy* required proof of both penetration and ejaculation, as well as the corroboration of two witnesses. Even the lesser crime of *sodomitical intent*, which was a misdemeanour, required at least a physical attempt at penetration. As the above reveals, the Labouchère addition, with its vaguely worded crime of 'gross indecency', clearly encompassed far more than sodomy or sodomitical intent: it had converted even private, homoerotic and paederastic 'speech acts' into 'criminal acts'.

However, as a 'legal wedge for invading late Victorians' sexual privacy', this legislation also aimed at a pre-emptive approach to 'gross indecency', expecting non-participants to serve as unofficial police inspectors, since it was possible to be held criminally liable for failing to report acts or anticipated acts of 'gross indecency', especially if those crimes were committed or were likely to be committed on one's premises. In 1886, Joseph Fenton Kaye, 'a decorative artist', was charged 'with acting as an agent in the letting of premises with the knowledge that they were to be used for an improper purpose'.² Clearly, no longer would a locked door sufficiently demarcate the private sphere from the public; no longer would private, consensual acts of a homoerotic or paederastic nature be 'winked at' by the police, the populace, the landlord, or the neighbour.

This pre-emptive stance even applied to reading materials and artworks. According to an article in the *News of the World* on 19 September 1886, George Welbey was charged with 'selling two indecent books', with having 'inserted advertisements in some newspapers offering "rare and curious" books for sale', and with sending 'catalogues of indecent works to the boys at Eton College'. Among his private papers, Scotland Yard discovered 'a great number of letters from persons in all conditions of society, clergymen, and some of high rank, applying for catalogues, and in some cases books and prints of an indecent character'. The Commissioner in the case is said to have remarked that 'if the parties purchasing could be got hold of by the law it would do more to stop the iniquitous traffic than prosecuting the sellers of such filth', and Scotland Yard

¹ 'Shocking Charge Against a Clergyman', *Weekly Dispatch* (2 May 1886), p.10.

² 'The Criminal Law Amendment Act', *Weekly Dispatch* (20 June 1886), p.11.

asserted that ‘a record would be kept of the names of the writers of the letters’.¹ This arrest, as well as its broader implications, fully illustrates Harris Mirkin’s claim about the ‘sharp limits placed on [the deviant group’s] speech and art on the grounds that they are disgusting, pornographic, dangerous to the social order and seductive of the innocent’.² However, the scrutinising of George Welbey’s private papers and the retention of the names of his correspondents illustrates something even more threatening about the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885: it was now potentially criminal even *to wish to acquire* books or artworks touching upon or displaying ‘The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name’.

Beyond revealing the hostile environment confronting those whose desires were paederastic and/or homoerotic, beyond suggesting what would have constituted the age of ‘criminal culpability’, these legal statutes also reveal that the Victorians, like their predecessors, *did* have various taxonomies for negatively naming and socially branding individuals like the Uranians, taxonomies deriving from biblical or slang sources — such as ‘sodomite’ and ‘bugger’, or the less specific ‘abominable vice’ and ‘unnatural act’ — and usually bespeaking ‘acts’ rather than ‘lifestyles’, ‘dispositions’, ‘identities’, or the like:

Before there was ‘homosexuality’ in the church, there was ‘sodomy’; before ‘sodomy’, layers of other terms: ‘sin of the Sodomites’, ‘irrational copulation’, ‘crime against nature’, ‘softness’, ‘corrupting boys’, ‘copulating with men’. Each phrase has been used in Christian moral writing, and all have been used to describe the clergy.³

Inasmuch as buggery specifically refers to anal intercourse [...] one might speculate that it was the Old Norse word ‘*baugr*’ in the sense of anus that is the true root of English ‘bugger’ and that the [French] anti-Bulgarian *blazon populaire* merely provided a convenient later verbal foil and support for the folk speech.⁴

These were taxonomies bespeaking biblical, legal, or popular revilement, and certainly had currency in the pulpit, pamphlet, courtroom, parlour, and street.⁵

¹ ‘Purveying Pernicious Literature’, *News of the World* (19 September 1886), p.2.

² Harris Mirkin, Manuscript copy of ‘The Pattern of Sexual Politics: Feminism, Homosexuality and Pedophilia’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 37.2 (1999), pp.1-24.

³ Mark D. Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p.113. Jordan asserts that St Peter Damian coined the word ‘sodomy’. ‘The abstract noun *sodomia* was apparently coined by Peter Damian in the 11th century in his *Book of Gomorrah*, which denounced homosexual acts among the clergy’ — Percy, ‘Paederasty in the Western Mind’, p.16.

⁴ Alan Dundes, ‘Much Ado About “Sweet Bugger All”’: Getting to the Bottom of a Puzzle in British Folk Speech’, *Folklore*, 113.1 (2002), pp.35-49 (p.42).

⁵ For two sermons, see John Harris, *The Destruction of Sodom: A Sermon Preached at the Public Fast, before the Honourable Assembly of the House of Commons of Parliament* (London: C. Latham, 1628); John Allen, *The Destruction of Sodom improved, as a warning to Great Britain: A sermon preached on the fast-day, Friday, February 6, 1756*,

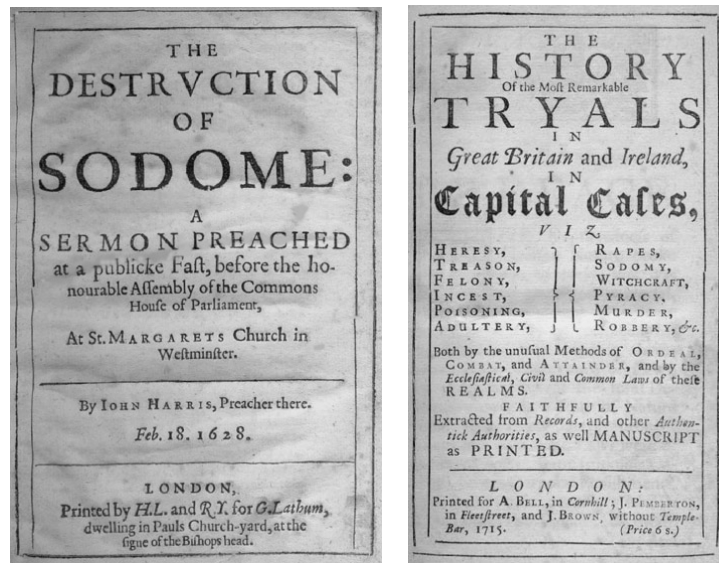
Since these expressions of opprobrium — as Foucault, Sedgwick, and Halperin emphasise¹ — denoted ‘acts’ or ‘perpetrators of acts’, rather than ‘modes of being’ or ‘singular natures’, they said nothing about the individual’s ‘constitution’; they merely decried or chided his commission of acts worthy of the full weight of the judicial condemnation and punishments noted above. However, what these three critics fail to regard adequately is that, for the Victorians and those before them, championing a more positive replacement for ‘sodomite’ or ‘bugger’ would have been tantamount to accusing oneself of participating in or at least condoning the acts or qualities being named, for why else would one risk doing so? Seen in this light, its ‘unnameable’ quality did not arise from ‘could not be named *intrinsically*’, but from ‘could not be named *safely*’ — as Lord Alfred Douglas’s poem ‘Two Loves’ clearly illustrates. In his (in)famously phrased ‘I am the love that dare not speak its name’,² Douglas dares to mention *that he dares not mention* the name of his love, and even this was quoted against Wilde during his trials, becoming a potent example of the dangers inherent not only to erotic acts, but also to erotic speech-acts.

at *Hanover-street, Long-acre* (London: A. Millar & J. and S. Johnson, 1756). For a pamphlet, see Mervin Touchet (Earl of Castlehaven), *The case of sodomy, in the tryal of Mervin Lord Audley, Earl of Castlehaven, for committing a rape. And sodomy with two of his servants, viz. (Lawrence Fitz-Patrick and Thomas Brodway) who was try’d and condemn’d by his peers April the 25th, and beheaded on Tower-Hill, May the 14th, 1631. With his articles of belief, sent in a letter to his son; the letter he writ to his four sisters, and his speech at the place of execution. [...] Printed from an original manuscript* (London: Privately printed, 1708).

¹ It should be noted that, in his recent *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), Halperin has begun to question some of the implications of his earlier attempts to sever completely ‘the conceptual link between paederasty and homosexuality’ (p.4) and to deal with ‘the distance that separates the aesthetic and sexual conventions of ancient Mediterranean paederasty from the canons of modern American middle-class gay male taste’ (p.94). Halperin writes:

Too great an emphasis on the historical specificity and time-bound insularity of previous sexual formations, on the obsolescence of Greek paederasty or Renaissance cross-dressing, for example, rapidly produces noxious political effects. It leads to the marginalization of anyone whose sexual or gender practices approximate to those of earlier, pre-modern subjects or do not conform to mainstream notions of ‘homosexuality as we understand it today’. (P.18)

² Lord Alfred Douglas, ‘Two Loves’, in [John Francis Bloxam, ed.,] *The Chameleon: A Bazaar of Dangerous and Smiling Chances*, 1 (December 1894) (London: Gay and Bird) — reprinted in Brian Reade, ed., *Sexual Heretics: Male Homosexuality in English Literature from 1850-1900* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1970), pp.360-62. One could also appropriate existent words: ‘In [Raffalovich’s] “Shame and Beauty”, Beauty, Youth, and Desire appear personified as “the brother-slaves of Shame” — a use of the word “shame” as a synonym for homosexuality that predates Lord Alfred Douglas’s more famous usage in “Two Loves” by a decade’ — Ed Madden, ‘Say It with Flowers: The Poetry of Marc-André Raffalovich’, *College Literature*, 24.1 (1997), pp.11-27 (pp.15-16).



If one considers not just the Victorians — those consummate chroniclers of words through megalithic endeavours like the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *English Dialect Dictionary* (of which Hopkins was a contributor) — but also their immediate precursors, one finds various examples of what Dowling labels ‘spaces of discourse’ for the paederastic and the homoerotic. Percy Bysshe Shelley considered the dynamics surrounding ‘Greek love’ (or paederasty) in his *Discourse on the Manners of the Antient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love* (written in 1818). William Beckford and George Gordon, Lord Byron were both practitioners of ‘Greek love’ — and had to flee to the Continent as a result. Jeremy Bentham wrote an extensive legal appeal for its decriminalisation in his *Offences Against One’s Self* (around 1785). J. A. Symonds wrote an apologia for it titled *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (finished in 1873, privately printed in 1883, and appearing as an appendix to his and Havelock Ellis’s *Sexual Inversion* in 1897). Sir Richard Francis Burton chronicled its existence in the East in his ‘Terminal Essay, Part IV/D, Social Conditions — Paederasty’, appended to volume ten of his translation of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* (privately printed in 1885-86).¹ It is rather diminishing of poets and intellectuals

¹ See the following primary sources: Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Discourse on the Manners of the Antient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love*, in James A. Notopoulos, *The Platonism of Shelley* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969). Jeremy Bentham, ‘Offences Against One’s Self: Paederasty’, ed. by Louis Crompton, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 3.4 (1978), pp.383-406; continued 4.1 (1978), pp.91-107. John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, in *Male Love: ‘A Problem in Greek Ethics’ and Other Writings*, ed. by John Lauritsen (New York: Pagan Press, 1983). Richard F. Burton, ‘The Terminal Essay’, in *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* (Privately printed by the Burton Club, 1885-86), vol. X, pp.178-219. See the following secondary sources: Regarding

of this calibre to claim that they were intrinsically, linguistically, or conceptually unable to provide a decent name for the ‘unnameable’ in whatever form. It is rather ridiculous to claim that Horace Walpole was able to invent such a glorious word as *serendipity* around 1754 — a merging of his own experiences with the tale of the three Princes of Serendip¹ — but was unable to invent a suitable word for his own erotic desires.²

The *OED* defines *serendipity* (which Walpole called ‘a very expressive word’ derived from ‘a silly fairy tale’) as ‘(A supposed talent for) the making of happy and unexpected discoveries by accident or when looking for something else’, further noting that ‘formerly rare, this word and its derivatives has had wide currency in the 20th century’. This *OED* note is important to consider in relation to words such as ‘homosexuality’ and ‘paederasty’. It is not that there were no ‘rare’ words for such concepts or desires, but that there were no words in ‘wide currency’ except for ‘sodomy’ and ‘buggery’, words that most people chose to allude to, rather than to employ directly — hence, ‘The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name’. Although the concept of ‘wide currency’ (or, in this particular case, the public’s Wilde curiosity) may partially explain the available diction of the society at large, as well as its attitudes and responses, currency is not obliged to be widespread. With its etymology deriving from *pais* (παῖς) (Greek for ‘boy’) and *erastês* (εραστής) (Greek for ‘lover’), the word ‘paederasty’ did have currency, even if only limited currency, long before the Victorians began, as

Shelley’s translation of the *Symposium* and the preliminary essay he provided for it, see Claude J. Summers, ed., *Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.224; Eric O. Clarke, *Virtuous Vice* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), pp.127-28; John Lauritsen, ‘Hellenism and Homoeroticism in Shelley and His Circle’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 49.3-4 (2005), pp.357-76. George Haggerty, ‘Beckford’s Paederasty’, in *Illicit Sex: Identity Politics in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Thomas DiPiero and Pat Gill (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), pp.123-42. Louis Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

In “‘A Race of Born Pederasts’: Sir Richard Burton, Homosexuality, and the Arabs’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 25.1 (2003), pp.1-20, Colette Colligan writes: ‘His essay on “Pederasty” devotes fifty pages to the subject although there are only four homosexual episodes in the *Arabian Nights*. [...] Burton’s essay on “Pederasty” contributes to the nineteenth-century discourse on homosexuality by uncovering its cultural history’ (pp.5-6).

¹ Letter to Horace Mann, 28 January 1754, in Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis, ed., *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole’s Correspondence*, 31 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937-83), XX, pp.407-11.

² See George Haggerty, ‘Literature and Homosexuality in the Late Eighteenth Century: Walpole, Beckford, and Lewis’, *Studies in the Novel*, 18 (1986), pp.341-52. Robb writes: ‘Goethe was not hampered by the nonexistence of the word “*Homosexualität*”. He was describing the precise, exciting conjugation of desire and intellect, of circumstance and predisposition [in his essay *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert*]’ (p.93).

Foucault asserts, to codify the linguistic and conceptual hybrid of the ‘homosexual’.

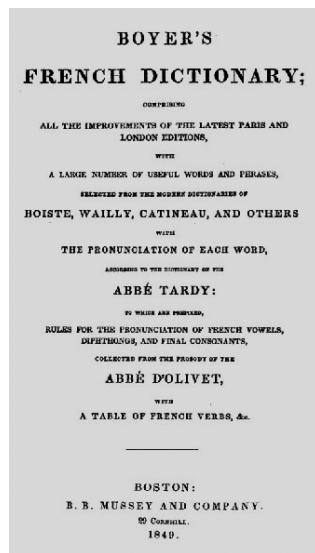
Furthermore, it should be remembered that this volume is only concerned with the paederastic Uranians, a distinct group of Victorian writers, artists, and thinkers, most of whom had some connection to Oxford University, its Greats curriculum, and Walter Pater — in other words, a ‘small band of elite “Oxonian” souls’ who clearly understood the etymology and the import of both ‘paederast’ and ‘paederasty’, and would have laughed at Dowling’s assertion that they did not. In fact, all of the writers to whom individual chapters in this volume are devoted were fluent or even brilliant in the Greek from which ‘paederasty’, in more ways than one, derives:

The uncritical allusions to homoeroticism in the Greek texts read in *Literae Humaniores* [or Classics, or Greats] would have introduced Oxford undergraduates to the possibility of a culture in which a mode of sexuality prohibited in their own society was tolerated and even encouraged. Indeed, it would probably have been impossible to discuss the subject of homoeroticism without considering the form it took in ancient Greece.¹

Hopkins, an Oxford graduate in *Literae Humaniores* (Classics), became Professor of Greek at University College, Dublin, and Fellow in Classics of the Royal University of Ireland. Pater, an Oxford graduate in *Literae Humaniores*, became an Oxford don lecturing in Greek, among other subjects, at Brasenose College, Oxford. Wilde, winner of the Berkeley Gold Medal for Greek from Trinity College, Dublin, later took an Oxford degree in *Literae Humaniores*. Johnson, a Cambridge graduate, became an assistant master at Eton, teaching Classics. After finishing at Eton, where he had studied under Johnson, Dolben began preparing with a private tutor for the Oxford entrance exam, expecting to study *Literae Humaniores* — though, after one such tutorial, which involved construing Ajax’s speech about taking leave of the world, Dolben went for a swim with his tutor’s son and drowned, utterly ending his Classics career. Hopkins, Pater, Wilde, Johnson, and Dolben — they were all fluent in Greek (or, in Dolben’s case, decently so); they were all fluent in Greek texts that lauded paederastic desires; they were all fluent that their fellows were also fluent in Greek and the desires it praised; they were all fluent about each other or their respective coteries. This complex ‘fluency’ was one of the elements that fused these individuals into a

¹ William F. Shuter, ‘The “Outing” of Walter Pater’, *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 48.4 (1994), pp.480-506 (p.492). In critical usage, the term *Literae Humaniores* is variously capitalised; I have chosen to follow the style employed in Barry Nicholas, ‘Jurisprudence’, in *The History of the University of Oxford, Volume VII: The Nineteenth Century, Part 2*, ed. by M. G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.385-96 (p.387). About the eroticisation of *Literae Humaniores* at Oxford, see Morris B. Kaplan, *Sexual Justice: Democratic Citizenship and the Politics of Desire* (London: Routledge, 1997), chapter 2: ‘Historicizing Sexuality: Forms of Desire and the Construction of Identities’.

recognisable group, a ‘small band of elite “Oxonian” souls’ for whom fluency in ancient Greek and things Grecian allowed for an exploration of Classical texts and their attendant celebrations of paederasty, allowed for the acquisition of an elaborate vocabulary for making their own paederastic desires conceptual, textual, and contextual — even if *only* in Greek.



BOUGRE, s. m. formerly *Bulgare*; it then signified heretick; it now signifies sodomite, dog, etc.

**PÉDÉRASTE, s. m. sodomite.
PÉDÉRASTIE, s. f. sodomy.**

**SODOMIE, s. f. sodomy.
SODOMITE, s. m. sodomite.**

Abel Boyer, *Boyer's French Dictionary; Comprising All the Improvements of the Latest Paris and London Editions, with a Large Number of Useful Words and Phrases, Selected From the Modern Dictionaries of Boiste, Wailly, Catineau, and Others with the Pronunciation of Each Word* [...] (Boston: B. B. Mussey, 1849) [First published in Boston, 1822]

With the above comments in mind, it is surprising that, as the sole support for her claim that individuals before the Late Victorians were unable ‘to give a name to previously unnameable masculine desire’, Dowling refers to the detail that ‘sodomy’ was ‘the crime not to be named among Christians’, stressing that this concept was ‘always previously banished [...] to a dim region of nameless evil by English theological or religious discourse’,¹ a discourse that had blent itself with the burgeoning machinery of English law. Seeming to forget that the title of her own book is *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*, not *Divinity and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* — and that Hellenism in Victorian Oxford involved the aforementioned fluency in a language with

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.11; see also pp.26-27. It should be noted that Dowling does make an exception in Wilde’s case, suggesting that, for him, this might have been ‘an aesthetic choice’ (see pp.125-27).

extensive paederastic diction and dimensions (not to mention the Latin that was equally studied in *Literae Humaniores*) — Dowling implies that English theological and religious discourse, as well as the judicial application or adaptation of it, determined not only the content and the currency of the English language, but also the intellectual constructs by which desires were made textual or perceptible by the English (derived from Foucault, who wrote: ‘As defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them’¹). As is often the case with New Historicists and other Social Constructionists, Dowling perceives no marked distinction between aesthetic/philosophical works and broader historical documents, which is particularly evident in those passages where she discusses ‘spaces for discourse’.² As a result, she postulates that writers and artists are ever engaged in various forms of counter-discourse with(in) the discourses of society, hence are constrained within society’s power dynamics, unable to formulate anything outside of its strictures and structures, unable to engage, adapt, or annex English diction or import that of Greek or Latin or French.

Despite Dowling’s claims, Shelley, Beckford, Byron, Bentham, Burton, and Walpole (not to mention Hopkins, Pater, Wilde, Johnson, and Dolben) did have a dozen suitable words in their vocabulary for the eroticism of the Greeks and the Uranians, or they coined them — English words such as ‘paederasty’, ‘Greek love’, ‘Sotadism’, and ‘inversion’. However, modern critics find such diction problematic (perhaps with the exception of ‘inversion’), readily translatable into modern legal and medical taxonomies as ‘paedophilia’ or ‘ephebophilia’.³ Within contemporary Western, officially sanctioned discourses, the labels ‘paedophile’ and ‘ephebophile’ designate and/or bestow the ultimate stigma, and an individual accused of being either is still worthy of being ‘banished to a dim region of nameless evil’, though the ‘dim region’ is now a gaol or a madhouse — places relatively unchanged since the Victorian period in their characteristics and contexts, despite the current preference for calling them ‘correctional facilities’ and ‘mental institutions’. Despite the pleasantries of its dubious dubbing, a ‘peace-keeper’ still retains all of the qualities of a bomb — or,

¹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, p.43.

² For an example, see Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.26.

³ In current psychological terminology, *paedophilia* is defined as ‘a psychosexual disorder essentially characterized by the act or fantasy of engaging in sexual activity with prepubertal children’ — W. Edward Craighead and Charles B. Nemeroff, eds, *The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science*, 3rd edn (New York: John Wiley, 2002), p.1161. *Ephebophilia* is defined as ‘being sexually attracted to or aroused by a postpubertal or adolescent partner’ — Raymond J. Corsini, *The Dictionary of Psychology* (Philadelphia, PA: Brunner and Mazel, 1999), p.334. About the use of the term *ephebophilia* in literary studies, see Tariq Rahman, ‘E. M. Forster and the Break Away from the Ephebophilic Literary Tradition’, *Études Anglaises*, 3 (1987), pp.267-78; Tariq Rahman, ‘Ephebophilia: The Case for the Use of a New Word’, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 24.2 (1988), pp.126-41.

as Shakespeare asserts so floridly, ‘that which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet’ (*Romeo and Juliet*, II, ii, lines 43-44). In essence, a name has no true effect upon the object to which it refers, unless that effect is imposed from the outside — as by menace, censorship, or ignorance:

‘Why, what a wonderful piece of luck!’ [the Student] cried; ‘here is a red rose! I have never seen any rose like it in all my life. It is so beautiful that I am sure it has a long Latin name’; and he leaned down and plucked it.

(Oscar Wilde, ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’)¹

As with Wilde’s student, who is overly fascinated by taxonomic classification, modern attempts at analysing or grasping the paederastic flower of the Uranians have often required such a plucking, wrenching that flower from the Greco-Roman context from which it had sprung and from which it had drawn its ‘Latin name’, as well as from the continuum in which it still blossoms today. By translating it into contemporary, simplistic concepts like ‘paedophilia’, ‘ephebophilia’, or ‘child molestation’ (concepts that are emotive as well as referential), or by a hubristic belief that modern taxonomic tools allow one ‘to give a name to previously unnameable masculine desire’, scholars often forget that the beauty of such a complex flower is lost in translation. This is a point that Shelley, translator of Plato’s paederastic *Symposium*, makes in ‘A Defence of Poetry’:

Hence the vanity of translation; it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed or it will bear no flower — and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel.²

Besides casting it into a crucible of semantic scrutiny, besides translating it into concepts tinged with a contemporary Western view of the world, besides claiming that such desires are merely anachronistic, there are other methods for (mis)handling the paederastic flower. One of these is to hide it discreetly within the wider field of human desire and social interaction, to label it as merely an aberrant or abhorrent manifestation of the ‘homosocial’.

¹ Oscar Wilde, ‘The Nightingale and the Rose’, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.278-82 (p.281).

² Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers, eds, *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose* (New York: Norton, 1977), p.484.

Homosocial: Foucault's Parrot

In time to come, Marius was to depend very much on the preferences, the personal judgments, of the comrade who now laid his hand so brotherly on his shoulder as they left the workshop.

(Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*)¹

In *Gerard Manley Hopkins and His Contemporaries: Liddon, Newman, Darwin, and Pater*, Jude V. Nixon notes: 'Hopkins's admission of attraction to physical beauty has sparked the charge that Hopkins had a homosexual attraction to Dolben and also, critics maintain, to Bridges himself, akin to the kind of feverish attraction [Pater's] Marius had to Flavian'.² However, Nixon disagrees with this assessment, assuming that what is expressed by Hopkins is really buckled within Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's 'homosocial' conception of 'homosexual code'.³ This assumption is particularly difficult to justify in the case of Hopkins and Dolben alluded to above, especially since, as Sedgwick argues in *Between Men* (1985) and *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), her coinage 'homosocial' describes a dynamic involving a triangular relationship between male attraction/repulsion and the female body, a dynamic arising

because the paths of male entitlement, especially in the nineteenth century, required certain intense male bonds that were not readily distinguishable from the most reprobated bonds, [hence] an endemic and ineradicable state of what I am calling male homosexual panic became the normal condition of male heterosexual entitlement.⁴

In the case of Hopkins and Dolben, however, the relationship is devoid of the 'female body' necessary to facilitate this Sedgwickian triangularity.

¹ *Marius*, I, p.168.

² Jude V. Nixon, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and His Contemporaries: Liddon, Newman, Darwin, and Pater* (New York: Garland Press, 1994), p.212. Marius and Flavian are characters from Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*; I deal with them at length in 'Chapter Four'.

³ Steven Seidman, *Difference Troubles: Queering Social Theory and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 'Some poststructuralists view the heterosexual/homosexual code as at the very center of Western culture — as structuring the core modes of thought and culture of Western societies. This is the chief contention of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick' (p.133).

⁴ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p.185; see also *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp.1-5; 88-90.

Even if homophobia does involve, as Sedgwick believes, some degree of ‘homosexual panic’ (a ready mixture of the menace, censorship, and ignorance noted in the last section), her argument seems, nonetheless, a rather defensive attempt to squeeze Feminist gender dynamics into homoerotic or paederastic dynamics, dynamics that often exclude ‘the female’ out-of-hand and with gusto. William F. Shuter explains this Feminist motivation as follows: ‘In the case of Pater (and hardly in his case alone), one difficulty is the quite intelligible aspiration on the part of gay and feminist critics to occupy a common ground’.¹ However, this attempt ‘to occupy a common ground’ is usually thwarted by the paederastic response to the ‘female body’, a response that stretches back to antiquity, as is revealed in Symonds’s poetic translation of a passage from the dialogue *Erôtes* — a debate between Charicles of Corinth, who advocates heterosexuality, and Callicratides of Athens, who favours paederasty — a debate that was attributed, during the nineteenth century, to Lucian of Samosata (ca. 120-80 CE):

I do not care for curls or tresses
 Displayed in wily wildernesses
 I do not prize the arts that dye
 A painted cheek with hues that fly:
 Give me a boy whose face and hand
 Are rough with dust or circus-sand,
 Whose ruddy flesh exhales the scent
 Of health without embellishment :
 Sweet to my sense is such a youth,
 Whose charms have all the charm of truth.
 Leave paints and perfumes, rouge, and curls,
 To lazy, lewd Corinthian girls.²

As highly representative examples of the Uranians’ paederastic response to the ‘female body’ and its charms, consider the following, from Symonds and Theodore Wratishlaw (1871-1933):

What is the charm of barren joy?
 The well-knit body of a boy,
 Slender and slim,
 Why is it then more wonderful
 Than Venus with her white breasts full
 And sweet eyes dim? (Symonds, from ‘Verses’)³

¹ Shuter, ‘Outing’, p.501.

² Translated by John Addington Symonds, in *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion* (London: Privately printed, [1901]), p.37. See also pp.56-57. This dialogue is now attributed to Pseudo-Lucian, since most scholars consider it an imitation written long after Lucian’s death. See ‘Chapter Four’ for more on Lucian, who becomes an acquaintance of Marius the Epicurean.

³ As quoted in d’Arch Smith, p.73.

Between thine arms I find mine only bliss;
 Ah let me in thy bosom still enjoy
 Oblivion of the past, divinest boy,
 And the dull ennui of a woman's kiss! (Wratishlaw, from 'To a Sicilian Boy')¹

While Symonds and Wratishlaw voice a preference for boys, the 'Uranians proper' (as d'Arch Smith labels them), writers such as Frederick Rolfe, are far more manifestly misogynistic: 'In the Uranian landscape, it is men who dominate — their bodies and activities, their forms of beauty — often hailed at the direct expense of women'.² One wonders how Sedgwick would respond to the following scathing passage from *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*, a passage in which Rolfe's protagonist stumbles to express, in a collage of languages, his utter revulsion for the 'female body' and its feminine trappings, a revulsion one might be tempted to call 'The Hate That Could Not Speak Its Name':

What had [his former friend] Caliban spluttered, 'marry some nice girl — instead of sneezing at them all — heaps would jump at you, if you would condescend to ask them nicely, as you can, if you choose'. Ouph! 'Marry some nice girl with money!' — some 'nice girl' — some fille repugnante, la femelle du male, une chose horrible, tout en tignasse, en pattes rougeaudes, yeux ravagés, bouche défraîchie, talons éculés — cidevant provinciale, nippée comme une Hottentot — puis bonne à tout faire, feignante, voleuse, sale — brrr! — some coarse raucous short-legged hockey- or hunting-female hideous in hairy

¹ As quoted in d'Arch Smith, p.84.

² Sarah Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.29. In 'Motives for Guilt-Free Pederasty: Some Literary Considerations', *Sociological Review*, 24.1 (1976), pp.97-114, Brian Taylor notes this misogyny: 'Five dominant motifs [...] recur throughout [the Uranians'] work. They are: the transience of boyhood, lost youth, the divine sanction, the class sanction, and misogyny and the erotic superiority of pederasty' (pp.101-02). Taylor further writes: 'The Uranians, if they were satisfactorily to formulate in poetic form motivations for guilt-free pederasty, needed to topple from its pedestal the ideal conception of Womanhood which the Victorians erected as the symbol of acceptable love' (p.107). It is noteworthy that one of the individuals most credited with erecting this 'pedestal' was Coventry Patmore, especially through his *Angel in the House* (1854-62), and that Hopkins, at Patmore's request, suggested corrections to a new edition of this work.

This paederastic 'misogyny' was also characteristic of the 'Uranians' on the Continent, particularly in France. Of André Gide's, *Corydon* (1924), Maya Slater writes: 'The feminine is what a good pederasty pushes aside' — *Women Voice Men: Gender in European Culture* (Exeter, UK: Intellect Books, 1997), p.33. Naomi Segal, author of *André Gide: Pederasty and Pedagogy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), makes reference to this elsewhere: 'Nowhere in [Gide's] writings does one discover a voice unsure of its right to be heard; he is, in other words, always masculine. [...] This mastery is a fascinating mixture of pedagogy and coquetry; he is the ideal target for a feminist critic, who seeks an address not meant for her and disinters exactly how it is not meant for her' — 'André Gide and the Niece's Seduction', *Coming Out of Feminism?*, ed. by Mandy Merck; Naomi Segal; Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp.194-213 (p.200).

felt — some bulky kallipyg with swung skirts and cardboard waist and glass-balled hat-pins and fat open-work stockings and isocetes shoes — something pink-nosed and round-eyed and frisky, as inane and selfish and snappy-mannered as a lap-dog — some leek-shaped latest thing, heaving herself up from long tight lambrequins to her own bursting bosom and bonneted with a hearse-plumed jungle-crowned bath — some pretentious pompadoured image trailing satin, moving (apparently leglessly) in society — all of the mental and physical consistency of parrots crossed with jelly-fish. O god of Love, never! (Pp.180-81)

For Rolfe, the ‘female body’ — ‘a parrot crossed with a jelly-fish’ — seems a species to be avoided, chided, or pitied, not a vital corner of the triangularity by which his own desires were formulated.¹ It is safe to assume that Rolfe would have agreed with Michael Lynch’s assessment of the ‘homosocial’ criticism of his friend Sedgwick, an assessment Sedgwick herself explains:

Michael Lynch, a long-time pioneer of gay studies whom I met a few years later, told me his first response to *Between Men* was, ‘This woman has a lot of ideas about a lot of things, but she doesn’t know much about gay men!’ He was so right [...] Rereading the book now, I’m brought up short, often, with dismay at the thinness of the experience on which many of its analyses and generalizations are based. Yet I’m also relieved, and proud, that its main motives and imperatives still seem so recognizable.²

Unfortunately, many critics continue to parrot this ‘homosocial’ criticism without questioning ‘the thinness of the experience on which many of its analyses and generalizations are based’ — a ‘thinness’ that its creator has herself begun to question. This ‘thinness’ derives, in part, from a failure to appreciate that, ever since its mythological origin, ‘the paederastic’ has usually been, or has usually been depicted as the ultimate enemy of the role of women, the female response to which is displayed in the following drawing by Albrecht Dürer:

¹ About the novel *The Sub-Umbra, or Sport Among the She-Noodles*, in *The Pearl*, Colligan notes: ‘A classic example of the Sedgwickian triangle, the first story disrupts the homosexual desire between two boys by introducing a girl into their sex play. Two boys who have intercourse with a girl at the same time, one vaginally and one anally, focus on the sensation of their “pricks throbbing against each other in a most delicious manner, with only the thin membrane of the anal canal between them” (p.15). This example is spurious, having been dislodged from a serialised novel that stretches over eight instalments: its dozen episodes chronicle the incestuous exploits between the male narrator, his male cousin, his female cousins, and others in the vicinity. The novel is a mixture of masturbatory, heterosexual, homoerotic, bisexual, and orgiastic scenes. Although *that* particular novel does contain two episodes with ‘Sedgwickian triangles’, the tale from *The Pearl* included as ‘Appendix One’ has a triangle with no female corner.’

² Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, ‘Forward’ to *Between Men*, 2nd edn, as provided on her personal homepage <<http://www.duke.edu/~sedgwick/WRITING/BETWEEN.htm>> [last accessed 27 July 2004]. In 1979, Lynch published the first article trumpeting Hopkins’s homoeroticism — ‘Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves’, *Hopkins Quarterly*.



The Death of Orpheus

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528)

Pen and ink drawing on paper, 1494

Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany



Orfeus der erst puseran

(‘Orpheus, the first sodomite’)**

By employing a term like ‘homosocial’, a term that covers everything from a handshake to sodomy, many Feminist critics keep open the possibility of considering all men and their ‘paths of male entitlement’ in a similar vein: consequently, women (or at least the ‘female body’) can maintain an angle in Sedgwick’s formerly-assumed-and-proclaimed ‘homosocial’ triangularity.¹ Since

** In mythology, Orpheus is often credited with originating paederasty. ‘In the *Metamorphoses*, after the disappearance of Eurydice, Orpheus holds himself “aloof from love of women”, and pursues instead “the love for tender boys” — a practice which quickly catches on among the people of Thrace. This was his downfall: a resentful band of Thracian women, infuriated by his lack of attention, literally tear him to shreds’ — Deanne Williams, *The French Fetish from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.65.

¹ Confronted with Sedgwick’s assertion about an unbroken ‘continuum’ between the homosocial and homosexual, Richard Dellamora argues that ‘the phrase [homosocial continuum] [...] reminds gay-identified men not of the sort of shared self-recognition that [Adrienne] Rich seeks to encourage among female readers, but rather of the processes, immanent and explicit, that stand in the way of homosexual awareness and self-identification among males’ (pp.193-94). In fact, Dellamora suggests that Pater’s late imaginary portrait ‘Apollo in Picardy’ portrays this ‘homosocial continuum’ as ominous: ‘More sharply than before, Pater also draws into focus the frustrated and destructive career of desire within a male homosocial community akin to the Oxford that he knew intimately’ (p.186) — especially see *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp.167-69, 186-88, and 193-94.

it illustrates how overly encompassing a term like ‘homosocial’ can be, consider an earlier, lesbian version of this concept advocated by Adrienne Rich in her ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’ (1980):

I have chosen to use the terms *lesbian existence* and *lesbian continuum* because the word *lesbianism* has a clinical and limiting ring. *Lesbian existence* suggests both the fact of the historical presence of lesbians and our continuing creation of the meaning of that existence. I mean the term *lesbian continuum* to include 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. If we expand it to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support, if we can also hear it in such associations as *marriage resistance* [...] we begin to grasp breadths of female history and psychology which have lain out of reach as a consequence of limited, mostly clinical, definitions of *lesbianism*.¹

This passage reveals that Rich’s female ‘homosociality’ spans from ‘genital sexual experience’ to ‘practical and political support’ — hence, from lesbian cunnilingus to babysitting. Since the usefulness of any term as a taxonomic category is weakened by its span, and since Sedgwick’s and Rich’s ‘homosocial’ terms seem to span at least half the range of human experience, the usefulness of such terms must be rather meagre and almost primary, like the terms ‘democracy’, ‘freedom’, and ‘Other’.

A supreme exemplum of the utter compass of a term like ‘homosocial’ appears in Julia F. Saville’s *A Queer Chivalry: The Homoerotic Asceticism of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, where she suggests that, for Hopkins, this dynamic is also applicable to the Holy Trinity, with its ‘divine homosocial intercourse between Father and Son, realized through the bodies of men’.² In accordance with Sedgwick’s claims about the triangular relationship (or trinity) between male attraction/repulsion and the female body, it seems mandatory that Hopkins envision the Holy Ghost as female (which, it must be admitted, he often does)³ — though the implication or application of this to Hopkins or to his literary canon seems rather doubtful and grasping. Even in the Holy Trinity, Feminist discourse attempts to find its place, the result being that, as Dennis Sobolev complains, Saville incorporates ‘Christianity as a whole into the homoerotic rubric of

¹ Adrienne Rich, ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’, reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. by Henry Abelove, David Halperin, and Michele Aina Barale (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.227-54 (p.239).

² Julia F. Saville, *A Queer Chivalry: The Homoerotic Asceticism of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), p.117.

³ As in ‘God’s Grandeur’: ‘Because the Holy Ghost over the bent / World broods with warm breast’ (lines 13-14).

psychoanalytic studies'.¹ At its best, such criticism considers male bonding *without* subsuming the paederastic into its overly buxom 'homosocial' discourse, an apt example being the following distinction made by Lesley Higgins: 'The passages I have quoted from [Pater's] *Plato and Platonism* suggest quite another story. In two very public fora — first the Oxford lecture hall, then the published text — Pater searched for "universal" truths within ancient Greek culture and found them in the reification of an intense homosociality and an active *paiderastia*'.² Pater did indeed regard these two abstractions — 'intense homosociality' and 'active *paiderastia*' — as 'universal truths', truths he found more concretely expressed in Grecian culture than in his own: yet, he did not consider 'homosociality' and '*paiderastia*' to be synonymous, especially given the possible legality of the first and the assured illegality of the second. Higgins's phrasing recognises this important distinction.

Although Pater's 'search' for both the homosocial and the paederastic even took place in public venues such as university lectures and published texts, this does not imply, for Higgins, that Pater and his fellows actually found what they were searching for, even on a personal level. Perhaps those 'universal truths' about erotic desires were beyond their grasp, even if those desires were (are) acknowledged, to some degree, to have been 'homosexual'.



How King Marke Found Sir Tristram (detail)

Aubrey Vincent Beardsley (1872-98)

Line block and letterpress, 1893-94

From Book 9, opposite page 262, in *Morte Darthur: The Birth, Life and Acts of King Arthur, of His Noble Knights [...]* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1909)

Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, California, USA

¹ Sobolev, p.125.

² Lesley Higgins, 'Jowett and Pater: Trafficking in Platonic Wares', *Victorian Studies*, 37.1 (1993), pp.43-72 (p.58).

**Homosexual:
Celibate, but Still Looking through the Chink**

We should have to say that pederasty, however great an evil in itself, was, in that time and place [at Wyvern College], the only foothold or cranny left for certain good things [...]. A perversion was the only chink left through which something spontaneous and uncalculating could creep in. Plato was right after all. Eros, turned upside down, blackened, distorted, filthy, still bore the traces of his divinity.

(C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*)¹

In ‘The “Piecemeal Peace” of Hopkins’s Return to Oxford, 1878-1879’, Lesley Higgins argues that Hopkins, particularly as an undergraduate, neither recognised nor comprehended the ‘homoerotic’ or ‘homosexual’ elements within himself, elements that modern scholars do recognise and comprehend:

Like many Victorians — like Pater himself — the one aspect of his ‘being’ that the young Gerard Hopkins would and could not explore was his sexual identity, specifically his homoerotic sensibility. As a highly-strung, physiologically and sexually naive undergraduate, his erotic yearnings were deeply troubling to him; he was never able to differentiate clearly between the sensuous, the sensual, and the sinful. The celibacy of the priesthood provided a refuge from sexuality. Yet his artistic eye was always caught by the physically beautiful.²

Higgins’s claim that Hopkins was a ‘physiologically and sexually naive undergraduate’ is particularly questionable, arising from posthumous medical evaluations — in this case, more than a century posthumous — like those by the psychiatrist Felix Letemendia, who concludes that ‘Hopkins was decidedly late in developing full sexual maturation, judging by his private note in [MS.] C.i.217, recorded when he was nineteen-years five-months old’.³ The private note to

¹ See C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955), pp.109-10.

² Lesley Higgins, ‘The “Piecemeal Peace” of Hopkins’s Return to Oxford, 1878-1879’, in *Gerard Manley Hopkins and Critical Discourse*, ed. by Eugene Hollahan (New York: AMS Press, 1993), pp.167-82 (p.177).

³ For extended comment on this topic, see Dr Felix Letemendia’s ‘Part III: Medico-Psychological Commentary’ in the ‘Introduction’ to *Facsimiles I*, pp.31-36 (p.31). It is my opinion that MacKenzie’s incorporation of this posthumous psychiatric analysis of Hopkins by Dr Letemendia, especially as part of his ‘Introduction’ to *Facsimiles I*, was an attempt to forestall the more paederastic and homoerotic interpretations that the contents of Hopkins’s confession notes clearly suggest. Had Dr Letemendia’s analysis appeared as an appendix, I might consider it otherwise: but, as it stands, it seems an apology for

which Dr Letemendia refers begins ‘E.s.n.po. Jan.6.’ (*Facsimiles* I, p.127), a string of abbreviations that Norman H. MacKenzie suggests stands for ‘Emissio seminis nocte post Jan. 6 [1864]’, translatable into ‘a wet dream on the night following Jan. 6’ (p.127, note). However, even given that MacKenzie’s interpretation of those abbreviations is correct, the presence of this ‘wet dream’ in Hopkins’s private confession notes does not necessarily imply, as Dr Letemendia and MacKenzie assert, that Hopkins had never had such an experience before, or that he was unfamiliar with solitary pleasures of a nocturnal or masturbatory kind. For Hopkins, this ‘wet dream’ was worth noting because his High Anglican confessors, Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-82) and Henry Parry Liddon (1829-90), had engendered in him a pharisaic scrupulosity that became something of a fetish, at least for a time: ‘The spiritual entries [like the one above] cover a period of ten troubled months from March 25, 1865, during which Hopkins was trying to reach a higher plane of spiritual life [...] They end on January 23, 1866, some two and a half years before he entered the Jesuit Novitiate’ (MacKenzie’s Introduction, *Facsimiles* I, p.4).¹ The sudden discontinuity of these confession notes would have drawn the speculative attention of Michel Foucault, though there is justification for the simple assertion that the subsequent notebook is no longer extant, perhaps burned by Hopkins or someone else. However, the two-and-a-half years that followed the last of these extant confession notes was an equally formative period for Hopkins, who found himself under guidance of another sort — Walter Pater and John Henry Newman (*later* Cardinal; 1801-90) — two new influences who would have had little sympathy with the pharisaic ‘Letter of the Law’ and note-taking that Pusey and Liddon espoused. Although Pater and Newman would have reasoned differently, each would have suggested that Hopkins assume a more liberal or humanist stance towards such ‘details of conscience’. It was probably with just such a corrective in mind that Prof. Jowett, one of the leaders of the ultra-liberal Broad Church party, sent Hopkins to agnostic Pater for Greats coaching, as Robert Bernard Martin explains:

Jowett surely suggested Pater in the hope that he would act as a counterbalance to the dangerous influence of Liddon, whom he knew Hopkins had seen frequently in the past year or two [...] What [Jowett] had failed to notice was that Hopkins had already begun avoiding Liddon, and that in any case the influence of Pater would be far more dangerous than Liddon’s because Pater openly voiced doubts that bubbled up in Hopkins but seemed never to trouble Liddon.²

what follows, the same sort of disingenuousness one finds in the traditional glosses preceding each chapter of the Canticles in the King James version of the Bible, claiming that what follows is an allegorical description of the relationship between Christ and his bride The Church ... as opposed to highly erotic, Eastern poetry.

¹ See Robert Bernard Martin, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life* (New York: Putnam, 1991), pp.99-103.

² *Ibid.*, pp.130-31.

One aspect that made both Pater and Newman particularly ‘dangerous’ for this High Anglican undergraduate and later Roman Catholic convert was that each recognised the paederastic and/or homoerotic elements within himself — even though, in Newman’s case, his response to those elements was a choice of celibacy. Despite the fact that a celibacy like Newman’s has often served, to some degree, as ‘a refuge from sexuality’, Renee V. Overholser suggests that, even as an undergraduate, Hopkins exhibited an uncanny potential for exploring his own sexuality, when he chose to do so: ‘The tightly disciplined Hopkins was intensely aware of his own sexuality, monitored every word and every gesture, lost physical control only during sleep, and feared the results even then’.¹ This ‘tightly disciplined Hopkins’ — especially after he had, as a Jesuit, professed a vow of celibacy — is also the contemplation of Peter Swaab, who chooses to label Hopkins a ‘homosexual’ despite recognising that ‘the word “homosexual” is of course anachronistic in reference to Hopkins’s lifetime, but the non-anachronistic alternatives are so fussy and unwieldy that I have stayed with it — scrupulous readers should insert imaginary scare-quotes for each usage’.² Anachronism aside, the problem, according to Swaab, is the general (in)applicability of sexual categories to a celibate priest, even though this state of celibacy seems, in Hopkins’s case, to have facilitated rather than suppressed his erotic expressiveness, at least poetically:

Although his religious vocation constrained and contained the expression of his sexuality, it may also have eased the problems attending a marginalized sexual identity: a vow of celibacy might by abstracting the issue of desire diminish the relevance of particular kinds of sexuality, discovering the same ambivalent possibilities in the varieties of human sexual passion. Being a Jesuit may actually have worked to enable and not to repress the sexual forthrightness of his poetry.³

The question one gleans from the above is: *Are sexual categories applicable to a professed celibate?* This question is still contentious in Hopkins scholarship, as is displayed by the most recent article on the topic, Dennis Sobolev’s ‘Hopkins’s “Bellbright Bodies”: The Dialectics of Desire in His Writings’. Although arguing that it is inherently anachronistic to claim that Hopkins was a ‘homosexual’ (even if imaginary scare-quotes are inserted), Sobolev nonetheless acknowledges the presence of certain ‘homoerotic’ elements within the poet and his writings — though, like Swaab, he questions the applicability of such sexual terminology to Hopkins:

¹ Renee V. Overholser, “Looking with Terrible Temptation”: Gerard Manley Hopkins and Beautiful Bodies’, in *Victorian Literature and Culture* 19, ed. by John Maynard and Adrienne Auslander Munich (New York: AMS Press, 1991), pp.25-53 (p.27).

² Peter Swaab, ‘Hopkins and the Pushed Peach’, *Critical Quarterly*, 37.3 (1995), pp.43-60 (p.44).

³ *Ibid.*

Nothing indicates that a nineteenth-century Catholic priest could experience his homoerotic tendencies, even acknowledged and accepted, as the core of his identity. [...] What Hopkins's notebooks demonstrate is both his homoerotic leanings and his conscious and unequivocal resistance to them; nothing in these diaries indicates that he saw his homoerotic 'temptations' as either the pivotal point of his identity or an object of celebration.¹

In Sobolev's analysis, the various discourses relating to Hopkins's eroticism and to Victorian 'taxonomies of desire' come full circle: As a celibate priest, Hopkins cannot be labelled a 'sodomite' since 'sodomy' denotes an act rather than a mode of being, commission rather than constitution. Hopkins cannot be labelled a 'homosexual' since that word, which denotes constitution rather than commission, is anachronistic in relation to most of Hopkins's lifetime. Hopkins cannot be labelled a person with a 'homoerotic identity' since, as a Roman Catholic, he could neither conscientiously commit homoerotic acts nor embrace a homoerotic constitution — hence, he had nothing with which to bastion such an 'identity'. At most, Hopkins's eroticism becomes, for Sobolev, a buckling of disconcerting tendencies: a tendency towards 'sodomy', a tendency towards 'homosexuality', and a tendency towards embracing a 'homoerotic identity'. Recognising that, given the extant biographical and literary evidence, an absolute avoidance of Hopkins's homoeroticism is no longer possible, Sobolev nonetheless constructs a Hopkins who is quarantined from all homoerotic considerations or should be, a Hopkins who was himself the foremost advocate of *an absolute avoidance of Hopkins's homoeroticism*, a homoeroticism that was merely a bundle of dismissed 'homoerotic tendencies'. Recast in the language of contemporary Christian polemics (intentionally or not), Sobolev's Hopkins becomes merely the possessor of certain 'tendencies', tendencies that, when they surfaced, were cast aside by Hopkins in disgust — or, to phrase this in accordance with current Roman Catholic doctrine, Hopkins overcame an 'objective disorder',² an 'intrinsically disordered inclination',³ through prayer and supplication, though an act of conscious choice in accordance with traditional Church teaching on the immorality of homoerotic and paederastic acts or indulged desires (as derived from Genesis 19.1-11; Leviticus 18.22, 20.13; Romans 1.18-32; 1 Corinthians 6.9; 1 Timothy 1.10). Hence, in order to lead a fuller Christian life, Hopkins ameliorated, changed, or prevented the development of a 'homoerotic identity', transcending his difficult 'tendencies' by exercising a

¹ Sobolev, p.122.

² Vatican, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, section 3 (1 October 1986) <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html> [last accessed 23 March 2006].

³ Vatican, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, rev. edn, 1997, paragraph 2358 (from section II, 'The Vocation to Chastity') <<http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>> [last accessed 23 March 2006].

form of internal Christian censure that, Sobolev emphasises, is revealed in his undergraduate confession notes.

However, what Sobolev and others conveniently fail to acknowledge is that these confession notes in Hopkins's 'diaries' — confession notes that scholars often link to his later Roman Catholicism and vow of celibacy — date from a period when Hopkins, still a High Anglican undergraduate, had made a fetish of taking such confession notes, a practice recommended to him by Pusey and Liddon, both of whom were equally fetishistic in this regard. What critics further fail to acknowledge is that, after Hopkins had made contact, personally or textually, with Pater, Newman, Duns Scotus, various Jesuits, and many others besides, he seems to have given up this fetish, or at least to have diminished it significantly. Although Hopkins may have changed substantially after abandoning the practice of filling notebooks with his sins and scruples, he clearly did not change or prevent his own erotic desires, as his Uranian poetry, a cornucopia of paederastic and homoerotic nuances, bountifully displays. Despite his vow of celibacy — or partially facilitated by it, as Swaab suggests — Hopkins's erotic desires gained elaborate expression through voyeurism, fantasy, poetry, and innuendo ... if not in unrecorded act. Seen in this light, Hopkins becomes one of those at Oxford who, by the 1860s, had begun to express homoerotic and paederastic desires through voyeurism, flirtation, letters, and Classically-inspired verse. He becomes one of those linked, at least on the level of desire, with that wider continuum stretching from Classical Greece to the present day, a continuum that, within the paederastic and homoerotic 'taxonomies of desire', would be properly labelled 'Uranian'.



Cupid Chastised

Bartolomeo Manfredi (1582-1622)

Oil on canvas, ca. 1605-10

Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Approaching these paederastic and homoerotic ‘taxonomies of desire’, particularly the paederastic, has always been a delicate issue for scholarship, not just for Hopkins scholarship. By attempting absolute avoidance, by claiming anachronism, by heightening the ‘homosocial’, and by labelling as ‘homosexual’ (often despite those occasional vows of celibacy), Victorianists have ‘moved with so much embarrassment’, an embarrassment that is not solely theirs or of their own scholarly creating. This embarrassment, especially in regard to the paederastic, permeates modern Western society because individuals like Hopkins posit a form of love, intimacy, and/or erotic expression that current social, medical, ethical, religious, political, scholarly, and familial powers consider maladjusted, psychotic, immoral, sinful, fringe, objectionable, and/or intrusive. The very existence of these individuals constitutes an eccentric positionality that modern Western society recognises *can* pose a critique, variant, alternative, or challenge to its ‘more accepted’ modes of love and physical intimacy.

This collective ‘embarrassment’ particularly surfaces in those cases where society must — as in the case of Hopkins — recognise the importance or superiority of such an individual, despite his ‘suspect’ erotic desires or actions. This is clearly displayed by a review in *The Economist* in February 1993, a review of a new supplement to the *Dictionary of National Biography* titled *Missing Persons*. Despite the fact that 1,086 individuals found inclusion in the *DNB* through this supplement, the anonymous reviewer, in a less-than-two-page critique, considers the inclusion of three individuals who are considered at some length in the present volume. With 1,086 individuals at his or her disposal, the fact that this reviewer, in such a tiny critique, felt compelled to comment on the inclusion of three Uranians is culturally revealing. The reviewer dismissively notes that one individual was included in the *DNB* because he was ‘very young (Digby Dolben [...] died at the age of 19)’, and more optimistically that ‘some are included because they were genuine “discoveries” by a later age. Gerard Manley Hopkins’s poetry was not published until 30 years after his death’. However, what is most noteworthy is that, out of the 1,086 individuals who found inclusion through this supplement to the *DNB* — even though the reviewer notes the inclusion of ‘murderers (Christie, Peace)’ — the reviewer states that ‘the vilest person here commemorated is probably Frederick Rolfe, “Baron Corvo”’. What makes Rolfe the ‘vilest person here commemorated’, viler even than those murderers, is undoubtedly that he was a Uranian writer and a practicing paederast — and an unrepentant one at that.¹ For this reviewer (specifically) and for modern Western society (generally), there is at least one ‘sin’ viler than murder, and that is actualised paederasty. Moreover, the vilest of the vile are those Uranians like Rolfe, those scurrilous individuals who are always posing a problem, who are always worthy of exclusion, who are always embarrassing the ‘collective we’ by drawing our attention to ‘the problem of the boy’.

¹ These quotations are from an anonymous review, ‘Famous Foundlings — *Dictionary of National Biography: Missing Persons*, edited by C. S. Nicholls’, *The Economist*, 326.7798 (13 February 1993), pp.91-92.

**‘The Divine Friend, Unknown, Most Desired’:
The Problematic Uranians**

Thus Aschenbach felt an obscure sense of satisfaction
at what was going on in the dirty alleyways of
Venice, cloaked in official secrecy.

(Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*)¹

Der Tod in Venedig (*Death in Venice*) dates from 1912, the year after Thomas Mann (1875-1955), on holiday with his wife in Venice, had fallen in love with a boy named Wladyslaw Moes (1900-86), an almost-eleven-year-old Polish aristocrat who was addressed by his childhood companions as ‘Wladzio’ and ‘Adzio’, diminutives that Mann misheard as ‘Tadzio’.² Mann would later assert the authenticity of the Venetian experiences captured in his novella, experiences that included his developing erotic interest in this boy:

Nothing in *Death in Venice* is invented: the traveller by the Northern Cemetery in Munich, the gloomy boat from Pola, the aged fop, the dubious gondolier, Tadzio and his family, the departure prevented by a mix-up over luggage, the cholera, the honest clerk in the travel agency, the malevolent street singer, or whatever else you might care to mention — everything was given.³

¹ Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice and Other Stories*, trans. by David Luke (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990), p.246.

² These details were gleaned from Gilbert Adair, *The Real Tadzio: Thomas Mann’s ‘Death in Venice’ and the Boy Who Inspired It* (London: Short, 2001). For analysis of the paederastic dimensions of Thomas Mann’s novella, see George Bridges, ‘The Problem of Pederastic Love in Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice* and Plato’s *Phaedrus*’, *Journal of the PNCFL* (Pacific Northwest Council on Foreign Languages), 7 (1986), pp.39-46; Cynthia B. Bryson, ‘The Imperative Daily Nap; or, Aschenbach’s Dream in *Death in Venice*’, *Studies in Short Fiction*, 29.2 (1992), pp.181-93; Tom Hayes and Lee Quinby, ‘The Aporia of Bourgeois Art: Desire in Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*’, *Criticism*, 31.2 (1989), pp.159-77; Ignace Feuerlicht, ‘Thomas Mann and Homoeroticism’, *Germanic Review*, 57.3 (1982), pp.89-97; Richard White, ‘Love, Beauty, and *Death in Venice*’, *Philosophy and Literature*, 14.1 (1990), pp.53-64. In *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2001), Jonathan Dollimore asserts: ‘Perhaps too homosexuality inherits the burden of paedophilia: the story of *Death in Venice* was based closely on an actual trip to Venice in which Mann developed an infatuation with a Polish boy who was later identified as Wladyslaw, subsequently Baron, Moes. At the time, this real-life counterpart of Tadzio was not fourteen but ten’ (p.293).

³ Thomas Mann, from *A Sketch of My Life* — this passage appears in Ritchie Robertson, ‘Classicism and Its Pitfalls: *Death in Venice*’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*, ed. by Ritchie Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.95-106 (p.101). See Gary Schmidgall, ‘Death in Venice, Life in Zurich: Mann’s Late “Something for the Heart”’, *Southwest Review*, 82.3 (1997), pp.293-324 (p.296).

His wife Katia's *Unwritten Memoirs* (1975) is far more revealing:

On the very first day, we saw the Polish family, which looked exactly the way my husband described them: the girls were dressed rather stiffly and severely, and the very charming, beautiful boy of about thirteen [*sic*] was wearing a sailor suit with an open collar and very pretty lacings. He caught my husband's attention immediately. This boy was tremendously attractive, and my husband was always watching him with his companions on the beach. He didn't pursue him through all of Venice — that he didn't do — but the boy did fascinate him, and he thought of him often.¹

Also there in 1911, wandering about 'the dirty alleyways of Venice' and sharing Mann's erotic interest in young Tadzios, was another writer, though these two never met, as far as anyone knows. Frederick William Rolfe, donning the pseudo-pseudonym² of Baron Corvo, arrived in Venice in 1908 and remained there until his death five years later. Even utter destitution was incapable of driving Rolfe away from those alleyways of stone and water, and the reason why is obvious: Venice was *the* place to be. As is evinced by Mann's voyeuristic novella, Rolfe's tantalisingly autobiographical *Desire and Pursuit of the Whole* (1909-10), J. A. Symonds's *In the Key of Blue and Other Essays* (1893), part of Henry James's 'Pupil' (1891), and a dozen lesser works, literary and pictorial — Venice had become, for the Late-Victorian period and beyond, the paederastic playground. This playground drew the Uranians in droves, for it afforded pleasures that, elsewhere in Europe, were difficult to come by.³

While Stephen J. Greenblatt has made currency of the concept of 'Renaissance self-fashioning', that concept (though not exactly in an identical sense) is also applicable to one group during the 'Second English Renaissance', that period dubbed by its own members as 'Victorian'. This 'self-fashioned' group was the Uranians. Amid a world of decorous behaviour, these Uranian writers and artists became the ultimate outsiders, outsiders whose desires and

¹ As quoted in Schmidgall, 'Death', p.296.

² My reason for employing the term 'pseudo-pseudonym' is that, according to Rolfe, 'Baron Corvo' was an honorary title bestowed upon him by the Duchess Carolina Sforza, a wealthy patron who assisted him when he was homeless in Rome and supposedly made a regular allowance to him while he was in England — see A. J. A. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo: An Experiment in Biography* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001 [1934]), p.34. Rolfe was given to donning pseudonyms (such as Frank English, Frederick Austin, and A. Crab Maid), though his most frequent adjustment came from merely shortening his name to 'Fr. Rolfe', such that 'Fr.' would be interpreted, naturally, as an ecclesiastical 'Father'. However, what can one expect from someone whose name reached its full form as Frederick William Serafino Austin Lewis Mary Rolfe, Baron Corvo (which is, in fact, the name provided for his entry in I. R. Willison, ed., *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, vol. 4, '1900-1950' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p.724.

³ See Robb, pp.95-96, 162.

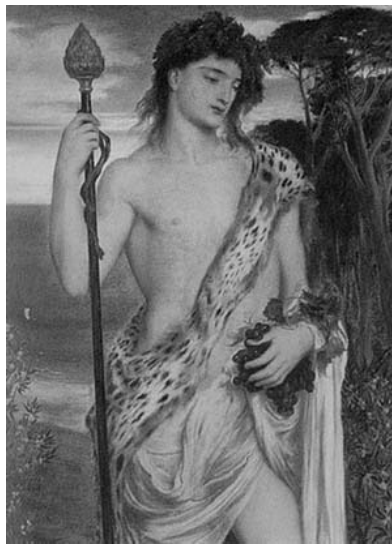
pursuits were particularly criminal, hence beyond the pale of possible disclosure or acceptance in proper society, and best expressed in a place like Venice or Capri, Tangier or Algiers. One feature of this group's 'self-fashioning' was a voyeuristic posturing — a proximity to the object of desire without that distance being defeated, at least artistically — a posturing that constitutes a unique temperament in English letters (though this temperament, of course, extends beyond them to writers such as Thomas Mann, who was 'always watching [ten-year-old Wladyslaw] with his companions on the beach'). The arguable immorality and assured illegality of the Uranians' desires resulted in a form of 'self-fashioning' no less marked than that of their Elizabethan predecessors, though taking a different stance, a stance gilded by an astonishing degree of secrecy. Rolfe's own self-fashioning — 'History As It Ought To Have Been And Very Well Might Have Been, But Wasn't' (*Desire*, p.45) — is most clearly displayed in his *Hadrian VII* (1904), a novel about a convert who becomes, through serendipitous circumstances, the Pope. Rolfe was himself the convert George Arthur Rose, and the papacy never within his scope; however, in fantasy, in 'history as it ought to have been', anything was possible, even the expression of pontifical authority and paederastic desires.

Besides the self-fashioned and flamboyant Baron Corvo, there are roughly forty other Uranian poets and a score of prose writers and artists who constitute a paederastic tradition currently chronicled by only one book — Timothy d'Arch Smith's *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930*.¹ That book's subtitle, 'Some Notes', expresses the inherent difficulty in reconstructing the Uranian atmosphere — even the atmosphere of its playground, Venice — a difficulty that arises, in part, from the group's overt or covert discretions, its members often sacrificing or breaking with their fellows as necessity required.

A striking example of such a breach is Walter Pater's review of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a review that will be considered in detail in 'Chapter Five'. Asked by Oscar Wilde to provide a congenial review, Pater instead took the occasion not to flatter, elucidate, or cloak, but to distance himself as much as possible from both Dorian and his corrupter, Lord Henry — both of whom had

¹ For various reasons — based mostly on the fact that this group had found, at that time, a vehicle for expression, and on the necessity to limit his own scope — d'Arch Smith demarcates the birth of the 'Uranians' (as a self-defined group) as 1888, though he does make a detailed study of those writers he labels 'Uranian precursors' before approaching the 'Uranians proper'. Specifically, d'Arch Smith asserts that 'the date of the commencement of the Uranian movement [...] may accurately be placed at 1 April 1888 when the poem, "Hyacinthus", appeared in the *Artist*' (p.24). In contrast, I have chosen to backdate the founding of the group thirty years, to the 1858 publication of *Ionica* by William Johnson (*later* Cory). Johnson is one of the poets d'Arch Smith considers 'Uranian precursors'. D'Arch Smith would probably not question my choice, since he himself writes that 'it is far from easy to explain satisfactorily the upsurge of Uranian writings between the approximate (but by no means arbitrary) dates of 1858 and 1930' (p.1).

been recognisably modelled on himself and the ideas he had expressed in his volume *The Renaissance*. This review, published in the periodical *The Bookman* in November 1891, claimed that the murdered Basil was the ultimate and beneficial expression of ‘true Epicureanism’, and decried the flagrant and sordid pruriency that Wilde’s novel presents and represents.¹ This review severed a fourteen-year friendship between these two writers, Pater choosing discretion over friendship. Wilde’s cultivations in love and in literature had become too outspoken and, consequently, dangerous for Pater, who began, in turn, to cultivate as much distance between himself and his friend, in person and in print, as courtesy would allow.



Bacchus

Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)
Watercolour on paper, 1867
Seymour Stein (private collection)

Another example is Pater’s response to the fate of Simeon Solomon (1840-1905), a brilliant young artist from a Jewish family, an artist whose friends and style were particularly Pre-Raphaelite, an artist who ‘took issue with the prevailing moral code and, some twenty years before the trials of Oscar Wilde, dared to express in art his own sexual preferences, however obliquely’.² Despite

¹ Walter Pater, ‘A Novel by Mr. Oscar Wilde’ [Review of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*], *The Bookman: A Monthly Journal for Bookreaders, Bookbuyers and Booksellers*, 1.2 (November 1891), pp.59-60.

² Colin Cruise, ‘Simeon Solomon’, *DNB*. Phrased differently, Solomon was ‘a painter of subjects that promote a kind of sensibility of which, arguably, he was the first to attempt a

the eroticism of much of his art, Solomon's future seemed assured — that is, until he was arrested in a public lavatory with George Roberts on 11 February 1873, charged with indecent exposure and 'attempting to commit sodomy'. This charge led to his being sentenced, on 24 March, to eighteen months of imprisonment, a sentence later commuted to a period under police supervision.¹ Expecting the sudden reappearance of this convicted 'sodomite' into their Decadent circle, '[Algernon Charles] Swinburne, Pater, and [Ingram] Bywater met by arrangement in Oxford on May 23 [1873] to consider how they might deal with the situation of their "wandering Jew"'.² With little ado, Swinburne opted to obliterate, as best he could, all traces of his former intimacy with the painter.³ Although Swinburne enjoyed hinting to his friends that he had himself experimented with such 'wandering', he tended to distance himself from those who 'wandered' into court or who published avowals (he would later sneer at the recently deceased J. A. Symonds, a rival for Jowett's affections, by dubbing him 'the Platonic amorist of blue-breeched gondoliers who is now in Aretino's bosom'⁴). Solomon's subsequent arrest on similar charges on 4 March 1874 (having been discovered *in flagrante delicto* with a certain Raphael-Maximillien Dumont in a public urinal near the Bourse des Valeurs, in Paris) and his sentence of three months in a French prison⁵ — these sounded Solomon's 'social death-knell' as far as Pater and most of his circle were concerned. Although Pater's

pictorial representation — same-sex desire' — Colin Cruise, ed., *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Merrell, 2005), p.9. In his histrionic *Memories of Sixty Years at Eton, Cambridge, and Elsewhere* (London: John Lane, 1910), Oscar Browning claims that 'Pater was a very intimate friend of Simeon Solomon' (p.106), and that 'Solomon was a frequent guest in my house at Eton, as he was of Pater at Oxford' (p.107).

¹ Cruise, *Love Revealed*, pp.9; 185.

² Donoghue, p.38.

³ Some of those traces were difficult to obliterate, though Swinburne did require that they not be reprinted, as with a review he had written about Solomon's art, claiming that it is 'music made visible' — Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'Simeon Solomon: Notes on His "Vision of Love" and Other Studies', *Dark Blue* [an Oxford University undergraduate magazine], 1 (July 1871), pp.568-77.

⁴ Swinburne, *Studies in Prose and Poetry* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1894), p.34.

⁵ Roberto C. Ferrari quotes an E-mail to himself from William Peniston (1 February 2001), an E-mail that secures these details:

Solomon was arrested on March 4, 1874. ... He was arrested at 8:30 at night in a urinal near the Bourse with Henri Lefranc, the alias of Raphael-Maximillien Dumont, a 19-year-old native-born Parisian wine clerk. The 7th Chamber of the Criminal Court of the 1st instance sentenced them on April 18, 1874 to 3 months in prison and 16 francs in fine for Solomon and 6 months in prison and 16 francs in fine for Lefranc/Dumont. (Information from the police ledger 'Pederasts et diverse', BB6, Archives de la Prefecture de la Police, Paris, France — as reported in the *Simeon Solomon Research Archive* <<http://www.simeonsolomon.org/cite4.html>> [last accessed 19 March 2006]).

affection for Solomon as a person and his admiration for him as an artist would continue, in 1876 he refused to name Solomon directly amidst a consideration of the painter's *Bacchus*, mentioning only 'a *Bacchus* by a young Hebrew painter, in the exhibition of the Royal Academy of 1868 [*sic*]' (*Greek*, p.37).¹ Forced to choose between his own protection and continued friendship, Pater always opted for the former, hoping not to find himself — as Wilde eventually would — a defendant in a trial where textual suggestion might shade into legal transcription.

With the above in mind, it is perhaps not surprising that, in most cases, relationships among the members of the Uranian circle were entirely textual, traceable only through bookplates, inscriptions, dedications, and acceptance letters.² Hence, the Uranian circle was, from its inception, built upon the reciprocity of gift-giving. As the first Uranian volume, *Ionica* (1858) by William Johnson (*later* Cory) became the object of much of this early reciprocity, Etonian paederasty *à la mode*:

Ionica had quickly made an impact within the small world of elite schools and universities, provoking speculation about its author. A later admirer of the book was Simeon Solomon, whose interest Cory noted in his journal of 1868: 'Browning says that Solomon, a young painter, wishes to give me one of his drawings as a compliment for printed rhymes. I said I should be glad to have it. But it has not come yet: perhaps my vanity was flattered in vain'.³

¹ After being charged with 'buggery' in 1873, Solomon 'did not exhibit at either the Dudley or Royal Academy exhibitions that year nor thereafter [...] He [later] began to re-emerge gradually from obscurity into a kind of celebrity. Oscar Wilde owned two works by him; J. A. Symonds, Walter Pater, and Eric, Count Stenbock, collected works during the 1880s and 1890s; and Lionel Johnson lined his flat with reproductions after his paintings' (Colin Cruise, 'Simeon Solomon', *DNB*). In 'Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting', in *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, ed. by Elizabeth Prettejohn (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp.36-58, Elizabeth Prettejohn writes: 'It is unclear whether Pater intended to refer to the oil painting of *Bacchus*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1867, or to the watercolour *Bacchus*, exhibited in 1868 at the Dudley Gallery; anyway Pater probably knew both works, and his remarks might apply to either' (pp.38-39). See also Cruise, *Love Revealed*, p.44.

² Donoghue notes that 'Pater conducted some of his relations with a more judicious mixture of public and private acknowledgments. His friendship with John Addington Symonds was typical of this precision' (p.39).

³ Morris B. Kaplan, *Sodom on the Thames: Sex, Love, and Scandal in Wilde Times* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p.111. Robb writes: 'The shared culture of gay men and women — their history, geography, literature, art and music — was not a passive store of knowledge. It was a vital means of communication. [...] Eventually, books on homosexual love — William Johnson's versions of Greek and Latin in *Ionica* (1858), Carpenter's *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship* (1902) — could be given as presents and tokens' (pp.143-44).

Another example of this reciprocity — the usual method of Uranian exchange and insinuation — can be found in the relationship between J. A. Symonds, Prof. John Conington (1825-69), and William Johnson. After ‘Symonds found himself at Balliol [College, Oxford,] in the autumn of 1858 in a world where perfervid friendships between undergraduates, and to a lesser extent between undergraduates and dons, were commonplace if not quite unremarkable’,¹ Prof. Conington presented him with a copy of *Ionica*,² that collection of poems tinged with paederasty written by his own friend Johnson. Impulsively, Symonds wrote to Johnson at Eton and received in reply ‘a long epistle on paiderastia in modern times, defending it and laying down the principle that affection between people of the same sex is no less natural and rational than the ordinary passionate relations’.³ By a similar process, Wilde garnered a meeting with Pater:

In July 1877 Wilde published an article on the Grosvenor Gallery in the *Dublin University Magazine* and sent a copy of it to Pater. A few references to Greek islands, handsome boys, and Correggio’s paintings of adolescent beauty alerted Pater to the writer’s disposition. He thanked Wilde for the article, praised the cultivated tastes it displayed, and invited him to make ‘an early call upon your return to Oxford’.⁴

That those with a Uranian ‘disposition’ discussed paederasty and forms of the homoerotic (whether Classical or contemporary) among themselves, in private or by letter, can be taken for granted — one fancies that, when Wilde called upon Pater after his return to Oxford, they discussed not cricket but cricketers, not bats but balls — however, of such conversations and correspondence, what remains is usually only hearsay, conjecture, or occasional asides like the following, made to Marc-André Raffalovich (1864-1934) by Wilde’s wife Constance: ‘Oscar says he likes you so much — that you have such nice improper talks together’.⁵ The tenor of those ‘improper talks’ can be gauged, to some degree, by the fact that Raffalovich would later acquire as his own lover John Henry Gray (1866-1934), Wilde’s lover at the time of the publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. However, the actual content of such conversations is usually left to conjecture, with current scholars knowing little

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.86.

² D’Arch Smith, p.9.

³ Phyllis Grosskurth, ed., *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds* (New York: Hutchinson, 1984), p.109. See Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.86-87. D’Arch Smith asserts that ‘Cory gave the Uranians at once an inspiration and an example’ (p.11).

⁴ Donoghue, p.81.

⁵ As quoted in Ellmann, p.282. Ellmann glosses this as ‘Wilde and Raffalovich talked openly about sexual matters’ (p.282). Madden writes: ‘A Russian Jew born in Paris, Raffalovich moved to England in 1882, planning to attend Oxford. Instead he settled in London and began to make a name for himself as a wealthy young writer and socialite’ (p.12). Madden notes that Raffalovich was an ‘old friend’ of J. K. Huysmans, whose writings influenced, to some degree, Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray* (p.24).

more than Wilde's wife, save that those conversations were 'nice' and 'improper' in erotic ways to which Constance was not privy.



Portrait de jeune homme

Antonio Allegri da Correggio (ca. 1489-1534)

Oil on wood, ca. 1525

Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

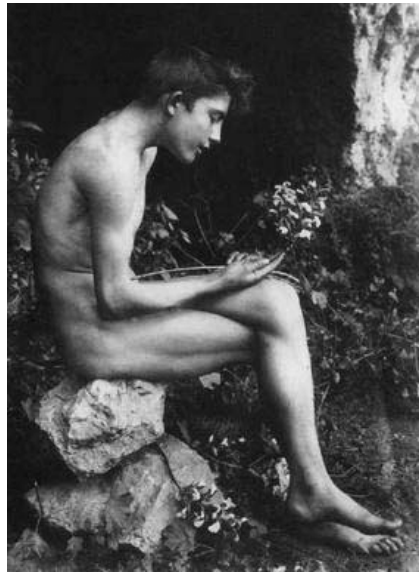
Substantiating or elucidating such second-hand statements is further problematised or even thwarted because the Uranians frequently burned their own correspondence and diaries, or their friends and families did so¹ — or, as in the case of Pater, they covered their tracks by avoiding both. The diary of Charles Edward Sayle (1864-1924) provides an example of why such was often the case. In one entry, Sayle relates that he had recently had a dream in which his friend Horatio Robert Forbes Brown (1854-1926), a sometimes friend of Rolfe whose parties were a feature of Venetian life, was 'in a state of complete nudity, indecisive of what to use for a fig-leaf — a page of his own poems? or mine?'² For the Uranians, that fig-leaf of discretion and diversion was often paper thin, allowing their private parts to show through.

Further heightening their biographical and literary obscurity, the Uranians often printed their volumes privately and circulated them only among their fellows, which requires a biographer or literary critic dealing with the lesser Uranians to be equally an archaeologist and an archivist. Frequently, the history of the lesser Uranians is only chronicled in the sales catalogues of auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christie's, with their books and artworks disappearing into the private collections of connoisseurs such as Seymour Stein, who acquired Solomon's *Bacchus* (1867) — perhaps the painting Pater mentions as 'by a young Hebrew painter' — for a mere £28,000 in 1993.³

¹ '[Rolfe's] Venetian will left his estate to his brother, Alfred, a schoolteacher in Australia, who was unable to claim it for fear of creditors. The estate, consisting mostly of "incriminating" letters, photos, and manuscripts, was confiscated by the British consul, and most of it was destroyed' (David Bradshaw, 'Frederick William Rolfe', *DNB*).

² As quoted in d'Arch Smith, p.110.

³ Patrick Pacheco, 'The Pasha of Pop', *Art and Antiques*, 5 (1994), pp.78-79 (p.79).



Junge auf zwei Steinen sitzend
Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931)
Albumen print, ca. 1900
Robert Lebeck Collection
Hamburg, Germany



Sich umarmende Jungen
Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931)
Albumen print, ca. 1900
Private collection



Zwei Jünglinge vor Agaven
Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931)
Albumen print, ca. 1900
Private collection



Drei Jungen auf einer Bank
Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931)
Albumen print, ca. 1895
Private collection

For their own more private and masturbatory purposes, the Uranians collected artworks of a different sort: nudes of Italian boys by photographers such as Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931), residing in Taormina, Sicily, and his distant relative Wilhelm (Guglielmo) von Plüschow (1852-1930), residing mostly in Rome¹ — photographs that have themselves become collectables dispersed by auction houses and chronicled in sales catalogues. However, for the Uranian scholar, catalogues have much to tell, and von Gloeden's guest book was itself a catalogue of the paederastically-inclined, and included the signature of Oscar Wilde, one of his staunchest admirers.² Like children with packets of baseball cards, the Uranians exchanged these salacious photographs as a form of pictorial insinuation and friendship. In a New Year's Eve letter for 1889, Edmund Gosse (1849-1928) thanks Symonds for sending him one such photograph, undoubtedly as a Christmas gift: 'As I sat in the Choir [of Westminster Abbey during Robert Browning's funeral], with George Meredith at my side, I peeped at it again and again'.³ Boys will be boys — but there were real dangers involved in such

¹ The fact that these two paederastic aristocrats, who were also photographers, left Germany to reside in Italy is explained by Vicki Goldberg in 'A Man-Made Arcadia Enshrining Male Beauty', *New York Times* (13 August 2000), 'Art/Architecture' section, pp.30-31: 'Germany in the 1880s was still prosecuting men for nude sunbathing, but in Sicily, male children ordinarily went nude on the beach, and most Mediterranean countries tacitly accepted homosexuality as a passing phase in a boy's development' (p.30). She also comments on von Gloeden's success as a photographer:

Not bad for a man who might have well been arrested for child pornography in our supposedly more tolerant and certainly less wilfully innocent culture. Von Gloeden was interested only in young boys and early adolescents [...] He photographed some of the same models for years but usually stopped doing so as they reached early manhood. A couple of young children who cannot be much more than 5 or 6 also turn up in his photographs. (P.31)

'Von Gloeden, a young Prussian country squire, left his homeland for Italy to regain his physical (he suffered from a disabling lung condition) and mental health (the psychological distress he experienced as a pederast unable to indulge his erotic fantasies)' — 'Wilhelm von Gloeden' [Exhibition press release], Throckmorton Fine Art, New York City, NY (exhibition of 12 July – 9 September 2000).

² Goldberg, p.30.

³ As quoted in Ann Thwaite, *Edmund Gosse: A Literary Landscape, 1849-1928* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1984), p.323. I wish to thank Dr Rictor Norton for corresponding with me regarding this point. According to d'Arch Smith, Symonds made such gifts to others as well, as a sign of friendship and understanding: 'Symonds was extremely kind to [Charles Kains] Jackson, [and] sent him photographs of nude Italian youths from the studios of von Gloeden and others' (p.18). It should be noted that von Gloeden's photographs were not always treated as mere pornography: 'His work was shown in international exhibitions and published in art journals, which doubtless preferred the more discreet images' (Goldberg, p.30). The details I have provided for each of Wilhelm von Gloeden's photographs reproduced here — photographs von Gloeden produced in multiple copies — merely accounts for one of the extant prints. These details come from

exchanges and glances, though the Uranians had, it must be admitted, ‘the ability to devise elegant stratagems to legitimize sexual display’.¹ It is difficult to imagine an ‘elegant stratagem’ that would have ‘legitimized’ Gosse’s constant peeping at a nude, provocatively posed Sicilian boy during Browning’s funeral — however, for the Uranians the danger was half the pleasure.²

‘All things I love are dangerous’³ was a self-assessment by Marc-André Raffalovich, a young poet from Paris who, after moving to England, joined the Uranian circle despite Sidney Colvin’s warning ‘to have nothing to do with Symonds or Pater, a warning the recipient ostentatiously ignored’.⁴ Besides being a collector of ‘dangerous’ friends, Raffalovich was also an avid collector of their ‘dangerous’ works, exercising much the same discrimination that Pater praises in his review of Colvin’s *Children in Italian and English Design*: ‘You feel that beyond mere knowledge, mere intellectual discrimination, each [phase of art] is a distinct thing for [Colvin], and yields him a distinct savour’.⁵ In this volume that Pater reviewed, Colvin considers at length the ways that William Blake’s texts and illustrations form decorative units: this very quality, to a lesser extent, has proven the ‘distinct savour’, the saving grace of the ‘dangerous’ Uranian collectables that Colvin’s friend Raffalovich so loved. In the twentieth century and today, those Uranian collectables, whether visual or textual, have become most prized, though for different, more respectable reasons, especially concerning the textual: fine papers, exquisite bindings, and general rarity (making it no surprise that the only chronicler of the Uranians, Timothy d’Arch Smith, has been both a collector and a dealer in rare books).⁶ As a result, many of the Uranian works — so ostentatious, so well crafted, so elegant — have disappeared into private collections such as Stein’s or have not surfaced again since auctions over fifty years ago.

Peter Weiermair, ed. with intro., *Wilhelm von Gloeden: Erotische Photographien* (Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 1993).

¹ Goldberg, p.31.

² George Meredith wrote a poem commemorating Browning’s funeral, ‘Now Dumb Is He Who Walked the World to Speak’. This poem does not mention Gosse’s prurient asides.

³ Marc-André Raffalovich, ‘Lovelace’ (from *In Fancy Dress*, 1886) — reprinted in Reade, p.199.

⁴ Donoghue, p.44. On 7 June 1894, *The Blackmailers*, a homoerotically-tinged play by Raffalovich and his lover John Gray, received its first-and-only performance at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Coventry Street, London. The play appears in Laurence Senelick, ed., *Lovesick: Modernist Plays of Same-Sex Love, 1894-1925* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁵ Walter Pater, [Review of] ‘*Children in Italian and English Design* by Sidney Colvin (London, 1872)’, reprinted in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 4th edn, ed. by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp.191-95 (p.195).

⁶ Notably, Timothy d’Arch Smith — himself an avid collector — managed The Times Bookshop, London; then later, with Jean Overton Fuller, Fuller d’Arch Smith Ltd. Rare Books. Through unprecedented access to rare materials in stately homes, libraries, and antiquarian establishments, d’Arch Smith extensively catalogued, appraised, and sold the choicest of printed works. *Love in Earnest* arose, in part, from this rare access.

The following is merely a recent example. In 2002, William Dailey Rare Books of Los Angeles sold, for \$2,000, Raffalovich's own copy of Sayle's poem *Bertha: A Story of Love*, published in a limited edition by Kegan Paul in 1885. What is of interest to a book collector is its

orig. blue cloth, lettered in gilt, blocked in gilt with a device of a sail (a pun on the author's name) designed by [Edward] Burne-Jones. 1 corner worn, light wear to boards, several spots of foxing to flyleaf, otherwise fine. With 3 bookplates of Marc-André Raffalovich, rubber-stamp of the Dominican fathers, & the bookplate of Timothy d'Arch Smith.¹

Such is the view of an antiquarian, whose concern is often only with curio and rarity. However, to a scholar or biographer of the Uranian movement, this book is nearly priceless (prompting more than puzzlement that d'Arch Smith saw fit to part with it as a mere commodity), for it bears three bookplates affixed by Raffalovich, to whom the book was originally presented. The book's ultimate value is not contained in its ornamental binding, but in the traces it provides of a line of Uranian descent, exchange, and intimacy, linking undeniably Sayle and Raffalovich.²

Another striking example of such a volume is William Johnson's *Ionica*, a 'classic paean to romantic paiderastia',³ privately printed in a limited edition by Smith, Elder & Co. in 1858, and bound together with *Ionica II* in 1877, a copy of which was recently for sale by R. F. G. Hollett & Son, a bookseller in Sedburgh, Cumbria, for \$1,557 (another copy, in a less exquisite binding, was recently for sale by William Dailey Rare Books for a mere \$1,000).⁴ However, those volumes all pale into antiquarian insignificance next to the copy of *Ionica* for sale for \$60,000 by John Windle Antiquarian Bookseller of San Francisco, whose catalogue entry reads:

Small 8vo, 169 x 105 mm. Full blue morocco extra, covers semé with a field of tiny gilt dots (tool 5m), gilt borders of tiny three-pointed leaves (tool 7d) and dots, flat back with bands tooled in six panels, lettered in gilt, gilt edges gauffed with same three-pointed leaf tool, turn-ins tooled at the corners, signed in the back 18C*S89. Enclosed in a later cloth box, a superb copy, essentially flawless.

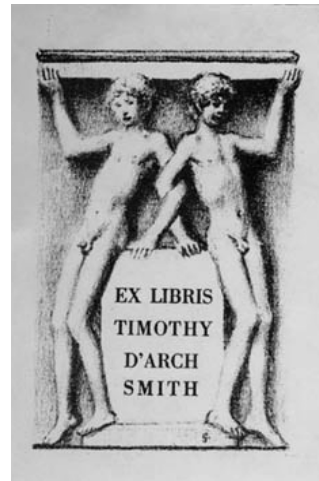
¹ I wish to thank Steve Gertz of William Dailey Rare Books for corresponding with me regarding this particular copy's catalogue description and for providing me with details about its sale. It is my hope that, by reproducing several of its identifiable bookplates, a collector will, sometime in the future, recognise its cultural value and arrange for it to be housed in a permanent collection.

² See d'Arch Smith, pp.77-78; 103, note 92.

³ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.114.

⁴ Hollett & Son's bookseller number: 45712. Dailey's bookseller inventory number: 8114. These were for sale through a consortium of booksellers at <www.abebooks.com> [last accessed 25 July 2004].

One of the finest and plainest of all [Cobden Sanderson] bindings. [...] The book has been unlocated since it was commissioned by Bain and sold to the Hon. C. W. Mills M. P. in 1890. Tidcombe 96 ('unlocated'). [...] The last example to have sold was in Breslauer cat. 110, #228 (\$90,000; sold to Otto Schaefer, resold at auction, later with Pirages and sold). 'The greatest English bookbinder since Roger Payne ... bindings by [Cobden Sanderson] himself are of the greatest rarity as most of them are in permanent collections ... [Sanderson] not only renewed the art of bookbinding in the English-speaking world, but also in Europe, except for France'.¹



Marc-André Raffalovich Bookplate

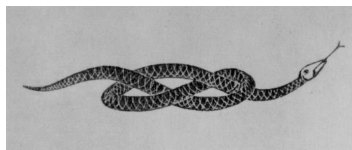
Columbine formed from birds and mask

Austin Osman Spare (1888-1956)

Printed in sepia, ca. 1910

Timothy d'Arch Smith Bookplate

Gaston Goor (1902-77)



Marc-André Raffalovich Bookplate

Coiled Serpent

Eric Gill (1882-1940)

(For demarcating the Uranian volumes in his collection)

¹ This volume was for sale through a consortium of booksellers at <www.polybiblio.com/jrwindle/538.html> [last accessed 25 May 2004].

As the above reveals, the legacy of the Uranians has seen a diaspora, though a diaspora that has served, in a unique way, to preserve that legacy, even if only as mere antiquarian artefacts and collectables — a state of affairs that Michael H. Harris does not consider detrimental, but perhaps beneficial for items of this rarity:

The debt owed by society in general to private collectors of books and manuscripts can hardly be overestimated. Although their range of interest is often narrow and their holdings are for years removed from the public view, the end results of their collecting have proven to be of benefit to all humankind. [...] Moreover, [these books and manuscripts] are often kept in far better condition in private libraries than they would have been in public ones.¹

Beyond the privately printed, the exquisitely bound, and the thoroughly dispersed, the rarest of Uranian texts often existed or still exist only as vulnerable manuscripts, the most significant example of a text that was endangered-then-rescued being Rolfe's *Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*, first published in 1934 in conjunction with A. J. A. Symons's *Quest for Corvo: An Experiment in Biography*. *The Quest for Corvo* chronicles Symons's adventures in unearthing Rolfe's manuscripts and the details of Rolfe's salacious life, details thinly veiled behind the fig-leaf of his *Desire*. Symons's acquisition and preservation of these manuscripts served to resuscitate Rolfe's notoriety, if not his literary standing, and to facilitate his appearance in the *DNB* as the 'vilest person here commemorated'. More recently, Rolfe's literary standing has indeed been enhanced — by the novelist A. S. Byatt, whose *Possession: A Romance*, winner of the 1990 Man Booker Prize for Fiction, was heavily inspired by Symons's 'detectival adventure'. Further, Byatt provided the introduction for the recent edition of Symons's *Quest for Corvo*, an introduction that trumpets the value of this experimental biography of Rolfe: '[I] reread it every few years [...] I have learned much from it about how to construct novels and how to think about human lives'.² For Symons, the grail of his search for the particulars of Rolfe's life was a manuscript novel chronicling Rolfe's period in Venice, a novel that Symons dubs '[Rolfe's] last self-portrait'.³ Had that manuscript been destroyed — 'Rolfe's brothers Herbert and Percy saw the novel; Percy recommended burning it'⁴ — the loss would have been substantial; for, as d'Arch Smith observes, *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole* is 'one of the finest homosexual

¹ Michael H. Harris, *The History of Libraries in the Western World*, 4th edn (London: Scarecrow, 1999), p.159.

² A. S. Byatt, 'Introduction' to A. J. A. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo: An Experiment in Biography* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001 [1934]), pp.ix-xvi (p.ix).

³ A. J. A. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo: An Experiment in Biography* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001 [1934]), p.261.

⁴ *Desire*, p.xviii.

novels ever written'.¹ Replace the word 'homosexual' with 'paederastic', and that statement becomes blatantly accurate.



Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo)

As far as Rolfe's novel is concerned, it is best to forgo any comment on the impish joy that its protagonist Nicholas Crabbe derives from exposing the hypocrisies of the other English expatriates in Venice and from throwing vitriol on his former friends back in England — both of which constitute substantial portions of the text. What is more striking, for the present consideration, is Nicholas's relationship with his gondolier, 'such an ordinary-looking working-boy [...] such an innocent expert well-knit frank boy' (*Desire*, p.52), a boy with only one flaw:

[Nicholas] always laid singular and particular stress upon the influence of her phenomenally perfect boyishness — not her sexlessness, nor her masculinity, but her boyishness [...] She looked like a boy: she could do, and did do, boy's work, and did it well: she had been used to pass as a boy, and to act as a boy; and she preferred it: that way lay her taste and inclination: she was competent in that capacity. [...] A youth knows and asserts his uneasy virility: a girl assiduously insinuates her femininity. [Gilda] came into neither category. She was simply a splendid strapping boy — excepting for the single fact that she was not a boy, but a girl. (Pp.48-49)

This is Uranian 'self-fashioning' taking a rather Elizabethan twist, for the ensuing dalliance and the eventual erotic consummation that concludes the novel would have been untenable if Zildo the boy-gondolier were not, in actuality, the boyish Gilda whom Nicholas had pulled from a pile of rubble after an earthquake, an act that drove the resuscitated Gilda to swear her perpetual servitude in the only

¹ D'Arch Smith, p.xix.

capacity in which Nicholas needed a servant — as his gondolier.¹ However, after this episode has been duly explained and its import supplied, the writer and the reader proceed to forget that the boy is not a boy, which brings them into constant proximity — but only proximity — with the ultimate object of Rolfe's desire:

[Zildo's] cleansing operations [on the boat] brought him near his master's chair. He crept balancing along the gunwale with his cloth, to polish the prow. As he came crawling back, a little shy breath of night sighingly lifted and spread the splendour of the fair plume waving in noble ripples on his brow. Nicholas had a sudden impulse to blow it, just for the sensuous pleasure of seeing its beauty in movement again — it was within a hand's length of his lips.

'To land', he instantly commanded, checking himself with a shock, sternly governing mind with will. [...] But, perhaps Zildo would not have snubbed him? 'So much the worse, o fool! Hast thou time or occasion for dalliance?' Thus, he reined up his soul, prone to sink, prompt to soar.

(*Desire*, pp.107-08)

Or this scene, more tauntingly tactile and sensual:

And then, all of a sudden, on this iridescent morning of opals in January, when the lips of Zildo touched the hand of Nicholas, owner of lips and owner of hand experienced a single definite shock: an electric shiver tingled through their veins: hot blood went surging and romping through their hearts: a blast, as of rams' horns, sang in their ears and rang in their beings; and down went all sorts of separations. They were bewitched. They were startled beyond measure. [...] [Nicholas] thrust the whole affair out of his mind. Zildo was worthy of all praise — as a servant. And — custodia oculorum — it might be as well not to look at Zildo quite so much. (Pp.122-23)

The passages above display typical Uranian posturing — an aesthetic proximity to the object of desire without that voyeuristic distance being transgressed — 'History As It Ought To Have Been And Very Well Might Have Been, But Wasn't'. For, to come too close often brought the actual into absolute contrast with the thing desired, but not always. Rolfe's letters from Venice — private, but fortunately not destroyed — display how this desired proximity found itself expressed in everyday life, 'History As It Was':

A Sicilian ship was lying alongside the quay and armies of lusty youths were dancing down long long planks with sacks on their shoulders which they delivered in a warehouse ashore. The air was filled with a cloud of fine white floury dust from the sacks which powdered the complexions of their carriers

¹ Robb writes: 'The commonest ruse was to alter the apparent sex of a character. A surprising amount of homosexual passion was portrayed by means of this simple device. The male object[] of love in [...] Rolfe's *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole* may turn out to be [a] female but, as far as emotional realities are concerned, this is a mere technicality' (p.214).

most deliciously and the fragrance of it was simply heavenly. As I stopped to look a minute one of the carriers attracted my notice. They were all half naked and sweating. I looked a second time as his face seemed familiar. He was running up a plank. And he also turned to look at me. Seeing my gaze he made me a sign for a cigarette. I grabbed at my pockets but hadn't got one; and shook my head. He ran on into the ship. I ran off to the nearest baccy shop and came back with a packet of cigs and a box of matches to wait at the foot of his plank. Presently he came down the plank dancing staggering under a sack. I watched him. Such a lovely figure, young, muscular, splendidly strong, big black eyes, rosy face, round black head, scented like an angel. As he came out again running (they are watched by guards all the time) I threw him my little offering. 'Who are you?' '*Amadeo Amadei*' (lovely mediæval name). The next time, 'What are you carrying?' '*Lily-flowers for soap-making*'. The next time, 'Where have I seen you?' '*Assistant gondolier one day with Piero last year*' — then — '*Sir, Round Table*' [the name of a paederastic brothel]. [...] I'm going to that ship again to-morrow morning. I want to know more.¹

Did Rolfe return the next day? If so, did this lead to more than cigarettes, rapid banter, and insinuation? Had the next letter been destroyed as Rolfe had requested, the answers to these questions would have remained forever elusive: but, it was not. Returning the next day, Rolfe invited the boy to an empty wine-shop where, while the proprietor slept, the boy performed a strip tease, told Rolfe about his erotic adventures and techniques, and boldly offered himself to Rolfe in whatever way he might desire, without charge.² This was a moment pregnant with possibilities. However, despite their shared arousal, they never even touched, which allowed Rolfe to revel instead in the voyeuristic spectacle and its potential, allowed him to experience an aesthetic proximity to the object of his desire without that distance being transgressed — for Rolfe desired much more than touches, or seemed to.

¹ From Frederick Rolfe's letter to C[harles Masson Fox], [ca. November 1909], *The Venice Letters*, ed. with intro. by Cecil Woolf (London: Cecil & Amelia Woolf, 1974), p.27. In his introduction, C. Woolf writes:

It is quite clear that Rolfe was at this time obsessed with adolescent boys. It is obvious that Masson Fox was also strongly attracted to boys. 'That homosexual underworld', of which A. J. A. Symons tells us that Rolfe 'stood self-revealed as patron', was in fact a little circle of three or four young, ragged lads ('simple little devils', Rolfe calls them) in their late 'teens, with whom he was on terms of intimate friendship. Besides these he refers in passing to half-a-dozen others. He delighted in picking their brains and listening to their tales. Symons also claims that Rolfe had become 'a habitual corrupter of youth' and 'a seducer of innocence', but the letters reveal that all three youths were practised initiates long before Rolfe set foot in Venice and so were neither innocent nor chaste. But they were genuinely fond of Rolfe and eager to meet a friend who shared their tastes. (P.11)

The closest friend of Charles Masson Fox (1866-1935) was the painter Henry Scott Tuke.

² [Letter to C.], 28 November 1909, *Venice Letters*, pp.28-33.



Portrait of Tito Biondi at Lake Nimi
 Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo) (1860-1913)
 Photograph, ca. 1890-92
 Private collection

Such illicit spectacles and their attendant pleasures — ‘what was going on in the dirty alleyways of Venice’ — were what had turned this locality, for the Late Victorians and beyond, into the pederastic stage. This Venetian ambiance, with its potential for flagrant dalliance with willing boys like Amadeo, was what inspired Rolfe to write *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole* and to wander about those ‘dirty alleyways’, refusing to leave the city despite his frequent destitution, his squandered fortunes and talents, his bouts with pneumonia. After his death, he would become a permanent fixture of the city, interred on San Michele, the cemetery island of Venice.¹ Like Mann’s Gustav von Aschenbach, Rolfe would die with his imagination scanning a shoreline full of young gondoliers and bathing boys, still waiting for his own Tadzio or Zildo, a boy who would offer more than physical caresses, a *Divo Amico Ignoto Desideratissimo* — ‘The Divine Friend, Unknown, Most Desired’. This ‘Divine Friend’ was, in fact, the fictive beloved to whom Rolfe dedicated his novel *Don Renato: An Ideal Content: A Historical Romance* (1909).² These two aspects — the ‘unknown’ and the ‘most desired’ — encapsulate the Uranian movement and its elusiveness,

¹ According to a letter from British Consul Gerald Campbell to Rolfe’s brother, the coroner listed the cause of death as ‘heart failure’ (as quoted in Symons, p.245). His *DNB* entry claims ‘he died of a stroke’.

² Frederick Rolfe, *Don Renato: An Ideal Content: A Historical Romance* (London: [Unofficially by Francis Griffiths], 1909), dedication.

encapsulate its desire for physical contact as well as for romance, its desire for self-protection as well as to be known, this last aspect often pondered by Mann in his diaries:

Why do I write this? In order simply to destroy it all at some appropriate time before I die? Or because I wish the world to *know* me? I believe the world does know me more than it lets on, at least the cognoscenti do, without needing this much more from me.¹

If this strand of paederastic writers is ever to be engaged or known properly, it will probably be through Gerard Manley Hopkins, for only in the case of Hopkins do we find poetry of grandeur blended with Uranian sentiment. Laid alongside Hopkins's poetry, the poetry of the others seems facile, the prose equally so (despite the costliness of their volumes and the mastery displayed in their bindings), such that only in Walter Pater — and to a limited extent in Henry James (1843-1916) — does this sentiment ever reach high art. However, it is because of three other aspects that Hopkins also lends himself to such a choice. Firstly, Hopkins detested the 'self-fashioning' distinctly this group's, or at least claimed to (a degree of doubt will be thrown on this in 'Chapter Two'). While Rolfe's *nom de plume* 'Baron Corvo' allowed him to be both playful and scathing,² its absence allowed Hopkins to maintain a self-honesty equally comic and brutal. It is this degree of honesty that makes Hopkins unique among the Uranians, recalling his boyhood motto, 'To be rather than seem'.³ Secondly, Hopkins almost always speaks from his own distinct perspective, unlike Pater who 'rarely speaks for himself; normally he lets his feelings emerge from his attention to something else, a group of paintings, a story from Greece, Lamb's essays, Sir Thomas Browne's tone, Wordsworth's poems'.⁴ Thirdly, as an anonymous reviewer made clear half a century ago in *The Times Literary Supplement*: 'Rarely has a poet attracted such a burden of documentation and

¹ As translated in Schmidgall, 'Death', pp.315-16.

² It is interesting to note that, in Rolfe's pseudo-pseudonym of 'Baron Corvo', *Corvo* is Italian for 'raven'. The only pseudonym Hopkins ever employed, as in *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, was 'Brân Maenefa', Welsh for 'crow (or raven) of Maenefa'.

³ As quoted in Norman White, *Hopkins: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, p.387.

⁴ Donoghue, p.308. In 'Pater's Sadness', *Raritan*, 20.2 (2000), pp.136-58, Jacques Khalip writes:

Pater remains as impenetrable as the subjects he writes about: the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Rossetti, the landscapes of Leonardo, Botticelli, the School of Giorgione, and the sculptures of Michelangelo. As with all these artists, that which is absent in Pater is precisely that which must be attended to, as if it were vividly present. Pater reminds us of our own anonymity and secrecy, our fear that our most private lives and feelings will never be understood and justly appreciated, and even more, that our discretions are activities of possible oppression. (P.138)

commentary'.¹ Hopkins's poems, letters, journals, confession notes, and the 'biographically known', such as his perpetual friendship with Pater, allow for a fuller reconstruction of his Uranian desires and his responses to them than is possible for Uranians such as Rolfe or Pater, with Wilde perhaps serving as the only other Uranian who lends himself to such attention, despite his praise, emanating from the mouth of Vivian in *The Decay of Lying*, for 'the temper of the true liar, with his frank, fearless statements, his superb irresponsibility, his healthy, natural disdain of proof of any kind!'² However, Wilde has been thoroughly subjected to such or similar considerations — though most critics have avoided the paederastic dimension of his desires as much as possible.

Hopkins is the most obvious bull's eye for future Uranian scholarship, which is made pointedly clear by a manuscript ditty found among his papers after his death:

Denis,
Whose motionable, alert, most vaulting wit
Caps occasion with an intellectual fit.
Yet Arthur is a Bowman: his three-heeled timber'll hit
The bald and bold blinking gold when all's done
Right rooting in the bare butt's wincing navel in the sight of the sun.
(*OET*, p.155)

'His three-heeled timber [...] Right rooting in the bare butt's wincing navel' is a fitting description of the pedicating on the Warren Cup, pointedly phallic and anal imagery that most Victorian scholars hope not to see 'bald and bold' in 'the sight of the sun'.³ For most scholars, the salacious is best ignored, especially in terms of these Uranians, though this is difficult to do in Hopkins's case, since his letters, journals, and confession notes augment the erotic subtexts, or 'underthoughts', of his poetry, with his main subtext continually surfacing, as it does in a letter to his friend Coventry Kersey Deighton Patmore (1823-96):

Everyone has some one fault he is tender to and vice he tolerates. We do this ourselves, but when another does it towards another vice not our own favourite (of tolerance, I do not say of commission) we are disgusted. The *Saturday Review* contrasting the Catholic and Protestant ideal of a schoolboy came out

¹ Anonymous, 'Rare Ill-Broker'd Talent', *Times Literary Supplement* (25 September 1959), p.544.

² Oscar Wilde, *The Decay of Lying*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.1071-92 (p.1072).

³ Swaab writes: 'Hopkins never intended to publish the poem, and probably had no notion that a post-Freudian readership might take it as a quiet reverie about buggery' (pp.48-49). MacKenzie merely notes: 'Thumb-nail sketches of two boys or men (Mt. St Mary's? Stonyhurst? Oxford?)'. MacKenzie also notes that the seeming wordplay on 'Arthur Bowman' and 'Denis Capps or Capes' has not yet led to any attributions (*OET*, p.398, note).

with the frank truth, that it looked on chastity as a feminine virtue (= lewdness a masculine one: it was not quite so raw as I put it, but this was the meaning).
(24 September 1883, *Letters* III, p.308)¹

Directly after observing that ‘everyone has some one fault he is tender to and vice he tolerates’ — an observation that could easily have provided Hopkins with a full plethora of human faults and vices on which to comment — he turns immediately to the question of the ‘ideal of a schoolboy’, to the question of schoolboy lewdness and its toleration at public schools, a toleration that another poet, Rupert Brooke (1887-1915), was later reported to have observed while temporarily a housemaster at Rugby: ‘What is the whole duty of a housemaster? To prepare boys for Confirmation, and turn a blind eye on sodomy’.² Obviously, Hopkins never strays very far from a proximity to the ‘fault he is tender to’, the ‘fault’ that provides his Uranian theme. This proximity is evident in the last paragraph he ever wrote to his closest friend Robert Seymour Bridges (1844-1930):

Who is Miss Cassidy? She is an elderly lady who by often asking me down to Monasterevan and by the change and holiday her kind hospitality provides is become one of the props and struts of my existence. [...] Outside Moore Abbey, which is a beautiful park, the country is flat, bogs and river and canals. [...] The country has nevertheless a charm. The two beautiful young people live within an easy drive. (29 April 1889, *Letters* I, pp.305-06)

With typical Uranian finesse, Hopkins constructs here a description both playful and telling, undoubtedly leaving Bridges to wonder whether the Monasterevan countryside, for all its flatness and bogginess, ‘has nevertheless a charm’ — or, whether the Monasterevan countryside ‘has nevertheless a charm’, one charm, that two beautiful young people live nearby, particularly ‘the youngest boy Leo [Wheble] [...] a remarkably winning sweetmannered young fellow’ (Letter to his mother, 25 December 1887, *Letters* III, p.183). Hopkins can often be found tantalisingly close to the object of his paederastic desires, in proximity to countryside dangers moral or sexual, ‘within an easy drive’.

¹ In March 1882, the *Journal of Education* published a lengthy letter, signed ‘Olim Etonensis’, arguing that educators should ‘let well alone’ and not interfere in the immoral practices (the ‘lewdness’ to which Hopkins refers) of the boys in their charge, since these practices have no lingering repercussions (*Journal of Education*, 152.49 (1882), pp.85-86) (see d’Arch Smith, p.2). See also Vern and Bonnie Bullough, ‘Homosexuality in Nineteenth Century English Public Schools’, in *Homosexuality in International Perspective*, ed. by Joseph Harry and Man Singh Das (New Delhi, India: Vikas, 1980), pp.123-31; John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Alisdare Hickson, *The Poisoned Bowl: Sex, Repression and the Public School System* (London: Constable, 1995).

² As quoted in John Knowler, *Trust an Englishman* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1972), pp.121-22.

However, the city could also afford such dangers — and a diary entry made by Mark Pattison (1813-84; Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford) on 5 May 1878 leaves one to wonder how Hopkins, appointed to a Jesuit curacy in Oxford in December of the same year, could later claim so nonchalantly: ‘By the by when I was at Oxford Pater was one of the men I saw most of’ (22 May 1880, *Letters* III, p.246). Pattison’s diary entry reads:

To Pater’s to tea, where Oscar Browning [...] was more like Socrates than ever. He conversed in one corner with 4 feminine looking youths ‘paw dandling’ there in one fivesome, while the Miss Paters & I sate looking on in another corner — Presently Walter Pater, who, I had been told, was ‘upstairs’ appeared, attended by 2 more youths of similar appearance.¹

Oscar Browning (1837-1923), who had been sacked from Eton in September 1875 under suspicion of paederasty, partly because of his involvement with young George Nathaniel Curzon (1859-1925; later Viceroy of India)², ‘paw dandling’ with four feminine youths in a corner — that was a rather tactile situation to be certain. Pater, who was said to be ‘upstairs’ (an area beyond the bounds of even the closest of Victorian guests), reappearing with two feminine youths in tow — that was a rather dangerous situation to be certain. These teatime asides seem to have been excessive for Pattison and worthy of comment — but for Hopkins? Well, the only extant letter between Hopkins and Pater is Pater’s acceptance of an invitation to dinner — at no less discreet a place than the Jesuit presbytery (*Facsimiles* II, p.176). One could anticipate the tabloid headline: ‘High Priest of the Decadents Visits Priest of the Jesuits for Curious,

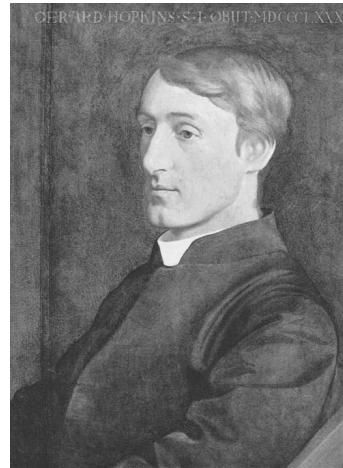
¹ As quoted in *The Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. by Lawrence Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p.xxxiv.

² ‘Oscar Browning was dismissed from Eton — for insubordination, according to the official explanation, for pederastic excess, according to the unofficial one. Browning was the friend of Pater and the patron of Simeon Solomon, whose painting “Bacchus” was inspired by the trip to Italy he took with Browning. Thanks to the influence of powerful friends, Browning was able to secure a new post at King’s College, Cambridge’ (Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s’, pp.7-8). For a detailed account of this, see Ian Anstruther, *Oscar Browning: A Biography* (London: John Murray, 1983), especially the chapters ‘Greek Love and George Curzon’ and ‘Ruined and Disgraced’, pp.55-80; David Gilmour, *Curzon* (London: John Murray, 1994), especially the chapter ‘Passionate Resolves: Eton, 1872-78’, pp.12-22. ‘His intimate, indiscreet friendship with a boy in another boarding-house, G. N. Curzon — later the politician and viceroy — provoked a crisis with [Headmaster] Hornby [...] Amid national controversy he was dismissed in 1875 on the pretext of administrative inefficiency but actually because his influence was thought to be sexually contagious’ (Richard Davenport-Hines, ‘Oscar Browning’, *DNB*). In later life, Curzon would claim, ‘Whatever I am, I owe it all to Mr. Browning’ — as quoted in Kenneth Rose, *Curzon: A Most Superior Person* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p.33. For further information about William Johnson (*later* Cory) and Oscar Browning, see Christopher Hollis, *Eton: A History* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1960), pp.276-84.

Ecumenical Dinner'. Wilde always praised 'feasting with panthers'¹; and Hopkins, as well as Wilde, would have readily recognised a Decadent allusion to 'pa—t—er—' hidden within that dangerous phrase. Hopkins's 'feasting with Pater' poses an enigma for any biography of the poet, but there are four other aspects that further constitute Hopkins's unique problematics: his use of poetical puzzles, his fluid personality, his often impish impiety, and his manuscript burnings. To these problematics, the next chapter will turn.



Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.



Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.
 Harry Ellis Wooldridge (1845-1917)
 Oil on canvas, 1887
 Private collection

¹ 'People thought it dreadful of me to have entertained at dinner the evil things of life, and to have found pleasure in their company. But they [...] were delightfully suggestive and stimulating. It was like feasting with panthers. The danger was half the excitement' — from *De Profundis* [January – March 1897], in *The Soul of Man and Prison Writings*, ed. by Isobel Murray (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.38-158 (p.132).



L'Amour prenant un papillon
Antoine-Denis Chaudet (1763-1810)
Finished by Pierre Cartellier (1757-1831)
White marble, 1817
(Plaster model shown at the 1802 Salon)
Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

— Chapter Two —

‘Problems So Beautifully Ingenious’: Hopkins and Uranian Problematics

A Poem on a Dinner Acceptance: Hopkins and Issues of Uranian Scholarship

All art is at once surface and symbol.
Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.
Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.
(Oscar Wilde, Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)¹

On the surface, Gerard Manley Hopkins’s fragmentary poem ‘[Who Shaped These Walls]’ is a partial draft on a scrap of paper, the only extant letter between himself and Walter Pater, Pater’s aforementioned acceptance of an invitation to dinner (*Facsimiles* II, p.176). Although merely a fragment of their friendship and of Victorian cordiality, beneath its surface of ink and formality there is a faint expression of peril, peril involving the disclosure of those homoerotic and paederastic sensibilities that these two friends had in common. As a symbol, this letter and its poem serve as the solitary occasion directly connecting Pater, leader of the Aesthetes and Decadents into the 1890s, with the poetry of Hopkins, once his student, forever his friend. If engaged symbolically — as if written with Pater in mind, though not for Pater to read² — Hopkins’s poem becomes more insightful than improvisational, a glimpse into the ways Pater maintained his discretion amidst the perils inherent to deviance during the Victorian period:

Who shaped these walls has shewn
The music of his mind,
Made know, though thick through stone,
What beauty beat behind.

[....]

¹ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.17-159 (p.17).

² In a letter to Robert Bridges, 29 January 1879, Hopkins retorts: ‘Can you suppose I should send Pater a discipline wrapped up in a sonnet “with my best love”? Would it not be mad?’ (*Letters* I, p.62). This suggests that Hopkins would never have shown the above poem to Pater, even if he had finished it.

Who built these walls made known
 The music of his mind,
 Yet here he has but shewn
 His ruder-rounded rind.
 His brightest blooms lie there unblown
 His sweetest nectar hides behind. (Lines 1-4; 37-42)

Noteworthy here is a passage from Pater's then-infamous 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance*, a passage from which Hopkins's fragmentary poem seems to have derived both its theme and its diction:

Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.
 (1893, pp.187-88)¹

How often had Pater, like 'a solitary prisoner', retreated behind 'his ruder-rounded rind', disguising or sublimating his most impassioned expressions, 'his brightest blooms [lying] there unblown', homoerotic and paederastic blooms dripping the 'sweetest nectar', though hidden behind either the thick wall of Victorian normalcy or a 'personality through which no real voice has ever pierced'? Hopkins was one of the few who could have aptly answered that question, for he was Pater's former student and later friend. However, for a modern reader to discover the 'brightest blooms' and the 'sweetest nectar' of an individual like Pater — an individual who had had to live amidst societal dangers and a necessity to hide discreetly his 'real voice', 'the music of his mind' — a reader must loosen those textual walls, those barriers Pater has wrought around his erotic garden. A reader must ignore his Wildean warnings that 'trespassers will be prosecuted' or that 'those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril'. A clue is usually provided, a textual chink through which the 'real voice' of a Pyramus like Hopkins, Pater, or Wilde can be heard to 'fling out broad [his] name'² — or at least to whisper it.

Using Hopkins as the 'representative Uranian' (for reasons previously explained), this chapter will explore four aspects of Hopkins's life and poetry that thwart a ready discovery of such a textual chink: the first involves his use of poetical puzzles, puzzles that thwart a straightforward reading; the second involves his fluid personality, a personality that thwarts identity taxonomies; the third involves his often impish impiety, an impiety that thwarts all seriousness;

¹ This passage first appeared, nearly verbatim, in Walter Pater [anonymously published], 'Poems by William Morris', *Westminster Review*, 34 (October 1868), pp.300-12, (pp.310-11).

² From Hopkins's '[As Kingfishers Catch Fire]', line 4.

the fourth involves his manuscript burnings, burnings that thwart a proper literary or biographical post-mortem.

‘Like the Plain Shaft’: Hopkins and Issues of Inversion

Decadence, burdened by freedom, invents harsh new limits, psychosexual and artistic. [...] Decadence takes western sexual personae to their ultimate point of hardness and artificiality [...] the aggressive eye pinning and freezing nature’s roiling objects.

(Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae*)¹

To appreciate the problems of applying a theory, any theory, to the Uranian and/or Decadent writers presently under consideration, particularly Gerard Manley Hopkins, consider an article co-written by two prominent linguists, Mick Short and Willie van Peer — ‘Accident! Stylisticians Evaluate: Aims and Methods of Stylistic Analysis’. The following is their explanation of the method by which they plan to test the validity of Stylistic Analysis:

Unlike literary critics, stylisticians often assume that their work is independent of value judgments. [...] The experiment described here was also based on this assumption. The general aim was to put the two experimenters in the kind of position that new readers of a poem would be in. To this end, a third party was invited to choose a poem (randomly, out of a set of poetry volumes) and tell us its title in order to check that we were not familiar with it. The poem selected was ‘Inversnaid’ by Gerard Manley Hopkins.²

On pages 48-50 of their article, Short and van Peer describe their observations:

Note that the switch from *description* in the first three stanzas [...] to the generalized *question* in the last stanza is accompanied by a switch to the generic and homophoric use of the article.

¹ Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (New York: Vintage, 1991), p.389.

² Mick Short and Willie van Peer, ‘Accident! Stylisticians Evaluate: Aims and Methods of Stylistic Analysis’, in *Reading, Analysing & Teaching Literature*, ed. by Mick Short (London: Longman, 1988), pp.22-71 (p.23).

The verbs in these predicates also show a decrease in activity, from the very active [...] to the passive [...] to the [stative].

A change is effected from intransitive verbs in the first three stanzas to transitive verbs in the final stanza, which have generic noun phrases referring to the nouns of the preceding stanzas as their objects.

Concrete nouns in the first three stanzas [are] replaced by generic nouns in the final stanza.

The adjective in the final stanza does not refer to colour, in contrast to those in the preceding stanzas.

The *Scots words* in the poem [...] heighten the local atmosphere of the Scottish scenery, but note again that such words are completely absent from the final stanza.

Obsolete words are similarly restricted to the three initial stanzas [...] Note that the neologisms decrease in boldness as the poem progresses.

A number of lexical items clearly have *figurative* meanings [...] Again no such cases can be found in the final stanza.

Thus far, Short and van Peer have remained linguistically objective, but page 53 marks a shift from description to evaluation, despite their earlier claim that ‘their work is independent of value judgments’:

[In the last stanza,] there is merely the expression of a vague hope for the wilds of nature, and the symbolism and patterning set up in the previous stanzas is wasted.

What is of essential interest here is that the evidence of the stylistic analysis so far provides good confirmation of the stated expectancies of the readers when dealing with the last stanza of the poem. The fact that their expectancies were not met also leads them to make negative statements about the worth of the poem.

Contrary to normal expectations the text reduces in complexity and entropy as it unfolds.

In this stylistic analysis, evaluations like the following abound — ‘little aesthetic reward’¹ — evaluations that lead to an overall conclusion that ‘hence the elements of this [fourth] stanza cannot be systematically related to (or contrasted with) the elements of the other stanzas, and this causes “Inversnaid” to be less successful than most of Hopkins’ other poems’.² Even eminent Hopkins scholars

¹ Short and van Peer, p.59.

² Ibid., p.65.

have come to nearly the same assessment as these two linguists, as is representatively expressed by Norman White: ‘Hopkins was not satisfied with the poem, and did not mention it to either Bridges or Dixon, neither of whom saw it until after his death’.¹ These conclusions — ‘less successful’, ‘not satisfy[ing]’, ‘little aesthetic reward’ — tell less about the poem itself than about its readers, readers who have not proven satisfactory to the task of successfully recognising this poem as the exquisite puzzle that it is, hence have not gleaned its ‘aesthetic reward’.

For this poem, its context and setting — Inversnaid, ‘Sept. 28 1881’, a Wednesday — are essential to note. After seven weeks at St Joseph’s Church, Glasgow, Hopkins was given two days’ leave, whence he hurried to the eastern shore of Loch Lomond to visit the Inversnaid waterfall for the first time. Norman MacKenzie notes that ‘the poem describes the stream’s course in reverse from its steep and rocky end to its quieter start among the braes around its source, Loch Arklet’ (*OET*, p.425, note). White describes the setting thus:

Arklet Water was wider and fuller than a burn; its peaty-brown waters, descended from Loch Arklet, were added to by burns, noticeably Snaid Burn, and over a course of a mile and a half through narrow valleys of heather and ladder-fern to oak forests, with the occasional birch, ash, and, hanging over the water, rowan, gradually steepened and quickened. There were smaller falls and side pools, with froth, foam, bubbles, and whirls, in rocky basins, before the final, magnificent, high but broken fall into a larger pool just before it entered Loch Lomond. Hopkins first saw the fall from the steamer, and on landing at the pier climbed up the mossy and rocky side of the stream to the narrow road, and then walked along the road inland, following the course of the stream uphill.²

The principal and fatal flaw of the aforementioned stylistic analysis of Hopkins’s ‘Inversnaid’ stems from a mistaken assumption that a waterfall poem should, stylistically, flow towards its climax, a climax of water descending into a lake: in essence, Short and van Peer have provided forty-nine pages of analysis without recognising that this waterfall was poetically constructed backwards. Both MacKenzie and White note what the Stylisticians fail to perceive — since their linguistic methods take into account *no* primary sources such as letters or other documents — that Hopkins approached the Inversnaid waterfall from its terminus, and only later walked uphill and inland towards its source, Loch Arklet. However, what all critics have failed to appreciate is that, at that moment, Hopkins’s genius and intuition met a landscape from which a poetic masterpiece would flow, but backwards.

Four extant letters, to his friends Richard Watson Dixon (1833-1900) and Alexander William Mowbray Baillie (1843-1921), provide details of Hopkins’s encounter with Inversnaid and its waterfall. The first Inversnaid letter — to

¹ Norman White, *Hopkins: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.328.

² *Ibid.*, pp.327-28.

Dixon, dated 26-30 September 1881 — was begun two days before Hopkins wrote ‘Inversnaid’ and finished two days after. It relates:

At Inversnaid (where Wordsworth saw the Highland Girl) on Wednesday I was delivered of an air to [your poem] ‘Does the South Wind’ and jotted it down on Loch Lomond. (*Letters II*, p.65)

The second Inversnaid letter — to Dixon, dated 29 October 1881 — clarifies the state of Hopkins’s adaptation of his friend’s poem into music (a point that will be crucial later):

Does the South Wind [...] is not quite finished and only written in sol-fa score.
(*Letters II*, p.85)

The third Inversnaid letter — to Dixon, dated 30 June 1886 — written half a decade after the second, again comments about this trip to Inversnaid and the resultant music, with Hopkins notably forgetting that he had already told Dixon about this trip, as well as his having begun the music to his friend’s poem there:

I am very slowly but very elaborately working at ‘Does the South Wind’ for solos, chorus, and strings. Some years ago I went from Glasgow, where I was, one day to Loch Lomond and landed at Inversnaid (famous through Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold) for some hours. There I had an inspiration of a tune.
(*Letters II*, p.135)

The fourth Inversnaid letter — to Baillie, dated 7 September 1887 — recounts the impression of this visit upon himself:

For this and other reasons I could wish I were in the Highlands. I never had more than a glimpse of their skirts. I hurried from Glasgow one day to Loch Lomond. The day was dark and partly hid the lake, yet it did not altogether disfigure it but gave a pensive or solemn beauty which left a deep impression on me. I landed at Inversnaid [...] for a few hours and had an inspiration of a very good tune to some lovely words by Canon Dixon, of whose poems (almost unknown) I am a very earnest admirer. (*Letters III*, p.288)

These four letters evince the ‘deep impression’ upon Hopkins of this landscape that inspired a tune, yet make no reference — not even as a passing allusion — to the poem that was also composed there, a poem whose existence was never related, as far as the evidence suggests, to anyone while Hopkins was alive, a poem that survived only as a single, pencilled draft. At the very least, the poem is a complex nature-sketch that could be paraphrased as:

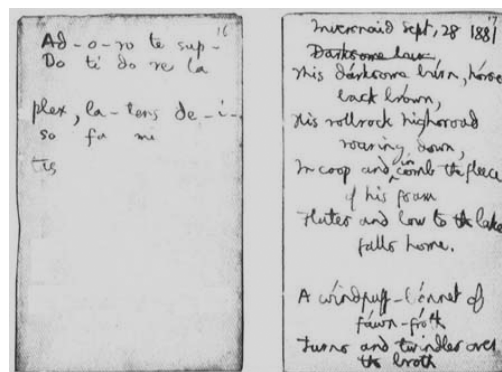
Brown and rippling like a horse’s back, this small and dismal stream loudly gallops downward, its course directed by confining rocks that, as it reaches the waterfall and descends to the lake, separate its foamy fleece like the flutes of a

column. Above the waterfall, the yellowish-brown froth moves about like a wind-blown bonnet, turning and dissipating as the stream swirls into a black pool capable of drowning all in Despair. Directed to this place by the steep banks that surround it — banks where heather, fern and mountain ash grow — the slower stream sprinkles the branches, fronds, and scarlet berries of the foliage with moisture. What would the world be if deprived of its wet and wild qualities? Let nature remain as it is — wet and wild, bountiful in weeds and wilderness.

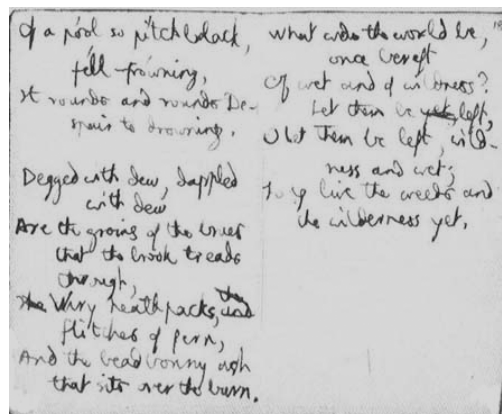
Such is the basic nature-sketch poetically expressed on a few manuscript pages in a pocket-sized booklet measuring a minute 5.5 by 8.9 centimetres, and directly following a 'sol-fa score' for the first Latin line of 'S. Thomae Aquinatis Rhythmus' (the rhymed prayer of St Thomas Aquinas) — '*Adoro te supplex, latens deitas*' (see *OET*, pp.111-14; *Facsimiles II*, p.219)

Manuscript of 'Inversnaid'

H.ii.16^r, 17^r



H.ii.17^v, 18^r



Of great bearing here is whether or not there is some connection between the tonic sol-fa tune for Dixon's poem 'Does the South Wind' (alluded to in the letters above) and the surviving tune for the Latin line '*Adoro te supplex, latens deitas*'. In 'Gerard Manley Hopkins as Musician' (Appendix II of *Journals*, pp.457-97), John Stevens, who attempted to account for and analyse all of Hopkins's musical dabblings, notes that the tune for Dixon's 'Does the South Wind' (titled 'Ruffling Wind' in its published form)¹ is no longer extant (pp.464; 471). Such may not be the case. '*Do ti do re la so fa mi*' — the fragmentary tune on MS. H.ii.16^r, directly preceding the sole autograph of 'Inversnaid' (which begins on H.ii.17^r) — might be, jointly, a tune for St Thomas Aquinas's rhymed prayer and for Dixon's poem. According to this scenario, after noticing an internal similarity between these two texts, Hopkins planned to use some portion of the fragmentary tune of the prayer to set the music for Dixon's poem. If this scenario is correct, then Hopkins 'was delivered of an air to "Does the South Wind" and jotted it down on Loch Lomond', apparently pencilling this tune onto the cover of the tiny booklet while onboard a steamer *approaching* the waterfall. A second scenario would posit that Hopkins's tune for Dixon's poem was written onto another page of that tiny booklet, a missing page that formerly followed the manuscript for 'Inversnaid' (which seems likely if there is no connection between Dixon's poem and the tune for the prayer written on the booklet's cover, with 'Inversnaid' immediately following²). If such is the case, then the tune for Dixon's poem was composed after the sole manuscript of 'Inversnaid', and certainly 'jotted down' by Hopkins while on a steamer returning *from* Inversnaid. The second scenario seems more plausible, since Hopkins wrote that 'at Inversnaid [...] I was delivered of an air to "Does the South Wind"', and subsequently 'jotted it down on Loch Lomond' (which suggests the return trip *from* Inversnaid rather than the initial approach).

The confusing navigation above condenses into the following: if Hopkins's sol-fa tune for Dixon's poem was written, as he claims, 'at Inversnaid [...] on Wednesday' (which is the same Wednesday with which he dates the manuscript of 'Inversnaid' — 'Sept. 28 1881'); and if this sol-fa tune was written into that same small booklet as 'Inversnaid', either before or after the poem (it seems likely that Hopkins had taken this booklet along expressly for such jottings); then the only extant draft of 'Inversnaid' had no predecessors, no prior drafts. Put simply, the sole autograph of 'Inversnaid' (which begins on H.ii.17^r) is either fronted immediately by the fragmentary tune to Dixon's poem (on MS.

¹ 'Ruffling Wind', in Robert Bridges, ed., *Poems by the Late Rev. Dr. Richard Watson Dixon, a Selection with Portrait and a Memoir by Robert Bridges* (London: Smith, Elder, 1909), p.147:

Does the south wind ever know
That he makes the lily blow?
Does the north wind hear the cry
Of the leaf he whirls on high? (Lines 1-4)

² 'The tiny "Inversnaid" booklet has the first Latin line [...] on its cover' (*OET*, p.313).

H.ii.16'), composed on the same Wednesday, with no manuscript pages intervening (pages that would have been necessary for earlier drafts of 'Inversnaid'); or, the sole autograph of 'Inversnaid' was followed immediately by a manuscript page no longer extant, a manuscript page on which was written that tune composed on the same Wednesday (hence, 'Inversnaid' would have been composed before the tune to Dixon's poem). Whichever scenario is endorsed, 'Inversnaid' seems to have been written, in total and on the spot, during the few hours Hopkins spent at Inversnaid, giving the poem a compositional timeframe wedged between his arrival and his departure from Inversnaid, 'a few hours'. Hence, Hopkins's 'Inversnaid' becomes a momentary effusion that spilled onto a few manuscript pages, an impromptu performance no less amazing than Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Twelve Variations in C major on *Ah, vous dirai-je maman* ('Twinkle, twinkle little star'). To claim that the poem was an 'impromptu performance' does not diminish its standing anymore than it would for a piece of Jazz, for Peter Milward is indeed correct that 'this is no chance effusion of the poet, standing by itself in isolation from his other poems'.¹

Why then would such a masterful display of impromptu brilliance have gone unmentioned to even Hopkins's closest friends, especially the poets Dixon and Bridges? To answer this question — and, in consequence, to contradict the evaluations made by both Stylisticians and Hopkins scholars — requires a return to two of those letters Hopkins wrote concerning his trip to Inversnaid.

The second Inversnaid letter — to Dixon, dated 29 October 1881 — also mentions a problem Hopkins perceived as endemic to the English sonnet, an inherent lack of length and proportion:

The reason why the sonnet has never been so effective or successful in England as in Italy I believe to be this: it is not so long as the Italian sonnet; it is not long enough, I will presently say how. Now in the form of any work of art the intrinsic measurements, the proportions, that is, of the parts to one another and to the whole, are no doubt the principal point, but still the extrinsic measurements, the absolute size or quantity goes for something. Thus supposing in the Doric Order the Parthenon to be the standard of perfection, then if the *columns* of the Parthenon have so many semidiameters or modules to their height, the architrave so many, and so on these will be the typical proportions. But if a building is raised on a notably greater scale it will be found that these proportions for the *columns* and the rest are no longer satisfactory, so that one of two things — either the proportions must be changed or the Order abandoned.

(*Letters II*, p.85; emphasis added)

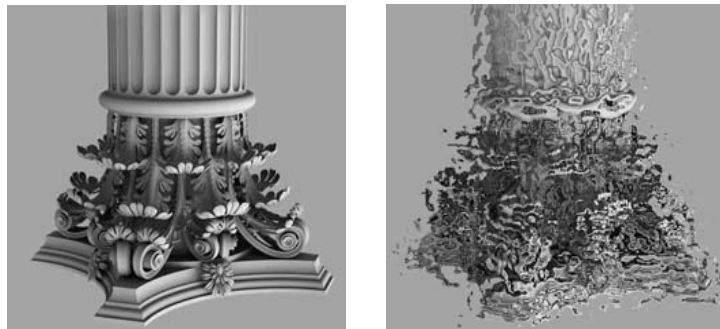
The third Inversnaid letter — to Dixon, dated 30 June 1886 — postulates that sonnets like Thomas Gray's 'Sonnet, On the Death of Mr Richard West' might actually gain in unity (or proportion) by having some portions that are less beautiful than others:

¹ Peter Milward, *Landscape and Inscape: Vision and Inspiration in Hopkins's Poetry*, with photographs by Raymond V. Schoder (London: Elek, 1975), p.76.

The sonnet of Gray's that you ask about is the wellknown one (the only one, I daresay) 'In vain to me': I remarked on its rhythmical beauty [...] Wordsworth says somewhere of it that it is 'evident' the only valuable part of it is (I believe) 'For other notes' and the quatrain that follows. Such a criticism is rude at best, since in a work of art having so strong a unity as a sonnet one part which singly is less beautiful than another part may be as necessary to the whole effect, like the plain shaft in a *column* and so on. But besides what he calls evident is not so, nor true. (*Letters* II, pp.136-37; emphasis added)

The link between these two passages is far more important for a proper understanding and evaluation of Hopkins's 'Inversnaid' than either the inverted landscape description or the long-forgotten tune to Dixon's poem: that link is an architectonic comparison of the English sonnet to a Classical column.

Hopkins's comments about the inadequate length of the English sonnet are particularly important when considering his 'Inversnaid', which is, in many ways, a sonnet with two added lines (especially if a volta exists just before the fourth stanza, the stanza criticised by the Stylisticians for its volta-like change in form and content). In essence, Hopkins seems to have applied his comments about Classical architecture to the English sonnet, recognising that 'either the proportions must be changed or the Order abandoned' and choosing to change the proportions.



Besides conceptually, an inverted Classical column does indeed provide a visual representation of a waterfall, a representation dramatically heightened, as Hopkins explains to Dixon, by making 'one part [...] less beautiful than another', an aesthetic choice 'necessary to the whole effect' if the poem is to be figured 'like the plain shaft in a column' until it reaches its more spectacular and capital effects at its physical ending (which, in the case of his 'Inversnaid', is actually its beginning) — or, in Hopkins's inverted columnar phrasing, till the water 'flutes and low to the lake falls home' (line 4), 'flutes' being, of course, the decorative motif consisting of a series of uniform, vertical incisions in the surface of a Classical column. As early as 1862, a schoolboy Hopkins, writing to his friend

Ernest Hartley Coleridge (1846-1920), reveals his interest in Classical columns: 'I have begun the story of the Corinthian capital' (3 September 1862, *Letters III*, p.13). If extent, this prose history might have shed some light on the present considerations, but it is not.¹

However, 'Inversnaid' is far more than a display of Hopkins's finesse in defamiliarising a landscape by describing its waterfall backwards, perhaps without regard for the expectations of his readers (as the Stylisticians complain) — though Hopkins seems to have had no reader in mind, save himself, for this unconventional and unmentioned poem: as Hopkins once wrote to Bridges, 'a poet is a public in himself' (19 January 1879, *Letters I*, p.59). What follows will posit that Hopkins deconstructed this waterfall for a particular, very personal reason: through it, he found an opportunity to deconstruct his own poetic process, to reveal his own creative impulses and liquidity of mind, to display what he refers to in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', with a sort of verbal pun, as being 'mined with a motion, a drift' (line 27). In essence, Hopkins moves backwards creatively, inspired by the name 'Inversnaid' to express an 'inverse made in verse', inspired to trace his own writing process back to its source. This was, for Hopkins, a movement far too intimate — both emotionally and aesthetically — to allow another poet, even as dear a friend as Robert Bridges, to watch.² Remembering that, in architectural terminology, *scape* is 'the shaft of a column' (from *scapus* or 'stalk' in Latin) (*OED*), the poem's columnar or core meaning, its inscape, is the 'inversion' of Hopkins's own writing process, a sort of poetic deconstruction that might account for its lack of 'theological dimension', a lack to which Milward draws attention: 'There is something

¹ A more recent version of this was written by Charles Warren Lang — *Callimachus: The Story of the Corinthian Capital* (New Albany, IN: Aegean Press, 1983).

² I would, given more space, have argued for reasons beyond the aesthetic. The poem's language and imagery seem partially derived from R. W. Dixon's poem 'Despair', a poem from *Christ's Company and Other Poems* (London: Smith, Elder, 1861), a collection of verse about which Hopkins was impassioned, as he relates to Dixon:

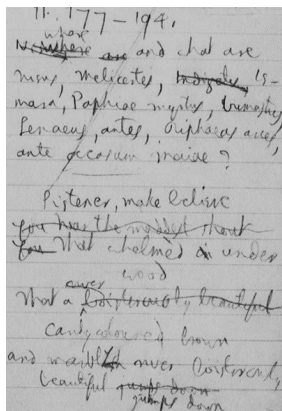
I became so fond of [*Christ's Company*] that I made it, so far as that could be, a part of my own mind. [...] And to shew you how greatly I prized them, when I entered my present state of life [as a Jesuit], in which I knew I could have no books of my own and was unlikely to meet with your works in the libraries I should have access to, I copied out *St. Paul*, *St. John*, *Love's Consolation*, and others from both volumes and keep them by me. (4 June 1878, *Letters II*, p.1)

Consider lines 6-10 of 'Despair':

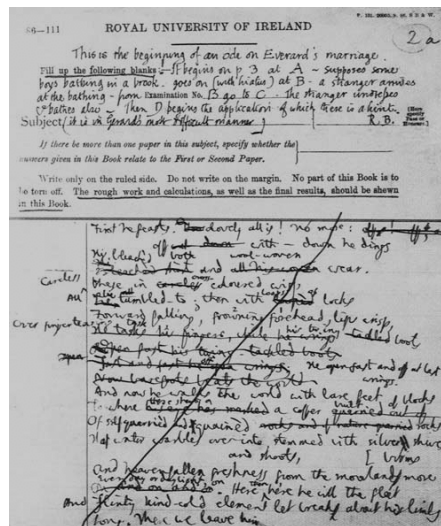
I trace this fountain rolling deeply down —
 Dark is the night, my pathway ruinous —
 Here foam the muddy billows thick and brown,
 Then issue thus
 Into a lake where all the world might drown.

apparently uncharacteristic of Hopkins in this poem, with its absence of theological reflection',¹

For this hypothesis to be supported, it needs must be through manuscript evidence, the only evidence revealing Hopkins's process of poetic formulation, his 'mind with a motion'. For this reason, it is better to consider another of Hopkins's water poems, 'Epithalamion' (for which a close reading is provided in 'Chapter Three'). This choice is necessitated because Hopkins's manuscripts are usually adjusted fair copies, with incremental drafts a rarity, except in a few cases such as his 'Epithalamion'. As Robert Bernard Martin explains: 'To see the manuscript of this poem ["Epithalamion"] is to realize how little we actually know about the physical circumstances of his writing. Usually we are lucky if we know even the general locality in which he wrote'.²



'Epithalamion'
MS. H.ii.14^f



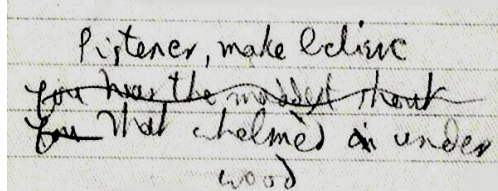
'Epithalamion'
MS. H.ii.7^f

¹ Milward, *Landscape*, p.76.

² Robert Bernard Martin, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life* (New York: Putnam, 1991), p.390.

The following is a transcription of the first three lines of the evolving 'Epithalamion' in manuscript (*Facsimiles II*, plates 494-502, pp.320-28):

MS. 1, H.ii.14^r

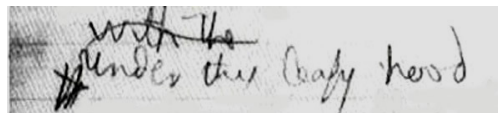


Listener, make believe

~~You hear the maddest shout~~

~~You~~ That whelmèd ~~in~~ under wood

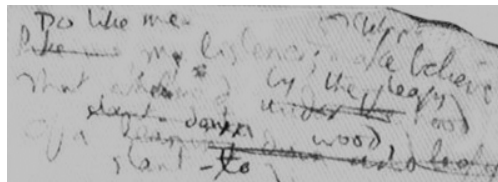
MS. 1, H.ii.14^v



~~With the~~

Under this leafy hood

MS. 2, H.i.50^r



Do like me,

~~Like me,~~ my listener; make believe

by the leafy

That whelmèd ~~under the~~ hood

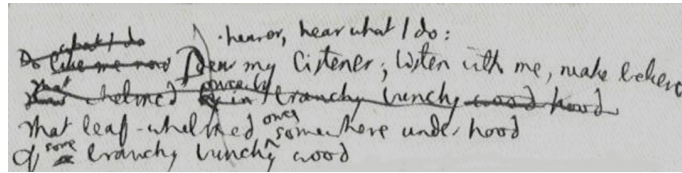
slant-to

~~slant-down~~ wood

lean-to

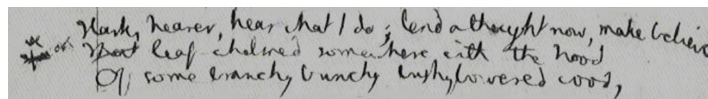
Of a ~~leaning down~~ and leafy wood

MS. 3, H.ii.11^f
 (Struck through by Hopkins)



what I do	D	hearer, hear what I do:
Do like me now,	dear my	listener; listen with me, make believe
That	once by	
	in	hood
How whelmed	by	branchy bunchy wood
	once	
That leaf-whelmed		somewhere under hood
	some	
Of a	branchy bunchy	wood

MS. 3, H.ii.11^f



Hark, hearer, hear what I do; lend a thought now, make believe
 We
~~You~~ are
~~That~~ leaf-whelmed somewhere with the hood
 Of some branchy bunchy bushybowered wood

These manuscript lines, even after a momentary perusal, reveal an increasing complexity from the vague to the concrete, from the passive to the active (especially in regard to the role of the reader) — put simply, a development towards the complexity that the Stylisticians praise in the earlier stanzas of ‘Inversnaid’.

Initially, Hopkins’s reader is drawn into the ‘Epithalamion’ by a direct address, then asked to participate in the fantasy being constructed: ‘listener, make believe’ (MS. 1). This address is subsequently broadened to ‘do like me, my listener; make believe’ (MS. 2), Hopkins accentuating that he and his reader (now possessively labelled ‘my listener’) are joint participants in the creation of

this fantasy, though Hopkins later suggests that his reader, whom he now addresses as ‘dear’, simply follow his lead: ‘do like me now, dear my listener, listen with me, make believe’ (MS. 3). Although the last is from the passage Hopkins struck through, it is noteworthy that he has already begun replacing ‘dear listener’ with ‘hearer’, especially since ‘hearer’ has miscreant connotations that would have been clearly evident to a Classical scholar like Hopkins: in Greek paederastic tradition, this direct address emphasised the beloved’s role within a paederastic, pedagogical relationship, a relationship between a young *erômenos* (or *aitês*, the ‘hearer’) and an older *erastês* (or *eisprêlas*, the ‘inspirer’).¹ In the final version, this becomes a very poignant address, both poetically and paederastically choice: ‘hark, hearer, hear what I do; lend a thought now, make believe’ (MS. 3). Hence, the participating reader, the ‘dear listener’, becomes Hopkins’s ‘hearer’, the paederastic encapsulation of both his ‘listener’ and his ‘dear’.

Hopkins’s placement of his ‘hearer’ into the topographical location of the ‘Epithalamion’ is fleshed out by the change of ‘whelmèd under wood’ (MS. 1) to ‘under this leafy hood’ (MS. 1), these two earliest versions later blended into ‘whelmed by the leafy hood’ (MS. 2). Although struck through by Hopkins, ‘whelmed once by branchy bunchy [hood]’ in the first version of MS. 3 subsequently becomes far more poetically complex as ‘leaf-whelmed once somewhere under hood / Of some branchy bunchy wood’. While Hopkins’s reader (‘hearer’) begins as overwhelmed in a nondescript, wooded landscape, he is soon situated beneath a ‘leafy hood’, a hood that is later altered, with painterly finesse, into a ‘branchy bunchy’ hood. In each successive stage of Hopkins’s drafting, the phrasing becomes far more tactile and resonant, with the reader increasingly overwhelmed with leaves, somewhere, under the ‘hood of a branchy bunchy wood’. This movement towards heightened complexity — visually, tactilely, poetically — culminates in a pair of masterful, tongue-twisting lines: ‘we are leaf-whelmed somewhere with the hood / Of some branchy bunchy bushybowered wood’ (MS. 3).

As far as Hopkins’s preference for compounding is concerned, notice that, after initially writing ‘of a leaning down — and leafy wood’ (MS. 2), Hopkins begins replacing ‘leaning down’ with ‘lean-to’, ‘slant-down’, and ‘slant-to’, searching for a suitable compound to replace the two words employed earlier. In the final version, he jettisons this completely, perhaps because the phrasing seems to push the imagery earthward, lessening the ‘whelming’ quality of the forested landscape he is constructing. A similar movement of compounding, as well as heightened rhythmicity, is displayed by the evolution of ‘under wood’ into ‘leafy hood’ — then ‘branchy bunchy hood’ — then ‘hood / Of some branchy bunchy wood’ — then, ultimately, ‘hood / Of some branchy bunchy bushybowered wood’.

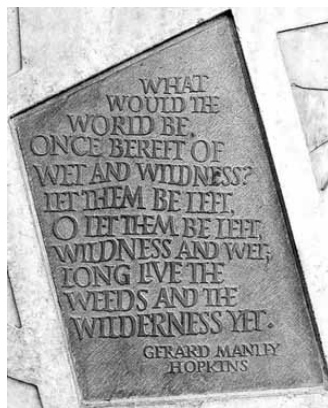
¹ See William Armstrong Percy III, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), chapter 7: ‘Spartan Hoplite “Inspirers” and Their “Listeners”’.

What is displayed here is indeed a poetic evolution, an intricate clustering on many levels: the reader ultimately becomes a paederastic ‘hearer’ asked not merely to watch but to participate in the narrator’s construction of an Arcadian fantasy; the landscape ultimately becomes not just a wood but an enveloping bower, utterly tactile and visual; the poetic diction ultimately moves towards heightened compounding, rhythmicity, and internal rhyme, particularly in the case of ‘branchy bunchy bushybowered wood’, where the beauty of the phrasing partly resides in ‘branchy’, ‘bunchy’, and ‘bushy’ seeming to compound equally with the adjective-root ‘bowered’. ‘Branchy bunchy bushybowered wood’ reveals all of the brilliance for which the mature Hopkins is famed, even though it sprang from a mere ‘under wood’. The clustering of the reader-writer relationship, the topiary description, and the poetic diction and form — these reveal a poetic process and a mental movement similar to that which is displayed inversely in ‘Inversnaid’.

Now, to return to ‘Inversnaid’ — but starting with the fourth stanza and moving backwards — notice that the poem begins vaguely with wide wildernesses labelled abstractly as ‘them’, with simplistic phrasing and vocabulary reminiscent of MS. 1 (H.ii.14^r and 14^v) of the ‘Epithalamion’, with a myriad of landscapes passive to the point of vulnerability:

What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

Despite its simplicity, this stanza encapsulates an appeal for the preservation of Nature that has proven particularly potent for the environmental movement and for the people of Scotland, who have incorporated these lines into the exterior of their new parliament:



Hopkins Inscription

Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh, UK

The second stanza endows such weeds and wildernesses with tactile detail, with specific natural growth that serves to illustrate the shift from ‘them’ to ‘the’. Its complexity is also heightened through the introduction of simple compounds — as in MS. 2 (H.i.50^f) of the ‘Epithalamion’ — as well as Scots words and the more visually suggestive ‘wiry’ and ‘flitches’.¹ Notice also how the rhythm of the second line masterfully captures the brook’s restricted flow:

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
And the beadbony ash that sits over the burn.

The third stanza reveals a specific-yet-fashioned landscape (expressed as ‘a’), a landscape where passive and active elements intermingle (illustrated by a cluster of froth that dissipates amidst the currents of a dark pool), a landscape reminiscent of the struck-through portion of MS. 3 (H.ii.11^r) of the ‘Epithalamion’. For the movement of the froth, Hopkins coins the word ‘twindles’, perhaps a portmanteau of ‘twitches’ and ‘dwindles’, or of ‘twine’ and ‘spindle’.² Four compounds (one a triple) heighten the complexity of the stanza’s diction; and the circular rhythmicity in lines three and four, the sense of motion:

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
Turns and twindles over the broth
Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

The fourth stanza possesses all of the overt complexity readers have come to expect from Hopkins — the complexity of MS. 3 (H.ii.11^r) of the ‘Epithalamion’ — with the poet directing his reader’s gaze towards ‘this’, a present landscape ultimately anthropomorphised into an equestrian ‘he’. Although, in accordance with Hopkins’s polished preference, the four compounds in this stanza are without hyphenation, what is most poetically telling is that the entire stanza is masterfully infused with the rhythmic motion of the waterfall:

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
His rollrock highroad roaring down,
In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

¹ See Milward, *Landscape*, p.80.

² The first portmanteau is suggested by Milward, *Landscape*, p.78; the second by Catherine Phillips, ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (The Oxford Authors series) (London: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.366. MacKenzie in *OET* suggests that it is a Lancashire dialect word meaning ‘produces twins (i.e. splits into two)’ (p.426).

Considered in this inverted form, Hopkins's 'Inversnaid' reveals the same writing process as the evolving drafts of the 'Epithalamion', though it does so inversely, for reasons literary scholarship and linguistics have neither noted nor explained.

Readers — be they scholarly or no — often expect literary meaning to be self-evident and straightforward, an expectation that is frequently, purposefully thwarted by a writer like Hopkins, who compares original artworks to chess problems. In a pair of letters to his most constant and competent of readers, Robert Bridges — the friend to whom he wrote: 'I do not write for the public. You are my public' (21 August 1877, *Letters I*, p.46) — Hopkins explains this chess analogy. The first letter (from 24 October 1883) and the second (from 6 November 1887) are both contemporaneous with the letters about Hopkins's trip to Inversnaid:

But you know there are some solutions to, say, chess problems so beautifully ingenious, some resolutions of suspensions so lovely in music that even the feeling of interest is keenest when they are known and over, and for some time survives the discovery. (*Letters I*, p.187)

Epic and drama and ballad and many, most, things should be at once intelligible; but everything need not and cannot be. [...] It is like a [check]mate which may be given, one way only, in three moves; otherwise, various ways, in many.
(Pp.265-66)

'Solutions [...] so beautifully ingenious' are often required in poetry, for 'everything need not and cannot be [intelligible]' on a first reading — or maybe a hundredth.¹ Hopkins's 'Inversnaid', one such poetic chess problem, begs for a solution more complex than a dismissive comment by a pair of unappreciative Stylisticians that it offers 'little aesthetic reward'.²

In 'To R.B.' — Hopkins's last poem, aptly addressed to Robert Bridges, his principal reader, his 'public' — Hopkins asserts that his own poetic skill has reached such mastery that his 'hand at work [is] now never wrong' (line 8), an assertion applicable to his 'Inversnaid'. Such a claim of 'genius' would be mocked by most modern literary scholars and linguists, who give little credence to Ezra Pound's assertion that 'a man of genius has a right to any mode of expression',³ or to Hopkins's that 'every true poet [...] must be original and originality a condition of poetic genius' (6 October 1886, *Letters III*, p.370).

¹ One is reminded of T. S. Eliot's comment about Shakespeare: 'We do not understand Shakespeare from a single reading, and certainly not from a single play. There is a relation between the various plays of Shakespeare, taken in order; and it is a work of years to venture even one individual interpretation of the pattern in Shakespeare's carpet' — from 'Dante', in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber, 1999), p.245.

² Short and van Peer, p.59.

³ Letter to the painter John Butler Yeats, 4 February 1918, as quoted in Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), part 2, chapter 10. J. B. Yeats was a Dublin acquaintance of Hopkins.

However, the poet Coventry Patmore, to whom Hopkins had addressed the last comment, was perceptive enough to recognise that the proper response towards a ‘genius’ or possible ‘genius’ is to anticipate that his ‘hand at work [is] now never wrong’:

After all, I might very likely be wrong, for I see that Bridges goes along with you where I cannot, & where I do not believe that I ever could; and I deliberately recognise in the author of ‘Prometheus’ [Bridges] a sounder and more delicate taste than my own. You remember I only claimed to be a God among the *Gallery Gods* — i.e. the common run of ‘Nineteenth Century’, ‘Fortnightly’ & such critics. I feel *absolutely* sure that you would never conciliate *them* — but Bridges’ appreciation is a fact that I cannot get over. I cannot understand his not seeing defects in your system wh. I seem to see so clearly; and when I do not understand a man’s ignorance, I obey the Philosopher and think myself ignorant of his understanding. (20 March 1884, *Letters III*, pp.353-54)

That “‘Inversnaid” seems to have been carried in embryonic form in Hopkins’ mind for two and one-half years before it was finally given its final [form]’¹ — springing from a six-line fragment ‘[O where is it, the wilderness]’ (*OET*, p.155) — is less surprising than that it seems to have been composed, in all of its glory, in about two and one-half hours, an impromptu performance recorded into a tiny booklet that Hopkins had withdrawn from his pocket while standing on the deck of a steamer or while walking along a wooded path at the edge of a waterfall, following the water uphill, against its current, towards its source. What other than ‘genius’ can account for this sudden confluence of poetic skill and landscape description, this appeal for the preservation of natural beauty, this straightforwardly readable poem that deconstructs itself if read in reverse, this master poet’s creativity being completely seized and sized — in short and imperiously, this utter intricacy as well as miracle of the moment. In ‘Inversnaid’, Hopkins has managed the Keatsian impossible, to ‘hold water in a witch’s sieve’ — after inverting it.

Since Hopkins once admitted to Bridges, ‘I may as well say what I should not otherwise have said, that I always knew in my heart Walt Whitman’s mind to be more like my own than any other man’s living’ (18 October 1882, *Letters I*, p.155) — it is perhaps not inappropriate to allow Walt Whitman (1819-92) to provide a final justification for this poem, as well as an explanation for its currently misunderstood state: ‘Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through fog with linguists and contenders, / I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait’ (*SM*, lines 80-81).

‘Backward I see’. If readers can manage to see backward, to see beyond the mockings and arguments, the Stylistic fog of linguists like Short and van Peer, readers might just witness, as they wait expectantly, a miracle of translated

¹ Paul Mariani, *A Commentary on the Complete Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp.176-77.

genius, a miracle that Hopkins describes in ‘Henry Purcell’ as ‘meaning motion fans fresh our wits with wonder’ (line 14). To see backward is to perceive properly, with awe, Hopkins’s inverse made in verse, as well as to unravel one of his grandest textual puzzles.¹



Inversnaid, its waterfall and stream

¹ As a less artistically complex example of this Uranian indulgence in the ‘puzzle poem’, consider these lines from John Gambril Nicholson’s ‘Dead Roses’, in which he hides the name of Frank Victor Rushforth, his thirteen-year-old beloved — as quoted in Timothy d’Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English ‘Uranian’ Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p.128:

But art is *victor* still through all the ages
 And renders evergreen our sunny hours:
 Key to my verse you are; and may its meaning
 Every time you turn my volume’s pages
Rush forth to greet you like the scent of flowers!

**‘A Parcel of Underwear’:
Hopkins and Issues of Identity**

At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,
And that we call Being.
(Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*)¹

Half a century ago, an anonymous reviewer voiced surprise in the *Times Literary Supplement* that, compared with Hopkins, ‘rarely has a poet attracted such a burden of documentation and commentary’.² Yet, even that anonymous reviewer would marvel, fifty years on, at the number of books, scholarly articles, and the like written about Hopkins each year. His poems, letters, journals, confession notes, and scores of other documents — these, added to the ‘biographically known’, make Gerard Manley Hopkins an ‘identity’ worth knowing, if only that were possible.

Concerning Hopkins’s ‘identity’, the educated prejudice of this volume derives from his intimation that ‘Walt Whitman’s mind [is] more like my own than any other man’s living’ (*Letters* I, p.155), as well as a belief that, given this confession, Whitman’s explanation of his own curious and mercurial mind equally befits Hopkins:

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.) (*SM*, lines 1324-26)

Such an educated prejudice — no matter how bastioned it is by specifics — is a dangerous acquisition, for it is indeed hubris for biographers or literary scholars to suppose that they know a biographical ‘subject’ well enough (perhaps better than that ‘subject’ knew himself or herself), even when that ‘knowing’ is based on intimate details such as that Hopkins would sometimes ‘bring a parcel of underwear, more holes than cloth, and humbly ask [his friend Mrs McCabe] if she could have the garments mended, as he wished to spare the Society [of Jesus] undue expenditure on his behalf’.³ ‘More holes than cloth’ — that is indeed the biographical and scholarly dilemma posed by Hopkins.

In her introduction to A. J. A. Symons’s classic biography of another of the Uranians, Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo), A. S. Byatt describes the most profound problem of biography: ‘There were holes in the fabric just where a reader was most hungry for density and richness. People often leave no record of

¹ Lines 609-10.

² Anonymous, ‘Rare Ill-Broker’d Talent’, *Times Literary Supplement* (25 September 1959), p.544.

³ As quoted in White, *Hopkins*, p.411.

the most critical or passionate moments of their lives. They leave laundry bills and manifestoes'.¹ Thomas Carlyle makes much the same point when he declares that '*disjecta membra* [scattered parts] are all that we find of any Poet, or of any man'.² 'Scattered parts' — it is because of these that a biographer, in particular, should remain leery of embracing educated prejudices or of employing primary concepts like 'identity', an elusive concept that Hopkins falteringly attempts to grasp in a short treatise that he never published:

When I consider my selfbeing, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of *I* and *me* above and in all things, which is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor, and is incommunicable by any means to another man (as when I was a child I used to ask myself: What must it be to be someone else?). Nothing else in nature comes near this unspeakable stress of pitch, distinctiveness, and selving, this selfbeing of my own. (*Sermons*, p.123)

'This selfbeing of my own', which Hopkins admits is 'incommunicable by any means to another man' (recalling the fragmentary poem he drafted on Pater's dinner acceptance), is the essence of what a biographer, despite the scattered parts and inexplicable holes of the life being considered, hopes to mend into a fitting garment.

His middle-class background; his education at Highgate, then at Oxford; his High Church and his Aesthetic leanings; his conversion to Roman Catholicism; his years spent in training to become a Jesuit priest; his spurious postings in most of the large Victorian cities; his friendships with the poets Robert Bridges, R. W. Dixon, and Coventry Patmore, as well as with Walter Pater and John Henry, Cardinal Newman; his frustrated life as a poetic genius unappreciated — this is the basic fabric of Hopkins's life until what must have seemed a godsend to the Jesuits, his appointment as Professor of Greek at University College, Dublin, and as Fellow of the Royal University of Ireland in Classics. This problematic Jesuit had finally found a use. But the more private aspects of the man — his homoerotic and paederastic desires, his reigning sorrows, his thwarted artistic aspirations — these are most clearly presented and represented in his poetry, a poetry equally sacred and profane, a blend of the painterly, the priestly, and the prurient, a blend of his principal influences — Ruskin, Newman, and Pater. The commingling of such kaleidoscopic forces within one person serves to question whether a sometimes-fashionable concept like 'identity' has any particular applicability for an individual, let alone for a group, a community, or a nation. It is this concept of 'identity' that the following will draw into question, by pointing out various holes in the Hopkinsian fabric,

¹ A. S. Byatt, 'Introduction' to A. J. A. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo: An Experiment in Biography* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), pp.ix-xvi (p.ix).

² Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, 5th vol. of *The Works of Thomas Carlyle in Thirty Volumes* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1897), p.11.

holes that make his inner life ‘incommunicable by any means to another’, ‘incommunicable’ in a way that Hopkins himself often intended.

After taking up his Irish professorship, Hopkins wrote to his mother that ‘the College is poor, all unprovided [for] to a degree that outsiders wd. scarcely believe, and of course — I cannot go into details — it cannot be comfortable’ (26 November 1884, *Letters* III, p.164). More than three years later, he would provide his mother with a bitter assessment of his Dublin post: ‘I am now working at examination-papers all day and this work began last month and will outlast this one. It is great, very great drudgery. I can not of course say it is wholly useless, but I believe that most of it is and that I bear a burden which crushes me and does little to help any good end’ (5 July 1888, *Letters* III, pp.184-85). This is what he had earlier expressed to Bridges as ‘that coffin of weakness and dejection in which I live, without even the hope of change’ (1 April 1885, *Letters* I, pp.214-15). Sometime during 1885, a year after assuming his professorship, ‘that coffin of weakness and dejection’ became too much for the poet to bear, and the ensuing depression saw the creation of his brilliant ‘Dark Sonnets’. The following sonnet from that sequence is particularly important for any consideration of Hopkins’s ‘selfbeing’, as well as the cause(s) behind his Dublin depression:

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
 What hours, O what black hours we have spent
 This night! what sights you, heart, saw, ways you went!
 And more must, in yet longer light’s delay.
 With witness I speak this. But where I say
 Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
 Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
 To dearest him that lives alas! away.
 I am gall, I am heartburn. God’s most deep decree
 Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
 Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
 Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
 The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
 As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.¹

Although this poem is undated, it surely belongs among the four sonnets alluded to on 1 September 1885 as having come ‘like inspirations unbidden and against

¹ This sonnet is from *OET*, pp.181-82. I have chosen to employ the title ‘Dark Sonnets’ for these poems rather than the more traditional ‘Terrible Sonnets’, since the current meaning of ‘terrible’ has associations that befit these brilliant sonnets not at all. The third option in currency is ‘Sonnets of Desolation’, first employed by William Gardner, though Gardner chose that title under the assumption that this ‘desolation’ was the ‘desolation’ described in St Ignatius’s ‘Rules for Discernment of Spirits’. Since I disagree with Gardner’s pat connection of these sonnets with an Ignatian retreat, I have opted to avoid his title as well.

my will' (*Letters I*, p.221), and is probably the very one described earlier, on 17 May 1885: 'I have after long silence written two sonnets, which I am touching: if ever anything was written in blood one of these was' (*Letters I*, p.219).

This sonnet 'written in blood' begins: 'I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day'. From its outset, the poem is a consideration of 'selfbeing', of consciousness, of the feeling and taste of 'my selfstuff' (one of the alternatives within line 12, MS. H.ii.35^v)¹. In essence, Hopkins's speaker appears bereft of everything except for the feeling of self, of existential human isolation, of bitter retrospection (see *OET*, p.447, note). In his spiritual-retreat notes for 1-2 January 1888, Hopkins describes a similar experience: 'Being tired I nodded and woke with a start. What is my wretched life? Five wasted years almost have passed in Ireland. [...] In the dark [...] we want a light shed on our way and a happiness spread over our life' (*Sermons*, p.262). The imagery of the first line of the sonnet draws on the ninth plague of Egypt, 'darkness over the land [...] even darkness which may be felt' (Exodus 10.21, KJV) — as well as on the Wisdom of Solomon, 'over them [...] was spread an heavy night, an image of that darkness which should afterward receive them: but yet were they unto themselves more grievous than the darkness' (17.21, Apocrypha, KJV). Evincing the scope of his poetic 'genius', his 'hand at work now never wrong' ('To R.B.', line 8), Hopkins manages to encapsulate this self-burden 'more grievous than the darkness', this 'darkness which may be felt', in a single aptly chosen word — *fell*. Its five homophones of different etymology all serve to characterise the encompassing darkness and the unsurpassable density of Hopkins's present experience:

- a covering of hide;
- gall (as in line 9);
- a waste hillside (as in the places on which some medieval visionaries woke to find themselves);
- a blow;
- savage, ruthless (as an adjective). (From *OET*, pp.447-48, note)

All of these meanings serve as keys to the sonnet, as well as contradict each other at various points, for they resonate a Whitmanesque 'contains multitudes'. In essence, 'the fell of dark' becomes massive, aggressively dangerous, maddeningly tactile — becomes a panther surrounding its prey, an image Hopkins employs in another of the 'Dark Sonnets':

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
 Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
 With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
 O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee and flee?
 ([Carrion Comfort], lines 5-8)

¹ *Facsimiles II*, p.267.

‘Darksome’ and ‘devouring’ are indeed appropriate descriptions of this pitch-black poem and its attendant depression, its ‘turns of tempest’ so sombre and so wasting:

What hours, O what black hours we have spent
 This night! what sights you, heart, saw, ways you went!
 And more must, in yet longer light’s delay.

Although these ‘black hours’ of disturbing sights and a heart atoss are a biographical certainty, Hopkins’s description of them is followed by a claim almost legal or contractual, as if compelled to account for both his actions and his whereabouts (‘me heaped there’), to prove to his auditors or to himself that this horrific experience had indeed been real: ‘with witness I speak this’. But who is his ‘witness’? His heart? his God? another person? The reader merely witnesses a Hopkinsian hole in the biographical fabric, both vague and intentional.

After realising the minimalism involved in telescoping a lifetime of felt darkness into a single nightmarish experience, Hopkins widens the lens to reveal that this ‘dark night of the soul’ was not just a particular moment, not just ‘this night’ for which he has been providing an audited account:

But where I say
 Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
 Is cries countless.

The above recalls the poet’s letters to his mother and to Bridges, letters steeped in feelings of depression, uselessness, dissatisfaction, and apathy; however, it is more than that. Just when Hopkins seems on the verge of blurring himself into poetic oblivion *via* hyperbole — his ‘hours’ becoming a ‘life’, his ‘lament’ becoming ‘cries countless’ — he focuses the lens again: suddenly the sonnet becomes curiously intimate, confessional, passionate, histrionic, and palpable, the generalised pain and darkness no longer telescoped towards the *what*, but instead towards the *who*:

And my lament
 Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
 To dearest him that lives alas! away.

The crucial intimation here might well be the phrase ‘dead letters’ — correspondence that remains at the Dead Letter Office when no traceable link to either addressee or sender can be found. Perhaps this simile suggests that Christ is forever unresponsive to Hopkins’s prayers; or, perhaps it concerns a more mortal figure, another ‘dearest him’, the ‘he’ of a letter to Bridges, dated 15 February 1879:

I cannot in conscience spend time on poetry, neither have I the inducements and inspirations that make others compose. Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse and the only person that I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly and when he does I cannot always ‘make capital’ on it, it would be a sacrilege to do so. (*Letters I*, p.66)

The *who* of this intimation to Bridges is tantalisingly undisclosed, an intentional hole in the biographical fabric where a name should be, the name of ‘the only person that I am in love with’, the person whose memory it would be a form of ‘sacrilege’ to ‘make capital on’, the person whose memory would be rent by rendering it as poetry.

The absence of capitalisation for the ‘he’ of the letter and the ‘him’ of the poem (suggesting an imbedded pun in ‘I cannot always “make capital” on it’) draws into question a ready attribution of these to Christ, which would have been a legitimate priestly affection. ‘The only person that I am in love with’ may instead have a biographical antecedent, a young poet whom Hopkins had made into what might be considered, shallowly, a fetish — Digby Mackworth Dolben. Dolben’s death, roughly two-and-a-half years after he and Hopkins had met, removed the obvious dangers associated with an actualised affection, whether those dangers were moral, spiritual, legal, social, emotional, or intimate. Before Dolben’s death, Hopkins wrote to Bridges: ‘Give my love to [Coles] and Dolben. I have written letters without end to the latter without a whiff of answer’ (28 August 1865, *Letters I*, p.1). Even when it remains unanswered, unrequited, unconsummated, and abounding in ‘dead letters’, love is love nonetheless; and, for Hopkins, this love, both as a remembrance of things past and as a dissatisfaction with the present, seems to have nurtured a bitterness that he directed at both his own limitations and at his God, who was responsible for placing the supreme limitation by taking Dolben away. That is perhaps the cause of Hopkins’s bitterness, but the effect is more problematic to assess, more full of biographical holes.

If the *who* – *he* – *him* is indeed Dolben, then the effect on Hopkins is a lingering distillation, a continual reflection on the theme of Richard Barnfield’s Elizabethan poem ‘The Teares of an Affectionate Shepheard Sicke for Love, or The Complaint of Daphnis for the Love of Ganimedee’ (1594), though without Barnfield’s acquiescence and erotic bravado:

If it be sinne to love a sweet-fac’d Boy,
 (Whose amber locks trust up in golden tramels
 Dangle adowne his lovely cheekes with joy,
 When pearle and flowers his faire haire enamels)
 If it be sinne to love a lovely Lad;
 Oh then sinne I, for whom my soule is sad. (Lines 7-12)¹

¹ Richard Barnfield, ‘The Teares of an Affectionate Shepheard Sicke for Love’, in *Poems of Richard Barnfield*, ed. by George Klawitter (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005).

On 2 January 1888, during a spiritual retreat, Hopkins notes that ‘something bitter distills’ (*Sermons*, p.262), and that particular distillation may have grown bitter through an absence of sweetness, through the absence of his own ‘sweet-fac’d Boy’, his own ‘lovely Lad’, his ‘dearest him that lives alas! away’. While Barnfield’s ‘my soule is sad’ is mitigated by paederastic pleasure (‘If it be sinne to love a lovely Lad; / Oh then sinne I’), Hopkins’s ‘my fits of sadness [that] resemble madness’ remains ever aggravated, as is revealed by the gastric juices of the following:

I am gall, I am heartburn. God’s most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.

In his commentary notes on the Ignatian ‘Meditation on Hell’, Hopkins describes the galling bitterness of a damned soul ‘gnawing and feeding on its own most miserable self’, for ‘[its] sins are the bitterness, [because those sins that] tasted sweet once, now taste most bitter’ (*Sermons*, p.243). This is exactly what is found in the bakery of the next few lines:

Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves [...]

Something bitter does distil here — the ‘selfyeast of spirit’, the worse than ‘sweating selves’ — a bitter distillation that Norman White describes as ‘a counter-movement of arrogance and unstated questioning’,¹ a counter-movement that would only continue for Hopkins, as is illustrated by ‘[Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord]’, a sonnet written in the year of his death:

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? (Lines 5-7)

The Hopkins above is still beneath God’s dark and palpable ‘lionlimb’, is still questioning defiantly and arrogantly whether he is the plaything of a Divine friend or a devouring foe.

However, while weaving fabric poetical, Hopkins is difficult to defeat or thwart, even by a Divine ‘lionlimb’, as the last two words of ‘[I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day]’ make clear — *but worse*. This last phrase lingers to defy syntactically Hopkins’s readers, his biographers, his unfortunate reality, his unsympathetic and unapproachable God, his ‘selfbeing of my own’. This last phrase is poetic sleight-of-hand by a master of the poetic deck:

¹ White, *Hopkins*, p.400.

Indeed, Hopkins strains the syntax of English, sometimes beyond the point of intelligibility, in order to draw from the language a coherence that runs athwart the syntagmatic line proper to discursive sense. The density of his poetic language, abundantly remarked upon and described in criticism, seems to reveal a new linguistic dimension based upon visible — or rather, as Hopkins would prefer, audible — connections between words, both in their depth and on their surfaces. [...] Indeed, few poets had insisted as doggedly as Hopkins on the nondiscursive connections that the reader is meant to perceive.¹

The non-discursive connections that arise from ‘but worse’ prompt the question, ‘But worse than what?’ If the earlier allusion is indeed to Dolben and not to Christ, then the Hopkins displayed here has moved beyond priest, poet, Victorian, and Jesuit: he has become a defiant troubadour, a lover not unlike Tristram, who, after being told that he has drunk his death by sharing the unintended elixir with Iseult, responds, ‘By my death, do you mean this pain of love?’² If such is the case, then Hopkins’s sonnet chronicles a lifetime of ‘this pain of love’, this bitter yearning for ‘dearest him that lives alas! away’, Hopkins echoing Tristram’s declaration that ‘If by my death, you mean this agony of love, that is my life. If by my death, you mean the punishment that we are to suffer if discovered, I accept that. And if by my death, you mean eternal punishment in the fires of hell, I accept that, too’.³

Syntactically, a phrase like ‘but worse’ defies ready explanation because it leaves two contradictory interpretations: either ‘this pain of love’ is not as intense as the pain of Hell, or it is more so. Hopkins never opts syntactically to side or decide — hence, the Paterian greyness of the phrase becomes an equal blending of the sacred and the profane, becomes what Pater describes in his essay on ‘Aesthetic Poetry’ as ‘the strange suggestion of a deliberate choice between Christ and a rival lover’,⁴ a choice with which Hopkins seems to dalliance, but refuses to make. This Jesuit poet had indeed learned much from his Decadent friend and former academic coach, and these last two words rival or perhaps surpass Pater’s own Antinomian subtlety and suggestiveness, as a blatant hole in a textual garment. That this hole is intentional is supported by Bridges’s claim that ‘No one ever wrote words with more critical deliberation than Gerard Hopkins’ (*Dolben* 1915, p.cxiv).

If this sonnet does, at least syntactically, make ‘the strange suggestion of a deliberate choice between Christ and a rival lover’, a lover such as Digby Dolben, then Hopkins is also defiantly challenging, or at least defiantly questioning, traditional Church teaching on the immorality of homoerotic and

¹ Cary H. Plotkin, *The Tenth Muse: Victorian Philology and the Genesis of the Poetic Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), pp.122-23.

² Joseph Campbell, with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, ed. by Betty Sue Flowers (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p.190.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Walter Pater, *Appreciations: With an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1889), p.215.

paederastic acts, even if those acts are only committed in the heart — for Christianity recognises little distinction between the two (though Jesus phrases the concept heterosexually): ‘But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart’ (Matthew 5.28, KJV). Hopkins’s defiant challenge, a challenge that White describes as ‘a counter-movement of arrogance and unstated questioning’, is so central to the ‘instress’ of Hopkins’s ‘inscape’, the core or column of his being, ‘my selfbeing, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself’ (*Sermons*, p.123), that it crushes beneath its own dark, poetic ‘lionlimb’ Dennis Sobolev’s claim that

nothing indicates that a nineteenth-century Catholic priest could experience his homoerotic tendencies, even acknowledged and accepted, as the core of his identity. [...] What Hopkins’s notebooks demonstrate is both his homoerotic leanings and his conscious and unequivocal resistance to them; nothing in these diaries indicates that he saw his homoerotic ‘temptations’ as either the pivotal point of his identity or an object of celebration.¹

However, according to Pater, both sides of such a syntactical divide — the divide ‘between Christ and a rival lover’ — are profoundly dangerous and sensuous, for the disparity between religious ‘resistance’ and erotic ‘celebration’, ‘between Christ and a rival lover’ is often rather slight: ‘That religion, monastic religion at any rate, has its sensuous side, a dangerously sensuous side [...] is the experience of Rousseau as well as of the Christian mystics’.² While the Hopkins of 1885 seems to straddle this divide — the syntactical option of Christ or a rival lover, of Roman Catholicism or Decadence — the Hopkins of 1888 performs ‘The Marriage of Heaven and Hell’ (in the truest Blakean sense), unifying these seemingly disparate extremes through, as would seem appropriate, an epithalamion, a ‘hymn of the wedding chamber’.³ In his ‘Epithalamion’, Hopkins casts aside the constraining garb of established convention and ‘identity’, revealing himself in all of his newfound nakedness and freedom. However, lest the chapter divisions be discarded, it is best to return, for now, to his outward trappings, his ‘identity’, his ‘parcel of underwear, more holes than cloth’.

‘More holes than cloth’ — this remains the dilemma for Hopkins biography and a feature of his poetry that adds to its subtlety and suggestiveness, its danger and depth. In response to those holes, particularly those ‘strange suggestion[s] of a deliberate choice between Christ and a rival lover’, most Hopkins biographers and critics have exhibited a scholarly preference for the

¹ Denis Sobolev, ‘Hopkins’s “Bellbright Bodies”: The Dialectics of Desire in His Writings’, *TSSL*, 45.1 (2003), pp.114-40 (p.122).

² Pater, ‘Aesthetic Poetry’, p.215.

³ In *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Poet as Victorian* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), Wendell Stacy Johnson notes a similar evolution within Tennyson’s monumental tribute to Arthur Henry Hallam: ‘The framework of *In Memoriam* [has] a hymn at the beginning and type of epithalamion at the end’ (p.13, footnote).

congenial, which is partly a decorous and cautious attempt not to marginalize the poet's deeply held religious convictions, his devotion to celibacy, and his authentic sense of vocation. Although this rather Roman Catholic preference is understandable, one nonetheless continues to hear Whitman whispering through those textual and biographical chinks:

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

Hopkins often appears, and probably was, holey and contradictory — but his stature, his largeness is not diminished by this, for he is the most curious type of 'genius', the type that is impossible to pin down, to force into the constraints of what biographers and scholars might, with their love of taxonomy, label as the Englishman, the Victorian, the Roman Catholic, the Jesuit, the poet, the Decadent, the paederast, the Communist sympathiser, the Classical scholar, the professor, the Ruskinian lover of nature, the exile, the Britannia jingoist, the dandy. He is all of these and more besides, possessing that 'fluidity of personality' that Jude Nixon suggests is central to Pater's argument in *The Renaissance*.¹ Confronted always with Hopkins's 'more holes than cloth', his 'scattered parts', his 'fluidity', it is bewildering that some biographers and scholars still employ concepts like 'identity' at all: the consistency they seek may not, in the nature of man, particularly this man, be there.

Man may, in essence, be a contradictory and elusive entity, with an inscape instressed in so multitudinous a way that the relative parts of itself are often contradictory to itself. Man perhaps deserves Michel de Montaigne's dub of 'a marvellous, vain, fickle, and unstable subject',² and fickleness is a quality Hopkins chose not to censure, but to celebrate:

Glory be to God for dappled things —
[...]
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, frecklèd (who knows how?). ('Pied Beauty', lines 1; 7-8)

The religious may celebrate Hopkins the priest-poet by affixing his image in stained glass; the British may add continuity to Poets' Corner by affixing his name to a plaque — but the man is too large to affix.³ He contains

¹ Jude V. Nixon, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and His Contemporaries: Liddon, Newman, Darwin, and Pater* (New York: Garland Press, 1994), p.177.

² Michel de Montaigne, *The Works of Michael de Montaigne: Comprising His Essays, Letters, Journey Through Germany [...]*, ed. by William Hazlitt (London: C. Templeton, 1845), p.2.

³ There is a memorial window to Hopkins in St Bartholomew's Church, Haslemere, Surrey. On 8 December 1975, a memorial tablet to Hopkins was unveiled and dedicated

Whitmanesque multitudes, hence is beyond feeble attempts to picture or to name, or to capture within a ‘theory’ or an ‘identity’. Hopkins is neither a saint nor an icon, yet is certainly beyond modern taxonomies in many ways. Most of those who fit readily within such taxonomies have a relatively measurable ‘identity’ (for lack of a better word): Hopkins has ‘expanse’.¹ Even if scholars and biographers brush aside this claim of expanse — of Hopkins’s multitudinous selving or inscape — they must nonetheless come to terms with at least a double self in the poet, a double self to which he alludes while chiding Bridges for not appreciating the genius of Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94), an allusion here glossed with an insight by Nils Clausson:

This sour severity blinds you to his great genius. *Jekyll and Hyde* I have read.
[....] You are certainly wrong about Hyde being overdrawn: my Hyde is worse.
(28 October 1886, *Letters I*, p.238)

(Stevenson’s sensational tale of the double self [first published in 1886] would certainly have resonated particularly strongly with Wilde and other members of the homosexual subculture that was emerging in London at the end of the nineteenth century.²)

This gloss is important for a proper understanding of Hopkins and his selving, since it may reveal what he meant by ‘my Hyde is worse’ in the letter, and by ‘but worse’ in the sonnet.³ During the Victorian period (and often today), this ‘double self’ was a necessity for those with a paederastic and/or homoerotic ‘disposition’. In a world of decorous behaviour, a world with which the more ‘public’ self needed to accord lest the individual be deemed maladjusted, psychotic, immoral, sinful, unlawful, fringe, objectionable, and/or intrusive, this ‘double self’ was necessary for survival. Hyde was all of those pejoratives, at least when considered by ‘legitimate’ powers — social, medical, ethical, religious, legal, political, scholarly, and familial — those powers that determine what is proper and what is ‘worse’. Hopkins’s ‘my Hyde is worse’ is a revealing disclosure of a ‘sweating self’ beneath his own Victorian veneer, and legitimates, to some degree, Bridges’s wish for Hopkins ‘to throw off the mask’ — a wish that will be explored in the next section. This tension between the public and the

in Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey, London. For discerning comments about this event and its ironies, see Norman White, ‘Saint Gerard Manley Hopkins?’, *The Yale Review*, 69 (1980), pp.473-80.

¹ In ‘Pater’s Sadness’, *Raritan*, 20.2 (2000), pp.136-58, Jacques Khalip writes: ‘This mystery surrounding Pater [is] a mystery that has occupied readers and critics alike in the effort to establish a credible selfhood for a writer who refuses any defining personality regardless of his own aesthetic recommendations’ (pp.155-56).

² Nils Clausson, “‘Culture and Corruption’: Paterian Self-Development versus Gothic Degeneration in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*”, *Papers on Language and Literature*, 39.4 (2003), pp.339-64 (p.349).

³ ‘[I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day]’, line 14.

private selves, between the expressed and the silenced, between what Hopkins labels ‘overthought’ and ‘underthought’, between what Wilde terms ‘surface’ and ‘symbol’, ‘between Christ and a rival lover’ fostered a poetic tension that has helped to secure Hopkins’s canonicity as far as English letters is concerned, something Hopkins would never have anticipated, assuming, as did Bridges, that his idiosyncratic qualities would ever ‘blind you to his great genius’.



Plate 21 (detail)

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

William Blake (1757-1827)

Relief and white-line etching with hand
colouring on paper, 1790

Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum
New York City, New York, USA

At his death in 1889, Gerard Manley Hopkins considered his life a failure in many ways, and most of those relating to his poetic gifts. Were it possible to resurrect Hopkins for some portion of an hour, to let him wander through the British Library — or almost any decent library, for that matter — amid the scores of scholarly volumes devoted to him (not to mention the *Hopkins Quarterly*), aisles of volumes, an every growing expanse of text and dedication, there would certainly be a look of bewilderment and a tinge of pleasure in his eyes, a look revealing that he knew not his own ‘self-being’ really, or his importance to this world and its literary heritage.¹ A man cannot know (and Hopkins was no exception) the impact of his own life, an impact that biographers ultimately hope to interweave with their materials, however dappled, strange, and fickle the fabric at their disposal is, fabric that is only rent asunder by sometimes-fashionable concepts like ‘identity’ and ‘selfhood’, concepts employed by critics such as David Anthony Downes.²

Besides these ‘more holes than cloth’, another aspect of this poet that thwarts attempts at ‘identity’ and ‘selfhood’ taxonomies is his frequent lack of seriousness, of Victorian earnestness — an aspect of his character and his writings to which this chapter now turns.

¹ In *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), Stephen Greenblatt voices a ‘desire to speak with the dead’, a desire that he describes as ‘a familiar, if unvoiced, motive in literary studies, a motive organized, professionalized, buried beneath thick layers of bureaucratic decorum’ (p.1). The Hopkins fantasy above is treated in this vein.

² A striking, recent example of this is David Anthony Downes, *Hopkins’ Achieved Self* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996).



Hopkins Memorial Window (detail)

St Bartholomew's Church
Haslemere, Surrey, UK



**A. M. D. G.
ESSE QVAM VIDERI
GERARD
MANLEY
HOPKINS
S.J.
1844-1889
Priest & poet
'Immortal diamond'
Buried at Glasnevin, Dublin**

Hopkins Memorial Tablet
Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey
London, UK

**‘Fun While It Lasted’:
Hopkins and Issues of Seriousness**

The Greeks were often arbitrary, impulsive, frivolous,
cynical, witty or jocular.

(K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*)¹

It is well to understand that the artist, even he
inhabiting the most austere regions of art, is *not* an
absolutely serious man [...] and that tragedy and farce
can spring from one and the same root. A turn of the
lighting changes one into the other; the farce is a
hidden tragedy, the tragedy — in the last analysis —
a sublime practical joke. The seriousness of the artist
— a subject to ponder. (Thomas Mann, ‘Sufferings
and Greatness of Richard Wagner’)²

In *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), Sherlock Holmes appears textually for the first time, as Mr Stamford describes him to Dr Watson:

[Holmes] appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge [...] but it may be pushed to excess. When it comes to beating the subjects in the dissecting-rooms with a stick, it is certainly taking rather a bizarre shape’.

‘Beating the subjects!’³

One cringes to think what a Freudian biographer or scholar — or any biographer or scholar for that matter — would attribute to Mr Holmes from the above description. The picture of Mr Holmes frequenting dissecting-rooms to beat corpses with his cane could lend itself to a flurry of sadistic, morbid speculations. Fortunately, Stamford explains away the enigma: ‘Yes, to verify how far bruises may be produced after death. I saw him at it with my own eyes’. That is the method behind the seeming madness: Mr Holmes, ever the curious Victorian detective, abuses corpses as a scientific act of post-mortem investigation into the nature of human bruising.

Unfortunately, biographers are often left with only fragments of such tales, with no conscientious friend to explain, to say ‘I saw him at it with my own eyes’. The life of the English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins also abounds with what is known and what is not, with tantalising suggestions, with vagrant and vacant clues. Nevertheless, a biographer must probe the partial story of a Holmes

¹ K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p.9.

² Thomas Mann, *Essays*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Knopf, 1957), p.225.

³ Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (London: Penguin, 2001), p.10.

or a Hopkins for explanations that will display the method behind the madness, that will provide the much needed density and richness.

As has already been observed, sometime during 1885 ‘that coffin of weakness and dejection in which I live, without even the hope of change’ (1 April 1885, *Letters* I, pp.214-15) became too much for Hopkins to bear, and the ensuing depression resulted in the creation of his brilliant ‘Dark Sonnets’, one poem of which was considered in the previous section. Most critics believe that the majority of these poems were written at the end of August 1885, while Hopkins was at Clongowes Wood College, Naas, County Kildare, for his yearly Jesuit retreat. There are benefits to derive from such a claim. If composed at that moment, these undated poems would likely demonstrate a movement parallel to the meditative *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, whose *Exercises* provided a framework for such retreats, as well as for Hopkins’s spirituality as a religious: ‘While composing the poems, Hopkins’s mind would be scrupulously and severely concentrated on Ignatius’ words and on his responses to them, so the poems are intimately related to the *Spiritual Exercises*’.¹ If these poems did arise from that spiritual retreat, it would be easier to defend a proper sequencing of their composition,² a sequencing that would allow biographers and literary critics, or so they assume, to find the meaning in the madness — and madness is indeed what is being dealt with here, as a letter to Robert Bridges, dated 17 May 1885, makes clear:

Well then to judge of my case, I think that my fits of sadness, though they do not affect my judgment, resemble madness. Change is the only relief, and that I can seldom get. (*Letters* I, p.216)

I have after long silence written two sonnets, which I am touching: if ever anything was written in blood one of these was. (P.219)

However, various biographical details serve to draw into question this convenient, conventional explanation, and make it unlikely that this particular Ignatian retreat provoked the ‘Dark Sonnets’.

In a letter to Coventry Patmore, dated 21 August 1885, Hopkins explains that he is ‘going into retreat tonight’, then pursues a related topic: ‘But as I am upon this subject I may mention in proof of the abuses high contemplation is

¹ White, *Hopkins*, p.404.

² As MacKenzie explains about his editorial decisions in the *OET*:

In my attempted chronological sequence I have placed each of the Sonnets of Desolation, only after considerable investigation, where it seems best to fit such evidence as we have from the erratic handwriting of his troubled Irish days, from any interlocking of poems in the surviving MSS, and all the biographical information I could discover. But no claims to certainty can be made [...] Critics who conceive theories of the development of GMH’s mind and spirits during his days in Ireland may be able to argue interestingly for a different arrangement. (P.443, note)

liable to three things which have come under my notice' (*Letters* III, p.365). Although the abuses Hopkins mentions are sexual in nature, the very fact that he is considering 'the abuses high contemplation is liable to' makes it improbable that, immediately after penning those words, he allowed the 'high contemplations' of a spiritual retreat to reach the tenor of absolute dejection found in the 'Dark Sonnets', though perhaps the poet was not in control, as a letter to Bridges, dated 1 September 1885, suggests: 'I shall shortly have some sonnets to send you, five or more. Four of these came like inspirations unbidden and against my will' (*Letters* I, p.221). Some representative passages from those poems are sufficient to provide a taste of their bitter tears:

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
 Not untwist — slack they may be — these last strands of man
 In me or, most weary, cry *I can no more*. I can;
 Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.
 ('[Carrion Comfort]', lines 1-4)

To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life
 Among strangers. ('[To Seem the Stranger]', lines 1-2)

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
 Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
 May who ne'er hung there. ('[No Worst, There Is None]', lines 9-11)

We hear our hearts grate on themselves: it kills
 To bruise them dearer. ('[Patience, Hard Thing!]', lines 9-10)

not live this tormented mind
 With this tormented mind tormenting yet. ('[My Own Heart]', lines 3-4)

This is some of the most heart-wrenching poetry in English, wrung from a poet in the grip of a religious and personal depression nearly beyond the bounds of sanity: such is the generally accepted, biographical story for the last week of August 1885. Amidst this absolute psychological pain — or his recovery from it — Hopkins writes to Bridges on 1 September:

I have just returned from an absurd adventure, which when I resigned myself to it I could not help enjoying. A hairbrained fellow took me down to Kingstown and on board his yacht and, whereas I meant to return to town by six that evening, would not let me go either that night or this morning till past midday. I was afraid it would be compromising, but it was fun while it lasted.

(*Letters* I, p.220)

Even if one brushes aside the obvious sexual possibilities of this adventure — a Jesuit priest on the yacht of 'a hairbrained fellow', compelled to spend the night and the morning after, a bit nervous that the situation 'would be compromising' — is one supposed to believe that, on the evening of 21 August, after making

statements about ‘the abuses high contemplation is liable to’, Hopkins went into spiritual retreat for over a week, a retreat where he experienced an absolute descent and deconstruction of the soul, a spiritual and psychological abuse that he captured onto paper as the ‘Dark Sonnets’ — then, immediately after leaving that retreat, embarked on 31 August on ‘an absurd adventure’ with ‘a hairbrained fellow [...] on board his yacht’, an adventure that was ‘fun while it lasted’? Something is amiss here, something that negates the seriousness of this desolate moment, something that would have provoked Dr Watson to exclaim, ‘Fun while it lasted!’

The problem with dating the majority of the ‘Dark Sonnets’, or their polishing, to the Clongowes Wood College retreat at the end of August 1885 (instead of dating most of them, as the following will suggest, to the preceding spring) is a loss of any direct causal relationship between Hopkins’s appreciable life and his depression. There is perhaps a simpler, less religiously profound cause for these poems, a cause that (un)hinges in relation to the suicidal tendency Hopkins displays markedly in that 1881 poem about his trip to Inversnaid:

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
Turns and twindles over the broth
Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning. (Lines 5-8)

It is a letter to one of his closest university friends, A. W. M. Baillie, that provides the most likely explanation for the ‘Dark Sonnets’, again involving both despair and drowning. In this letter, dated 24 April – 17 May 1885, Hopkins refers to his own constant and generalised melancholy:

This is part of my disease, so to call it. The melancholy I have all my life been subject to has become of late years not indeed more intense in its fits but rather more distributed, constant, and crippling. (*Letters III*, p.256)

This letter also describes a specific shock:

I mean poor Geldart, whose death, as it was in Monday last’s *Pall Mall*, you must have heard of. I suppose it was suicide, his mind, for he was a selftormentor, having been unhinged, as it had been once or twice before, by a struggle he had gone through. [...] Three of my intimate friends at Oxford have thus drowned themselves, a good many more of my acquaintances and contemporaries have died by their own hands in other ways [...] I should say that Geldart had lent me his autobiography called (I wish it had another name) *A Son of Belial*. It is an amusing and a sad book — but perhaps you have seen it. I am in it [...] thinly disguised. (Pp.254-55)

In chapters seven through nine of this autobiography, Hopkins appears as Gerontius Manley, ‘my ritualistic friend’.¹ His friend Geldart’s suicide, coupled with the nostalgic emotions evoked by reading Geldart’s autobiography just prior, seem to have caused Hopkins to re-examine his own life against a remembrance of things past, as the letter further explains:

I began to overhaul my old letters, accumulations of actually ever since I was at school, destroying all but a very few, and growing ever lother [*sic*] to destroy, but also to read, so that at last I left off reading; and there they lie. (P.255)

Half a decade earlier, Hopkins had written to the same correspondent, ‘Not to love my University would be to undo the very buttons of my being’ (22 May 1880, *Letters* III, p.244), and this love for Oxford was encapsulated in his university friendships with people like Geldart. Their suicides — that is what nearly undid the buttons of Hopkins’s being. Hopkins’s own suicidal tendency, his renewed friendship with his university friend Geldart, his subsequent reading of Geldart’s autobiography (an autobiography in which he himself appears as an undergraduate), his reading about Geldart’s ‘suicide’ in a newspaper, his own resultant nostalgia, his overhauling of the letters that he had collected since Highgate School, his burning of many of these remembrancers — these are what created the impetus for such phrases as ‘choose not to be’, ‘seem the stranger’, ‘cries countless, cries like dead letters’, ‘mind has mountains’, ‘this tormented mind tormenting yet’. This seems logical, however plain a portrait.

Dating the majority of the ‘Dark Sonnets’ to late August 1885 is a scholarly preference that attempts not to marginalize Hopkins’s deeply felt religious convictions or his authentic sense of vocation. It is an appeal to an absolute, religious consistency and seriousness that may not adequately characterise this particular poet and priest — however inconvenient and inexplicable that inconsistency and frivolity may be for Hopkins biographers and critics.

To provide another example: On 15 August 1882, the feast of the Assumption, Fr Hopkins, along with seven other Jesuits, pronounced solemn vows during a nine o’clock mass at St Joseph’s Church, Manresa House, Roehampton, vows that capped his fourteen years of Jesuit training. Just two days later, he wrote lightly to three of his Jesuit friends:

My hearties, — I am going to answer ‘the three of yez’ [...]
After our vows we got agate among the novices, charming boys they are. One of them is 68 years of age. There was an entertainment in the evening, in the

¹ [Edmund Geldart] Nitram Tradleg, *A Son of Belial: Autobiographical Sketches* (London: Trubner, 1882); reissued by University Microfilms International, 1976.

society's wellknown style of gingerbread jokes and a rococo gilding of piety and tears and fond farewells, but still the general effect very nice.¹

To this, Dr Watson would have exclaimed, 'Gingerbread jokes! Rococo gilding of piety and tears!' Nothing here bespeaks a Jesuit remembering the solemn occasion that finalised his Jesuit training and secured his placement as a 'Spiritual Coadjutor', or the celebration provided for him and the others afterwards, or the communal atmosphere of the Society of Jesus. Perhaps this frivolity — so difficult to accord with conventional perspectives on Hopkins — explains why this letter was trumpeted as 'newfound' only a decade ago, though 'newfound' disguises the fact that, for multiple decades, this manuscript letter had lain unmentioned and unaccounted for among the papers for the projected Hopkins biography that Anthony D. Bischoff, S.J., left unfinished at his death in 1993. The 'losing' of this frivolous and enigmatic letter is the one detail Joseph J. Feeney, S.J., has failed to explain since 'newfinding' this and other Hopkins manuscripts among the late Bischoff's things,² leaving one to speculate that other 'unmentionables' still linger in Jesuit hands. The issues that arise from this 'newfound' letter are complex, forcing one to ask how seriously Hopkins held his priestly profession — a question that even Hopkins's contemporaries were asking. While Hopkins was a curate in London in 1878, Bridges wrote to a mutual friend, Lionel Boulton Campbell Lockhart Muirhead (1845-1925):

Gerard Hopkins is in town preaching and confessing at Farm St. I went to hear him. He is good. He calls here; and we have sweet laughter, and pleasant chats. He is not at all the worse for being a Jesuit; as far as one can judge without knowing what he would have been otherwise.³

Bridges always remained sceptical of his friend's priestly profession and religious motivations, though unable to posit what else Hopkins could have been besides a Jesuit. Bridges always waited for Hopkins 'to throw off the mask' of the Jesuit role he believed him to be playing.

¹ Letter of 17 August 1882, as quoted in Joseph J. Feeney, 'Four Newfound Hopkins Letters: An Annotated Edition, with a Fragment of Another Letter', *Hopkins Quarterly*, 23.1-2 (1996), pp.3-40 (pp.9; 14).

² Bischoff had had this material for almost half-a-century (see *ibid.*, p.3). Compare this response to the idealism and enthusiasm expressed in his 'Habit of Perfection', an undergraduate poem about which David Anthony Downes writes: 'Here is indicated his prepossession with spiritual thoughts; here is, in embryo, the highly subjective emotion and eccentricity of expression which is to mark his later and more mature work. In every stanza there is the cry of a grand renunciation — the taking of the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience' — *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of His Ignatian Spirit* (New York: Bookman, 1959), p.81.

³ Donald E. Stanford, ed., *The Selected Letters of Robert Bridges, with the Correspondence of Robert Bridges and Lionel Muirhead*, 2 vols (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983-84), I, p.127.

Scholars often see Hopkins the Jesuit as far more melancholic and dull than charming, fluid, and irreverent, which displays a failure to comprehend the ‘sweet laughter, and pleasant chats’ to which Bridges was privy, the improvisational humanity that characterised Hopkins as much as his depressions did. Hopkins ever exhibited that multifaceted individuality that Donoghue notices in Pater, Jeff Nunokawa in Wilde:

Pater practiced what Michel Foucault came to the point of preaching in his last books, the three volumes of his *History of Sexuality*: an aesthetic sense of life, according to which — in Foucault’s terms — we create ourselves as a work of art [...] The method is improvisation. Neither in Pater nor in Foucault is it necessary to posit a stable self defending its coherence from every attack.¹

Wilde pictures another labor of self-fashioning instead, the labor of self-fashioning which appears at its most glamorous in the labor of fashion itself. Those who have most famously studied this art of the self categorize it as the fruit of the freedom that attends modernity — the loosening of the traditional bonds that once constituted our identity, the style of life that bears the mark of a personal signature rather than an imposed status. It is Wilde, of all people, who discerns the shades.²

Pater wrote of Winckelmann that ‘the insincerity of his religious profession was only one incident of a culture in which the moral instinct, like the religious or political, was merged in the artistic’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.149), and Bridges seems to have thought much the same of Hopkins, as Hopkins indicates in a letter dated 10 June 1882, a letter written after Bridges attended the Corpus Christi procession at Roehampton:

It is long since such things had any significance for you. But what is strange and unpleasant is that you sometimes speak as if they had in reality none for me and you were only waiting with a certain disgust till I too should be disgusted with myself enough to throw off the mask. You said something of the sort walking on the Cowley Road when we were last at Oxford together — in ’79 it must have been. Yet I can hardly think you do not think I am in earnest. (*Letters* I, p.148)

A clue to how seriously, or earnestly, Hopkins held his priestly profession — a seriousness that his closest friend Bridges surely questioned, even to his face — was left at the bottom of another boat (this time not a yacht), during a playful

¹ Donoghue, pp.324-25.

² Jeff Nunokawa, *Tame Passions of Wilde: The Styles of Manageable Desire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p.18. See also Joseph Bristow, “‘A Complex Multiform Creature’: Wilde’s Sexual Identities”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Peter Raby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.195-218. Thomas Wright claims that ‘we think of Wilde now as a man who had so many different personalities that he could only ever be true to himself when he was inconsistent’ — ‘In the Mouth of Fame’, *Times Literary Supplement* (9 February 2001), pp.3-5 (p.3).

exchange with the children of his Irish friend Dr Francis McCabe, whose home was Belleville:

Opposite Belleville was a lake in a disused quarry, on which the young McCabes kept a flat-bottomed punt, in which they would row and fish [...] Hopkins used to join the young people in the boat: 'Once on a very hot day he took off his [priestly] dog collar and threw it down in the bottom of the boat exclaiming "I'll say goodbye to Rome"'.

There is something refreshingly Wildean in this exclamation and its accompanying flourish, something melodramatic, enigmatic, symbolic.¹ Hence, much that still needs explaining rests at the bottom of that boat with Hopkins's priestly collar, much of that 'arbitrary, impulsive, frivolous, cynical, witty or jocular' quality that Dover notes in the ancient Greeks, and that should be noted in this Professor of Greek. Of that experience, the only assurance is that 'it was fun while it lasted'. However, Hopkins's world would soon become much hotter and less explanatory than on that summer day spent with the McCabe children, spent revelling in an acquired freedom from Rome and its seriousness.



A Dream of Decadence on the Cherwell

(Caricature of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas)

The New Rattle [Oxford undergraduate magazine], May 1893

Vol. 4 (Oxford: Bridge & Co.)

¹ White, *Hopkins*, p.411. For some curious and playful parallels between Hopkins and Wilde, see Leonara Rita Obed, 'Gerard Manley Hopkins and Oscar Wilde – Victorians and Writers', Lecture delivered at *The 16th Gerard Manley Hopkins Summer School*, Monasterevin, Ireland (2003) <http://www.gerardmanleyhopkins.org/lectures_2003/oscar_wilde.html>, and <http://www.gerardmanleyhopkins.org/lectures_2003/hopkins-and-wilde2.html> [last accessed 12 June 2004]. Obed's *tone* parallels my own: 'As the Oxford dandy who became a dandyfied Jesuit, Hopkins not only had an uncanny resemblance to Oscar Wilde, but fulfilled his clandestine dreams: he was the sacred counterpoint to his profanities, an actual and secret Ernest in the disappearing English countryside to Wilde's city-smart Jack' (oscar_wilde.html).

**‘Telling Secrets’:
Hopkins and Issues of Post-mortem**

Above all other things I put the fact that *you* have come out of the ranks of a common friend into the first place of all, as something better than a brother. You are the inestimable treasure for which I have been waiting nearly thirty years and which, God knows, I long ago thought would never come at all.

(Edmund Gosse, Letter to the sculptor
Hamo Thornycroft, 31 December 1879)¹

Literature has often been subjected to a 233° change of perspective — 233° Celsius to be precise — the temperature at which paper begins to burn (to convert Ray Bradbury’s familiar title into the unrecognisable). Despite the use of exquisite forensic tools, the burning of manuscripts has often thwarted both biography and literary criticism outright, whether as an expression of authorial intention, affection, censorship, or ignorance. In the case of Gerard Manley Hopkins, the biographical post-mortem has been altered immensely by the choices of which manuscripts to burn and which to preserve, and those choices have often involved sensitivity to the homoerotic and the paederastic.

For Hopkins — whose poem ‘That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection’ contains the observations that ‘million-fuelèd, nature’s bonfire burns on’ and that ‘world’s wildfire, leave but ash’ (lines 9, 20) — the bonfire and the ash were often his own manuscripts. The first of these

¹ As quoted in Evan Charteris, *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse* (London: W. Heinemann, 1931), p.107. For Gosse’s homoerotic attraction to the academic sculptor Hamo Thornycroft, see Ann Thwaite, *Edmund Gosse: A Literary Landscape, 1849-1928* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1985), pp.192-97. This led to ‘the catty description of Gosse as a closeted “hamosexual” by Lytton Strachey’ — Jason Edwards, ‘Edmund Gosse and the Victorian Nude’, *History Today*, 51.11 (2001), pp.29-35 (p.34). In ‘Near and Far: Homoeroticism, Labour, and Hamo Thornycroft’s *Mower*’, *Art History*, 26.1 (2003), pp.26-55, Michael Hatt describes how this attraction flowered into verse:

The most significant example [of Gosse’s love poems to Thornycroft] is a set of poems included in his collection *Firdausi in Exile*, first published in 1885. [...] A letter from John Addington Symonds to Gosse, dated 25 March 1890, clarifies things. Symonds is responding to a letter from Gosse that included a key to *Firdausi in Exile*, identifying a sequence of covert homosexual verse, a cycle Symonds calls ‘The Taming of Chimaera’. (Pp.28-29)

bonfires, on 11 May 1868, saw him casting into the flames his early poems, an event he dubbed the ‘slaughter of the innocents’ (*Journals*, p.165).¹

Later, in August of that year, Hopkins answered a request from Robert Bridges for a poem: ‘I cannot send my *Summa* for it is burnt with my other verses: I saw they wd. interfere with my state and vocation’ (7 August 1868, *Letters* I, p.24). This decision was later clarified for R. W. Dixon: ‘I destroyed the verse I had written when I entered the Society [of Jesus] and meant to write no more; the *Deutschland* I began after a long interval at the chance suggestion of my superior, but that being done it is a question whether I did well to write anything else’ (29 October – 2 November 1881, *Letters* II, p.88). This explanation of the Jesuitical motivation behind the ‘slaughter of the innocents’ and the ensuing decision ‘to write no more’ drew the following response from Dixon:

Your Letter touches & moves me more than I can say [...] [especially] to hear of your having destroyed poems, & feeling that you have a vocation in comparison of which poetry & the fame that might assuredly be yours is nothing. I could say much, for my heart bleeds [...] Surely one vocation cannot destroy another: and such a Society as yours will not remain ignorant that you have such gifts as have seldom been given by God to man.

(4-14 November 1881, *Letters* II, pp.89-90)

This is a heart-wrenching plea from an appreciative friend who did not know the whole story, for ‘surely one vocation *cannot* destroy another’, and never did. What Hopkins conveniently failed to mention to Dixon was that this bonfire had been more of a purging of manuscript drafts and an act of carnival religiosity than an actual slaughter, as the rest of the letter to Bridges relates: ‘I kept however corrected copies of some things which you have and will send them that what you have got you may have in its last edition’ (*Letters* I, p.24).²

A decade later, Hopkins would explain to Bridges, ‘I do not write for the public. You are my public’ (21 August 1877, *Letters* I, p.46) — and that public had a copy of most of what Hopkins had written before the bonfire, ‘in its last edition’. Hopkins’s choice of this friend, this public, this literary executor was a brilliant one, since Bridges would find himself, decades later, Poet Laureate, and in a position to edit and publish grandly the first edition of Hopkins’s poems (Oxford University Press, 1918). Besides the ‘retained’ poems

¹ I am recognising a distinction between ‘bonfire’ and a more typical ‘tidying up’. Not infrequently, Hopkins had burned other manuscripts, though the extent of those burnings is hard to measure, as in a journal entry for 1 June 1866: ‘I read today the journal I kept in 1862, burning parts’ (*Journals*, p.138).

² Maneck Homi Daruwala notes an apparently opposite motivation for a similar bonfire by Pater: ‘Finally, despite the stress on criticism and fiction, Pater’s aesthetics remain those of Romantic poetry. Pater, like Wilde, began by writing poetry, even though he burnt his early poems for being too Christian’ — in “‘The Discerning Flame’: Of Pater and *The Renaissance*”, *Victorian Institute Journal*, 16 (1988), pp.85-127 (p.117).

forwarded to Bridges in 1868, as the editor of Hopkins's *Journals* admits: 'In the early Diaries are many of the verses once thought to have been burnt' (*Journals*, p.xv). When it comes to verses, poets often make resolutions about parting with them, but the decomposing hand of an Elizabeth Siddal is eventually moved aside to release the manuscripts that a grieving Dante Gabriel Rossetti has buried with her. Phoenix-like, poems amazingly resurrect from ashes and graves.

This is rarely the case with items more biographically telling. In a letter written from Dublin in 1885, amidst the depression that birthed his much-prized 'Dark Sonnets', Hopkins recounted to A. W. M. Baillie: 'I began to overhaul my old letters, accumulations of actually ever since I was at school, destroying all but a very few, and growing ever lother [*sic*] to destroy, but also to read, so that at last I left off reading; and there they lie' (24 April 1885, *Letters* III, p.255). This was the first major bonfire purging away the details of his life, but not the last.

After his death on 8 June 1889, Hopkins's remaining papers were found in his room in 86 St Stephen's Green, Dublin. About these, Fr Thomas Wheeler, S.J. — then Minister and Vice-President of University College and the person who had attended Hopkins as he lay dying — wrote to Bridges:

Hopkins had a presentiment that he would not recover — but I am sure he took no measure to arrange his papers, and gave no instructions about preserving or destroying them. Any suggestion to that effect would be made to me — and he never broached the subject at all. ... So I cannot fancy what he would have wished to be done with them. As for myself I looked in a hurried way through his papers but cannot say that I read any of them. Letters which I recognized by your writing or initials I set apart to forward. Many others I destroyed: and when I learned your wish to sift these writings in view to publication or selection I gathered them together indiscriminately and sent them to be used by you or his parents, at your discretion. (27 October 1889, as quoted in *Letters* I, p.vi)

Fr Wheeler's letter was in response to Bridges's request for the forwarding of his own letters, as well as Hopkins's literary remains, for 'Hopkins had once told Bridges that he was content to leave the fate of his poems in the hands of Providence, but he chose Bridges as his poetic executor'.¹ Fr Wheeler's comment that 'many others I destroyed' encapsulates a loss that is only hinted at by what remains. An example of this is Hopkins's only extant letter from Walter Pater (that acceptance of a dinner invitation considered earlier), a letter undoubtedly saved from oblivion because Hopkins had drafted part of a poem, '[Who Shaped These Walls]', on the manuscript (*Facsimiles* II, p.176). One is left to wonder what else was tossed thoughtlessly into that Dublin bonfire, perhaps even Hopkins's ode on Edmund Campion,² alluded to in letters:

¹ White, *Hopkins*, p.451.

² Edmund Campion (b.1540) — for whom Campion Hall, Oxford, is named — was an Oxford graduate and Fellow of St John's College who left to help establish the proposed University of Dublin; a Divinity scholar at the University of Douai; a Jesuit missionary to England; a martyr executed on 1 December 1581; and a saint canonised in 1970.

One is a great ode on Edmund Campion S.J. [...] Thinking over this matter [of Campion's martyrdom three-hundred years ago] my vein began to flow and I have by me a few scattered stanzas, something between the *Deutschland* and *Alexander's Feast*, in sprung rhythm of irregular metre. But the vein urged by any country sight or feeling of freedom or leisure (you cannot tell what a slavery of mind or heart it is to live my life in a great town) soon dried and I do not know if I can coax it to run again. (16 September 1881, *Letters* I, pp.135-36)¹

After Hopkins's remaining papers had reached England, this bonfire continued under Bridges's supervision, as the editor of Hopkins's *Letters* relates: 'It seems, therefore, that [Bridges's] letters were returned, and that [he] destroyed them [...] One side of this fruitful friendship, therefore, has to be deduced from what remains. That is a grave misfortune' (*Letters* I, p.vi). Bridges, who hoped to thwart his own future biographers, tended to do such things, and had done so before: 'Two letters [from Hopkins], written towards the end [of his life], [Bridges] tells us that he burned, but he gives no reason. It seems probable they were letters of anguish and distress (the prose counterpart of certain of the sonnets) that he knew his friend would not wish to have printed' (*Letters* I, p.v). Bridges simply notes: 'The two letters preceding this one were destroyed RB' (as quoted in *Letters* I, p.303, note). However, Bridges was not the only friend who had destroyed letters from Hopkins. On 5 July 1909, William Edward Addis (1844-1917) wrote to Fr Joseph Keating, S.J.: 'I knew [Hopkins] in his undergraduate days far better than any one else did [...] Of many letters some of them very long which Hopkins wrote to me I have not, alas! kept even one'.²

Under their own volition or Bridges's guidance, Hopkins's family also participated in this process of purging. Hopkins's sisters Grace and Kate burned, unopened, an autograph notebook in their possession, a notebook on which Hopkins had written, 'Please do not open this' (*Journals*, p.xiv).³ It is fortunate that Hopkins's sisters did not have access to his other notebooks, since another segment of the now-published journals is marked 'PRIVATE' and 'Please not to

¹ In the introduction to his biography of Hopkins, Martin relates that in a BBC broadcast in 1957, Lance Sieveking, a relative of Gerard Manley Hopkins, told of an old man in Dublin who remembered passing the half-open door of Hopkins's rooms in St Stephen's Green on the day after his death in 1889. Although it was June, a huge fire was burning in the grate, and when he turned to investigate, he saw 'an old fellow, all in black', pulling out the contents of a chest of drawers and 'heaping papers on the fire'.

We shall never know what was destroyed that day, although it seems a safe supposition that most of the poet's remaining private papers went up the chimney. (P.xi)

² As quoted in G. F. Lahey, *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), pp.18-19.

³ For the details of this burning, see W. H. Gardner, *Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89): A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition*, 2 vols (London: Secker and Warburg, 1944 and 1949), I, p.viii.

read' (*Journals*, p.529, note). As a courtesy, Bridges usually sought the family's sanction before committing Hopkins's manuscripts to the flames: 'There is a bundle of what is practically worthless — old examination papers, and schemes for discovering the Structure of Greek choruses etc etc. which cd. be of no possible use to any one but the writer. I will either return this lot [to you] as it is or use my judgment in burning it. I think it ought to be burned' (Letter of 14 October 1889, as quoted in *Journals*, p.xii). Questionably, Bridges and the Hopkins family sometimes deviated from what would clearly have been Hopkins's 'intentions' as a Jesuit — opting instead for clarification of his life through choosing which manuscript evidence to preserve. In November 1889, Bridges wrote again: 'I have added one or two MS to this collection, and I have tied into the end of it an envelope which you will find to contain some MS notes which Gerard made of his meditations in retreat. *These are very private*, and were certainly not intended to be read' (as quoted in *Journals*, p.xiii). Although these 'were certainly not intended to be read', Bridges suggests preserving them, for 'they are a valuable & unimpeachable testimony to the mental trouble that he suffered from being obliged to witness the disloyal plotting of his Society in Ireland — and together with his letters to me will some day be wanted' (p.xiii).

However, it was with the Society of Jesus, those 'disloyal plott[ers] of his Society in Ireland', that a mass of Hopkins's manuscripts remained, such that Fr Matthew Russell, S.J., editor of the *Irish Monthly*, felt confident enough to assert authoritatively in 1902: 'The remains of Father Hopkins' writings were left here, in Dublin' (as quoted in *Journals*, p.xv). Understandably, the papers relating to Hopkins's university duties went to his successor in the chair of Greek; others remained in the drawers of his former desk until borrowed and often kept by admirers. Many of those papers have found their way into library collections and archives; others are lost.

It must be admitted though that Hopkins had himself inadvertently provoked a famous literary bonfire, a bonfire involving a prose meditation by Coventry Patmore, that poet who had a knack for rescuing artworks, either physically or publicly. It was Patmore who, after Alfred Tennyson (1809-92) had absentmindedly left behind his only manuscript volume of *In Memoriam* in a cupboard at some lodgings in Hampstead Road, managed to rescue it forcefully before the landlady had her way with it. It was Patmore who persuaded John Ruskin to write that famous letter to *The Times* in favour of the maligned Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, hence swaying the public to take a second, more appreciative look.¹ Saving the Victorians' most beloved poem as well as their

¹ For his rescue of *In Memoriam*, see Derek Patmore, *Portrait of My Family: 1783-1896* (New York: Harper, 1935), pp.103-04. For his prompting of Ruskin, see E. J. Oliver, *Coventry Patmore* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), p.36. Patmore's assistance to the Pre-Raphaelites went even further: 'Other of Ruskin's letters show the efforts he made, on Patmore's initiative, to find patrons and purchasers for the Pre-Raphaelites' (*Ibid.*, p.30).

most representative artworks — those were indeed Herculean feats, feats that Patmore managed with his usual, cultivated flair.

Some three decades after those events, at the end of July 1883, Patmore made Hopkins's acquaintance while at Stonyhurst College's 'Great Academy' (or, Speech Day) as the guest of honour; and, from that moment, Patmore's feelings for Hopkins as both friend and critic were clear: 'I assure you that I shall always regard my having made your acquaintance as an important event of my life, and there are few things I desire more than a renewal of opportunity of personal intercourse with you' (11 June 1885, *Letters III*, pp.363-64). Although Patmore never warmed to or particularly understood Hopkins's utterly innovative poetics, he did value Hopkins as a critic, asking him to comment on his forthcoming edition of *The Angel in the House* and confiding to him about his most intimate of projects, *Sponsa Dei*, based on the nuptials of the Virgin: 'I have written a series of notes wh. I purpose shall be published after my death, under the title of "Sponsa Dei". I do not think they would be more, or so impressive in verse' (7 April 1885, *Letters III*, p.361). In fact, Patmore had spent ten years polishing this commingling of the sacred and the profane, a commingling probably beyond the bounds of Roman Catholic propriety: 'I spend many hours a day in meditating on my own line, but that line has carried me and daily carries me further and further away from the thoughts that can or ought to be spoken' (p.362).

While Hopkins, as Robert Bernard Martin stresses, was equally attuned to this undercurrent of eroticism — 'there is a long Christian tradition of the association between eroticism and religion, and it was never far beneath the surface in Hopkins's poetry'¹ — when asked to criticise the second book of Patmore's overly heterosexual *Unknown Eros*, Hopkins was only able to comment falteringly (as one would expect, given his own erotic 'sensibilities') that several of the poems involving Erôs and Psyche are 'such a new thing and belong to such a new atmosphere that I feel it as dangerous to criticise them almost as the *Canticles*' (3 January 1884, *Letters III*, p.347). What Hopkins tactfully describes as 'a new atmosphere' arising from Patmore's pen is elucidated more forthrightly by Shane Leslie (1885-1971), editor of the *Dublin Review*: 'The flaming content of Patmore's "Unknown Eros" left Swinburne panting in his gilded brothel'.²

In August 1885, while visiting Patmore at Hastings — where, it should be noted, Patmore's library 'was said to have [had] as many erotic books as religious ones'³ — Hopkins was given the manuscript of *Sponsa Dei* to read. The result was that 'Hopkins did not approve of the book. He told Patmore that he thought the book too intimate, dealing as it did with so "mystical an interpretation of the significance of physical love in religion", to be placed in the

¹ Martin, p.251.

² As quoted in D. Patmore, p.214.

³ Martin, p.355.

hands of the general reading public'.¹ Given the delicacy of this situation, Hopkins waited until he was far from Hastings before commenting at length, which he did on 21 August: 'Anything however high and innocent may happen to suggest anything however low and loathsome' (*Letters* III, p.365). After providing three examples of religious contemplation perverted to the point of sexual excess, Hopkins writes: 'I am sorry to disgust you with these horrors; but such is man and such is Satanic craft. I could not bring myself to speak by word of mouth'.²

Partly prompted by his friend's reaction, Patmore, on Christmas Day 1887, tossed this beloved prose meditation into the fireplace. In a letter to Bridges after Hopkins's death, Patmore explains this act:

The *authority* of his goodness was so great with me that I threw the manuscript of a little book — a sort of 'Religio Poetae' — into the fire, simply because, when he had read it, he said with a grave look, 'that's telling secrets'. This little book had been the work of ten years' continual meditations, and could not but have made a greater effect than all the rest I have ever written; but his doubt was final with me. (12 August 1889, *Letters* III, p.391, note).

To Hopkins, Patmore had earlier explained:

Much-meditating on the effect which my M.S. 'Sponsa Dei' had upon you, when you read it while staying here, I concluded that I would not take the responsibility of being the first to expound the truths therein contained: so, on Xmas Day, I committed the work to the flames without reserve of a single paragraph. (10 February 1888, *Letters* III, p.385)

¹ D. Patmore, pp.218-19.

² In 'The Other in the Mirror: Sex, Victorians and Historians' (1998) <<http://www.lesleyahall.net/sexvict.htm>> [last accessed 23 March 2006], Dr Lesley A. Hall of the Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine and of University College, London, notes: 'There is, indeed, some rather curious evidence — which I discovered in correspondence between one of [Patmore's] descendants and Sir Julian Huxley — that Patmore practised a possibly unique form of masturbation without ejaculation providing the pleasures of arousal without those of satisfaction'. This material was further elucidated and corrected in an E-mail to me from Dr Hall on 2 January 2005:

Looking back over my files, I see that this correspondence consists of a group of letters from Richard de Bary to Julian Huxley during 1933. They are from the Huxley papers at Rice University, file 11.3. de Bary was not in fact a relative of Patmore but had 'spoken with one who knew CP personally'. The process appears to have involved 'an absolutely perfect closure (by silk-thread or what you will) of the sex organ', which, according to de Bary, prevented emission and [allowed for] the re-absorption of the spermatozoa into the nervous system. [...] There is also a letter from the specialist in sexual medicine Dr Norman Haire, to whom Huxley showed this correspondence.

I wish to thank Dr Hall for providing me with copies of this entire correspondence.

Presented with the shocking suggestion that his own words had sparked this bonfire, Hopkins took months to reply:

Your news was that you had burnt the book called *Sponsa Dei*, and that on reflexion upon remarks of mine. I wish I had been more guarded in making them. When we take a step like this we are forced to condemn ourselves: either our work shd. never have been done or never undone, and either way our time and toil are wasted — a sad thought [...] My objections were not final, they were but considerations (I forget now, with one exception, what they were); even if they were valid, still if you had kept to yr. custom of consulting your [spiritual] director, as you said you should, the book might have appeared with no change or with slight ones. But now regret is useless.

(6-7 May 1888, *Letters III*, pp.385-86)

Given the import derived from his earlier letter, Patmore responded immediately:

I did not burn 'Sponsa Dei' altogether without the further consultation you mentioned. After what you had said, I talked to Dr Rouse [my spiritual director] about it, and he seemed to have no strong opinion one way or another, but said he thought that all the substance of the work was already published in my poems & in one or two of my papers in the *St. James's*. So I felt free to do what your condemnation of the little book inclined me to do.

(11 May 1888, *Letters III*, pp.390-91)

Dr Rouse's observations reveal that, as with Hopkins's 'slaughter of the innocents', this Hastings bonfire had been more a purging of manuscript drafts and an act of carnival religiosity than an actual slaughter, for Patmore had already published most of the contents of *Sponsa Dei*, though in a form less accessible to the common reader, the 'general reading public'. Although E. J. Oliver notes 'Patmore's joy in bonfires',¹ it must be admitted that those bonfires were largely symbolic.

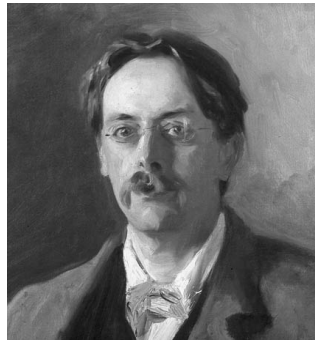
Edmund Gosse — at that time Patmore's literary executor and one of the few who had read this prose meditation in manuscript — was shocked one morning at breakfast by the following exclamation: 'You won't have much to do as my literary executor!'² In a passage in which he publicly blames Hopkins for the loss, Gosse describes the destroyed prose work:

This vanished masterpiece was not very long, but polished and modulated to the highest degree of perfection ... The subject of it was certainly audacious. It was not more or less than an interpretation of the love between the soul and God by an analogy of the love between a woman and a man; it was, indeed, a transcendental treatise on Divine desire seen through the veil of human desire.

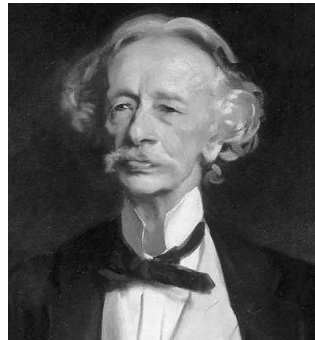
(As quoted in *Letters III*, p.xxxiv)

¹ Oliver, p.169.

² As quoted in White, *Hopkins*, p.403.



Sir Edmund Gosse
 John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)
 Oil on canvas, 1886
 National Portrait Gallery
 London, UK



Coventry Patmore (detail)
 John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)
 Oil on canvas, 1894
 National Portrait Gallery
 London, UK

Gosse further writes: ‘The purity and crystalline passion of the writer carried him safely over the most astounding difficulties, but perhaps, on the whole, he was right in considering that it should not be shown to the vulgar’.¹ Gosse may have been a literary figure of some clout during the Victorian period, but his competence to assess what could ‘safely [carry a person] over the most astounding [erotic] difficulties’ and what ‘should not be shown to the vulgar’ (a reference to the ‘general reading public’) should be considered suspect, given the following aside, mentioned in ‘Chapter One’. Like many in his intimate circle, Gosse had a penchant for collecting photographs of nude boys, particularly those by Wilhelm von Gloeden, photographs that his circle gave one another as gifts. In relation to Gosse’s sense of public discretion, one should remember that letter from 31 December 1889 in which he thanks J. A. Symonds for sending him one such photograph: ‘As I sat in the Choir [in Westminster Abbey during Robert Browning’s funeral], with George Meredith at my side, I peeped at it again and again’.² Gosse was indeed a paragon of discretion.

¹ As quoted in D. Patmore, p.213.

² As quoted in Thwaite, p.323. I wish to thank Dr Rictor Norton for corresponding with me regarding this point. As far as the broader implications of Gosse’s fascination with such nudes, Edwards writes:

Yet in many ways, Gosse’s account [of his father’s violent verbal response to the sculptures in an art book bought by his wife (Gosse’s mother) and his allusions to the paederastic sins of the ancients] does challenge our inherited familiar notions of the Victorian encounter with the nude. As we review the Victorian nude in the gallery today, Gosse’s memoirs remind us that it aroused desires, that [those desires] were different to our own, were born out of different ideas, and were experienced in different ways. (P.35)

Nonetheless, Gosse's concern that some things 'should not be shown to the vulgar' is worth considering (and not simply because the prior comment, about his lack of discretion, borders on *argumentum ad homonym*). Gosse's concern raises ethical questions about literary burial, exhumation, and post-mortem.¹ To provide an example: With the autumn Classical Honour Moderations exam looming before him, Hopkins set off on a reading holiday in Wales in early August 1864, accompanied by his friends Alfred Erskine Gathorne-Hardy (1845-1918) and Edward Bond (1844-1920). After their arrival in Wales, the holiday quickly devolved into an unacademic romp, at least for Hopkins's companions. Writing to another friend, A. W. M. Baillie, Hopkins confided that he was having 'a hard time of it to resist contamination from the bawdy jokes and allusions of Bond and Hardy', innuendo provoked by the presence of four young ladies from Reading who were staying in the same lodgings (20 July – 14 August 1864, *Letters III*, p.213). The reading party had become a Reading party. At this point in the letter, Hopkins 'obliterated four lines and a bit, and stuck a piece of paper over part of the cancelled sentence' (Editor's note, *Letters III*, p.213). In reference to this cancelled passage, Hopkins wrote to Baillie at the very beginning of the letter: 'I TRUST TO YOUR HONOUR NOT TO READ the lines scratched out below' (p.210). Although this paste-over remained undisturbed during Baillie's lifetime — a token of his respect for Hopkins's wishes — modern conservation tools have exhumed the lines, such that scholars now know that 'Hardy is always talking of debauching [two], well-dressed girls but when he has introduced himself to them oh then he is very, very sick' (as quoted in editor's note, *Letters III*, p.213). Since, on this holiday in Wales, Hopkins had had 'a hard time of it to resist contamination from the bawdy jokes and allusions of Bond', Bond would seem the last person Hopkins would accompany on another holiday, especially his last holiday before entering the Jesuit novitiate in 1868. However, Hopkins's journal entry for 3 July 1868 reveals: 'Started with Ed. Bond for Switzerland' (*Journals*, p.168). The reason for choosing Switzerland was that Hopkins had been told by Bond that 'the Jesuits [...] are strictly forbidden the country' (2 July 1868, *Letters III*, p.53) — the reason for choosing the bawdy and allusive Bond as his companion, that is open to conjecture.

The point is that, with preserved documents (no matter how 'privileged' and 'private' such documents might be considered today), curiosity always reigns over privacy, as in the case of Billie Andrew Inman's volumes *Walter Pater's Reading: A Bibliography of His Library Borrowings and Literary References*,

Although I agree that Gosse's account in *Father and Son* (1907) of his father's prudish responses does call for a re-evaluation of Victorian perceptions of the nude, I disagree with the claim that Gosse exhibited 'different' desires, desires that arose from 'different' ideas and were experienced in 'different' ways.

¹ Notice Gosse's similar concern in regard to his own biography of Pater, as Donoghue notes: 'Gosse wanted to bring Pater's life forward, subject to considerations of decorum and privacy' (p.18).

1858-1873 and *Walter Pater and His Reading, 1874-1877: With a Bibliography of His Library Borrowings, 1878-1894*. These two volumes serve, by sheer bulk, to support a claim that preserved documents allow for posthumous intrusion. At present, legal regulations usually stipulate that records of library borrowings must be purged after books have been returned: thankfully, the Bodleian Library had no such policy during the Victorian period, for it is the nature of biographers and literary critics to probe all of the residue that a biographical ‘subject’ has left behind, with the same rigour as an Egyptologist over the body of a pharaoh and with many of the same tools.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Hopkins’s literary remains became the impetus and test case for employing forensic tools in the study of literary manuscripts, as is explained by Norman H. MacKenzie, editor of Hopkins’s authoritative *Oxford English Texts* edition and Garland Press *Facsimile* volumes:

If two inks with different chemical ingredients have been used in a MS — as is often the case when a forger has changed part of a document — no matter how cleverly he has matched the ink in colour to deceive the naked eye, the Infrared Image Converter should be able to detect the intrusive ink. Since visual separation of Hopkins’s revisions from the transcriptions of Bridges was often problematical, I suggested to the Bodleian Library that MS. B should be taken to the Document Examination Laboratory of Scotland Yard for a demonstration of their apparatus [...] Dr. David Rogers, the senior research librarian who accompanied me, was so impressed that he enlisted Dr. Edward Hall of Oxford’s Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art to construct a modified version of the instrument for the use of readers in the Bodleian.

(*Facsimiles* II, pp.10-11)

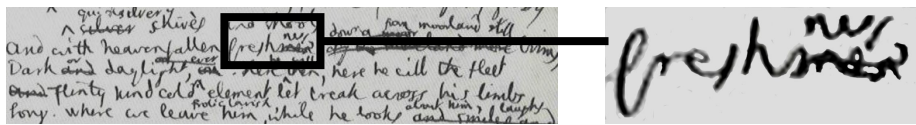
This machine was eventually augmented by a more sophisticated Video Spectral Comparator, installed in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Library specifically for examining Hopkins’s manuscripts (*Facsimiles* II, p.11). Such forensic tools have altered the scholarly view of Hopkins forever, and the resultant manuscript autopsies have not always proven pleasant or ethical for many Hopkins scholars. These autopsies, added to the publication of suppressed materials, have altered forever the scholarly perception of Hopkins, as Dennis Sobolev explains:

In 1989 Norman MacKenzie published the most guarded materials of Hopkins criticism: his early notes and diaries, whose carefully censored fragments were earlier published by Humphry House. [...] This publication has changed the atmosphere of Hopkins criticism. [...] As Martin writes, ‘in totality [Hopkins’s notes] indicate that his susceptibility was largely homoerotic’. An unprejudiced reader can hardly disagree with this conclusion; as far as we know, Hopkins was attracted to male rather than female beauty.¹

¹ Sobolev, p.120.

Illustrious, illustrative examples of the erotic disclosures derived from these manuscript autopsies and from the full publication of the early notes and diaries can be found in relation to the manuscripts of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' (long mistakenly labelled a fragment) and his confession notes.

In the 'Epithalamion', Hopkins's reader is asked to join the narrator in imaginatively constructing a woodland abounding with bathing boys. The narrator then directs the reader's gaze towards an advancing stranger who, inspired by the sight of these naked striplings, undresses and bathes alone, caressed by a vacillating stream. As recently as 1990, the scholar James Earl suggested that the proper lesson learned from Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' is that 'we would do well to destroy the poems we write while administering exams'.¹



After bemoaning the fact that this voyeuristic masterpiece had not been cast into the flames by the poet or someone else, Earl must have been dumbfounded when the facsimile volumes of Hopkins's manuscripts appeared, revealing to a wider readership that, while describing the spilling of the water from the moorland, Hopkins had not initially written 'heavenfallen freshness' but 'heavenfallen freshmen' (H.ii.9^r, *Facsimiles II*, p.327), a Freudian slip that, despite being discreetly struck through, reveals that his poetic mind, in process, was aflow with a waterworld in which his 'freshmen' bathed rather than finished their exam, an exam they were taking while he was busily composing this poetic Arcadia.

Beyond this imaginative romp with the 'freshmen', there are more concrete revelations in these facsimiles, such as the following notes for confession crossed out by Hopkins himself — notes that, if unreadable to the naked eye, can be exposed through forensic science:

- Parker's boy at Merton: evil thoughts. (*Facsimiles I*, p.157)
- Looking at a cart-boy fr. Standen's shopdoor. (P.157)
- Looking at boy thro' window. (P.162)
- Looking at boys, several instances. (P.173)
- Imprudent looking at organ-boy and other boys. (P.174)
- Looking at a boy at Tiverton. (P.177)
- Temptation in thinking over boy I saw. (P.181)
- Looking at a chorister at Magdalen, and evil thoughts. (P.195)

¹ James W. Earl, "The One Rapture of an Inspiration", *Thought*, 65.259 (1990), pp.550-62 (p.560).

Evil thought abt. Magdalen wh. I did not treat as I shd. Temptation fr. myself in washing [...] Dallying with that temptation about Magdalen, wh. indeed I think was never a tempt. in itself but a scruple and a wicked careless predisposition of mind. (*Facsimiles I*, pp.198-99)

This last entry clearly reveals Hopkins dallying, a month later, with a remembrance of that Magdalen choirboy (with a bit of masturbatory suggestion washing over it all).¹ Hopkins, who had a passion for etymology (later contributing eighty-nine entries to the *English Dialect Dictionary*), would have appreciated that the *OED* traces the word ‘chorister’ back to ‘queristre’ (around 1360), with an entry from 1611 defining ‘querister’ as a ‘singing boy’.² ‘Querister’ was just the sort of dictionary entry to stir a ‘queer’ like Hopkins, whose confession notes occasionally read: ‘looking at a dreadful word in Lexicon’ (*Facsimiles I*, p.156) and ‘evil thoughts in dictionary’ (p.157). Such disclosures in Hopkins’s confession notes and ‘Epithalamion’ drafts serve to define him as a voyeur of cart-boys, choristers, and heavenfallen freshmen, serve to define him erotically — by dictionary definition — as a ‘paederast’, even if only on the level of his ‘looking’. Such disclosures also leave many critics questioning whether these manuscripts should have been burned or kept.³

¹ This chorister fetish has a lengthy history as a Roman Catholic stereotype. As representative, consider the sodomy case involving a canon and a choirboy of the Church of Our Lady of Loreto, in 1570 — Richard Sherr, ‘A Canon, a Choirboy, and Homosexuality in Late Sixteenth-Century Italy: A Case Study’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21.3 (1991), pp.1-22.

² ‘Another [17th-century] ballad which lasted over sixty years was “The zealous querister’s songe of Yorke”, addressed “to all faithfull singers and godlye readers in the world” — Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.106.

³ There is certainly more here than Dowling’s claim (though that claim is valid, however partial) that ‘the Tractarian ideal of friendship as spiritual communion [...] would so deeply color Oxford sociality in later years, prompting both A. H. Clough and G. M. Hopkins to fill their Oxford diaries with brief but impassioned notations of the ebb and flow in friendships’ (*Hellenism*, p.43). A particularly salient example of such a ‘paederastic’ bonfire is documented by Colette Colligan in her “‘A Race of Born Pederasts’: Sir Richard Burton, Homosexuality, and the Arabs”, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 25.1 (2003), pp.1-20 (pp.9-10):

As her husband’s executor, Isabel Burton censored and burned much of his unpublished material on pederasty. [...] Isabel Burton found *The Scented Garden* particularly offensive and burnt the nearly completed manuscript. In a melodramatic letter to the *Morning Post* on January 19, 1891, she publicly confessed to burning the manuscript:

My husband has been collecting for 14 years information and materials on a certain subject. [...] He then gave himself up entirely to the writing of this book, which was called *The Scented Garden*, a translation from the Arabic. It treated of a certain passion. Do not let anyone suppose that Richard Burton ever wrote a thing from the impure point of view

The above is a unique reading of those two ‘Magdalen’ confession entries, since critics have universally claimed that the second refers to Hopkins’s cousin Magdalen, hence displays an absolutely rare moment of heterosexual attraction.¹ Given Hopkins’s confession a month prior about ‘looking at a chorister at Magdalen, and evil thoughts’, this canonised claim seems blatantly false, a mistake arising from the assumption that ‘Magdalen’ refers to Hopkins’s female cousin in the second entry, rather than a place with erotic associations for Hopkins. This mistake also arises from a lingering hope, held by many critics, that Hopkins would, at the very least, have gone through a slight ‘heterosexual phase’ sometime or other; however, if correct, the above reading of the last of those confession notes is one more indication that the ‘heterosexual Hopkins’ is not to be. Besides, it seems natural for Hopkins to have chosen to write ‘that temptation about Magdalen’ rather than ‘that chorister at Magdalen’, especially since he is confessing ‘evil thoughts’ about a particular chorister: in essence, by metonymically substituting ‘Magdalen’ for ‘chorister’, Hopkins keeps the image of that particular boy out of his mind as much as possible, which seems — while still under the (un)scrupulous High Anglican influence of E. B. Pusey and H. P. Liddon — to have been his goal.

Given this reading, the last entry of this ‘Magdalen’ pair becomes important in another way, for it discredits Sobolev’s claim that ‘in relation to Whitman, it is noteworthy that Hopkins admits the similarity only between his

[...] I remained for three days in a state of perfect torture as to what I ought to do about it [...] I said to myself ‘out of 2,000 men, 14 will probably read it in the spirit of science in which it was written; [...] the other [...] will read it for filth’s sake, and pass it to their friends, and the harm done will be incalculable’ [...] It would, by degrees, descend amongst the populace of Holywell Street.

The following are other examples: In *Murray Marks and His Friends: A Tribute of Regard by Dr. G. C. Williamson* (London: J. Lane, 1919), pp.156-63, George Charles Williamson explains that Marks was one of those who, as an act of altruism, bought the late paederastic and homoerotic artworks of the impoverished Simeon Solomon, but only so that they could then destroy them, ‘because [these works of art] were evil in design and horrible in appearance’. In ‘Death in Venice, Life in Zurich: Mann’s Late “Something for the Heart”’, *Southwest Review*, 82.3 (1997), pp.293-324, Gary Schmidgall notes that Thomas Mann made bonfires of his own diaries because of their paederastic and homoerotic content: ‘But for the diaries, we would be obliged to read between the lines of his novels, short stories, and feuilletons to speculate that he was also a great and lifelong, if also frustrated, lover. He had destroyed compromising diaries as early as 1895, when Wilde’s trial panicked him, and as recently as 1945’ (p.321).

¹ For two examples, the first coming from the publication of these private notes, the second from the most recent overview of Hopkins’s sexuality, see Dr Felix Letemendia, ‘Part III: Medico-Psychological Commentary’, in the ‘Introduction’ to *Facsimiles I*, p.34; Sobolev, p.120. If Hopkins’s cousin had any connection to this episode, it probably arose from her name sparking a remembrance of that chorister from Magdalen Chapel. For the erotic attractiveness of the Magdalen choristers, see Martin, pp.62-63.

and “Whitman’s mind”, and nothing indicates that by the mind he means sexual orientation’.¹ If correct that ‘Magdalen’ is a reference to Magdalen Chapel, a place bountiful in choristers, and not to Hopkins’s female cousin of the same name, then Hopkins’s claim about ‘dallying with that temptation about Magdalen’, a temptation that arose from ‘a wicked careless predisposition of mind’, discredits Sobolev’s claim, providing, as Hopkins’s confession note does, a direct link between his mind and his erotic desires.² This makes Hopkins’s claim of having *a mind strikingly like Whitman’s* all the more potent and revealing. One should also consider (which Sobolev fails to do) that Hopkins’s claim of similarity to Whitman appears in a letter to his closest friend Robert Bridges, a friend he sometimes addresses tenderly as ‘my dearest’ in letters,³ a friend who had already exhibited a tendency to discontinue correspondence when things went too far, which he had earlier done because of the political sentiments expressed in Hopkins’s (in)famous ‘Red Letter’ — ‘Horrible to say, in a manner I am a Communist’ (2 August 1871, *Letters I*, pp.27-28). For a time, Hopkins clearly feared that this tendency would resurface:

Besides I did not foresee the misunderstanding. What I did fear, and it made me keep the letter back, was that you would be offended at my freedom, indeed that you would not answer at all. Whereas, for which I heartily thank you, you have answered three times. (29 January 1879, *Letters I*, pp.63-64)

Given Hopkins’s clear expressions of affection for ‘my dearest’ Bridges and the risk of Bridges not replying (perhaps for years), it seems rather unreasonable to expect Hopkins to exclaim bluntly, ‘I always knew in my *loins* Walt Whitman’s *lust* to be more like my own than any other man’s living’, even if such was the case. Besides, all that would have remained of such a scandalous intimation would have been a simple note from Bridges: ‘The letter preceding this one was destroyed RB’.

There is always a limit to ‘telling secrets’ directly, especially secrets like those contained in a poem like Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ — and burning has often been the preferred method for dealing with such ‘secrets’, as Earl’s

¹ Sobolev, p.117; see also the accompanying comment, p.135, note 5. A similar claim is made in Eldrid Herrington, ‘Hopkins and Whitman’, *Essays in Criticism*, 55.1 (2005), pp.39-57 (p.46).

² This confession note would — even if it referred to Hopkins’s cousin — do the same.

³ About Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s use of the word ‘dearest’ to describe Arthur Henry Hallam in *In Memoriam*, Jack Kolb notes: ‘Tennyson himself was quoted as saying “if anybody thinks I ever called him ‘dearest’ in his life they are much mistaken, for I never even called him ‘dear’” — ‘Hallam, Tennyson, Homosexuality and the Critics’, *Philological Quarterly*, 79.3 (2000), pp.365-96 (p.367). In this article, Kolb also analyses an anonymous review of *In Memoriam* in *The London Times* in November 1851, a review that complains about the ‘amatory tenderness’ that phrasing such as ‘dearest’ suggests; Kolb notes that this anonymous review was ‘almost certainly written by Manley Hopkins, Gerard’s father’ (p.367).

inflammatory comment attests. Most scholars and biographers are leery of seeing Hopkins in the position of Ronald Firbank's protagonist in *Concerning the Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli* (1926) — especially since, at the end of that novella, Firbank's cardinal dies while chasing his favourite chorister around the altar of an empty church, in the nude.¹ A noteworthy vignette along this line was left behind by J. A. Symonds, a vignette concerning the eccentricities of Hopkins's university friend Edward William Urquhart (1839-1916), whom Symonds describes as 'a Scotchman of perfervid type' who 'had High Church proclivities and ran after choristers'.² In his confession notes about Magdalen Chapel and its innocent choristers, as well as in his later poetry and letters, Hopkins left behind similar vignettes concerning his own paederastic and homoerotic eccentricities — a striking example being his 'Epithalamion', which will be considered after a contemporary aside.



May Morning on Magdalen Tower (detail)

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

Oil on canvas, 1888-90

Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, near Liverpool, UK

¹ Ronald Firbank, *Concerning the Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli* (London: G. Richards, 1926). In "'Aggressive, Witty, & Unrelenting": Brigid Brophy and Ronald Firbank', *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 15.3 (1995), pp.68-78, Peter Parker comments that 'Firbank has suffered similarly in that even his admirers regretted (and, perhaps more to the point, were embarrassed by) what Evelyn Waugh described as a "coy naughtiness about birches and pretty boys"' (p.72).

² Phyllis Grosskurth, ed., *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds* (New York: Hutchinson, 1984), p.109.

**‘Depriving Future Generations of an Understanding’:
A Contemporary Aside**

dort, wo man Bücher
Verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen.

where books are burned, there
In the end, people will also be burned.
(Heinrich Heine, *Almansor*)¹

This wilful purging of paederastic, homoerotic, and other ‘subversive’ materials was not merely a feature of the nineteenth century (on a personal, familial, or editorial level). It was also not merely a feature of a moment like the Nazi destruction, on 10 May 1933, of the library and archives of the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute of Sex Research) — a private research institute founded in 1919 by Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) and Arthur Kronfeld (1886-1941) — an event that saw bonfires in the Opernplatz, a public square in Berlin, consume roughly 10,000 of its books and journals, and 5,000 of its images.² Contemporary Western society also occasionally sanctions such bonfires.



Execution for Sodomitical Godlessness in the City of Bruges, 26 July 1578

Franz Hogenberg (ca. 1540 – ca. 1590)

[From *Engravings of Scenes from the History of The Netherlands, France and Germany*
New York Public Library, New York City, New York, USA

¹ Heinrich Heine, *Almansor: A Tragedy* (1821), I, 284-85, as quoted in Thomas Pfau, *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790-1840* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), p.439. These words are inscribed on a plaque in the Bebelplatz (formerly the Opernplatz), the site of the Nazi book-burnings in 1933.

² See Angus McLaren, *Twentieth-Century Sexuality: A History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp.124-25; Heinz Heger, *Men with the Pink Triangle: The True Life-And-Death Story of Homosexuals in the Nazi Death Camps*, trans. by David Fernbach (Los Angeles, CA: Alyson, 1994), p.10.

As recently as 2001, the Dutch legal system oversaw the seizure and destruction of an important portion of the archives of the Brongersma Foundation, a research institute in Haarlem, near Amsterdam, The Netherlands, founded in 1979 by Edward Brongersma (1911-88), a doctor of law, a member of the Dutch Eerste Kamer (Senate), the chairman of the Eerste Kamer's Judiciary Committee, the principal scientific officer at the Criminological Institute of the University of Utrecht, and the author of *Das Verfehmtte Geschlecht* (*On Boy-Love*, 1970), *Sex en Straf* (*Sex and Punishment*, 1972), *Over pedofielen en kinderlokkers* (*On Pedophiles and Child Molesters*, 1975), and *Loving Boys* (2 vols, 1988-90). The Gay periodical *The Guide* chronicled the circumstances:

Dutch police invoked two new laws in the raid — one bans possession of any images of minors intended to arouse; the other requires doctors, teachers, clergy, and other professionals who know of sex involving youngsters to report it to the police. The new laws threaten two aspects of the Brongersma Foundation's collection. In addition to some 20,000 books, the archive holds hundreds of thousands of homoerotic images — ranging from private photographs and commercial pornography to the collected work of artists such as German photographer Hajo Ortil. Many of the images depict youths. The archive also contains some 500 personal sexual histories, often detailing relationships with boys.¹

In late October, police made their second raid on the Brongersma Foundation [...] The raid came shortly after a Dutch court sanctioned a police seizure made at the archive a few months earlier, in which authorities carted away dozens of boxes of personal histories and photographs. [...] A letter to the editor in *Trouw*, a Dutch daily, noted that when sodomites were burned at the stake in the middle ages, their court docket was burned with them — depriving future generations of an understanding of the deed. The Brongersma raids raise the question whether sexuality that is judged criminal can be documented for posterity. But the letter-writer was among the few voices raised against the archive's destruction, which has been met by a general silence among Dutch historians and preservationists.²

In 2003, the remainder of this collection was transferred, on permanent loan, to the Nederlands Instituut voor Sociaal Sexuologisch Onderzoek (The Netherlands Institute for Social Sexological Research), in Utrecht, which now manages the personal histories and accompanying visual materials, and the Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (International Institute of Social History), in Amsterdam, which manages the library and archives of the Foundation, with both institutions continuing to follow Brongersma's strict rules for gaining access to the materials. In 2004, the Foundation renamed itself the Fonds voor

¹ Anonymous, 'Never Again?: Dutch Police Seize Gay Archive', *The Guide* (October 1999), archived at <http://www.ipce.info/ipceweb/Library/guide_brong_99oct_eng.htm>.

² Anonymous, 'Burning the Library: Dutch Government Destroys Gay Archive, Vows Mass Arrests', *The Guide* (February 2001), archived at <http://www.ipce.info/ipceweb/Library/guide_brong_01feb_eng.htm>.

Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Seksualiteit (Fund for Scientific Research on Sexuality) — which had always been the Foundation's official subtitle — in an attempt to diminish, as much as possible, its connection to its late, controversial founder.¹



A Venetian Bather

Paul Peel (1860-92)

Oil on canvas, 1889

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada

¹ These details were derived from the official website of the Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Seksualiteit, at <<http://www.fondsseksualiteit.nl/eng>> [last accessed 25 June 2006].

In an attempt to be as objective as possible, I supplied the pages of this 'Contemporary Aside' to the Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Seksualiteit, along with a formal request for correction or further comment; however, no reply was made to my request.

— Chapter Three —

**‘Beautiful Dripping Fragments’:
A Whitmanesque Reading of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’**

A celibate whose Ruskinian interest in natural beauty focussed upon the landscape and the innocent child or youth, Hopkins has not often been written of in sexual language or been critically analyzed for sexual themes and attitudes. Perhaps we should be glad.

(Wendell Stacy Johnson, ‘Sexuality and Inscape’)¹

In considerations prior to, but left unchanged in his literary biography of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Norman White dismisses the poet’s elusive ‘Epithalamion’ as ‘second-hand impressions pasted together’, as ‘landscape descriptions [that] have no force of plot behind them’.² In opposition to Hopkins’s foremost biographer, this chapter will argue that such an assessment overlooks the ‘Epithalamion’ as a display of Hopkins’s mastery of the painterly, the priestly, and the prurient — overlooks a masterpiece that John Ferns has argued not only reveals Hopkins in ‘his freest and happiest poetic vein’, but also ‘shows his genius’.³ (This poem is included as ‘Appendix Four’.) Even as recently as 1990, James W. Earl suggested indelicately that the proper lesson learned from Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ is that ‘we would do well to destroy the poems we write while administering exams’, Earl merely labelling the poem ‘a beautifully embarrassing sexual fantasy’.⁴

Traditionally, most scholars have dismissed this poem as a spurious improvisation, ignoring the existence of earlier drafts, drafts indicative of a thoughtful process of revision.⁵ Most scholars seem to request a fair copy to

¹ Wendell Stacy Johnson, ‘Sexuality and Inscape’, *Hopkins Quarterly*, 3 (1976), pp.59-66 (p.59).

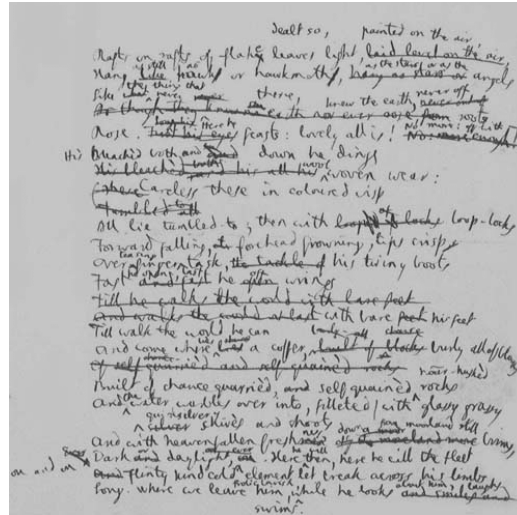
² Norman White, ‘Hopkins’ Epithalamion’, *Hopkins Quarterly*, 4 (1977-78), pp.141-59 (pp.159; 157). Other quotes from Norman White are from *Hopkins: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), abbreviated as *Hopkins*; and *Gerard Manley Hopkins in Wales* (Bridgend, Wales: Seren [Poetry Wales Press], 1998), abbreviated as *Wales*.

³ John Ferns, “‘Bright Lines’: A Re-reading of Hopkins’s “Epithalamion””, *Hopkins Quarterly*, 15 (1988-89), pp.165-77 (p.175).

⁴ James W. Earl, “‘The One Rapture of an Inspiration’”, *Thought*, 65.259 (1990), pp.550-62 (p.560).

⁵ In ‘Hopkins’s “Bellbright Bodies”: The Dialectics of Desire in His Writings’, *TSSL*, 45.1 (2003), pp.114-40, Dennis Sobolev suggests (particularly on p.132) that the

legitimise the ‘Epithalamion’, even though its author admitted, only a year after its composition, in that fatal year that saw both his death and the purging of his uncollected manuscripts: ‘We greatly differ in feeling about copying one’s verses out: I find it repulsive, and let them lie months and years in rough copy untransferred to my [manuscript] book’ (Last letter to Robert Bridges, 29 April 1889, *Letters I*, p.304).¹



It must be admitted that Hopkins contributed to the dismissal of the poem as a fragment, and certainly for good reasons. As if to thwart societal disapproval, whether Victorian or Jesuit, Hopkins attached a nuptial title and several extraneous fragments to the poem (totalling eleven manuscript lines),

‘Epithalamion’ represents a momentary ‘moral’ lapse for Hopkins and his poetry, and that ‘his religious faith and intellectual honesty make him return to what he represents in his other poems’, primarily ‘his experience of the fragmented body and the tormented mind’. Sobolev’s argument would be easier to maintain if it were not for the still-extant manuscript drafts of the poem, drafts that indicate that the poem was not a momentary effusion, but involved a process of careful thought and poetic crafting. This poem is not just a ‘slip’, like the Freudian slip of writing ‘freshmen’ instead of ‘freshness’.

¹ All quotations from Hopkins’s poetry are from *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. by Norman H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); abbreviated as *OET*. Since this chapter is a close reading of the ‘Epithalamion’, I have expected that my readers will keep the poem open and at hand (hence, I have provided the poem as ‘Appendix Four’). For this reason, I have not provided line numbers for the ‘Epithalamion’ (which would have been a continual distraction while reading), though I have provided line numbers for all of the other poems considered. Besides the *OET*, the other primary sources I have used are those most authoritative and typical, and all references to these texts are given parenthetically.

fragments that Norman H. MacKenzie describes as ‘perhaps the weakest lines GMH ever wrote’ (*Facsimiles* II, p.383, note; also *OET*, p.492, note). Always keen to exploit a poetic opportunity, Hopkins seems to have converted the occasion of his brother Everard’s wedding — an occasion Hopkins had earlier treated facetiously, labelling the poetic wedding announcement ‘buffoonery’ in a passage C. C. Abbott excised from the published *Letters*¹ — into ‘an audible fig leaf intended to cover the sentiments expressed earlier [in the poem]’,² sentiments both suggestive and erotic. If one brushes aside that fig-leaf — the nuptial title and the appended fragments — one discovers a poet inflamed with paederastic desire, a poet who guides his reader into a woodland abounding with bathing boys, then directs that reader’s gaze towards an advancing stranger who, inspired by the sight of these naked striplings, undresses and bathes alone, caressed by a vacillating stream. This is not a typical, Roman Catholic wedding-scene, to be certain — or, in the words of Simon Humphries, ‘This looks not like a nuptial’.³

Traditionally, most critics have opted to ignore the poem, which may account for its banishment — before the *Oxford English Texts* edition (1990) — to a section titled ‘Unfinished Poems, Fragments, Light Verse, &c.’ This was an editorial decision more politic than aesthetic, and hinged on which types of nakedness were prized and which were considered suspect. Beyond editorial placement, little else has changed. Of the ‘Dark Sonnets’, most critics would agree with Robert Bernard Martin that ‘in this great series of poems Hopkins seems stripped before us, so that no conventions of nationality, period or religion come between poet and reader to obscure the sense of profound emotion they share’.⁴ Of the later ‘Epithalamion’, on the other hand, most critics would agree with White that it is a pitiable fragment or with Earl that it should have seen the flames. Given the brilliance of this late poem, such a stance merely reveals a deliberate avoidance, in the critical sphere, of the sexual and psychological nakedness that it, in turn, presents and represents, an avoidance of the homoerotic and paederastic qualities that infuse it, an avoidance of what Michael Lynch labels ‘the gayness of [Hopkins’s] whole aesthetic’.⁵ ‘Take away the “title”’,

¹ C. C. Abbott notes: ‘Here a passage, which in print fills 17 lines, is omitted. It deals with a family matter in a heavily facetious tone, and concludes, A TRUCE TO THIS BUFFOONERY. Though relatively unimportant, it should be restored later’ (*Letters* I, p.268). See MacKenzie’s explanation about what was excised (*OET*, pp.489-90).

² Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p.43. See chapter two, ‘“Spousal Love” in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins’. See also Tom Paulin, ‘The Phallic Thumb of Love’, in *Writing to the Moment: Selected Critical Essays, 1980-1996* (London: Faber, 1996), p.192.

³ Simon Humphries, ‘“All By Turn and Turn About”: The Indeterminacy of Hopkins’ “Epithalamion”’, *Victorian Poetry*, 38.3 (2000), pp.343-63 (p.343).

⁴ Robert Bernard Martin, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life* (New York: Putnam, 1991), p.387.

⁵ Michael Lynch, ‘Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves’, *Hopkins Quarterly*, 6 (1979), pp.107-17 (p.112). The most telling avoidance of the implications of Hopkins’s

suggests Humphries, ‘and those forty-two lines might begin to look like the kind of poem that is uncongenial to some critics’.¹ Because of this, as Dennis Sobolev notes, ‘the history of the reading of this poem is not especially rich; most critics [have] tried to avoid it’.²

This scholarly preference for the congenial, for avoidance of a poem like the ‘Epithalamion’, is partly a decorous and cautious attempt not to marginalize Hopkins’s deeply felt religious convictions, his devotion to celibacy, and his authentic sense of vocation: hence, countenancing Hopkins’s ‘suspect’ desires has been equated, by many scholars, with defacing Hopkins’s memory. When John Robinson dared to describe Hopkins as ‘a man drawn to boys by their beauty’, as a man who might eventually have found religious sanction for such a love,³ he garnered the following rebuke from MacKenzie, a rebuke that is hardly a disclaimer: ‘Robinson seems to mock the strenuous idealism with which every true priest, doctor, teacher, etc., must try to meet the temptations from one sex or the other in his profession’ (*OET*, p.453, note). What follows will suggest that scholars indeed be decorous and cautious — not so much with their established views of Hopkins the man and of his roles, priestly or otherwise, but with the complexity of the texts and other evidence he has left behind, however fragmentary, uncongenial, and full of temptations what remains may be. It is particularly down the path of sexual desire, not spiritual devotion that the following will approach this rather-naked poet, hoping not to mock but to mark.

Despite being fraught with danger, Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ is too resplendent and finely wrought to be dismissed as spurious. Despite being impish, it is neither improvised nor poetically impoverished. Although correct that ‘the lines suggest that when [Hopkins] let himself go, his verse turned spontaneously to naturalized images of the youthful male body’, and although apt in his comparison of the ‘Epithalamion’ to Walt Whitman’s ‘[Twenty-eight Young Men Bathe by the Shore]’ — even Richard Dellamora fails to recognise the complexity of the poem, describing it as merely ‘a free improvisation’.⁴

poem can be found in the two un insightful pages of text devoted to it by Julia F. Saville in her *A Queer Chivalry: The Homoerotic Asceticism of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), pp.189-91. This avoidance is particularly questionable for a critic who also wrote ‘The Romance of Boys Bathing: Poetic Precedents and Respondents to the Paintings of Henry Scott Tuke’, in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, ed. by Richard Dellamora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp.253-77. This avoidance seems slightly alluded to by Sobolev, pp.128-29.

¹ Humphries, p.344.

² Sobolev, p.127.

³ John G. Robinson, *In Extremity: A Study of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p.95. In ‘Motives for Guilt-Free Pederasty: Some Literary Considerations’, *Sociological Review*, 24.1 (1976), pp.97-114, Brian Taylor considers this ‘religious sanction’ claimed by the Uranians: ‘A number of techniques can be delineated in this respect. Initially, pederastic love could be adjudged as a God-given emotion which therefore transcended human considerations of morality’ (p.104).

⁴ Dellamora, *Masculine Desire*, p.42.

However, a close reading of the poem serves to invalidate this claim of improvisation, a claim that cannot account for the poem's highly wrought qualities, deeply sensual Keatsian tactility, and emotional connection to the 'Dark Sonnets'. In essence, unlike Dellamora's broad critique, which uses the poem as part of an endeavour to secure Hopkins within a wider Victorian atmosphere replete with Walter Pater, J. A. Symonds, and Oscar Wilde, the following will instead attempt a closer, more textual reading, hoping to offer a defence for this solitary poem mislabelled by most critics as a fragment, a folly, or a free improvisation (with the principal exceptions to this stance being John Ferns and Jude Nixon).¹ In essence, the following will argue that the 'Epithalamion' is a

¹ In *Gerard Manley Hopkins and His Contemporaries: Liddon, Newman, Darwin, and Pater* (New York: Garland Press, 1994), Nixon writes: 'Hardly an unfinished fragment as was for years alleged, the poem ends by returning to the sylvan scene of the opening, forming a ring-like shape' (p.193). Although my *Victorian Poetry* article on the 'Epithalamion' appeared before his article, I find that I did fulfil one of Sobolev's expectations:

Yet in order to prove that the homoerotic subtext of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' does exist, it must be foregrounded and analyzed by means of a direct close reading of the poem. Only such an analysis can become an alternative to both the unsuccessful allegorizations of the poem and the arbitrary unsystematic search for its homosexual elements. (P.129)

Besides attempting to chart the changes in Hopkins Studies that relate to Hopkins's sexuality, Sobolev's article provides an intriguing interpretation of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion', though I disagree with it on a number of points. Firstly, Sobolev maintains, surprisingly, that 'the poem remained a fragment' (p.132). Secondly, although it could indeed be argued that 'the poem dramatizes a metonymical fulfillment of homoerotic desire' (p.131), I thoroughly disagree with his claims that 'to put it briefly, Hopkins's "Epithalamion" achieves precarious poetic equilibrium between the articulation and concealment of his homoeroticism. And, though a poetic success, this equilibrium can hardly be called a moral victory' (p.132). By arguing that the poem 'is structured around different strategies of self-censorship and its avoidance' (p.132), Sobolev seems not to have grasped the contradictory nature of Hopkins that I explored in 'Chapter Two', or the fact that the 'victory' here might, in fact, be Hopkins's full embracement and perhaps acceptance of the homoerotic and paederastic 'inscape' within himself. Thirdly, if the poem is, as I will subsequently argue, an epithalamion written with Hopkins's beloved Digby Dolben in mind, then the disregard for any permanence that Sobolev displays by claiming that 'the relationship it celebrates is not the sacred link of marriage but rather the intoxication of homoerotic desire: ecstatic, transient, and deeply sinful' (p.132) must be reconsidered. Why a homoerotic relationship must be inherently 'transient' and 'deeply sinful' (even if these are considered by Sobolev to be Hopkins's own perspectives or those of the Roman Catholic Church) needs to be elucidated, which Sobolev fails to do. Since Dolben had been dead for decades by the time Hopkins composed his 'Epithalamion', one must consider Sobolev's claim of 'deeply sinful' against his earlier claim about the body of Christ in Hopkins's Bedford Leigh sermon and the dead sailor in Hopkins's 'Loss of the Eurydice': 'The beauty of a

masterpiece that deserves inclusion among the seriously studied poems of Hopkins's canon, extending Martin's assertion that 'it is like a paradigm of his whole poetic career'.¹ Or, as Pater's Marius the Epicurean would have phrased it, the following hopes to reveal an 'ampler vision, which should take up into itself and explain this world's delightful shows, as the scattered fragments of a poetry, till then but half-understood, might be taken up into the text of a lost epic, recovered at last' (*Marius*, II, pp.219-20).² Yet, this 'ampler vision' has biographical implications to recover as well, for the poem is more than an aesthetic object. It is necessary to remember Thomas Carlyle's comment that '*disjecta membra* [scattered parts] are all we find of any Poet, or of any man'.³

Put simply, the following will suggest that scholars rethink their traditions, their assumptions, their often overly abstract methods of engaging Hopkins's texts and life, by taking into consideration Pater's recommendation — made in praise of the archaeologist and art critic Johann Joachim Winckelmann — that they 'escape from abstract theory to intuition, to the exercise of sight and touch' (*Renaissance* 1893, p.147). Responding to the 'Epithalamion' as 'an exercise of sight and touch' — in this particular case, in a more Whitmanesque way — might allow for the poem to be appreciated as something quite different than previously supposed. However, before beginning 'an exercise of sight and touch', it is obligatory to justify a Whitmanesque reading for Hopkins's poem.

Although Hopkins claims he 'cannot have read more than half a dozen pieces [by Whitman] at most', besides one review, and all of these from periodicals such as the *Athenæum* and the *Academy*, he admits nonetheless: 'This, though very little, is quite enough to give a strong impression' (*Letters* I, p.154).⁴ Although this comment mostly regards the poet's rhythms, its

dead [body] is placed beyond the horizon of desire, and hence it can become a "legitimate" vehicle for the expression of homoerotic sentiment' (p.124).

¹ Martin, p.391.

² In the 'Epithalamion', Hopkins may indeed be responding to Pater — as he did in the fragmentary '[Who Shaped These Walls]' (*OET*, no. 135), drafted on the only extant letter between these two friends, Pater's acceptance of an invitation to dinner. Notice particularly the first portion of the then-scandalous 'Conclusion' to Pater's *Renaissance*: 'Let us begin with that which is without — our physical life. Fix upon it in one of its more exquisite intervals, the moment, for instance, of delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat. What is the whole physical life in that moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names?' (1893, p.186).

³ *The Works of Thomas Carlyle in Thirty Volumes* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1897), V: *Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, p.11.

⁴ A number of the reviews Hopkins encountered (or is likely to have encountered) allude to the American poet's eroticism: [John Westland Marston], 'Poems; by Walt Whitman', *Athenæum*, 2113 (25 April 1868), pp.585-86 — 'We are not now called upon to weigh the accusations which have been brought against the writer in America for his license of expression in morals, [...] but simply to examine his credentials as a poet' — as quoted in Kenneth M. Price, ed., *Walt Whitman: The Contemporary Reviews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.160. Edward Dowden, 'The Poetry of Democracy:

implications go far deeper than the merely metrical. Just a few statements later in this 18 October 1882 letter to Robert Bridges, Hopkins confesses: 'I may as well say what I should not otherwise have said, that I always knew in my heart Walt Whitman's mind to be more *like* my own than any other man's living. As he is a very great scoundrel this is not a pleasant confession' (p.155, emphasis added). In light of the insistence by Henry David Thoreau (1817-62) that 'Walt Whitman can communicate to us no experience, and if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of?'¹ — Hopkins's admission is indeed confessional. Even if only in thought, never in act, Hopkins realised that he was 'like' Whitman, that homoerotic 'scoundrel' who asserts poignantly, 'wherever are men *like* me, are our lusty lurking masculine poems' ('Spontaneous Me', line 11, emphasis added).² Given Hopkins's admission of similarity to Whitman, the

Walt Whitman', *Westminster Review*, 96 (July 1871), pp.33-68 — 'If the strong, full-grown working man wants a lover and comrade, he will think Walt Whitman especially made for him. If the young man wants one, he will think him especially the poet of young men. Yet a rarer and finer spell than that of the lusty vitality of youth, or the trained activity of manhood, is exercised over the poet by the beautiful repose or unsubdued energy of old age. He is "the caresser of life, wherever moving"' — as quoted in Price (ed.), *Whitman*, p.191. George Saintsbury, 'Leaves of Grass', *Academy*, 6 (10 October 1874), pp.398-400 — 'He is never tired of repeating "I am the poet of comrades"' — Socrates himself seems renescent in this apostle of friendship. In the ears of a world (at least on this side the Atlantic) incredulous of such things, he reiterates the expressions of Plato to Aster, of Socrates respecting Charmides, and in this respect fully justifies (making allowance for altered manners) Mr. Symonds' assertion of his essentially Greek character, an assertion which most students of Whitman will heartily endorse'. Edmund W. Gosse, 'Walt Whitman's New Book', *Academy*, 9 (24 June 1876), pp.602-03 — 'Between the class that calls Whitman an immoral charlatan bent on the corruption of youth, and the class that accounts him an inspired prophet, sent, among other iconoclastic missions, to abolish the practice of verse, there lies a great gulf' — 'The ethical purpose of the book [...] [involves the] sane and self-sacrificing love of comrades [...] It is the old story of Achilles and Patroclus transferred from windy Troy to the banks of the Potomac' — as quoted in Price (ed.), *Whitman*, pp.211-13. It is also noteworthy that Hopkins would have had access to Whitman's poetry while visiting Robert Bridges, for 'Bridges owned and annotated a copy of the 1872 edition of *Leaves of Grass*' — Eldrid Herrington, 'Hopkins and Whitman', *Essays in Criticism*, 55.1 (2005), pp.39-57 (p.40).

¹ Letter from Henry David Thoreau to Harrison Blake (7 December 1856), reprinted in *Walt Whitman*, ed. by Milton Hindus (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.67-68 (p.68).

² For the more typical response of English homoerotic and paederastic readers, see Timothy d'Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), pp.3-4, where he asserts that 'there can be no doubt that this book [*Leaves of Grass*] [...] contributed very largely to the Uranian spirit'; Gregory Woods, "'Still on My Lips": Walt Whitman in Britain', in *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman: The Life after the Life*, ed. by Robert K. Martin (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), pp.129-40; Gregory Woods, *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), pp.176-80, where he labels Whitman 'the most influential modern homosexual writer in late nineteenth-century Britain', sending 'shock-waves

following will posit that something lusty and masculine does indeed lurk behind the nuptial title and extraneous fragments of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion', a 'scoundrel-ous' something that he dared not name (at least to Bridges), something that was erotically responsive to what Whitman christens 'youth, large, lusty, loving — youth full of grace, force, fascination' ('Youth, Day, Old Age and Night', line 1),¹ something that can be unexpurgated through a Whitmanesque reading of the poem.

Since Whitman, as well as his contemporaries Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82), successfully employed 'indirect but powerful sexual imagery often couched in matrimonial terms' and 'the invocation of classical locations' to establish spaces conducive for displaying homoeroticism,² it should come as little surprise that Hopkins also concealed his most delicate erotic expression within an epithalamion, the Classical 'hymn of the wedding chamber', an occasional genre popularised by Gaius Valerius Catullus (ca. 84-54 BCE). Further, by concealing his most poignantly erotic fantasy behind several extraneous fragments and a nuptial title, Hopkins's response mirrors that of Whitman in 'When I Read the Book', though the latter chose to hide between parenthetical fig-leaves, then ultimately to exclude the poem from *Leaves of Grass*: '(As if any man really knew aught of my life; / As if you, O cunning Soul, did not keep your secret well!)' ([1867], lines 4-5). There is indeed such a cunning behind Hopkins's fig-leaves, as his reader shall soon hear.

With his voice resonating a Whitmanesque 'what I assume you shall assume' (*SM*, line 2), Hopkins's narrator summons his reader into the text: 'Hark, hearer, hear what I do'. As a direct address, 'hearer' has miscreant connotations that would have been clearly evident to a Classical scholar like Hopkins, Professor of Greek at University College, Dublin. Such an imperative (translatable into a Whitmanesque 'what I hear you shall hear') has served throughout paederastic tradition — especially among the ancient Dorians — as a direct address emphasising the beloved's role within a paederastic, pedagogical relationship, a relationship between a young *erômenos* (or *aitês*, the 'hearer') and an older *erastês* (or *eispnêlas*, the 'inspirer'), a relationship that is elucidated in *Plato and Platonism*, a collection of lectures by Hopkins's former academic

through the furtive gentility of Britain's Uranian community'. For Whitman's influence on J. A. Symonds, see Phyllis Grosskurth, ed., *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds* (New York: Hutchinson, 1984), pp.246-47; Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp.87, 90, and 130.

¹ *Song of Myself*, in *Leaves of Grass: Comprehensive Reader's Edition*, ed. by Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley (New York: New York University Press, 1965), pp.28-89. All other Whitman passages, unless specified, come from this volume. *Song of Myself* is abbreviated as *SM*. All references to these texts are given parenthetically.

² Byrne R. S. Fone, *Masculine Landscapes: Walt Whitman and the Homoerotic Text* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), p.216. See also Byrne R. S. Fone, 'This Other Eden: Arcadia and the Homosexual Imagination', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 8.3-4 (1982-83), pp.13-34.

coach and later friend, Walter Pater.¹ Pater, who also claims that an artist ‘says to the reader, — I want you to see precisely what I see’ (*Appreciations*, p.28), defines the roles of ‘hearer’ and ‘inspirer’ among the ancient Dorians as

the clean, youthful friendship, ‘passing even the love of woman’, which [...] elaborated into a kind of art, became an elementary part of [ancient Greek] education. [...] The beloved and the lover, side by side through their long days of eager labour, and above all on the battlefield, became respectively, *aitês*, the hearer, and *eispnêlas*, the inspirer; the elder inspiring the younger with his own strength and noble taste in things. (*Platonism*, pp.231-32)²

After addressing his reader as ‘hearer’, Hopkins’s narrator invites him to participate aesthetically in the creation of a mutual fantasy, hoping to inspire him with his own strength and taste in things poetical, hoping to demonstrate that ‘instinctive imaginative power’ that Pater considers ‘a sort of *visual* power [...] causing others also to see what is matter of original intuition for him’ (p.142). This Hopkinsian ‘exercise of sight and touch’ has begun.

Although increasingly aware that prurient arousal might be inherent in sharing the mounting voyeurism of Hopkins’s narrator, the ‘observer-participant framing the action’,³ we, Hopkins’s hypothetical ‘hearer’, are drawn into a sympathetic confidence with this ‘inspirer’, despite or encouraged by the realisation that any passions we display here together must ever remain private, as Whitman stresses emphatically in ‘To You’:

Let us twain walk aside from the rest;
Now we are together privately, do you discard ceremony;
Come! vouchsafe to me what has yet been vouchsafed to none — Tell me
the whole story,

[...]

Tell me what you would not tell your brother, wife, husband, or physician.

We ‘vouchsafe’ to Hopkins’s narrator when we ‘lend’ him ‘a thought’, when we allow him control over our imagination and share in his point of view: we are consequently implicated in the impending voyeurism. Like Whitman’s reader, who is free to ‘fully participate in [the text’s] homoerotic and homosexual context’,⁴ we are drawn into the ‘Epithalamion’ and its context by a narratorial

¹ Pater delivered this material as a series of lectures at Brasenose College, Oxford, in the Hilary Term of 1891 (see Donoghue, chapter 25).

² A clear elucidation of the relationship between the *erômenos* and *erastês* (‘hearer’ and ‘inspirer’) can be found in K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p.91. For an analysis of how this relationship dynamic was used by Oxonians such as Pater, see Dowling, *Hellenism*, particularly pp.83 and 102.

³ Dellamora, *Masculine Desire*, p.45.

⁴ Fone, *Masculine*, p.149.

stratagem similar to that which Michael Moon terms ‘enfoldment’. Moon asserts that Whitman’s texts are primarily poetic enfoldments that claim ‘to deliver both the full physical presence of the author, which it of course cannot actually provide, *and* the imaginary space it does extend, in which the sympathetic reader may enter into partial or liminal contact with the author/speaker of these texts’.¹ Similarly, after Hopkins’s narrator invites us to participate in the imaginative creation of a ‘branchy bunchy bushybowered wood’, we, by joining him, become ‘leaf-whelmed somewhere’, overwhelmed by foliage, enfolded seductively into a masculine landscape by a technique that Whitman describes as ‘putting myself here and now to the ambush’d womb of the shadows’ (*SM*, line 1053).² However, as with Whitman’s woodlands, Hopkins’s are not *feminine* wombs, for even the topographical descriptions abound with phallic imagery³ and swell with the same seminal inspiration that inflames the landscape of his sonnet ‘Spring’:

¹ Michael Moon, *Disseminating Whitman: Revision and Corporeality in ‘Leaves of Grass’* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p.65.

² Lynch suggests that ‘most of the natural phenomena Hopkins admires [...] are masculinized’ (p.111). Sobolev presents a counter-argument that ‘the belief that Hopkins masculinizes nature is mistaken; consequently, no homoerotic subtext can be found in Hopkins’s love for nature and its expression in his “nature sonnets” [1877-78]’ (p.126; accompanying comment, p.136, note 17).

³ While discussing Saville’s *Queer Chivalry*, Sobolev remarks: ‘One of the major goals of [Jacques] Lacan was to avoid sexual “reductionism”, which characterized both the popular psychoanalysis of his time and its application in literary criticism of the fifties and sixties, with its notorious search for “phallic imagery”’ (p.124). I fail to see how the search for or recognition of ‘phallic imagery’ is necessarily ‘notorious’, particularly in regard to a poet whose imagery is as homoerotically and paederastically suggestive as Hopkins’s. The phallus, with all of its implications, cultural resonances, and personal connections, has ever been a focal point for those sharing Hopkins’s desires, as is displayed by innumerable pornographic images — from cave drawings to Grecian Herms, from silver Roman cups to the glass-fruit dildos of Pietro Aretino’s bawdy tales, from Wilhelm von Gloeden’s albumen prints to glossy Gay magazines, not to mention the legion of pornographic sites on the Internet. Such ‘phallic imagery’ has ever been a component of human experience, as J. A. Symonds explains:

Greek art, like Greek mythology, embodied a finely graduated half-unconscious analysis of human nature. The mystery of procreation was indicated by phalli on the Hermæ. Unbridled appetite found incarnation in Priapus, who, moreover, was never a Greek god, but a Lampsacene adopted from the Asian coast by the Romans — *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion* (London: Privately printed, [1901], p.66.

The importance of these phallic Herms to the ancient Greeks is emphasised by Victoria Wohl in her ‘The Eros of Alcibiades’, *Classical Antiquity*, 18.2 (1999), pp.349-85: ‘One morning in the spring of 415 BC, Athens awoke to find all the Herms in the city mutilated. These statues that stood at crossroads and in front of houses had been cut about the face and also, Aristophanes hints, castrated. This act of impiety caused much consternation: it was taken as a grave omen [...] Thucydides describes in some detail the panic that ensued and how suspicion came to rest on the general Alcibiades’ (p.349).

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden. — Have, get, before it cloy,

Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning. (Lines 9-12)

Affirming Whitman's notion that 'the cleanest [or most unsoured] expression is that which finds no sphere worthy of itself and makes one' (*Preface* 1855, p.717), Hopkins imaginatively constructs a liminal space conducive to the flow of his own desires, a Xanadu with a vaulted pleasure-dome formed by a bushybowered wood 'that leans along the loins of hills', an image of pubic foliage sprouting from fleshy riverbanks. As the narrator explains, these hilly loins are animated by a 'candycoloured [...] gluegold-brown / Marbled river' — an adhesive, *Calamus* river aflow with a palatable, shiny, streaked liquid — a sepia semen of sorts. This description, which 'fancy painted [...] very faintly, in watered sepia' (*Letters I*, p.225), seems the residue of one of Hopkins's own sacred Alphas, the river Hodder — 'swollen and golden [...] like ropes and hills of melting candy' — or elsewhere, 'a sallow glassy gold at Hodder Roughs' (*Journals*, pp.212; 200). Erotically transformed in the 'Epithalamion', this seminal river gushes 'boisterously beautiful, between / Roots and rocks', as if forced through phallic passageways; is 'danced and dandled' in ejaculatory spurts that fall as 'froth and waterblowballs'. The word-choices here are playfully decadent. Since the jerking, fondling motion of 'dandled' is coupled with a word like 'waterblowballs', the river acquires even greater masturbatory connotations: the water is 'dandled' forward by a 'blow' (a rather aggressively fistled word), till it is ejaculated, cast as 'balls' and 'froth'. This is indeed a Whitmanesque 'pent-up aching river', squeezed forward, from between the rocks, by the lusty urgency of gravity. As a symbolic treatment, this landscape displays the 'strain of the earth's sweet being', the 'limpid liquid within the young man, / The vex'd corrosion' that Whitman describes as 'so pensive and so painful, / The torment, the irritable tide that will not be at rest' ('Spontaneous Me', lines 27-29).

In this passage and others, Hopkins's hills and imagination seem animated by what Whitman describes as 'the procreant urge of the world' (*SM*, line 44), undoubtedly prompting the observation by Ferns that 'the world in which Hopkins asks us to join him is a procreant, natural world'.¹ With its 'landscapes projected masculine, full-sized and golden' (*SM*, line 647), Whitman's procreant world is bountiful with the 'tussled hay of head [...] trickling sap of maple, fibre of manly wheat [...] sweaty brooks and dews [...] winds whose soft-tickling genitals rub against me' (*SM*, lines 536-41). These landscapes, sprouting 'a forest of phallic suggestion',² are indistinguishable from the one into which Hopkins has led us, noticeable in such details as Hopkins's

¹ Ferns, p.166.

² Fone, *Masculine*, p.147.

choice of ‘honeysuck’ rather than ‘honeysuckle’ (hence, allowing for possible connotations of fellatio, rather than maternal feeding). In fact, this phrasing recalls one of the most erotically suggestive verses in the Bible, from the lips of one of the most paederastic of biblical figures: ‘And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die’ (1 Samuel 14.43, KJV). In Adam’s hand, the forbidden was the proverbial apple; in Jonathan’s, the honey-dripping rod — yet both bespeak the dangers of carnal experience, the violation of rules, and the sensual potential so close at hand in a pastoral setting.

Nevertheless, although paradises such as ‘this carnal pastoral world’¹ are sensually suggestive in their flow and foliage, they lack the reciprocity necessary to satisfy fully. ‘What you look hard at seems to look hard at you’, wrote Hopkins regarding Nature in his journal (p.204), and the crucial word here might well be ‘seems’. Like their progenitor Adam, both Hopkins and Whitman realise that even an authentic interaction with ‘the earth’s sweet being in the beginning / In Eden garden’ is vacant without companionship. As Whitman admits, ‘Now I care not to walk the earth unless a lover, a dear friend, walk by my side’.² Although Whitman can contemplate aesthetically that ‘I hear and behold God in every object’ (*SM*, line 1281), and Hopkins that ‘the world is charged with the grandeur of God’ (‘God’s Grandeur’, line 1), both poets recognise, as did Adam before them, that without human intimacy even the presence of God amidst his creation implies an infelicitous loneliness.

In his meditative ‘Hurrahing in Harvest’, Hopkins wanders a Whitmanesque landscape in autumn, conscious that ‘the azurous hung hills are [the Saviour’s] world-wielding shoulder / Majestic’ (lines 9-10), conscious that he — as priest, as poet, as man — is lifting up ‘heart, eyes, / Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour’ (lines 5-6). Nevertheless, contact with both Nature and its God leaves him, ‘the beholder / Wanting’ (lines 11-12), wanting another form of contact besides the spiritually and poetically contemplative.³ Similarly, Hopkins rhetorically questions in ‘Ribblesdale’: ‘What is Earth’s eye, tongue, or heart else, where / Else, but in dear and dogged man?’ (lines 9-10). ‘Earth, sweet Earth, sweet landscape’, recognises Hopkins, ‘[has] no tongue to plead, no heart to feel’ (lines 1-3). Hopkins seems to be searching for something that Nature cannot alone provide, something perhaps analogous to Whitman’s lover-in-repose: ‘[He] gently turn’d over upon me, / And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged [his] tongue to my bare-stript heart’ (*SM*, lines 88-89).

¹ Sobolev, p.130.

² *Whitman’s Manuscripts: ‘Leaves of Grass’ (1860): A Parallel Text*, ed. by Fredson Bowers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p.68.

³ My reading of this phrase from ‘Hurrahing in Harvest’ is idiosyncratic, based partly on my subsequent reading of the limitations of an intimacy with Nature that Hopkins expresses in ‘Ribblesdale’.

‘And now I think I am going out by woods and waters alone’, wrote Hopkins to Bridges in 1883 (*Letters I*, p.181). That Hopkins might have explored the pathways and waterways of his own Arcadian woodlands — places like the Vale of Clwyd — looking for an affectionate loungee with a tongue and a heart and a hand for earnest grasping, should come as little surprise given that Hopkins was a man in the flesh, though perhaps given that Hopkins was a man of the cloth. Nevertheless, this loungee figure is

the central and primary archetype of the homosexual imagination and the dominating icon of homoerotic fantasy — the anonymous image of passionate sexual desire as well as the ideal friend, the archetypal comrade. He stands for the unexpected sexual encounter that is unfettered by the artificial demands of name, custom, or social status.¹

Because this affectionate loungee is stripped of name, of custom, of social status — some ‘child of Amansstrength’ without the brawny name of ‘Harry Ploughman’ (line 16) — he represents the ultimate stranger, perhaps the very stranger whom we, his ‘hearer’, are taken into the epithalamic forest to observe. But first, ‘O the lads!’

‘We are there’ in that bushybowered wood only a moment before the phallic forest — the ‘hanging honeysuck’ and ‘dogeared hazels’ — begins to resound with cries of merriment. We, the unified pair, the reader and narrator, ‘hear a shout’ (in draft H.i.50^f, ‘the maddest merry shout’), a sound eventually recognised by our guiding narrator as ‘boys from the town / Bathing’, young figures engaged in the shameless madness of merriment and play.² In this landscape, even the trees seem to appreciate these boys as ‘summer’s sovereign good’, for they ‘hover’ over the ‘bevy of them’ like a brooding bird covering her young with a canopy of feathers, an image that appears throughout Hopkins’s canon, most notably in his sonnets ‘In the Valley of the Elwy’ (‘a hood / All over, as a bevy of eggs the mothering wing / Will’, lines 5-7) and ‘God’s Grandeur’ (‘the Holy Ghost over the bent / World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings’, lines 13-14).

¹ Fone, *Masculine*, p.173.

² For an explanation of the bathing atmosphere at Victorian schools, see Martin, p.14. Under similar voyeuristic conditions, Thoreau contemplates the shame common to the Victorian period on both sides of the Atlantic: ‘Boys are bathing at Hubbards Bend playing with a boat (I at the willows). The color of their bodies in the sun at a distance is pleasing — the not often seen flesh color — I hear the sound of their sport borne over the water. As yet we have not man in nature. What a singular fact for an angel visitant to this earth to carry back in his note book that men were forbidden to expose their bodies under the severest penalties’ — Patrick F. O’Connell, ed., *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau: Journal, Volume 5: 1852-1853* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p.90.



A Study of His Students, for *The Swimming Hole*, 1885

Thomas Cowperthwait Eakins (1844-1916)

Photograph, 1883

Hirshhorn Museum, Smithsonian Institute

Washington, D.C., USA

Overdraped by the dualistic wings of summer sunshine and shading foliage, these naked striplings, mastered by the heat, hurl themselves defiantly into the moorland river ‘with dare and with dowlfinry and bellbright bodies’ — their ‘bellbright’ (a commonplace for ‘bronzed’)¹ bodies penetrating the water’s ‘kindcold element’ with the ease of dolphins, then ‘huddling out’ of the seminal souse only to dive in again.² Disorderly, these boys cluster together on the riverbank like Whitman’s young ‘Paumanok’ swimmers — ‘the clutch’d together! the passionate ones! / The side by side! the elder and younger brothers! the bony-limb’d’ (lines 205-06). Ravished by a Whitmanesque zeal, Hopkins and his narrator — exclaiming in an earlier draft, ‘O the lads!’ (H.i.50’) — anticipate that we, his ‘hearer’, will also enjoy a frolicsome display of ‘bony-limb’d’ boys labelled as ‘summer’s sovereign good’, boys whom Sobolev describes as ‘the objects of desire in all its unredeemed physicality’.³

Such is the fantasy local, reverberating with the sound of boys flaunting about *en plein air*. However, the local of the fantasizing itself was elsewhere. Appreciating with Whitman that ‘no shutter’d room or school can commune with me, / But roughs and little children better than they’ (*SM*, lines 1255-56),

¹ *OET*, p.491, note.

² Peter Swaab tintinnabulates that ‘the metaphors — dolphins, bells — are sensuous without being sensual, and the tumble of the elements describes a planetary blessing, not a sexual allure’. This quotation is from his article ‘Hopkins and the Pushed Peach’, *Critical Quarterly*, 37.3 (1995), pp.43-60 (p.56).

³ Sobolev, p.130.

Hopkins seems to have composed some portion of his 'Epithalamion' while invigilating a university examination, allowing his thoughts to drift from that shuttered schoolroom towards communion with little roughs sanctified as 'summer's sovereign good', perhaps remembering the bathers in Frederick Walker's painting by that name,¹ or in Stonyhurst College's 'deep salmon pool with a funnel of white water at its head which generations of boys had used as a chute',² a place in the river Hodder that was locally nicknamed 'Paradise', described by Hopkins as 'all between waterfalls. [...] If you stop swimming to look round you see fairyland pictures up and down the stream' — and a decade later, 'the river Hodder with lovely fairyland views, especially at the bathingplace' (*Letters* III, p.117; I, p.151). Beyond these speculations about an inspiring landscape — particularly vague since Hopkins has allowed for the options of 'Southern dean or Lancashire clough or Devon cleave' — the manuscripts of the 'Epithalamion' reveal yet another location from which to draw: that shuttered classroom. While describing the spilling of the water from the moorland, Hopkins had written not 'heavenfallen freshness' but 'heavenfallen freshmen' (H.ii.9³), a Freudian slip that, though discreetly struck out, reveals that his poetic mind, in process, was aflow with a homoerotic and paederastic waterworld in which his students — and, given his tastes, certainly the freshmen — bathed rather than finished their exam.³ Imaginatively, Hopkins seems to have been communing with his students in another, more pastoral place.

¹ During Hopkins's lifetime, Walker's painting was acquired by William Graham in 1869, then by Cuthbert Quilter in 1886. For the possible influence of Walker's *Bathers* on Hopkins's poem, see Joseph Bristow, "'Churlsgace": Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Working-Class Male Body', *ELH*, 59.3 (1992), pp.693-711 (p.706); Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot, Hants, UK: Scholar Press, 1995), pp.257-58. For Justus George Lawler's counter-argument that 'what is relevant is that there is no evidence Hopkins knew Walker's *Bathers*', see *Hopkins Re-Constructed* (New York: Continuum, 1998), pp.68-73. In 'Near and Far: Homoeroticism, Labour, and Hamo Thornycroft's *Mower*', *Art History*, 26.1 (2003), pp.26-55, Michael Hatt notes that Gosse's beloved Thornycroft 'saw [Frederick Walker's] *The Bathers* on more than one occasion when dining with Cuthbert Quilter, who bought the painting in 1886, and recorded in his diary that it was "my favourite picture by an Englishman"' (p.41).

² MacDonald Hastings, *Jesuit Child* (New York: St Martin's, 1972), p.57.

³ See *Facsimiles* II for MacKenzie's attempt at diversion: '*distracted professor!*' (p.327, note). Regarding MacKenzie's comment, Sobolev writes: 'These "freshmen", however, cease to be a simple howler when one takes into account Hopkins's notes [...] where he writes about physical attraction to his fellow students' (p.130). *OED* defines 'freshman' as 'a newcomer, a novice; a student during his or her first year'.



The Bathers

Frederick Walker (1840-75)

Oil on canvas, 1865-67

Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, near Liverpool, UK

Selected from lads in paintings or Stonyhurst or Dublin or elsewhere (or merely a composite of them all), Hopkins's clustering 'freshmen', imagined by the poet as 'wet-fresh', populate the erotically ornamented landscape of his 'Epithalamion', a space where the moorland water merges with 'young beings, strangers, who seem to touch the fountains of our love, and draw forth their swelling waters' (Whitman, 'The Child and the Profligate', p.74).¹ This mixture of flesh and fancy can be seen more clearly elsewhere, in Hopkins's description of one well-favoured boy:

Mannerly-hearted! more than handsome face —
 Beauty's bearing or muse of mounting vein,
 All, in this case, *bathed* in high hallowing grace ...
 ('Handsome Heart', lines 9-11, emphasis added)²

Considered amid the coupled concepts of water and eroticism (a common aesthetic theme for the Victorians, especially for painters such as Henry Scott Tuke³), this boy becomes more than an embodiment of 'beauty's bearing',¹ more

¹ In *Walt Whitman: The Early Poems and the Fiction*, ed. by Thomas L. Brasher (New York: New York University Press, 1963), pp.68-79 (p.74, note 23).

² In *The Great War and Modern Memory: Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), after discussing 'the tradition of Symonds, Wilde, Rolfe, Charles Edward Sayle, John Francis Bloxam, and other writers of warm religio-erotic celebrations of boy-saints, choirboys, acolytes, and "server-lads"', Paul Fussell notes that 'Hopkins's "The Handsome Heart: At a Gracious Answer" is in the tradition' (p.288).

³ What was unique about Tuke's position in Victorian culture was that his paintings — unlike the texts of the Uranian poets who handled much the same theme — were neither marginal nor marginalized: 'The fact that the canvas [*August Blue*] was purchased by the

than a poetic 'muse'. As the 'muse of mounting vein', he seems to have inspired both Hopkins's poetic and phallic veins to mount, quivering Hopkins, like Whitman,

to a new identity,
Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,
Traucherous tip of me reaching and crowding. (*SM*, lines 619-21)



August Blue

Henry Scott Tuke (1858-1929)

Oil on canvas, 1893

Tate Collection, London, UK

Such 'mortal beauty', Hopkins admitted in a sonnet by that name, typically inflamed his senses: 'mortal beauty [is] dangerous; [for it] does set danc- / Ing blood' (lines 1-2).² The lines that follow these insinuate even more

Chantrey Bequest for the national collections made Tuke famous as well as made legitimate the male nude as a subject for painting. The homoerotic significance of *August Blue* was not lost on contemporaries' (Kestner, p.262). 'While these [Uranian] poets were clearly a marginal group of writers, publishing in fringe journals, Tuke was well known and highly acclaimed in mainstream art circles' (Saville, 'Romance', p.254). 'The motif of boys bathing *en plein air* flirts with effeminacy with peculiar suggestiveness, for while its secluded spaces can evoke the tradition of romance, they simultaneously eschew both dandyism and brooding or languid sensuality' (Ibid., p.256).

¹ The phallic quality is heightened exponentially if 'bearing' is interpreted in terms of a compass, with this boy the 'bearing' towards which Hopkins's 'needle' points.

² In 'Winckelmann, Historical Difference, and the Problem of the Boy', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 25.4 (1992), pp.523-44, Kevin Parker makes a similar claim about Winckelmann: 'When evaluating particular works of Greek figurative sculpture,

about Hopkins's voyeuristic tendency, for they disclose the object of his desire. While contemplating the mortal objects that his own gaze usually seeks, Hopkins alludes to 'Pope Gregory the Great, whose appreciation of the beauty of Anglo-Saxon slave boys (*Non Angli sed angeli*) led him to send Augustine to convert the pagan invaders of Britain. The extensive allusion to this well-known story occupies lines seven and eight of the sonnet and is therefore spatially at its center'.¹ This allusion is indeed central — not only to the poem, but also to Hopkins's desires. Its centrality is not to be avoided, for Hopkins directs us to 'see', to contemplate 'mortal beauty', specifically the beauty of these young *angli / angeli*:

See, it does this: keeps warm
Men's wits to the things that are; what good means — where a glance
Master more may than gaze, gaze out of countenance. (Lines 3-5)

An earlier draft stresses the visual clarity essential for such voyeurism: 'One clear glance / May gather, more than staring out of countenance' (H.ii.23^v, emphasis added). Another stresses Hopkins's own role as that voyeur: 'Where a glance / Gather more may than gaze *me* out of countenance' (H.ii.29^v, emphasis added). Then, lest we misunderstand this rare expression of 'perfect personal candor' (Whitman, *Preface* 1855, p.722), lest we fail to comprehend what keeps his wits warm to 'what good means', especially 'summer's sovereign good', lest we miss that 'meaning motion' that Hopkins says in 'Henry Purcell' 'fans fresh our wits with wonder' (line 14) — Hopkins clarifies, in the next poetic line, exactly which motion dances his blood, warms and fans his wits: 'those lovely lads once, wet-fresh' ('To What Serves Mortal Beauty?', line 6).²

Enfolded into a vantage point amid the foliage, the narrator of the 'Epithalamion' — fully endowed with the poet's voyeuristic tendency towards 'those lovely lads' envisioned as 'wet-fresh' — now directs our gaze towards an advancing stranger 'beckoned by [their] noise', a curious and lusty intruder of whom Whitman would have inquired, 'Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude' (*SM*, line 389).³ Although, for the moment, Hopkins's epithalamic stranger remains clothed, he is nonetheless a lusty intruder who

Winckelmann assumes the sensibilities of the Greeks. The youthful male figure for him, as for the Greeks, was a thing of extraordinary, even dangerous beauty' (p.540).

¹ Thomas Dilworth, 'Hopkins's "To What Serves Mortal Beauty"', *Explicator*, 48.4 (1990), pp.264-66 (p.265).

² Swaab does not seem to appreciate what 'keeps warm / Men's wits' — at least men like Hopkins: 'Poet and reader, then, are watching the stranger watching the boys, a cooling intellectual symmetry' (p.56).

³ Sobolev comments: 'It is clear enough that having entered this carnal pastoral world, the stranger is doomed to participation, however vicarious, in its life' (p.130). If the stranger is 'doomed' to revel in the best of 'earthworld, airworld, waterworld' while watching a bevy of boys, then the Uranians would have rejoiced at the prospect of being so 'doomed'. To twist the popular adage: 'One man's Hell is another man's Heaven'.

‘drops towards the river [...] unseen’, the liquidity of his motion reminiscent of the seminal drops of the ‘waterblowballs’ and the dew of the ‘hanging honeysuck’. As the embodiment of Hopkins’s paederastic desires, this stranger makes his appearance in the poem for the first time, limned with a Paterian solidity:

To speak, to think, to feel, about abstract ideas as if they were living persons; that, is the second stage of Plato’s speculative ascent. With the lover, who had graduated, was become a master, in the school of love, [...] it was as if the faculty of physical vision, of the bodily eye, were still at work at the very centre of intellectual abstraction. Abstract ideas themselves became animated, living persons, almost corporeal, as if with hands and eyes. (*Platonism*, p.170)

While Hopkins’s abstracted sensuality takes on human corporeality and moves unseen towards the boys, their ‘bellbright bodies [are] huddling out’ of the river, repeatedly running across the rocks, leaping into the air, plunging into the water, becoming ‘earthworld, airworld, waterworld thorough hurled’, hurled with the same masturbatory force as the ‘waterblowballs’ from the river’s phallic passageways.

Initially, we, Hopkins’s ‘hearer’, know nothing about this stranger except that he is ‘listless’ — lacking in youthful appetite, desire, and joy. ‘Beckoned by the noise’, he ‘came’ and ‘eyed’ the boys amidst the motion of their diving, watching their excited faces and plunging bodies contort with the same expectation that Hopkins describes in his poem ‘Brothers’:

[Young] Henry by the wall
 Beckoned me beside him.
 I came where called and eyed him
 By meanwhiles; making my play
 Turn most on tender byplay.
 For, wrung all on love’s rack,
 My lad, [...]
 Smiled, blushed, and bit his lip,
 Or drove, with a diver’s dip,
 Clutched hands through claspèd knees. (Lines 12-21)

For the stranger of the ‘Epithalamion’, the nudity of such boys leaping about in a watery dance — ‘this garland of their gambol’ — is so sensually arousing that it ‘flashes in his breast’, the sight of their shameless bodies in ‘a diver’s dip’ setting his blood dancing with ‘a sudden zest / Of summertime joys’. There is certainly more to this ‘garland’ of youthful male bodies than Joseph Bristow’s discreet aside that, in ‘Tom’s Garland’, Hopkins’s representation of the working-class navvy ‘as primarily “garlanded”, donned in flowers and, by extension, somehow prettified in this manner, not only was unorthodox in English letters, [but] also

came close to sexually immoral sentiments'.¹ This 'Garland of Ladslove' (to lend it a Uranian title)² would have been interpreted less hesitantly by Pater, his Decadents, and their Uranian descendants, all of whom would have clearly understood the implication of Hopkins's 'self *flashes* off frame and face' ('Mortal Beauty', line 11, emphasis added), a description derived from two of Hopkins's favourite words, 'dappled' and 'pied', words that, Bristow emphasises, 'find their ancient Greek analogue in the word *poikilos*. Plato's Socratic dialogues deploy this term, which also connotes energies that "flash" and "flame" with pederastic desire'.³ Whatever the argument for a Classical derivation — an argument that Robert Crawford suggested,⁴ Linda Dowling developed,⁵ and Bristow encapsulates above — it is relatively certain that this sudden overflow of 'limber liquid youth' will, at least momentarily, provide relief for the stranger's inflamed paederastic desires, a relief described by Whitman in his excluded ditty 'After the Argument': 'A group of little children with their ways and chatter flow in, / Like welcome, rippling water o'er my heated nerves and flesh'.

Whitman suggests that this is the way 'boys stir us' while we lie in the shadows. Aroused by the sight and sound of boys stirring a river '*boi-ster-ous-ly* beautiful' (giving that word a bit of paederastic distance⁶), Hopkins's listless stranger, warmly dressed in 'woolwoven wear', is motivated to undrape and bathe alone in 'a pool neighbouring', a pool hidden from the boys' view by a canopy of wychelms, beeches, ashes, sycamores, hornbeams, and hazels.

¹ Bristow, 'Churlsgrace', p.704.

² One of the cardinal collections of Uranian verse is John Gambriel Francis Nicholson's *A Garland of Ladslove* (London: [Murray], 1911).

³ Bristow, 'Churlsgrace', p.704.

⁴ See Robert Crawford, 'Pater's *Renaissance*, Andrew Lang, and Anthropological Romanticism', *ELH*, 53.4 (1986), pp.849-79 (p.854).

⁵ See Linda Dowling, 'Ruskin's Pied Beauty and the Construction of a "Homosexual" Code', *Victorian Newsletter*, 75 (1989), pp.1-8 (pp.5-6). See also Saville, *Queer*, pp.122-23. J. A. Symonds comments on this word as well: 'In that passage of the *Symposium* where Plato notices the Spartan law of love as *Poikilos*, he speaks with disapprobation of the Bœotians, who were not restrained by custom and opinion within the same strict limits' — *Greek Ethics* [1901], p.20.

⁶ An example of this playful use of diction with internal suggestiveness can be found in Matthew Campbell, *Rhythm and Will in Victorian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.204-05, dealing with Hopkins's repeated use of 'I am' at the end of 'That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection' and the resultant internal 'I am' in the phrase 'immortal diamond' ('d—I am—ond'). The standard for evaluating Hopkins's word-choices is chapter five, 'Inscaping the Word', of W. A. M. Peters, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Critical Essay Towards the Understanding of His Poetry*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), pp.140-71. Subsequent to the analysis of 'boisterous' in my *Victorian Poetry* article, Sobolev made the following comment: 'The choice of diction reflects (and in this case prefigures) the homoerotic dimension of the meaning. The word "boisterous" and a few more or less explicitly sexual images at the very beginning of "Epithalamion" [...] foreshadow the explicit eroticism of the middle section of the poem' (p.129).

Although ‘ashamed to go naked about the world’ (Whitman, ‘[O Hot-Cheek’d and Blushing]’, line 6), this stranger, in typical Whitmanesque fashion, nonetheless feels compelled to ‘go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked’ (*SM*, line 19). Hidden from all eyes but our own, he participates voyeuristically in the ‘riot of [their] rout’, yet remains hidden behind a curtain of foliage, a curtain not unlike that which discreetly distances Whitman’s female voyeur in ‘[Twenty-Eight Young Men Bathe by the Shore]’:

Where are you off to, lady? for I see you,
You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in your room.

Dancing and laughing along the beach came the twenty-ninth bather,
The rest did not see her, but she saw them and loved them.

[...]

they do not ask who seizes fast to them,
They do not know who puffs and declines with pendant and bending arch,
They do not think whom they souse with spray. (*SM*, lines 206-16)

Rather than conceal himself behind the feminine, Hopkins chooses more daringly to introduce an unimpassioned male stranger described as ‘listless’, a twenty-ninth bather ‘whose perceptions [he] fully shares’.¹ Such a decision is indeed risky, for Hopkins does not even distance his poem into a more excusable antiquity (which, for example, J. A. Symonds does in ‘The Lotos Garland of Antinous’). This is clear evidence of the ‘boy-stirred’ Hopkins whom MacKenzie derides Robinson for drawing attention to, lest readers ‘mock the strenuous idealism with which every true priest [...] must try to meet [...] temptations’ (*OET*, p.453, note). This is the ‘boy-stirred’ Hopkins whose Oxford confession notes recount: ‘Parker’s boy at Merton: evil thoughts’ (*Facsimiles I*, p.157); ‘looking at a cart-boy fr. Standen’s shopdoor’ (p.157); ‘imprudent looking at organ-boy and other boys’ (p.174). This is the ‘boy-stirred’ Hopkins who wrote to his mother from Tiverton that his distant cousins, the two Miss Patches, are ‘such pretty lively girls’ (29 July 1865, *Letters III*, p.90) — though what had really stirred him during this visit was something quite different: ‘looking at a boy at Tiverton’ (Confession note, 28 July 1865, *Facsimiles I*, p.177).

Afraid of meeting such a Tiverton-temptation directly, especially within a waterworldly frolic, the voyeuristic stranger of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ responds like Whitman’s narrator in ‘[O Hot-Cheek’d and Blushing]’: although ‘ashamed to go naked about the world’ (line 6), he is nevertheless overcome by a curiosity ‘to know where [his] feet stand and what this is flooding [him], childhood or manhood — and the hunger that crosses the bridge between’ (line 7). To appease such a potentially shameful, sensual hunger, Hopkins’s stranger

¹ Ferns, p.168.

'hies to a pool neighbouring', moving eagerly and pantingly towards a place where he can bathe alone, apart from the childhood pulling and hauling.

In 'The Bugler's First Communion', a more ceremonious Hopkins applauds a boy who similarly 'hies headstrong to [his] wellbeing', a boy who spontaneously gratifies his own spiritual hunger without concern for the reproach of others (line 24, emphasis added). In parallel, Hopkins's epithalamic stranger hies headstrong towards his own wellbeing, a secluded pool where he can satisfy his sensual hunger with a watery communion, for

it is the best
There; sweetest, freshest, shadowiest;
Fairyland.

Famished by 'the hunger that crosses the bridge between' boyhood and manhood, this stranger seeks the 'sweet' epithalamic pool and 'here he feasts' — imbibing the sound of the bathing gambol, the shade of the leaves 'painted on the air', the smell of the riverbank, and the thought of 'O the lads!' In other words, he is sensually satiated by that caressing, masculine atmosphere of which Whitman says, 'I am mad for it to be in contact with me' (*SM*, line 20). However, although the stranger begins to feast upon this voyeuristic spectacle, James R. Kincaid suggests that such a hunger can never be appeased: 'We imagine that we are searching for optical consummation, a satiating feast for the eyes; but we have no intention of devouring anything or even of locating something that could be devoured. All we want, first and last, is appetite'.¹ This appetite, this maddening hunger, this opposite of 'listlessness' compels Hopkins's stranger, in Whitmanesque fashion, to 'go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked' (*SM*, line 19), compels him into a voyeuristic playfulness about which Kincaid concludes: 'Play, feasting on its own inventiveness, does not lead to anything but its own perpetuation. [...] Play eroticizes the whole world — and keeps it that way'.² The state that Kincaid describes is illustrated by an entry in Symonds's *Memoirs*, an entry whose train tracks run alongside Hopkins's epithalamic pool and Whitman's shore:

Four young men are bathing in the pond by the embankment. I pass; the engine screams and hurries me away. But the engine has no power to take my soul. That stays, and is the pond in which the bathers swim, the air in which they shout, the grass on which they run and dress themselves, the hand that touches them unfelt, the lips that kiss them and they know it not.³

¹ James R. Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.310.

² *Ibid.*, p.197.

³ Grosskurth, ed., *Memoirs*, p.167. See Joseph Cady, "'What Cannot Be': John Addington Symonds' *Memoirs* and Official Mapping of Victorian Homosexuality', *Victorian Newsletter*, 81 (1992), pp.47-51.



Alchemical Illustration¹

MS. Ashburnham 1166, fol. 16

14th century

Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence, Italy

This ‘eroticisation of the whole world’ is particularly noticeable in Hopkins’s description of the ‘branchy bunchy bushybowered wood’ that canopies the secluded pool. Especially when the topiary adjectives are taken as a progressive cluster do the connotations become clearly phallic and ejaculatory. The delicate-yet-abrasive softness of the ‘silk-beech’ — like the surface of the penis — is immediately followed by an engorged bundle composed of the ‘scrolled ash’ and the ‘packed sycamore’, creating an erection of bark that displays those primal passions that refuse to be restrained (the ‘wild wychelm’) under a state of agitation (‘hornbeam fretty overstood / By’). The *horn-beam* provides a portmanteau of phallic suggestion, especially if ‘fret’ is interpreted in the sense of ‘to rub, chafe, cause to move against something with friction’ (*OED*) — which is understandable, since the stranger’s erection is presently cramped within his clothes. To add climax to the phallic suggestion, this cluster of trees —

¹ I wish to thank Stanton J. Linden, Professor of English at Washington State University, for providing me with details about this illustration that Carl Jung describes as ‘Adam as prima materia, pierced by the arrow of Mercurius. The arbor philosophica is growing out of him’ (*Psychology and Alchemy*, p.256, fig. 131). Prof. Linden notes that ‘the illustration [...] comes to be quite popular in later times’ (E-mail to me, 23 January 2006). I would also like to thank Barbara Obrist of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Université de Paris, for corresponding with me about this illustration. She notes that ‘usually this type of image represents Adam as the father of humanity’ (E-mail to me, 30 January 2006).

adjectivally depicted as a packed scroll that is silky, wild, and fretted — ejaculates ‘rafts and rafts of flake-leaves light’, sousing the sky with a repeated expression of what Hopkins calls ‘all this juice and all this joy’ in his poem ‘Spring’.¹

It is beneath these leaves that the stranger responds as he would not dare elsewhere, declaring, as if to establish a poetic volta: ‘Nó more’. From this moment onwards, the stranger becomes an active participant in the landscape, with Hopkins’s stress mark on ‘No’ suggesting, from the narrator’s perspective, ‘No, he does more than play voyeur’; from the stranger’s, ‘No, I want more than to play voyeur’. Even without this stress, it would suggest ‘No more of this only playing voyeur’, for this verbal response is coupled with an action, a mad attempt for contact with this atmosphere without clothing intervening. Further, when coupled with its visual illustration — ‘down he dings / His bleached both and woolwoven wear’ — this ‘Nó more’ anticipates far more than a discarding of clothing. Since, according to Whitman, ‘costumes [...] rise out of the sub-strata of education, equality, ignorance, caste, and the like’,² Hopkins and his stranger are also discarding Jesuitical moralising, Victorian prudery, celibate asexuality, and personal shame. They are fulfilling Whitman’s command, ‘Undrape! you are not guilty to me’ (*SM*, line 145). This is a command ‘to reject to some degree the system of controls over their own bodies that their culture enforces’,³ a command to sound their barbaric yawps of ‘Nó more!’ over the riverbanks of the world, a command to engage in the most ‘unmanly’ of activities — childish play. As a rejection of ‘the system of controls’ over the body, this ‘Nó more’ is strikingly daring for Hopkins, because, although

a genius at individuality, Hopkins had made himself subservient to [the Society of Jesus,] a regimented organisation which controlled its members’ bodies and minds for every minute of the day, where individual behaviour was frowned on, and where imagination and the senses had to be harnessed within a specific dogmatic syllabus.⁴

A salient example of this ‘Nó more’ is found in White’s already mentioned account of Hopkins’s frolics with the children of Dr McCabe: ‘Hopkins used to join the young people in the boat: “Once on a very hot day he took off his [priestly] dog collar and threw it down in the bottom of the boat exclaiming ‘I’ll say goodbye to Rome’”’.⁵ Clearly, warmth, water, and play have certain expectations in the mixing, one of which is exposure, as with the limbs: in ‘[As

¹ My interpretation of Hopkins’s phrase ‘flake-leaves light’, an interpretation that suggests that it is ejaculatory in nature, parallels my subsequent interpretation of the ‘leaf-light’ wafer in ‘The Bugler’s First Communion’.

² From ‘An American Primer’, in Francis Murphy, ed., *Walt Whitman: A Critical Anthology* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1969), pp.64-79 (p.76).

³ Moon, p.72.

⁴ White, *Wales*, pp.19-20.

⁵ White, *Hopkins*, p.411.

Kingfishers Catch Fire]’, Hopkins goes so far as to suggest that even ‘Christ plays in ten thousand places, / Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his’ (lines 12-13).

Hitherto in the ‘Epithalamion’, the stranger has been separated from the playful ‘garland of their gambol’, from the ‘more’, by his own garland of ‘woolwoven wear’, a particularly interesting referent in light of the following passage from Pater’s *Plato and Platonism*: ‘[Unable to find a place for the inspired poet in our land,] we should tell him that there neither is, nor may be, any one like [a poet] among us, and so send him on his way to some other city, having anointed his head with myrrh and crowned him with a *garland of wool*, as something in himself half-divine’ (p.276, emphasis added). Rather whimsically, Pater’s Plato suggests that the mature poet be sent away as a stranger, though anointed with praises and invested with a garland of wool: hence, in all ways, ‘to seem the stranger lies [his] lot’ (line 1), for he does not conform to the rigidity of a proper society — whether Platonic or Victorian or Jesuit. Therefore, given the constraint, the heat, and the implications of his ‘garland of wool’, Hopkins’s stranger opts instead for the naked ‘garland of their gambol’, though seeking a bit more privacy than the boys, for reasons.

With his ‘treacherous tip [...] reaching and crowding’ inside of his clothes (like a ‘hornbeam fretty overstood / By’), the stranger furiously unbuttons ‘his bleached both and woolwoven wear’ (an earlier draft reading, ‘his bleached shirt and all his woven wear’, H.ii.14^v). He allows his clothing — the most universal symbol and actualiser of societal conformity and modesty — to fall about his ankles like Madeline’s dress in John Keats’s ‘Eve of St Agnes’, a discarded cluster that entangles him ... because he is still wearing his shoes. Due to his own impatience, the stranger finds himself held captive by the very thing he hopes to cast aside, frustratingly suspended in all of his aroused nakedness by the very act of undressing hurriedly and impulsively:

[His] forehead frowning, [his] lips crisp
Over fingerteasing task, his twiny boots
Fast he opens, last he off wrings
Till walk the world he can with [his] bare feet. (Emphasis added)

This particular detail seems to have been drawn from Walker’s painting:



After his conventions, his bothersome clothing, and especially his shoes have been duly discarded — ‘careless these in coloured wisp / All lie tumbled-to’ — Hopkins’s stranger discovers how surprisingly tactile the world about him has always been, discovers the Whitmanesque ‘press of [his] foot to the earth [that] springs a hundred affections’ (*SM*, line 253), a touch hitherto overlooked because, as Hopkins observes in ‘God’s Grandeur’, ‘nor can foot feel, being shod’ (line 8). Standing naked at the rim of the hidden pool, now only garlanded by the ‘loop-locks’ of his hair — ‘forward falling’ locks finding their nearest equivalent in ‘loose locks, long locks, lovelocks’ (‘Leaden Echo’, line 31) — the stranger undoubtedly experiences the same liquid caress described by Whitman: ‘It sails me, I dab with bare feet, they are lick’d by the indolent waves’ (*SM*, line 606). Recognising the seductiveness of this inviting touch, Whitman embraces the water as a lover, hurling himself into its sousing arms with the same expectation that motivates Hopkins’s young epithalamic bathers:

You sea! I resign myself to you also — I guess what you mean,
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers,
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me,
We must have a turn together, I undress, hurry me out of sight of the land,
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse,
Dash me with amorous wet. (*SM*, lines 448-53)

While, for Whitman, this encounter with the sea, ‘rich in physical and sensual detail [...] results in an absolute spiritual as well as sexual union’¹ — for Hopkins, who undoubtedly recognises that these inviting fingers belong to the hand of God, the ‘fondler of [his] heart’ (‘Deutschland’, line 71), this water also bespeaks a chilly sense of unfamiliarity, forbiddance, and danger, for Hopkins often contemplates a not-so-amorous ‘sway of the sea’, as in ‘The Wreck of the Deutschland’ where he questions God: ‘Dost thou touch me afresh? / Over again I feel thy finger and find thee’ (lines 3; 7-8).

Although recognising in the epithalamic ‘waterworld’ the omnipresent finger of God the ‘fondler’, both Hopkins and his stranger are apprehensive about the caressing ‘limpid liquid’ at their feet, intuitively aware that even a touch to their feet could be erogenous, springing forth a hundred potentially ‘dangerous’ and unfamiliar affections. By the poetic repetition of ‘*here he will then, here he will the fleet / Flinty kindcold element let break across his limbs*’ (emphasis added), Hopkins dramatises his and the stranger’s hesitation, their apprehension about any contact with the ‘pent-up aching river’ into which the boys hurl themselves so expectantly. This apprehension is one of the reasons why the stranger opts for the tranquil pool rather than the ‘boisterous’ river. Realising that an erotic hunger crosses the river between boyhood and manhood, ‘on all sides prurient provokers stiffening [his] limbs’ (*SM*, line 623), Hopkins’s hesitant-yet-hungry stranger seeks satisfaction, though on the adult side of this

¹ Fone, *Masculine*, p.166.

seminal deluge, in a pool more conducive to his ‘manhood, balanced, florid and full’ (*SM*, line 1170), a pool where the ‘procreant urge’ he shares with the boys and with Whitman can be mastered.

Mastery and masturbation — these two words cut to the quick of Hopkins’s frustrated sexuality and pit his Jesuitical impulses against his human. While Whitman, ‘in his own love grip of autoerotic arousal’,¹ can confidently assert, as he bathes and admires himself, that ‘welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean, / Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be less familiar than the rest’ (*SM*, lines 57-58) — Hopkins cannot make such a sensual or masturbatory assertion. In contrast to Whitman, Hopkins, especially as an undergraduate, conceived of his own masturbation (the ‘Old Habits’ sometimes discreetly signified as ‘O.H.’ or cast in Latin in his diaries) as a stumbling block, a division between himself and the Divine, a tactile example of fleshy impulses mastering him in ways reminiscent of that ‘great scoundrel’, the irreverent Whitman, and of his ‘O Christ! This is mastering me!’ (*SM* 1860, line 243):

The young man that flushes and flushes, [...]
 The young man that wakes deep at night, the hot hand seeking to repress what
 would master him,
 The mystic amorous night, the strange half-welcome pangs, visions, sweats,
 The pulse pounding through palms and trembling encircling fingers, the young
 man all color’d, red, ashamed, angry. (‘Spontaneous Me’, lines 31-34)

Much later, as a Jesuit priest, Hopkins must have feared that these impulses, if indulged, would lead to the overt sexuality found in Whitman’s ‘Not My Enemies Ever Invade Me’: ‘But the lovers I recklessly love — lo! how they master me!’ (line 2). For Hopkins, on the other hand, to be ‘no master of myself is the worst failure of all’ (Retreat notes of 1888, *Sermons*, p.262). Hopkins’s undergraduate attempts to become ‘master of myself’ concerning masturbation are clearly evident in his confession notes, where, regarding ‘the flow of bodily fluid’ during acts such as masturbation, Dellamora believes Hopkins’s requirement of mastery only reserved a distinctly neutral place ‘for involuntary emission on the side of religious and organic ecstasy’.² If such was the case, then — even though his poetry ‘reveals how intimately his love of men and boys was connected with his love of Christ’³ — Hopkins must have recognised that religious ecstasy (not to mention organic) was a rare experience, and hard to come by.

In ‘The Bugler’s First Communion’, Hopkins depicts just such a moment of religious, and perhaps organic ecstasy, with the ‘overtone of strong sexual awareness in the poem’⁴ cast in a ceremonial frame, as a priestly Hopkins ‘forth

¹ Fone, *Masculine*, p.147.

² Dellamora, *Masculine Desire*, p.54.

³ Woods, ‘Still’, p.132.

⁴ Martin, p.297.

Christ from cupboard fetched' and administered the Eucharist to a bugler boy of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry from the nearby Cowley Barracks, a bugler boy dressed in 'regimental red' (lines 9-10).¹ During this ceremony, Hopkins becomes aware of how erotically provocative his own stance is, relative to the kneeling boy penitently ready to receive the Host. Hopkins avouches: 'How fain I of feet / To his youngster take his treat!' (lines 10-11). Given the 'underthought' that 'if Christ is [seen as] a phallus, [then] the logical conclusion must be that the Eucharist is an act of fellatio',² Hopkins withdraws the consecrated Host, the 'too huge godhead' (line 12), from the altar cupboard, a cupboard depicted like the sheath of a phallus, complete with retractable wooden foreskin, allowing Hopkins to 'unhouse and house the Lord [as godhead]' ('Habit of Perfection', line 24). While he places the 'leaf-light' wafer upon the bugler boy's tongue, Hopkins's glance lingers on the boy's face ('Christ's darling') and mouth ('tongue true') and throat ('breathing bloom') (lines 14-16) — his glance seeming to follow the wafer along. In essence, Hopkins's glance lingers on the thing he labels in 'The Habit of Perfection' the 'palate, the hutch of tasty lust' (line 13). Given the above, it should come as little surprise that the bugler's parted lips — armatured by many a rousing blast of a phallic trumpet — seem to have inspired Hopkins with the same 'flashing' passion that envelops his epithalamic stranger, a passion that is elucidated by Whitman in 'The Mystic Trumpeter':

I hear thee trumpeter, listening alert I catch thy notes,
Now pouring, whirling like a tempest round me,

[...]

Blow trumpeter free and clear, I follow thee,
While at thy liquid prelude, glad, serene,
The fretting world, the streets, the noisy hours of day withdraw,

[...]

O trumpeter, methinks I am myself the instrument thou playest.

(Lines 3-4; 13-15; 50)

For Hopkins, the bugler boy's 'freshyouth fretted' has a phallic, as well as instrumental connection to the 'Epithalamion' and its '*hornbeam fretty*'. With his 'fretted' trumpet pressed to his lips, the 'bugler boy' provided the Uranians, as well as Whitman, with a potent symbol, with a literal herald of sexual arousal. Such is also the case in Hopkins's 'Brothers', a poem occasioned by the performance of a one-act burlesque, 'A Model Kingdom', adapted, perhaps by Hopkins, from *Chrononhotonthologos*, a 1734 musical burlesque by Henry Carey

¹ See White, *Hopkins*, pp.313-14.

² Gregory Woods, *Articulate Flesh: Male Homo-eroticism and Modern Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), p.45.

(1687-1743).¹ In March 1878, the boys of Mount St Mary's College, near Chesterfield (where Hopkins was then officially Sub-Minister), performed this burlesque, with the character of Salpingophalos (the 'brass-bold' herald with trumpet) played by James Broadbent,² a boy who 'did give tongue', a reference to his opening lines in the burlesque, lines that must have proven rather 'fretty' for Hopkins:

Now [James] was brass-bold:

He had no work to hold

His heart up at the strain;

Nay, roguish ran the vein.

[...]

There! the hall rung;

Dog, he did give tongue! ('Brothers', lines 25-28; 33-34)

Salpingophalos: Your faithful Gen'ral *Bombardinion*

Sends you his Tongue, transplanted in my Mouth,

To pour his Soul out in your Royal Ears.

(As quoted in *OET*, p.422, note)

'To pour his Soul out in your [...] Ears' is a phrase that encapsulates the essence of the Classical paederastic relationship constructed within Hopkins's 'Epithalamion', the 'inspirer' (*eispnêlas*) pouring his soul into the ear of his 'hearer' (*aitês*). This phrasing is also found in the complex Uranian pun from which Timothy d'Arch Smith derives the title for his book, a pun used by the Uranian poet John Gambriel Francis Nicholson (1866-1931) as the title for his *Love in Earnest: Sonnets, Ballades, and Lyrics* (1892). Brilliantly, Nicholson employs this quadruple pun to suggest that his love is for a boy named Earnest, that his love is 'in earnest', that his love is placed *in* Earnest (hinting at oral and

¹ In 'Gerard Manley Hopkins at Mount St. Mary's College, Spinkhill, 1877-1878', *Hopkins Quarterly*, 6.1 (1979), pp.11-34, Francis Keegan questions: 'Was "The Model Kingdom" written by Hopkins? Unfortunately we cannot determine, for the text has not survived either at the Mount or at Stonyhurst' (p.23). Keegan's article, the fullest exploration of Hopkins's Mount St Mary's College experiences, provides information about his students — particularly his favourite, Herbert Berkeley — as well as a plethora of photos of the campus, the boys, and various playbills. The playbill for 'A Model Kingdom' is provided in facsimile, revealing that Norman White's spelling — 'Salingophalos' — is a misprint (*Hopkins*, p.295).

² This poem is based on two actual brothers: the 'my lad' was Henry Broadbent (born on 29 May 1866; not quite twelve when he figured in Hopkins's poem) and James (the younger of the two) — see Keegan, p.26. About the connection, pedagogical and personal, between Hopkins and Herbert Berkeley, Martin writes: 'Hopkins deeply needed affection, however rigid his exterior, and he may have been on the verge of wanting too much in this case' (pp.272-73).

anal penetration), and that his love is placed verbally in Earnest's 'ear-nest'. It is the last portion of this complex pun that finds resonance in the paederastic phrase 'to pour his Soul out in your [...] Ears', a phrase that would have had particular resonance for Hopkins when he heard young James Broadbent 'give tongue' as Salpingophalos.

If Hopkins was indeed the person who adapted this one-act burlesque — as some critics suggest — then the choice of the name 'Salpingophalos' for this 'brass-bold' boy resonates with a paederastic playfulness that is particularly risky, since that name, which at first appears to be merely a portmanteau of the Greek word *salpinx*, *salpingos* (meaning 'trumpet') and *phalos* ('shining, bright'), has far more Uranian potential than that.¹ If *ophalos* is taken in terms of *omphalos* (meaning 'navel'), it recalls Hopkins's poetic ditty 'Denis', with its anal-esque phrasing of 'rooting in the bare butt's wincing navel' (*OET*, p.155). Something even more daring and decadent appears by simply adding another 'L': *phalos* (meaning 'shining, bright') becomes *phallos* ('erect penis'), converting the name of the character in the burlesque into a portmanteau truly 'brass' and 'bold', the boy becoming 'salpingo—phallos', or 'trumpet—phallus'.



**The Broadbent brothers:
Henry George and James**

As for his communion with that other 'brass-bold' boy, the one from 'The Bugler's First Communion', Hopkins seems to have fantasised about a moment of passionate reciprocity with the boy. Not only does Hopkins exhibit a desire to be fellated — to be mouthed like the boy's instrument, as Whitman suggests; or to have his 'love placed *in Earnest*', as Nicholson hints — but also to fellate, to consume the bugler boy as though he were a piece of fruit, to feel him 'yield tender as a pushed peach', gushing 'limber liquid youth':

¹ In Carey's original, the character labelled 'Salpingophalos' in the Mount St Mary's College production is merely labelled 'Herald'. The Herald's lines in the original include: 'Your faithful general, Bombardinian, / Sends you his tongue, transplanted in my mouth, / To pour his soul out in your royal ears'.

How it does my heart good [...]
 When limber liquid youth, that to all I teach
 Yields tender as a pushed peach,
 Hies headstrong to its wellbeing of a self-wise self-will! (Lines 21-24)¹

Given the ‘underthought’ of the poem as a whole and its emphasis on ‘mansex fine’ (line 16), Hopkins seems to have constructed here a variable scenario of fellatio, though its paederastic nuances are held and tempered within a religious frame,² a displacement that decadently blends the sacred with the profane.

At the very least — even barring the fellatio imagery that many readers will consider to have been pushed beyond the point of decency, converting Hopkins’s Eucharistic spectacle into ‘The Bugger’s First Communion’³ — this bugler boy nonetheless encapsulates the paederastic ideal of a youth poised between those ripening desires that threaten innocence (‘freshyouth fretted in a bloomfall all portending / That sweet’s sweeter ending’ — altered from the earlier ‘boyhood fretted’, MS. 3, A.p.131)⁴ and the inexperience that will surely be lost to age (‘bloom of a chastity in mansex fine’) (lines 30-31; 16). Symonds explains this particular paederastic ideal as follows:

The very evanescence of this ‘bloom of youth’ made it in Greek eyes desirable, since nothing more clearly characterises the poetic myths which adumbrate their special sensibility than the pathos of a blossom that must fade. When distinction

¹ In *The Breaking of Style: Hopkins, Heaney, Graham* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), Helen Vendler suggests that this peach metaphor ‘takes on such unconscious sexual analogy that a psychoanalytic reading finds it almost risible’ (p.23).

² Fone makes a similar comment regarding Whitman’s textual acts of fellatio: ‘The sacramental union has taken place, and the eucharistic semen has been shared’ (*Masculine*, p.183). ‘The Manicheans and the Albigenses are said to have sprinkled semen on their Eucharistic bread’ (Woods, *Articulate*, p.45).

³ Such may be the case, though mine is not the first time an ‘L’ has been altered either to enhance or diminish Hopkins’s Eucharistic suggestiveness. Notice MacKenzie at work, as he explains in his ‘Introduction’ to the *OET*:

Occasionally I have made an editorial decision because of the markedly better sense which flows from a change. In No. 71 [‘The Half-way House’], l. 10, the Eucharist may with theological propriety be described as ‘love’s proper food’ (as my text now runs), but as Christ in this poem is called ‘Love’ (the personification of love), abstruse scruples might be roused by the traditional reading: ‘Love when here [i.e., Christ while he was a man], they say, / Or once or never took Love’s proper food’. (P.xlix; all parentheses and brackets are MacKenzie’s, except for my identification of the title for No. 71)

Had it read ‘love’ and not ‘Love’, how different would Shakespeare’s line have been: ‘So the boy Love is perjurd ev’ry where’ (*A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*, I, i, line 248). For a consideration of the homoerotic potential of the doctrine of the Real Presence and the sacrament of the Eucharist, see Saville, *Queer*, pp.25-26; 39-41.

⁴ *Facsimiles* II, p.180. Curiously, one of the meanings of ‘fret’ is ‘to eat, devour, consume’ (*OED*).

of feature and symmetry of form were added to this charm of youthfulness, the Greeks admitted, as true artists are obliged to do, that the male body displays harmonies of proportion and melodies of outline more comprehensive, more indicative of strength expressed in terms of grace, than that of women.¹

Fearful that this desirable ‘bloom of youth’ (represented by the bugler boy’s face) will wither, Hopkins is apprehensive about looking away, racked with a paederastic fear that Kincaid explains:

[In such literature,] the adult turns his back for an instant and wheels around to find the room empty: ‘suddenly, [...] overnight like an overblown flower, it is dead’. The child does not grow or even grow up; it becomes extinct. In part, these metaphors express the fact that the child becomes unattractive to the adult, becomes just another ordinary adult and no longer anything magical — disfigured by body hair and erupting skin and ungainly height.²

Although, in ‘The Leaden Echo’, Hopkins ponders how ‘to keep / Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, ... from vanishing away’ (lines 1-2), he ultimately concludes that

no, nothing can be done
To keep at bay
Age and age’s evils. (Lines 9-11)

So, like a member of that ‘morbid strain’ of paederasty ‘that longs for the expiring child’ as a means of preserving its innocence, purity, and beauty,³ Hopkins writes to Bridges regarding this particular bugler boy: ‘I am half inclined to hope the Hero of [the poem] may be killed in Afghanistan’ (8 October

¹ Symonds, *Greek Ethics* [1901], p.68.

² Kincaid, p.226. See *Letters* I, p.29: Claiming that he is being prompted by his sister, Hopkins requests the music Bridges had written for ‘O earlier shall the rose[bud]s blow’ — a poem on just this theme of withering boyhood by the early Uranian, William Johnson (*later Cory*), whose *Ionica* (1858) was certainly familiar to Hopkins, especially since Johnson was an assistant master at Eton while Bridges, Dolben, and others from Hopkins’s circle were students, and was much loved by the student body. Bridges mentions Johnson’s enthusiasm for Dolben’s poetry, as well as his poor transcribing skills (see *Dolben* 1915, pp.lvi, note; lviii, note; and 136-38), and it is possible that Bridges shared these details with Hopkins, who would certainly have been interested in anything Dolbenian. Surprisingly, there is no scholarship to date exploring Johnson’s probable influence on Dolben, Bridges, or Hopkins. In my ‘Conclusion’, I deal with Johnson’s reciprocal influence over Dolben (as well as Hopkins and Bridges, by connection).

³ Kincaid, p.235. In *Love Between Men in English Literature* (New York: St Martin’s, 1996), Paul Hammond acknowledges this ‘trope’, however authentic: ‘Much of the pederastic writing of the nineteenth century delights in imagining boys wounded or dead’ (p.142).

1879, *Letters I*, p.92) — where the British troops were then fighting the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80).

Although ‘The Bugler’s First Communion’ displays how thoroughly Hopkins could sublimate his sexual desires into ritual and poetry, it also demonstrates how sexually unfulfilled he must have been amid his own denials, scrupulosities, and beliefs; amid Jesuitical and other religious restrictions; amid the concern of Western society (in general) and Victorian society (in particular) to limit physical intimation and expression of homoerotic and paederastic desires. As Hopkins admits, even his Saviour often unsympathetically ‘locks love [like a treasure] ever in a lad’ (‘Bugler’s’, line 35), locked by something far less malleable than humanity’s ‘bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key’ (‘Leaden Echo’, line 1). However, the principal cause of Hopkins’s inability to acquire this locked treasure might have been something unrelated to restrictions from within or without, something instead inherent to his own voyeuristic tendency, his own ‘inscape’. A substantial distance is required for voyeurism, a distance illustrated in the ‘Epithalamion’ by the stranger’s shift from the boisterous river and its stirring boys to a hidden pool neighbouring, a distance that might have posed Hopkins’s problem. Lest it be thought that such a perspective could only be reached by modern literary criticism (and this volume in particular), perhaps it is best to let Hopkins explain the problem himself, as he does in a letter to R. W. Dixon: ‘I cannot get my Elegy [“On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People”] finished, but I hope in a few days to see the hero and heroine of it, which may enable me (or quite the reverse; perhaps that: it is not well to come too near things)’ (22 December 1887, *Letters II*, p.154). Jude Nixon notes much the same dynamic in Pater’s approach to beauty: ‘Pater’s aesthetic, then, is jointly one of subjectivity and one of distancing, creating a dialectic in which beauty, to be found, must be located in the space between subject and the object of perception’.¹

So desirous is Hopkins to acquire this blurred and remote treasure that, even while contemplating the drowning nuns in ‘The Wreck of the Deutschland’, he is questioning: ‘What by your measure is the heaven of desire, / The treasure never *eyesight got?*’ (lines 207-08, emphasis added). This question echoes Kincaid’s insistence that paederasty ‘seems almost always to be on intimate terms with such possessive looking’.² Elsewhere, surrounded by more tranquil waters, Hopkins suggests where this treasure might be got:

Then come who care for peace or pleasure
 Away from counter, court, or school
 And spend some measure of your treasure
 To taste the treats of Penmaen Pool. (Lines 37-40)

¹ Nixon, p.176.

² Kincaid, p.227. Although Kincaid’s statement covers ‘paedophilia’ in general, I have limited it to its connection to boys, to its ‘paederastic’ sense.

The bugler boy's Eucharistic 'treat' (line 11), with all of its erotic connotations, could have been acquired just as easily at a Penmaen or epithalamic pool, where even listless strangers can partake in a watery communion with the 'Thou mastering me / God', a God who is not only the 'giver of breath and bread', but is also the giver of the 'world's strand [and] sway of the sea' ('Deutschland', lines 1-3). Nevertheless, even when entirely visual, these 'treats' and the getting of them disturbed Hopkins, whose impulses and apparent earnestness were particularly Jesuitical, whether personal, prescribed, or feigned:

I cast for comfort I can no more get
 By groping round my comfortless than blind
 Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
 Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet. ([*'My Own Heart'*], lines 5-8)

While considering Hopkins's grandest 'world of wet' — 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' — Bristow accentuates how thoroughly these concepts of Eucharistic and watery communion were merged for the poet:

In stanza thirty [...] the poet prayerfully appeals to 'Jesu, heart's light, / Jesu, maid's son', and asks what 'feast followed the night' that the Lord 'hadst glory of this nun'. Here his inquiry shades into envy — for the nun has surely been 'feasted' upon in a way that has given her, and not the speaker, the Lord's 'crown'. This glorious 'feast' certainly sounds ravenous. [...] This 'feast' may — even when all doctrinal considerations have been made — appear to verge on impropriety. This is an eminently sexual, rapacious, and wholly virile God.¹

In the 'Epithalamion', although hesitant, although fearful of the Whitmanesque 'souse upon me of my lover the sea' — the liquid embodiment of 'an eminently sexual, rapacious, and wholly virile God' — Hopkins's stranger nonetheless accepts the sensual treats offered by this epithalamic waterworld, and immediately 'feasts: [for] lovely all is!' Compelled (or more aptly, guided) by an unseen poetic hand, Hopkins's stranger is moved into a gushing cleft in the landscape's side. He is moved tenderly, reminiscent of Christ's easing of the hesitant finger of Thomas the Doubter into that place of liquid epiphany that Digby Dolben describes in 'Homo Factus Est':

Look upon me sweetly
 With Thy Human Eyes
 With Thy Human Finger
 Point me to the skies.

¹ Bristow, 'Churlsgace', p.700.

Safe from earthly scandal
 My poor spirit hide
 In the utter stillness
 Of Thy wounded Side.

[...]

By the quiet waters,
 Sweetest Jesu, lead;
 'Mid the virgin lilies,
 Purest Jesu, feed. (Lines 13-20; 49-52)¹

Resembling Dolben's 'quiet waters', Hopkins's 'heavenfallen freshness' spills from the moorland into 'a coffer, burly all of blocks / Built of chancequarrièd, selfquainèd hoar-huskèd rocks'. Filled continually — 'dark or daylight, on and on' — by water that 'warbles over into' it, this stone chalice brims with a liquid grace like that which was promised to the Woman at the Well: water from 'a vein / Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift' ('Deutschland', lines 31-32). Quite physically, this coffer converts the 'boisterous' water into the 'quiet waters' the stranger is seeking, into the 'finger of a tender of, O of a feathery delicacy' ('Deutschland', line 246).

'Feathery delicacy' — for Hopkins, the poet of 'The Windhover', the falconry connotations associated with the word 'warbles' are particularly significant for his 'Epithalamion', describing how a falcon crosses its wings over its back after 'rousing' and 'mantling'.² Like a 'dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding / Of the rolling level underneath him' ('Windhover', lines 2-3), Hopkins's moorland water alights upon the coffer's 'burly' arm, where it *rouses*, raising and shaking its fluid feathers. It then *mantles*, spreading its wings and tail over its outstretched talons as it begins to perch. Finally, the water *warbles*, wrapping its wings about itself, a finishing flourish to its downward flight.³ In liquid terms, the coffer's 'burly [...] blocks' serve to convert the 'brute beauty' ('Windhover', line 9) of the moorland water — rushing 'boisterously beautiful,

¹ *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, ed. by Robert Bridges, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), p.1-4; abbreviated as *Dolben* 1915. Quotations from Bridges's 'Memoir' are also from this volume.

² *OED* defines 'warble' as '*falconry*. Of a hawk: cross (the wings) together over the back after rousing and mantling'. It defines 'rouse' as '*falconry*. Of a hawk: raise and shake (the feathers)'; and 'mantle' as 'of a perched bird of prey: spread the wings over the outstretched legs, spread the wings and tail so as to cover food'.

³ In *Ovingdean Grange: A Tale of the South Downs* (1860), 'the Lancashire novelist' William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-82) has a snippet of conversation that explains this: 'The falcon is a hawk for a prince — when after mantling, as we falconers term it, she crosseth her wings over her back, and disposeth herself to warble'. 'To warble!' the handmaiden exclaimed. 'Lawk a mercy! I never yet heard that a hawk doth sing'. 'Neither doth she, Patty; but she warbleth, nevertheless — that is to say, she sitteth erect as yon tartaret doth on my father's fist' — in [*Works of William Harrison Ainsworth*], 17 vols (London: G. Routledge, [n.d.]), XI, p.76.

between / Roots and rocks' for the delight of boys — into something calmer, something that 'warbles' into the epithalamic coffer with a 'feathery delicacy', with the rhythmic trills, thrills, and quavers expectant of a satisfied bird. Through a solitary term like 'warble', Hopkins, a poetic genius who admired falconry, is able to convey a completed-yet-controlled masturbatory flow, 'the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!' ('Windhover', line 8).

Beyond chalice and falcon iconography, this coffer also represents a natural cathedral whitened in places by the river's sway, its very stones deposited by a less-than-delicate 'finger' of God, a finger that now descends into the coffer as feathery ribbons of water — 'filleted with glassy grassy quicksilvery shivès and shoots' — giving the effect of a window of stained glass, an effect that a much younger Hopkins describes as 'glazed water vaulted o'er a drowsy stone' (*Journals*, p.67). With its diamonded panes of 'glassy' water separated by leadwork of 'grassy' tracery (appropriately termed *calms*), this 'quicksilvery' and prised window falls into the coffer, a window variegated by vegetative 'shivès and shoots' that grow upwards from between the 'hoar-huskèd rocks' (reminiscent of the earlier, more brutish 'between / Roots and rocks' — though 'hoar' denotes the mature, rather than the puerile). Of all of Hopkins's spaces, this partially submerged coffer, described with the intricacy of a Leonardo sketch, is indeed the most masterfully charged with the grandeur of God, abounding with spiritual relevance, creative incubation, and physical enjoyment, expressing the best of 'earthworld, airworld, waterworld' — though not 'thorough hurled' like the marbled river into which the boys dive. Mastery, not masturbatory hurling, is aflow in this seclusion, a thorough mastery of what Ferns calls 'the restorative waters of life'.¹

Beckoned by the healing spirit of God moving upon the face of this water, Hopkins's stranger accepts the watery embrace he has hitherto so feared: he allows 'the fleet / Flinty kindcold element [...] [to] break across his limbs / Long'; he allows 'the souse upon [him] of [his] lover the sea, as [he lies] willing and naked' (Whitman, 'Spontaneous Me', line 35); he allows himself to be covered by this window of variegated, liquid glass. Hopkins is again invoking the ultimate voyeuristic moment of English literature — Keats's Madeline enveloped in 'warm gules' cast by 'a casement high and triple-arch'd'.² Of particular interest here is Hopkins's earlier use of the word 'flashes' to describe

¹ Ferns, p.174. The watery window of this epithalamic 'cathedral' is reminiscent of the stained glass of St Margaret's Church near Binsey, Oxfordshire, Hopkins's encounter with which is described in Martin, pp.64-65. In addition, though serendipity secured its placement immediately following MacKenzie's facsimile of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion', Hopkins's pencil sketch 'Cleaning Dr. Molloy's Windows' (H.i.49, *Facsimiles II*, p.329) reveals a man who is framed by a water-washed window that undoubtedly envelops him with refracted light. If composed near the time Hopkins was drafting his 'Epithalamion', this sketch might provide a visual source for the poem's coupling of water and window, revealing a man illumined by both.

² John Keats, 'The Eve of St. Agnes', lines 218; 208.

the passions stirring within the stranger's breast: beyond expressing the influence of the boys' voluptuous accents, 'flashing' is a glass-maker's term for the act of covering transparent glass with a film of colour, implying that the listless stranger is overspread by a brilliant 'froliclavish', is given the ability to behold the world in a surprisingly fresh and dappled way. The overall effect is 'lavish' — the very word Hopkins uses to describe the healing waters of St Winefred's well (*Letters I*, p.40) — but lavish in a way that is frolicsome in both a glassmaking and a glad-making way. Such a lavish use of glassmaking terminology, terminology with expansive nuances, should come as little surprise from this grandson of Martin Edward Hopkins, admitted as a Freeman of the City of London on 13 September 1809, as 'Citizen and Glass-seller'.¹

Enfolded voyeuristically into this bushybowered pool along with the stranger, we — Hopkins's reader and narrator — seem also to experience this healing delight, this new 'exercise of sight and touch', this 'froliclavish' so syntactically ambiguous: 'we leave him, *froliclavish*, while he looks about him, laughs, swims' (emphasis added). Syntactically, perhaps this state of being 'froliclavish' belongs to the stranger, or to us, or to both. Whichever the case, we have experienced what we came for, and should discreetly follow Hopkins's advice for properly engaging 'Mortal Beauty': 'Merely meet it [...] then leave, let that alone' (lines 12-13). However, our presence has not gone unnoticed. While we — the reader and narrator, the 'hearer' and 'inspirer' — attempt to leave our own poetic, voyeuristic seclusion, we seem to be discovered by the gaze of the stranger, that voyeur whom we thought we were watching unseen. After looking about him, the stranger, laughing perhaps at our own newly acquired embarrassment, begins to swim uncaringly, as if beckoning us to strip and join him in the sensual pleasures of his pool.²

This is indeed what Ferns suggests, Hopkins in 'his freest and happiest poetic vein'³ — or is it? Readers will perhaps be a little surprised that, after the preceding pages, what follows will muddy the waters of this argument, as well as part company with all other critics, including Ferns. To claim that Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' is a Uranian celebration of paederastic and homoerotic voyeurism, to lift the fig-leaf of its nuptial title and extraneous attachments to reveal an aroused Hopkins many have refused to see — that is not necessarily to

¹ Before becoming a Jesuit and Hopkins's friend, Clement William Barraud (1843-1926) was a member of his family's firm, Barraud & Lavers, stained-glass artists (*Journals*, p.441, note). Hopkins could easily have acquired such a technical term from him. Also noteworthy is the detail that, in 1874, Hopkins and Barraud 'walked over to Holywell and bathed at the well and returned joyously. The sight of the water in the well as clear as glass, greenish like beryl or aquamarine' (*Journals*, p.261).

² While considering the voyeuristic interaction between readers and the young protagonist of *David Copperfield*, Kincaid uses exactly the same phrasing as Hopkins: '*He looks about him*, he observes. He looks back at us, exactly what readers hiding in the bushes do not want' (p.306, emphasis added).

³ Ferns, p.175.

agree with ‘freest and happiest’. Humphries claims that ‘whatever kind of poem critics have discovered in the text, there’s one certainty to hold on to: that this is a curiously untroubled poem. The Dublin poems are not carefree, not “careless”; this one is’.¹ The following will attempt to remove that certainty, suggesting instead that, if Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ has a fitting place, it is probably nearest the ‘Dark Sonnets’ and the emotions surrounding them, providing a clear elucidation of the sadness to which Hopkins alludes in May 1885: ‘My fits of sadness [...] resemble madness’ (*Letters I*, p.216). ‘Could we draw the [“Epithalamion”] closer to the work of the Dublin period, those dark poems of despairing self-examination from which critics (I think without exception) dissociate it?’ is a question that Humphries raises in his recent article in *Victorian Poetry*,² a question that the remainder of this chapter will attempt to answer.

Strangely, the sensual pleasures of Hopkins’s epithalamic pool are far more ambiguous than the syntactical options of the word ‘froliclavish’. Given the frolicsome and celebratory quality of the poem as a whole, it may seem remarkable that Hopkins’s most sensual expression should end in a ‘coffer’ — a medieval cognate of ‘coffin’³ — a coffer overflowed by water and occupied by a stranger who beckons us seductively like one of John William Waterhouse’s painted nymphs. Hypnotically, pools and their bathers may invite us to participate in frolicsome abandon — but, for Hopkins, pools are not always places of lasting ecstasy and expectation, erotic or otherwise. Waterworlds such as his ‘Inversnaid’ often surge with an unspecified sense of loss and despair:

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
Turns and twindles over the broth
Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning. (Lines 5-8)

Fear of the dangers intrinsic to pools has a biographical source for Hopkins. While the death of ‘him I love’ was only a nightmare for Whitman in his cluster *Whispers of Heavenly Death* —

Of him I love day and night I dream’d I heard he was dead,
And I dream’d I went where they had buried him I love, but he was not in
that place,
And I dream’d I wander’d searching among burial-places to find him,
And I found that every place was a burial-place. (‘Of Him I Love’, lines 1-4)

— for Hopkins, on the other hand, the death of his beloved, by drowning, was not a dream.

¹ Humphries, p.345.

² *Ibid.*, p.353.

³ *OED* notes that ‘coffer’ is derived from and retains as one of its meanings ‘a coffin’.

Digby Mackworth Dolben, who was more than three years younger than Hopkins, was just turning seventeen when they met briefly at Oxford in February 1865.¹ ‘Hopkins found Dolben attractive’, White explains, ‘and like many others succumbed to his charm’.² This ‘infatuation’, suggests White, ‘probably caused him to understate the flirtatiousness and provocativeness in Dolben’s religious attitudes’,³ attitudes unconventional in their poetic figurement of Christ as a glorified paederastic lover, with death as their consummation embrace. ‘The traditional aspects of religious poetry as love poetry seem somehow extended beyond their legitimate bounds by Dolben’, suggests Martin, later stressing that Hopkins was equally attuned to this undercurrent of eroticism: ‘There is a long Christian tradition of the association between eroticism and religion, and it was never far beneath the surface in Hopkins’s poetry’.⁴ However, not long after their meeting, Dolben went far too far beneath the surface, this time literally, not figuratively — a familiar tale from Bridges’s ‘Memoir’ of Dolben that I have provided because of the passage given emphasis:

He went, late in the afternoon to bathe with Mr. [Constantine] Prichard’s [ten-year-old] son Walter *at a spot where the stream widens into a small pool*. The boy could not swim, but had learned to float on his back. Digby was a good swimmer. They had bathed there together before: the conditions were not dangerous, and no apprehension was felt when they did not return. [...] What happened was that when they were bathing Digby took the boy on his back and swam across the pool with him. Returning in the same fashion he suddenly sank within a few yards of the bank to which he was swimming. The boy, who was the only witness, had the presence of mind to turn on his back and keep himself afloat, and shout to some reapers in the riverside meadows.

(Dolben 1915, pp.cx-cxi)⁵

¹ Dolben probably came to Oxford to celebrate his birthday — February 8th — with his friend and distant cousin Bridges, who was then in residence at Corpus Christi College.

² White, *Hopkins*, p.110. Bridges writes: ‘It was at this visit [to Oxford in February 1865], and only then, that [Dolben] met Gerard Hopkins: but he must have been a good deal with him’ (Dolben 1915, pp.lxxii-iii).

³ White, *Hopkins*, p.110.

⁴ Martin, pp.86; 251. ‘Dolben early developed his twin interests in extreme high-church religion and poetry, both of which were marked with strong eroticism [...] [In this poetry,] he demonstrated enormous fluency and ease, often in high-church devotional poems in which the physical urgency of a boy in his teens spills over into sexual imagery in describing his love of Christ’ (Robert Bernard Martin, ‘Digby Augustus Stewart Dolben’, *DNB*). Poems such as ‘The Lily’ and ‘A Letter’ (Dolben 1915, pp.59; 60-63) — particularly the latter — are bountiful with suggestive links between Dolben’s poetry and Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’.

⁵ Bridges qualifies this location in the ‘Memoir’ for the 2nd edn; in the 1st edn, it simply reads: ‘He went, late in the afternoon to bathe with Mr. Prichard’s son Walter’ — Robert Bridges, ed., *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, 1st edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), pp.cvi-cvii. For Dolben’s love of swimming, see *Dolben* 1915, p.xcix; for a description of this pool in the River Welland, see p.cxvii.

Although, as noted in the last chapter, Hopkins wrote to Bridges soon afterwards that ‘there can very seldom have happened the loss of so much beauty (in body and mind and life) and of the promise of still more as there has been in his case — seldom I mean, in the whole world’ (30 August 1867, *Letters* I, pp.16-17), the impact of Dolben’s death on Hopkins is sketchy at best. Hopkins reveals little, Bridges even less — allowing some conservative critics, such as Justus George Lawler, to posit ‘an interpretation totally at odds with that of Martin and all the domesticated [Humphry] House apes’ (unfortunately not a Lawlerian truncation of ‘apostles’).¹ Lawler’s insistence on ‘verifiable data’² — an insistence that is connected rhetorically to Philip Henry Gosse’s *Omphalos* — is a scholarly truncheon that does little to flesh out Hopkins’s feelings for Dolben, or to discredit the eroticised interpretations made by Hopkins’s principal biographers, Martin and White. A case in point, and one intimately related to the present consideration, is Lawler’s dismissal of the widely held assumption that *The Bathers* (1865, adjusted till 1868), a painting by Frederick Walker (1840-75), one of Hopkins’s favourite artists, probably influenced his ‘Epithalamion’. While rebutting that Hopkins makes no reference to this painting — hence, provides no ‘verifiable data’ — Lawler conveniently ignores the fact that much of the biographical material relating to Hopkins has seen bonfires aplenty.³ Nevertheless, the lacuna that arises from Hopkins *not* mentioning *The Bathers* is intriguing in itself, and may shed more light on Hopkins’s feelings for Dolben than Lawler would anticipate or sanction.

While in journal entries for 2 July 1866 and 17 June 1868, Hopkins notes having just seen the Royal Academy Exhibition (see *Journals*, pp.142-43; 167), the relevant unknown is whether or not he saw the intervening Exhibition of 1867, where Walker’s *Bathers* was then on display amidst critical furore, including comments by John Ruskin, who considered the painting a pleasant aberration within Walker’s oeuvre.⁴ What Lawler fails to acknowledge is that

¹ Lawler, *Re-Constructed*, p.86. I will refrain from commenting much on this piece of Bloomianism. I am sure the Hopkinsian ‘Master of All Things’ (Lawler, not God) will accuse me of employing the same ‘deception’ as Martin: trying to re-con the reader with a sexual interpretation of Hopkins that ‘any honest reader’ would never consider convincing (p.88). Much of Lawler’s acidity is flung at critics like Michael Lynch, critics who posit a homoerotic reading of Hopkins’s works. Lawler’s vehement attack on Lynch’s integrity should be weighed against Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s ‘Memorial for Michael Lynch’: ‘I think Michael loved truth more than anything else in the world. He loved it aesthetically as well as morally and politically. We all know that the people he loved were those he could tell the truth to and those he felt sure would tell it to him’ (as read at his memorial service, August 1991) <<http://www.duke.edu/~sedgwic/WRITING/LYNCH.htm>> (Sedgwick’s personal homepage) [last accessed 25 June 2004].

² Lawler, *Re-Constructed*, p.83.

³ For Lawler’s counter-argument that ‘what is relevant is that there is no evidence Hopkins knew Walker’s *Bathers*’, see *ibid.*, pp.68-73.

⁴ Kestner asserts that ‘a key painting in the tradition of representing the male nude, replete with many of these [homoerotic and ephebic] associations, is Frederick Walker’s *The*

there is a substantial break — an entire year — in Hopkins's journals between 24 July 1866 (while Hopkins was on a reading holiday in Horsham with friends) and 10 July 1867 (after Hopkins had arrived in France with his friend Basil Poutiatine).¹ This means that, if Hopkins had seen and immediately commented on the painting, as was his practice, then those comments, perhaps written into a journal that is no longer extant, are now lost. Nonetheless, it is highly probable that Hopkins *did* see Walker's painting, especially given that he tended, as would seem obvious, to visit the Royal Academy Exhibition, when he did visit it, in June or July (see also his letter to A. W. M. Baillie, 10 July 1863, *Letters* III, p.201), and given that he had just taken First Class Honours in *Literae Humaniores* (or Greats) in June 1867, about which, half-a-year later, he would write to Bridges: 'Is not the thought of Greats like a mill-stone round your neck now? It was to me' (1 November 1867, *Letters* I, p.18). Having had that 'mill-stone' removed, indulging in a visit to London and its Royal Academy seems the sort of thing he would have done to relax, especially since he still lived with his family in Hampstead, outside of London. Further, there is a biographical detail that would have made this particular painting a difficult one for Hopkins to comment on later, since it would have brought to the surface far too much pain. *The Bathers* would likely have been seen and admired by Hopkins, granted that he did see it, in June 1867. Since Digby Dolben drowned while bathing on 28 June 1867, the obvious association of that event with Walker's bathing scene probably explains the lacuna, especially given Hopkins's feelings for Dolben, feelings that White, Martin, and most other contemporary critics acknowledge.

Elaborating on a comment by Lawler's despised Humphry House, Martin asserts that Hopkins's meeting with Dolben 'was, quite simply, the most momentous emotional event of [his] undergraduate years, probably of his entire life'.² More reservedly, White merely notes that, after Dolben's visit in 1865, 'almost every day that summer term [Hopkins] spent some time with [Stuckey] Coles, who knew Dolben well — better than Bridges had known him — from Eton', often committing the sin of 'dangerous talking about Dolben' (from *Facsimiles* I, p.158), such that, in the end, Hopkins seems to have been forbidden by his High Anglican confessor, probably H. P. Liddon, from having any contact with Dolben except by letter.³ This confessor seems to have feared what Hopkins

Bathers, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1867' (p.255). Kestner also notes that 'the canvas was re-exhibited in 1876' (p.257).

¹ See *Journals*, pp.147; 366, note.

² Martin, p.80. 'Hopkins was completely taken with Dolben, who was nearly four years his junior, and his private journal for confessions the following year proves how absorbed he was in imperfectly suppressed erotic thoughts of him' (Robert Bernard Martin, 'Digby Augustus Stewart Dolben', *DNB*). A portrait of Dolben appears in my 'Conclusion'.

³ White, *Hopkins*, pp.114-15. Sobolev suggests that 'in the aftermath of their publication [Martin's and White's biographies, 1991 and 1992], Hopkins critics divided into two groups: to the first group belong those critics who think that Martin plays Hopkins's alleged homosexuality up; to the second, those who think that White plays it down'

would later admit to Bridges: ‘No one can admire beauty of the body more than I do. [...] But this kind of beauty is dangerous’ (22 October 1879, *Letters I*, p.95).

Accompanying its Walkeresque revelry in naked bathers and the ‘beauty of the body’, Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ does indeed harbour a sense of danger, a danger that permeates the poem and is all the more ominous because of its subtlety. Like an unnoticed *memento mori*, the leaves above the epithalamic pool ‘hang as still as hawk or hawkmoth’, the first recognisable as Hopkins’s elegant-yet-deadly ‘Windhover’ suspended above its prey, the second, a more common harbinger of death¹ — both motionless, both waiting. They are ‘dealt so’, like the fated tarot of Hopkins’s ‘Spelt from Sibyl’s Leaves’; or ‘painted on the air’, like the doom disclosed by the finger of God that only Daniel could read. Threateningly, these symbols of menace overhang a pool in which a coffer (‘coffin’) is partially submerged, a coffer filled continually by a window of variegated water, a window described as a ‘heavenfallen freshness’, recalling:

Angels fall, they are towers, from heaven — a story
Of just, majestic, and giant groans.
But man — we, scaffold of score brittle bones;
[...]

whose breath is our *memento mori* —
(‘[The Shepherd’s Brow]’, lines 3-7)

These menacing details bespeak the fatality of the grave rather than the pleasures of the flesh — hence, they constitute an embedded *memento mori* that seems to taint the celebratory joy resounding throughout the poem. It is this hidden fatality that aligns the ‘Epithalamion’ with the ‘Dark Sonnets’, as well as situates the absence of Dolben in relation to Hopkins’s perpetual ‘sadness’.

(p.116). See also Alison G. Sulloway, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1972); Paddy Kitchen, *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: H. Hamilton, 1978), pp.62-76. For Dolben’s closeness to Coles, who often served as his confidant/confessor, see *Dolben* 1915, p.xxv.

¹ *Chambers’s Encyclopædia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People*, 10 vols (London: W. and R. Chambers, 1860-68), V, p.270: ‘The name Hawk-moth appears to be derived from the hovering motions of these insects, resembling those of hawks looking for prey’. Given the context, Hopkins is probably invoking the ‘death’s head hawkmoth’ (*acherontia atropos*), a common English variety: ‘The death’s head hawkmoth is distinguished by a remarkable spot on its thorax, bearing a slight resemblance to a skull. From this circumstance, and that of its uttering a sharp sound when handled, it has been considered, by the vulgar, as an animal of ill omen, and as a messenger of fate’ — *The Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, conducted by David Brewster, 18 vols (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1830), IX, p.131. Nearly the same description appears in: *The London Encyclopædia, or, Universal Dictionary of Science, Art, Literature, and Practical Mechanics*, ed. by Thomas Curtis, 22 vols (London: Thomas Tegg, 1839), VIII, p.473; Robert Patterson, *The Natural History of the Insects Mentioned in Shakespeare’s Plays* (London: A. K. Newman, 1841), pp.162-63; *Chambers’s Encyclopædia*, III, p.449.

Given this reading, the pool with its coffer, taken as a whole, becomes a skilfully executed, symbolic representation of Dolben's drowning place in the River Welland, near Luffenham, coupled with the altar of Finedon Chapel, below which is the family vault where, at that time, Dolben was interred.¹ 'Some day I hope to see Finedon and the place where he was drowned too', wrote Hopkins to Bridges amidst their grief. 'Can you tell me where he was buried? — at Finedon, was it not?' (30 August 1867, *Letters* I, p.17). If this epithalamic coffer does indeed represent the combined drowning and burial places of Dolben, the places Hopkins so hoped to see, even if only in his imagination, then White's dismissal of such imagery as 'landscape descriptions [that] have no force of plot behind them' seems more than a grand misreading or an avoidance of the eroticism that infuses the poem: it throws into doubt more than just his and others' commentaries on this single 'pitiable fragment' (to borrow a phrase from Stephen Jay Gould). To maintain such a perspective is to miss that, for Hopkins, the world is charged with a sadness, with 'cries countless, cries like dead letters sent / To dearest him that lives alas! away' ('[I Wake and Feel]', lines 7-8).

To make a claim such as White's is to admit that one has never been led through this wooded cathedral, or perhaps any of Hopkins's other poetic structures, by the hand of a Gerard Manley Hopkins who was inspired so curiously as a priest by calling, poet by inspiration, paederast by desire. Humphries claims that 'we can't make the purely carefree poem and the repressive poem cohere. We can find one, then the other, in turn; but each reading blocks out the other'.² Such may not be the case: the carefree and the repressive, the loving and the dangerous, the landscape descriptions and the forceful plot — these all find their coherent meeting place 'at a spot where the stream widens into a small pool', that place where God and Dolben met for their watery communion, their consummation embrace, their merging through submerging, their marriage through Death.

'I began an Epithalamion on my brother's wedding', Hopkins wrote to Bridges on 25 May 1888. 'It had some bright lines, but I could not get it done' (*Letters* I, p.277). This statement disguises the fact that Hopkins had begun an epithalamion to mark the joyous (perhaps 'buffoonery') occasion, on 12 April 1888, of his brother Everard's marriage to Amy Caroline Sichel³ — but that the resulting poem, by whatever poetic path, had led instead to 'a spot where the stream widens into a small pool', to a voyeuristic celebration of his own favoured love, complete with a narrator and his hearer, naked boys bathing, and a reluctant stranger who joins in, but at a distance. As Sobolev stresses:

¹ His body was later removed and reburied nearby, to make room for another Dolben.

² Humphries, p.352.

³ Curiously, Hopkins began writing the 'Epithalamion' for his brother Everard's wedding, a wedding held in April 1888, the same month that d'Arch Smith considers as the birth-month of the Uranian movement proper: 'The date of the commencement of the Uranian movement [...] may accurately be placed at 1 April 1888 when the poem "Hyacinthus", appeared in the *Artist*' (p.24).

It indeed celebrates sexual relationship, as an epithalamion should do; yet the relationship it celebrates is not the sacred link of marriage but rather the intoxication of homoerotic desire: ecstatic, transient, and deeply sinful. [...] In other words, Hopkins wrote a poem for himself, rather than for his brother.¹

However joyful this scene of paederastic and homoerotic ‘froliclavish’ may appear, Hopkins’s poem is nonetheless tinged with a sadness and a danger, the import and importance of which becomes clear only when it is considered as, partially, a loving remembrance of Digby Dolben, that young poet who had imagined death as a nuptial embrace, that young poet who was later buried in his family’s vault beneath the high altar of St Mary the Virgin’s Church, Finedon, an altar certainly the destination of many a bride and bridegroom.²

Here in the ‘Epithalamion’ is indeed imagery like that which Hopkins uses to describe his own expectation of the physical appearance of Bridges’s bride Monica: ‘as fancy painted [...] very faintly, in watered sepia’ (1 June 1886, *Letters* I, p.225). More than a rustic spot where boys from Stonyhurst College bathe, more than a pool aflow with masturbatory connotations, more than a space suitable for paederastic expression and phallic imagery — the bushybower of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ is the symbolic and nostalgic spot ‘where the stream widens into a small pool’, the place where his beloved Dolben drowned, ending the one chance Hopkins seems to have had for meeting, and perhaps in some way actualising romantic love in his lifetime. But, after that?

I to him turn with tears
Who to wedlock, his wonder wedlock,
Deals triumph and immortal years. (‘At the Wedding March’, lines 10-12)

The ‘Epithalamion’ is Hopkins’s ‘fairyland’ watered by ‘cries countless’; his ‘watered sepia’ become ‘fancy painted’; his sadness become beauty; his St Winefred’s blood become a well. It is Hopkins’s ‘song of the wedding chamber’, but for ‘dearest him that lives alas! away’. But ultimately, it is one of those ‘beautiful dripping fragments’ (to use Whitman’s wording)³, a fragment not so much in itself as in the current understanding of it. Waiting ‘beautiful’ and ‘dripping’, like one of those ‘boys from the town / Bathing’, this finished

¹ Sobolev, p.132.

² I am grateful to Fr John Humphries, Vicar of St Mary the Virgin’s Church, Finedon, Northamptonshire, for supplying me with information and photographs of the Dolben vault, which is on the east end of the church. He writes: ‘The Dolben vault is not accessible from inside the church, but it is directly beneath the high altar. I believe that two bodies were removed from the vault at some time and reburied in the churchyard to make room for another Dolben. I also believe that the church was altered at some time, a widow on the south side and a window on the north side being walled up in order to take the weight of the sanctuary when the vault was carved out’ (From my correspondence with Fr Humphries, 1-2 February 2004).

³ Whitman, ‘Spontaneous Me’, line 7, from the cluster *Children of Adam*.

masterpiece impatiently awaits its next dive into the pool of literary criticism, its next ‘diver’s dip, / Clutched hands through claspèd knees’. This close reading has, at the very least, given Hopkins’s poem one more ‘turn and turn about’ — and, as a lively swimmer, it will certainly demand many more.



Dolben Family Vault
St Mary the Virgin's Church
Finedon, Northamptonshire, UK



Homer and His Guide

William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905)

Oil on canvas, 1874

Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

— Chapter Four —

**‘A Sort of Chivalrous Conscience’:
Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* and Paederastic Pedagogy**

I will not sing my little puny songs.

[...]

Therefore in passiveness I will lie still,
And let the multitudinous music of the Greek
Pass into me, till I am musical.
(Digby Mackworth Dolben, ‘After Reading Aeschylus’)¹

Puzzled by the degree of intimacy between ‘a shy, reticent scholar-artist’ and ‘a self-silenced, ascetic priest-poet’, David Anthony Downes speculates: ‘It has been frequently said that Gerard Hopkins and Walter Pater were friends. The statement is a true one, though exactly what it means, perhaps, will never be known’.² Apprehensive that such speculations might lead to elaboration on their erotic sensibilities, Linda Dowling cautions that, ‘given the fragmentary biographical materials we possess about both Hopkins and Pater, any assertion about the “homoerotic” nature of their experience or imagination may seem at best recklessly premature and at worst damnably presumptuous’.³ However, since in Victorian England ‘homosexual behaviour became subject to increased legal penalties, notably by the Labouchère Amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which extended the law to cover all male homosexual acts, whether committed in public or private’,⁴ expecting ‘verifiable data’ concerning their unconventional desires is the ultimate scholarly presumption.

By leaving behind no journal or diary, no authorised (auto)biography, and only a few trite letters, Pater fostered that absence of directly biographical

¹ *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, ed. by Robert Bridges, 1st edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), p.23. In the 2nd edn (1915), this appears on p.26.

² David Anthony Downes, *Victorian Portraits: Hopkins and Pater* (New York: Bookman, 1965), pp.31; 13.

³ Linda Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s Pied Beauty and the Construction of a “Homosexual” Code’, *Victorian Newsletter*, 75 (1989), pp.1-8 (p.1). The publication date of Dowling’s article suggests that she may not yet have had access to the corrective insights provided by the Hopkins *Facsimile* volumes, which may explain her subsequent change in tone.

⁴ David Hilliard, ‘Unenglish and Unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality’, *Victorian Studies*, 25.2 (1982), pp.181-210 (pp.182-83).

evidence that made him ‘arguably the most private Victorian’,¹ or as Denis Donoghue humorously explains:

Reciting Pater’s life, we have to look for him in the cloud of his occasional writings. He is rarely visible anywhere else. There are weeks or even months in which he seems to have taken literally his favorite motif of evanescence and drifted away. We assume that he is still alive, but the evidence for his breathing is meager.²

Although, to some extent, manuscripts relevant to such an assessment of Hopkins were purged after his death — now providing what is often only fragmentary evidence — Hopkins, unlike Pater, did leave behind plentiful and divergent biographical materials in journals, letters, sermons, confession notes, and poems, among other things. Nevertheless, Pater’s writings such as *The Renaissance* and *Marius the Epicurean* do opaquely disclose his life and sensations, even if ‘the evidence for his breathing is meager’.

At the time that Hopkins, an Oxford undergraduate, began coaching with Pater in preparation for his finals in *Literae Humaniores* (or Greats), Pater was an obscure Fellow in Classics at Brasenose College, Oxford, a Fellow busily preparing a series of lectures on the history of philosophy and ‘erecting a shell around himself, deliberately isolating himself from old friends’.³ As an intuitive undergraduate, Hopkins must have ascertained, to some degree, what lurked behind his academic coach’s elaborate privacy, a privacy reminiscent of that which surrounds Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean*, whose demeanour drives mere acquaintances to inquire: ‘Why this reserve? — they asked, concerning the orderly, self-possessed youth, whose speech and carriage seemed so carefully measured’ (I, p.127). Donoghue explains this measured reserve as, ‘[Pater] represents, however mildly, the perfection of standing aside’⁴ — a ‘standing

¹ Jude V. Nixon, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and His Contemporaries: Liddon, Newman, Darwin, and Pater* (New York: Garland, 1994), p.168. Downes recounts: ‘As Edmund Gosse noted, Pater kept no diary, wrote few letters, preserved no records of his friends and experiences. Hopkins was quite the opposite’ (*Portraits*, pp.30-31). In ‘The “Outing” of Walter Pater’, *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 48.4 (1994), pp.480-506, William F. Shuter notes that ‘until quite recently Pater’s sexual history has remained a blank. Pater himself left no record of a sexual relationship of any sort, and Edmund Gosse described him to Benson as “the most secluded of men”’ (p.481).

² Denis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995), p.23.

³ Alison G. Sulloway, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p.44. Sulloway labels him ‘the recluse of Brasenose’.

⁴ Donoghue, p.8. Donoghue further explains that ‘Pater’s position is consistent with his antinomianism: the artist is neither for nor against the law, he stands aside from it’ (p.132). In ‘“Culture and Corruption”: Paterian Self-Development versus Gothic Degeneration in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*’, *Papers on Language and Literature*, 39.4 (2003), pp.339-64, Nils Clausson observes that ‘the self-development novel does not generically require that its protagonist lead a double life: Pater’s heroes

aside' that is aptly illustrated by his later responses to public and pulpit attacks on his *Renaissance*:

Instead of defending himself, Pater internalized his subversive values and retained them in the form of difference. Provided he did not express them in a public or tendentious form, he was reasonably safe, even though he continued to be associated with irregularity of sentiment and desire. So he retained, as private property, feelings that could not be avowed.¹

Since he shared Pater's 'irregularity of sentiment and desire', Hopkins must have perceived and partially appreciated the reasons and the reasoning behind his Greats coach's reserve, for he too would come to cultivate much the same, remaining ever, in diverse ways, Pater's most constant of students.

Downes's claim that 'exactly what it means [that Hopkins and Pater were friends], perhaps, will never be known' is bastioned by various biographical lacunae, with scholars even disagreeing as to the circumstances under which they initially met. In *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life*, Robert Bernard Martin suggests that 'Hopkins had been very much aware of Pater for at least two years, having heard from Samuel Brooke about the essay that he had read to the Old Mortality Society in 1864, advocating beauty as the standard by which to judge morality'.² Equally credible is Downes's suggestion³ that Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek, introduced Hopkins to Pater, to whom he would later send Hopkins for Greats coaching. Jowett had himself coached Pater between 1860 and 1862, and had 'thought [so] highly of Pater as an undergraduate'⁴ that he had been willing to provide Pater private tuition in Greek.⁵ However, this admiration for Pater — at least for Pater's later role as a don — would dissipate in the coming decades.

Later, as Master of Balliol College and 'an agent of revolutionary change' by infusing Oxford with Platonism and Platonic tutorials (all that 'Jowetry', in Oxford slang),⁶ Jowett became increasingly aware that, for Pater,

— Marius and Gaston — do not. But the homosexual theme of Wilde's novel does require that Dorian live a double life' (p.349).

¹ Donoghue, p.69.

² Robert Bernard Martin, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life* (New York: Putnam, 1991), p.131. See also Donoghue, pp.29-30.

³ Downes, *Portraits*, p.22.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Jowett was 'so struck with [Pater's] power that he very generously offered to coach him for nothing' — as related in Edmund Gosse, *Critical Kit-Kats* (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1896), p.248. In *Walter Pater* (London: Macmillan, 1906), Arthur C. Benson relates instead that Jowett 'offered to look over the Greek compositions and essays of any members of his class who cared to submit them to him, and Pater took advantage, like many other men, of the offer' (p.9).

⁶ Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.64.

pedagogic moments such as preparing undergraduates for Greats often abounded with paederastic motive, perhaps even motion. To Jowett's disdain, 'Pater persisted in trying to reclaim for the Platonic canon a politics of desire which the more sexually orthodox Jowett — as translator-agent — was trying to silence and erase', a disingenuousness Pater attempted to rectify with 'readings [that] recoded the Platonic texts and their cultural complements (sculpture, drama, myth) as the sites of, and inspiration for, a valorized homoerotic culture'.¹ As a result of this persistence on Pater's part, Jowett came to label him a 'demoralizing moralizer',² though this label was, according to J. A. Symonds, equally applicable to Jowett, as Linda Dowling notes:

¹ Lesley Higgins, 'Jowett and Pater: Trafficking in Platonic Wares', *Victorian Studies*, 37.1 (1993), pp.43-72 (p.45). Jowett's linguistic discretions are explained by Higgins: 'Jowett was too much of a scholar to omit from the *Phaedrus*, the *Symposium*, or any other text, passages which describe male-male relations. [...] Jowett depended on the superficial gender "neutrality" of English — and innocuous, sentimentalized words such as "lover" and "beloved" — to mute the frank Greek discourse, to empty out all significance of male-male erotic motives, consequences, and activities' (p.48).

Like Pater, Jowett may have seen no advantage in unifying his public roles and his private self, opting instead for a division between the two, especially in regard to the erotic views of the ancients he studied and of his own. On one hand, Jowett chose to diminish the eroticism of Plato; on the other, he had private friendships with those who attempted to accentuate Grecian erotics, most notably Pater and Symonds. In 'The Romance of Boys Bathing: Poetic Precedents and Respondents to the Paintings of Henry Scott Tuke', in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, ed. by Richard Dellamora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp.253-77, Julia F. Saville notes that, 'when Symonds died in April 1893, Jowett wrote his epitaph, concluding it with the words "Farewell, my dearest friend. No one in his heart sustained his friends more than you did, nor was more benevolent to the simple and unlearned"' (pp.261-62). Jowett seems to have been far more accepting of his friends' (in)discretions than most critics give him credit for, and the breach with Pater (if there really was such a breach) probably arose from a fear of Pater's lack of discretion (or at least lack of self-cover), rather than from any sense of revulsion towards, or moral objection to a relationship between Pater and Hardinge. It certainly did not arise from a lack of personal feeling or intellectual appreciation for Pater. Pater occasionally jettisoned his own friends under similar circumstances: his breach with Wilde, in like fashion, is considered in 'Chapter Five'.

² As quoted in Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.103. For Pater as a sort of 'Socrates' to his circle, consider the following comments by Alexander Michaelson [Marc-André Raffalovich], in his 'Walter Pater: In Memoriam', *Blackfriars*, 9 (1928), pp.469-70:

There would have been something irresistible about Pater at the height of his power had he cared to exert his personal influence. Those unacquainted with his writings, or prejudiced by Mallock's *New Republic*, could describe him as 'a black, white, ingratiatory vampire'. Of course we who knew and loved him saw and understood the feelings of that delightful youth [Hardinge] (now a distinguished novelist) when first face to face with that Minotaur. [...] Few men, I suppose, have been kinder and more affectionate to young men *as they were*; it is so much easier to be kind and affectionate to the men we imagine.

As Symonds establishes long-term and fully sexual relationships with working-class men outside of England in the 1880s, he begins to regard the nongenital or nonphysical eroticism of the Platonic doctrine of eros with a deepening mistrust. [...] With this realization, Symonds comes to a bitter new assessment of his old teacher Jowett, as though Jowett's Socratic 'corruption' had somehow consisted in tempting suggestible young men down the delusive path to spiritual procreancy rather than fleshly excess.¹



The paederastic potential of such a pedagogy — the spiritual path of 'Jowetry' extended to a literal 'tempting [of] suggestible young men' — is revealed through the elusive Pater-Hardinge scandal, though Dowling emphasises that 'only the most fugitive rumors of this long-suppressed and still shadowy episode have survived until now to suggest that Pater may have enacted as well as

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.128; see pp.128-30 for the development of Symonds's argument. For the primary source, see Symonds's comments on the claim that 'Greek love' is 'mainly a figure of speech' — Letter to Benjamin Jowett, 1 February 1889, in Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, eds, *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, 3 vols (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1967-69), III, pp.345-47. My only reservation about Dowling's comments is her use of the broad term 'working-class men outside of England', which seems to suggest that Symonds's attractions were entirely to 'men'. Though they usually were (in practice), they were not always so, especially when Symonds was dealing with textual fantasy or purchasing visual fantasies from the photographic studio of Wilhelm von Gloeden. Notice also that Symonds's beloved Augusto Zanon, a Venetian porter, had the youthful features sought by the paederastic Uranians (see above). In *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), Timothy d'Arch Smith primarily agrees with Dowling's claim (see p.12).

inculcated the Socratic eros'.¹ Even though the scandalous evidence is supplied second-hand, Dowling, Richard Dellamora, and others have tended to assert that Jowett, motivated in 1874 by various erotic disclosures involving Pater, moved to counter permanently his protégé's attempts at further university advancement, though it seems unlikely that he did so out of spite or a desire to punish: it was Jowett's nature to be paternalistic. In this case, perhaps insightfully, he seems to have decided that a low profile would best suit his prodigal, unrepentant intellectual-son, especially while on campus. As for the specifics of this evolving 'situation', current critical assumption encapsulates into the following: 'Though [Pater] was aware that he would be strongly opposed, he knew that he merited the position [of Junior Proctor]. Nonetheless, opposition took an unexpected turn when Benjamin Jowett [...] black-mailed Pater by threatening to disclose some incriminating letters',² letters that revealed that Pater had 'become sexually involved with a Balliol undergraduate',³ a youth named William Money Hardinge (1854-1916), 'a nineteen-year-old student who had a tendency, before faced with consequences, to advertise his homosexuality'.⁴ Hardinge's homoeroticism was

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.101.

² Richard Dellamora, 'An Essay in Sexual Liberation, Victorian Style: Walter Pater's "Two Early French Stories"', in *Literary Visions of Homosexuality*, ed. by Stuart Kellogg (New York: Haworth, 1983), pp.139-50 (p.148). To Benson, Gosse explained the impact of this on Pater: 'Pater's whole nature changed under the strain, after the dreadful interview with Jowett. He became old, crushed, despairing, and this dreadful weight lasted for years; it was years before he realized that Jowett would not use them' — as quoted in R. M. Seiler, ed., *Walter Pater: A Life Remembered* (Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 1987), p.258.

³ Martin, p.300. Pater's friend J. A. Symonds, whose acquaintance he had made in 1860, found himself in much the same situation:

In November 1862 one of Symonds's resentful friends, G. H. Shorting, circulated to six Fellows of Magdalen [College, Oxford,] certain love-poems and passages of love-letters from Symonds. The implication was that Symonds intended corrupting the choristers of Magdalen. An inquiry was held in the college. On December 28 Symonds was acquitted, but the episode put him under such strain that his health deteriorated. He resigned his fellowship at Magdalen and moved to London. (Donoghue, pp.39-40)

⁴ Billie Andrew Inman, 'Estrangement and Connection: Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett, and William M. Hardinge', in *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp.1-20 (p.13). See also Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.100-03, 106-09, and 114, note; Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Knopf, 1988), pp.60-61. Although most critics have accepted Inman's interpretation of the evidence that she presents, Shuter suggests another possible interpretation, one in which Pater was merely the verbal plaything of Hardinge, an undergraduate who was attempting to be provocative by claiming that he was having a homoerotic relationship with someone, with the scandalous Pater an obvious victim to fill this suggestive, fantasy role:

I question only that the conclusions have in fact been demonstrated by the evidence and arguments thus far advanced. That we have the evidence to

so ‘advertised’ that he was nicknamed ‘the Balliol Bugger’, a nickname that Donoghue explains: ‘A gifted poet, winner of the Newdigate [Poetry] Prize in 1876, [Hardinge] was mainly known for his sexual activities’.¹ A fellow student would later describe him as ‘[William Hurrell] Mallock’s friend, the strange, hectic, talented Hardinge — musical, poetical, intensely flippant and flippantly “intense”’; and Marc-André Raffalovich, as ‘as entertaining and as tiresome, as gay and as indiscreet, as dangerous and as instructive a friend as I have ever known’.²

Some of the details of this evolving ‘situation’, a situation that nearly became a significant scandal, are provided by a twenty-six-page letter, dated 1 March 1874, from Alfred Milner (1854-1925; *later* 1st Viscount Milner) to Philip Lyttelton Gell (1852-1926), both of whom were close, undergraduate friends of Hardinge:

The very fact, that Hardinge had not yet irretrievably committed himself with Pater was all the more reason why the evil should be prevented. It seems more strongly absurd to say, that one should not interfere till the mischief was done. And it is vain to pretend that there was not evidence of the strongest character against Hardinge. When a man confesses to lying in another man’s arms kissing him & *having been found doing it*, as there is the strongest evidence to prove, or when letters pass between them in wh. they address one another as ‘darling’ & sign themselves ‘yours lovingly’, & such a letter *I* have seen, when verses are written from one man to another too vile to blot this paper, what hope can you have, that a criminal act, if not committed already, may not be committed any day?³

evaluate at all we owe of course to the thorough and indefatigable research of Billie Inman, whose paper may well contain all we are ever likely to learn about this episode in Pater’s life. It is a measure of my debt to Inman’s work that even when I question her reading of the evidence I do so on the basis of data she has gathered. (‘Outing’, p.482)

¹ Donoghue, pp.58; 59. ‘I still differ as to Hardinge’s supposed innocuousness (to coin a word). His reputation as the “Balliol B . . . r” is injuring the College as a whole, though I think with you, that it did not harm individuals’ (Milner’s letter to Gell, 3 March 1874, as quoted in Inman, ‘Estrangement’, pp.8-9). ‘It has been Hardinge’s fate to be remembered in the twenty-first century, not as a novelist, but as a Balliol student who, because he had written some sonnets celebrating same-sex love and had exchanged love letters with Walter Pater, was rusticated in February 1874 for a term of nine months’ — Billie Inman, ‘William Money Hardinge’, in *The Literary Encyclopedia* <<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5855>> [last accessed 23 March 2006].

² Walter Sydney Sichel, *The Sands of Time: Recollections and Reflections* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), p.119; Alexander Michaelson [Marc-André Raffalovich], ‘Giles and Miles and Isabeau’, *Blackfriars*, 9 (January 1928), pp.26-27 (p.26).

³ As quoted in Inman, ‘Estrangement’, pp.7-8 (the emphasis is Milner’s). Poignantly, this series of letters about the Pater-Hardinge ‘affair’ exchanged by Milner and Gell dates to the same week as the arrest — on 3 March 1874 — of Pater’s close friend Simeon Solomon for a ‘sodomitical’ offence in a public urinal in Paris. Solomon’s arrest

Worries about those kisses, fondlings, verses, and epistolary addresses reached Richard Lewis Nettleship (1846-92), a Fellow of Balliol; and, subsequently, Jowett himself, then Master of the College. Dowling summarises one version of how those letters reached Jowett, as recorded by Arthur C. Benson, one of Pater's earliest biographers:

One possible reconstruction: [Hardinge's friend] Mallock took the incriminating letters to Jowett in order to confront and embarrass him with inescapable proof of the literally demoralizing effects of liberal teaching at Oxford, for which Jowett, who had in the past recommended Pater to Balliol pupils as a private coach in philosophy, might be held responsible.¹

By whatever hand or tongue the contents of those eroticised letters reached him, Jowett immediately endeavoured to contain the scandal, as well as to prevent its repetition: 'Report of the nature of the letters would have been enough for Jowett; he would have felt justified, even without seeing them, in sending Hardinge down [from Oxford] for a few months till the dust settled, and in having a sharp interview with Pater'.² Fortunately for both Pater and Hardinge, only the 'tamer' letters were physically or conversationally presented as evidence, since the more 'culpable' letters had been destroyed and remained unmentioned, as Milner relates to Gell:

It's a mercy, that neither Jowett nor Nettleship know the worst, that [Arnold] Toynbee made Hardinge destroy his most culpable letters, I mean such as could be adduced against him in a court of law, & that for the future we all mean to keep absolute silence to the outside world & speak as little as possible among ourselves upon a subject, wh. has become [...] painful to most of us.³

Despite the disclosures and the averted scandal, Donoghue stresses that 'there is no evidence that Jowett used the letters — or even talk of them — to warn Pater against putting himself forward for any university appointments. On the other hand, a word from Jowett would have been enough to set Oxford against Pater, whose reputation was already dubious'.⁴ Although lacunae abound, the absence of concrete details is telling in itself, suggesting that Jowett had himself fostered that absence, exercising a masterful tact that served to extricate Pater from at least *this* dangerous predicament. As Billie Inman asserts: 'It was not in official

undoubtedly served as a forceful reminder to Pater of the real dangers associated with Milner's question, 'What hope can you have, that a criminal act, if not committed already, may not be committed any day?'

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.109-10, note. To Benson, Gosse confided that 'it was W. H. Mallock who took the terrible letters to Jowett, which gave Jowett such power' — as quoted in Seiler, *A Life*, p.258.

² Donoghue, p.61.

³ Milner's letter to Gell, March 1874, as quoted in Inman, 'Estrangement', p.8.

⁴ Donoghue, pp.61-62.

Oxford's nature to "ruin a man's life" over manifestations of "unnatural" tendencies, but to remove temptation, keep publicly silent, and speak as little as possible about it among themselves'.¹ This is what Jowett seems to have done. Beyond maintaining an 'official Oxford' stance, Jowett had personal reasons for being gracious, if not sympathetic, towards Pater and his predicament.



Portrait of Professor Jowett
 Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-79)
 Albumen silver photograph, 1864
 Wilson Centre for Photography, London, UK

Despite the propriety of his public and his collegiate personae, Benjamin Jowett was, it must be remembered, the pre-eminent translator and popularizer of Plato of his day, and understood (interestedly or not) those paederastic desires that had impregnated ancient Greek life and philosophical dialogues, desires flowing variously through his own translations of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, as well as through the lives of his Oxford contemporaries, especially his protégés Pater and Symonds. For this reason, paternalistic Jowett may merely have hinted to Pater that he had better seek Falstaff's 'table of green fields'²

¹ Inman, 'Estrangement', p.14.

² This passage is from William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, ed. with intro. by Andrew Gurr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) (II, iii, line 14), though the line is emended in the Cambridge edition to 'A babbled of green fields' (Gurr following the lead of Louis Theobald, ed.). For an elucidation of various paederastic elements in the relationship between John Falstaff and Prince Hal, see Heather Findlay, 'Renaissance Pederasty and Pedagogy: The "Case" of Shakespeare's Falstaff', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 3.1 (1989), pp.229-38. That Falstaff, a paederastic 'inspirer', had a final dream of 'A table of green fields' — or else 'A fable of green fields', 'A talked of green fields' ('A' meaning 'he'), or 'A babbled of green fields' — makes me question Gerald Monsman's following comment in 'The Platonic Eros of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde:

somewhere at a distance from Oxford undergraduates, particularly those who, like Hardinge, were from Jowett's own Balliol College. Recognising the refined tastes of this prodigal, a prodigal whom he had himself refined, Jowett would have anticipated, as well as appreciated that Pater's attractions had an intellectual or artistic component unlikely to be satisfied at Brasenose College, as Higgins explains: 'Quite frankly, [Pater's] college was an intellectual backwater. Balliol had Jowett, Lincoln had Mark Pattison, Christ Church had Henry Liddell — and Brasenose had its own beer'.¹ Put vividly, 'its lone literary distinction was that every Shrove Tuesday a new set of "Ale verses" was recited at the college's pancake supper party'.² Nevertheless, even if Jowett's hint, request, or warning had simply been for Pater to go afield or to frolic away from Oxford, Pater seems not to have obliged: 'In his private life Pater was not entirely circumspect. Even after the episode with Hardinge, he continued to cultivate good-looking young men, especially undergraduates of an athletic disposition'.³ However, Pater also had London interests, interests that could provide as much drama, if not as much intellectual stimulation, as Raffalovich relates: 'I am pleased to remember that [Pater] several times met Harry Eversfield, so successful as the boy in Pinero's play'.⁴

Although the Pater-Hardinge scandal occurred in the decade following Hopkins's Greats coaching in 1866, Dellamora suggests that even that coaching

"Love's Reflected Image" in the 1890s', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 45.1 (2002), pp.26-45:

Although Pater's Greek citation is a species of creative misquotation, his 'effluence of beauty' wording appears substantially in this form twice in the *Phaedrus*, initially at 251b as referenced here in *Marius*. Whereas Plato's effluence of beauty depicts Greek love — much to the discomfort of such Victorian editors as W. H. Thompson and Benjamin Jowett — Pater virtually purges the phrase of its original erotic overtones. Surely even the most programmatic reading could not find sexual innuendo in Pater's 'green fields and children's faces'. (P.32)

Despite its innocuous appearance, I would suggest instead that Pater is making a rather prurient, paederastic suggestion, an allusion to Falstaff's dying dream of Arcadia, a dream that, in Falstaff's case, would certainly have been bountiful in sexual innuendo. As evidence that this phrase still has currency in this sense, note that one of Guy Davenport's collections of paederastically-tinged short stories is titled *A Table of Green Fields: Ten Stories* (New York: New Directions, 1993).

¹ Lesley Higgins, 'Essaying "W. H. Pater Esq."': New Perspectives on the Tutor/Student Relationship Between Pater and Hopkins', in *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: ELT Press, University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp.77-94 (p.80).

² *Ibid.*, p.238, note 13.

³ Donoghue, p.69. '[Pater's] desire for young men was strong, otherwise he would not have taken such risks in consorting with them, but between himself and people of his own generation he generally kept his distance or added to it' (*Ibid.*, p.54).

⁴ As quoted in *ibid.*, p.69.

was a ‘pedagogic moment [that] permitted them to share a sense of masculine desire informing one’s perception of organic existence’,¹ a pedagogic moment in which ‘Hopkins probably learned as much from his tutor’s asides and from the atmosphere of aestheticism as he did from formal instruction’.² Again lacunae abound, such that only a single, fragmentary sentence remains to sketch this atmosphere of aestheticism so pregnant with homoerotic and paederastic potential, Hopkins’s journal entry for 17 June 1868: ‘To lunch with Pater, then to Mr. Solomon’s studio and the Academy’ (*Journals*, p.167).



Simeon Solomon

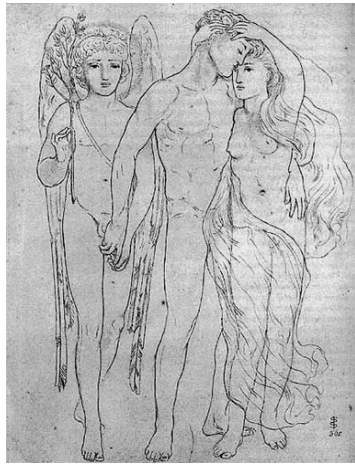
Frederick Hollyer (1837-1933)
Platinum photographic print, ca. 1866
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

A striking change of tone becomes evident when this journal entry is placed alongside one from two years prior: ‘Coaching with W. H. Pater this term. Walked with him on Monday evening last, April 30. Fine evening bitterly cold. “Bleak-faced Neology in cap and gown”: no cap and gown but very bleak. Same evening Hexameron met here’ (2 May 1866, *Journals*, p.133). The Hexameron, meeting in Hopkins’s rooms on the same evening as his walk with Pater, was an essay society of which Hopkins was a founding member, a High Anglican society partially created to combat a growing agnosticism on campus, an agnosticism symbolised by ‘one Paper which obtained great notoriety at the beginning of this Term [because it] was directed against the immortality of the soul. It was written by a junior Fellow of a College’ (Henry Parry Liddon’s letter to the Bishop of Salisbury, 17 March 1864, as quoted in *Journals*, p.353, note).

¹ Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p.49.

² Martin, pp.132-33.

That ‘junior Fellow of a College’ was none other than Pater; and the paper, his ‘Fichte’s Ideal Student’, delivered on 20 February 1864 to the Old Mortality Society, a society that Donoghue describes as ‘a web of hypothetically erotic relations which may or may not come to anything but in the meantime desultorily occupy the same space’ — and Dowling, as ‘the unique moment of Oxford masculine comradeship, a window or halcyon interval of particularly intense male homosociality’.¹ Tellingly, despite his earlier aversion to Pater’s ‘bleak-faced Neology’ and his own membership in the Hexameron Society founded to combat that Neology (or Rationalism at variance with the received interpretation of Scripture), Hopkins seems to have attended at least one such meeting — on Thursday, 31 May 1866 — probably invited by Pater to hear him deliver a paper, about which Hopkins records: ‘Pater talking two hours against Xtianity’ (*Journals*, p.138).²



The Bride, the Bridegroom and Sad Love

Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)
Pencil and ink on paper, 1865
Victoria and Albert Museum
London, UK



Bacchus

Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)
Oil on wood, 1867
Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery
Birmingham, UK

¹ Donoghue, p.156; Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.85. See also Gerald Monsman, ‘Old Mortality at Oxford’, *Studies in Philology*, 67 (1970), pp.359-89; Gerald Monsman, *Oxford University’s Old Mortality Society: A Study in Victorian Romanticism* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1998).

² In correspondence with me on 20 August 2004, Gerald C. Monsman, Professor of English at the University of Arizona and author of the authoritative book on the subject, *Oxford University’s Old Mortality Society*, responded to my suggestion that Hopkins may have heard Pater read a paper to a group other than the Old Mortality — since the Old Mortals, who ‘did not last after 1866, although reunions continued to be held for another decade’ (*Old Mortality*, p.110), always met on Saturdays. Monsman’s response was, ‘Wow! a fascinating possibility that makes more sense than a tutorial or a conversation’.

In the two years separating those two journal entries, much has changed: Hopkins is now found in London accompanying Pater to lunch, then to the studio of Pater's notorious friend Simeon Solomon at 12 Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy Square, a studio in which he would have seen a number of paintings and drawings tinged with the paederastic, the homoerotic, and the lesbian.¹ Probably still in the company of Pater and Solomon, Hopkins then went to the Royal Academy Exhibition, where he lingered before an oil painting by Frederic Leighton (1830-96; later Lord Leighton), *Jonathan's Token to David*, a painting that Hopkins noted in his journal (*Journals*, p.167), a painting that would have appealed strongly to his sensibilities, as well as to those of Pater and Solomon. Hopkins did not live long enough to see Leighton's further development of this theme, *Hit!* (1893),² of which Joseph A. Kestner writes:

The pedagogic relationship of the older male to the youth, with potentially strong erotic elements, reappeared in Leighton's *Hit!* of 1893, a canvas of a youth teaching a boy to hold a bow and shoot at a target. [...] The erotic nature of Leighton's canvas is confirmed by preparatory drawings for *Hit!*: in two drawings, the young man is nuzzling the youth; in one drawing the nude boy stands beside the seated youth; in the other he stands between his legs, with the outline of the bow all but disappeared, making the sketch highly erotic in the tradition of the *erastês* and the *erômenos*. Attempts to claim that this is father and son, as in the notice from the *Athenæum*, deflect the homoeroticism of the drawings and are refuted by the age of the instructor. The aspect of ephebic training also appears in Leighton's *Jonathan's Token to David*, exhibited in

¹ I am grateful to Roberto C. Ferrari of Florida Atlantic University for securing for me the following detail: 'Simeon Solomon moved to 12 Fitzroy Street in January 1868. I do not have a definite date but know from a letter he wrote to Frederick Leyland that he already lived at this address by the beginning of February 1868' (E-mail from 26 July 2004).

In 'Canons and Causes', *The Hudson Review*, 56.1 (2003), pp.168-74, John Loughery notes that 'Oscar Wilde owned Solomon's *Love among the Schoolboys* [1866]' (pp.171-72), a drawing Hopkins might have seen at Solomon's studio. In *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy* (London: Routledge, 1993), Robert Aldrich notes that 'Alfred Douglas, Oscar Wilde's lover, owned a collection of [Solomon's] drawings, including one called "Love among the Schoolboys"' (p.142). Given Douglas's constant pennilessness, the drawing was certainly a gift from Wilde, who was its owner. The provenance of this drawing is partially explained by Emmanuel Cooper: 'Solomon's drawing *Love Talking to Boys* (private collection), of schoolboys affectionately hugging each other while being lectured by a winged schoolboy angel, hung on the walls of Oscar Wilde's rooms at Oxford. When Lord Alfred Douglas sold Wilde's Solomon drawings after his trial, Wilde reproached him for his heartlessness' — *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.67. This drawing is reproduced in my 'Conclusion'.

² I am grateful to Reena Suleman, Curator of Collections and Research at Leighton House, London, for securing that a preparatory version of Leighton's painting *Hit!* is in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (E-mail from 5 July 2004).

1868, showing Jonathan accompanied by a young lad as he prepares to shoot the arrow warning his beloved friend David that Saul intends to have him slain.¹

Lunching with Pater, visiting Solomon's studio, lingering before Leighton's *Jonathan's Token to David* — such was a typical day for a Uranian disciple of Decadence. Since Hopkins kept such a schedule — even if only as an occasional 'day on the town with the boys' — it is difficult to accept Martin's claim that 'there is no reason to think that Hopkins was in any way involved in the world in which the others moved',² a world that would be shaken, in due course, by Solomon's repeated arrests and convictions for 'sodomitical' adventures in public urinals. If, at the Royal Academy on that June day in 1868, Hopkins had accompanied Solomon to the urinal, there is no record.³ Seriously, the reluctance among scholars such as Martin and Dowling to associate Hopkins directly with the blatant homoeroticism and paederasty of Pater's coterie seems untenable, especially if Hopkins kept the company of the likes of Simeon Solomon and Pater himself.⁴

¹ Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot, Hants, UK: Scholar Press, 1995), p.253. In a more generalised way, Kestner suggests that

For British Victorian paintings of the male nude, a nexus of ideas formed around the tradition of the epehebia and of the *erastêslerômenos* relation, the latter marked by an older man and a youth in the canvas, the former by elements such as sequestration, liminality and nudity. [...] The element of ephebic education, with possible strong homoerotic elements, appears in several representations of the male nude by Frederic Leighton. (P.250)

For a similar comment, see Rosemary Barrow, "'Mad about the Boy": Mythological Models and Victorian Painting', in *Dialogos: Hellenic Studies Review*, vol. 7, ed. by David Ricks and Michael Trapp (London: Frank Cass, 2001), pp.124-42 (p.127). In 'A Man-Made Arcadia Enshrining Male Beauty', *New York Times* (13 August 2000), 'Art/Architecture' section, pp.30-31, Vicki Goldberg notes: 'Von Gloeden's work was a kind of treasure trove for artists. In his own time, he had an influence on F. Holland Day, Frederic Leighton, Alma-Tadema and Maxfield Parish' (p.31).

² Martin, p.178.

³ For a fabulously decadent account of Prince Edward being locked into a bathroom with Solomon's and Pater's friend Oscar Browning, see Theo Aronson, *Prince Eddy and the Homosexual Underworld* (London: Barnes & Noble, 1995), pp.70-73.

⁴ '[Solomon] became part of an informal network of gay men which included Walter Pater, Oscar Browning, George Powell, and Lord Houghton, some of whom were friends and confidants, others patrons and collectors of his work' (Colin Cruise, 'Simeon Solomon', *DNB*). Donoghue suggests that 'Solomon's prose poem *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (1871) owes a great deal to Pater and to theories of symbolism in Pater's vicinity' (p.38). There is a copy of Solomon's *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (London: F. S. Ellis, 1871) at the University of Rochester that bears the following inscription to Edward Burne-Jones: 'With Simeon's affectionate regards to Ned. June 25th 1871'. It should be noted that Solomon was, at one time, a close friend of Burne-Jones, who was a close friend of R. W. Dixon, later a close friend of Hopkins.

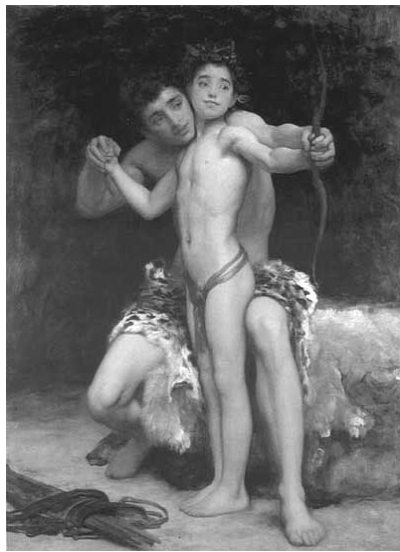


Jonathan's Token to David

Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-96)

Oil on canvas, ca. 1868

Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA



Hit!

Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-96)

Oil on canvas, 1893

Roy Miles Gallery, London, UK

Pater's coterie also included various Oscars, one being Oscar Browning, an intimate friend of Solomon, as well as a Master of Eton dismissed 'for insubordination, according to the official explanation, for pederastic excess, according to the unofficial one' — a paederast who, through 'the influence of powerful friends, [...] was able to secure a new post at King's College, Cambridge'.¹ Or, in the phrasing of the *Dictionary of National Biography*: 'He cultivated intelligent boys (such as Cecil Spring-Rice), to whom he lent books and whom he teased with Socratic provocations. He went abroad every school vacation [...] usually to Italy and often accompanied by an Eton boy: he took, for example, Gerald Balfour to Sicily in 1869'.² Had Hopkins's journal been as detailed as Mark Pattison's in 1878, it might have read something like this:

To Pater's to tea, where Oscar Browning [...] was more like Socrates than ever. He conversed in one corner with 4 feminine looking youths 'paw dandling' there in one fivesome, while the Miss Paters & I sate looking on in another corner — Presently Walter Pater, who, I had been told, was 'upstairs' appeared, attended by 2 more youths of similar appearance.³

Whatever conclusions are drawn from Hopkins's consorting with Pater and his coterie, the assertion that 'Hopkins still kept doubtful company'⁴ seems rather established, even if one only goes as far as Donoghue: 'Hopkins and Pater were divided on religious belief, but their interest in art, aesthetics, and homoerotic sentiment kept a mild friendship going'.⁵

¹ Dowling, 'Ruskin's', pp.7-8. In 'Simeon Solomon and the Biblical Construction of Marginal Identity in Victorian England', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 33.3-4 (1997), pp.97-119, Gayle M. Seymour describes Browning with the following parenthetical: 'Eton don Oscar Browning [was the person] with whom Solomon traveled to Italy in 1869 and 1870 and through whom the artist was able to establish numerous friendships with adolescent boys at Eton' (p.113). However, Seymour is blurring the point by claiming that Solomon had made 'numerous friendships with adolescent boys', since 'friendships' is rather a (trans)muted way of saying 'paederastic relationships' or 'paederastic dalliances'. This more accurate phrasing would partially defeat her claim in the sentence that followed: 'Clearly, Solomon was defining himself as homosexual and presenting himself as such, at least when he was safely in the company of other homosexuals' (p.113). This is not 'clear': what is 'clear' is that Solomon was defining himself as a paederast and presenting himself as such, at least when he was safely in the company of other paederasts — especially given the evidence of his attraction to Browning's adolescent Eton boys, an attraction often hinted at in letters. 'The artist engaged in a voluminous correspondence with the Eton tutor Oscar Browning, a particularly close friend' — Roberto C. Ferrari, 'Pre-Raphaelite Patronage: Simeon Solomon's Letters to James Leathart and Frederick Leyland', in *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites*, compiled and ed. by Colin Cruise (London: Merrell, 2005), pp.47-55 (p.47).

² Richard Davenport-Hines, 'Oscar Browning', *DNB*.

³ From Pattison's diary entry for 5 May 1878; as quoted in *Letters of Pater*, p.xxxiv.

⁴ Donoghue, p.33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.34.

Hopkins could not but have recognised that Pater's coterie was as Decadent as possible, including, at various times, the Uranian poets Marc-André Raffalovich, Lionel Johnson, John Henry Gray, and Stanislaus Eric, Count Stenbock (1858-95); the artist Simeon Solomon; the writers J. A. Symonds, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Edmund Gosse, and Oscar Wilde¹; the wealthy connoisseur and Uranian apologist Edward Perry Warren, who later acquired the silver Roman *scyphus* considered in 'Chapter One'; Richard Monckton Milnes (1st Baron Houghton; 1809-85), who owned what was then perhaps the largest collection of erotica in Britain, a collection only rivalled by that of Henry Spencer Ashbee (1834-1900), whose collection became the core of the Private Case Collection at the British Library; and Charles Kegan Paul (1828-1902), whose publishing house issued much of the Uranians' verse. However, even a reluctance to associate Hopkins with *that* degree of Decadence does not obscure what his friendship with Pater, whether mild or intimate, implies.



The Sleepers and the One who Watcheth

Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)

Watercolour on paper, 1870

Art Gallery and Museum, The Royal Pump Rooms

Warwick District Council, Warwickshire, UK

¹ That Hopkins did not consider Symonds overly 'scandalous' is revealed by a nonchalant comment in a letter to his mother: 'I went to call on Mr. Green, fellow of Balliol, professor of Moral Philosophy. His wife, a very kind creature, is sister to John Addington Symonds the critic' (12 February 1879, *Letters* III, p.152). References to Gosse appear from time to time in Hopkins's letters to Bridges, who was one of Gosse's acquaintances; in fact, Gosse was interested in publishing some of Hopkins's poetry, which reveals that Bridges had shown that poetry to him (or else that Coventry Patmore had done so). After Hopkins's death, Bridges warned the Hopkins family against allowing Gosse to edit Hopkins's poetry or compose anything biographical.

Years later, although certainly aware of the various scandals surrounding Pater through friends such as Gosse and through texts such as *The New Republic* by William Hurrell Mallock (1849-1923),¹ Hopkins's 'dearest' and most protective friend Robert Bridges nevertheless 'reactivated personal ties between Hopkins and Pater',² such that, after his return to Oxford in 1878, Hopkins regularly visited Pater, which was partly facilitated by proximity, since Pater's house at 2 Bradmore Road was only minutes away from St Aloysius's Church where Hopkins was then Curate. However, as chronicle of this suggestive friendship, only a few, pedestrian passages remain, such as Hopkins's casual comment to his mother on 12 February 1879: 'I went yesterday to dine with the Paters' (*Letters* III, p.151). Similarly, Pater's only extant letter to Hopkins is a terse response from 20 May 1879 —

My dear Hopkins,
It will give me great pleasure to accept your kind invitation to dinner on Thursday at 5.30.
Very sincerely yours,
W. H. Pater (Facsimiles II, p.176)

— though its salutation, Higgins stresses, 'was one which Pater reserved for close friends only'.³ That these now 'close friends' met extensively between 1878 and 1879 is substantiated by a letter from Hopkins to his friend A. W. M. Baillie: 'By the by when I was at Oxford Pater was one of the men I saw most of' (22 May 1880, *Letters* III, p.246). This casual claim to Baillie becomes particularly intriguing and insightful when one considers the number of scandals, contained or publicised, that were then besieging Pater and his immediate coterie: Pater's utterly decried *Renaissance* editions of 1873 and 1877; Pater's discovered intimacy with Hardinge in 1874; Solomon's arrest and conviction on sodomy charges in 1873 and again in 1874 (for the latter, receiving a sentence of three months in prison); W. H. Mallock's *New Republic: Culture, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country House* in 1877 (though parts had already appeared in the journal *Belgravia* in 1876), a book that portrays Pater as the paederastic 'Mr. Rose', who is ever flitting about young 'Leslie', a thinly disguised Hardinge⁴; Oscar Browning's removal from Eton in 1875 under

¹ The paederastic nuances surrounding Pater seem to have been evident to his Oxford contemporaries. In 1880, C. E. Hutchinson wrote and distributed at Oxford a pamphlet titled *Boy-Worship*, a pamphlet that established Pater as the original for 'Mr. Rose', the paederastic aesthete of Mallock's *New Republic* (see Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.111-14).

² Lesley Higgins, 'The "Piecemeal Peace" of Hopkins's Return to Oxford, 1878-1879', in *Gerard Manley Hopkins and Critical Discourse*, ed. by Eugene Hollahan (New York: AMS Press, 1993), pp.167-82 (p.173).

³ *Ibid.*, p.175.

⁴ See Billie Andrew Inman, *Walter Pater's Reading: A Bibliography of His Library Borrowings and Literary References, 1857-1873* (New York: Garland, 1981), pp.30-35; 232-37. For Raffalovich's gloss that Hardinge was the person being caricatured as

suspicion of paederasty (which, unlike William Johnson's earlier dismissal from Eton and Solomon's arrests, had been mentioned, though vaguely, in the press and in the House of Commons). Although no extant evidence supports that Hopkins knew the specifics of any of these scandals, he would certainly have recognised the dangerous Decadent residue clinging to Pater because of them, for there was much that Hopkins did know.

Concerning the first scandal: Hopkins undoubtedly knew the public and pulpit reactions to the first and second editions of *The Renaissance*:

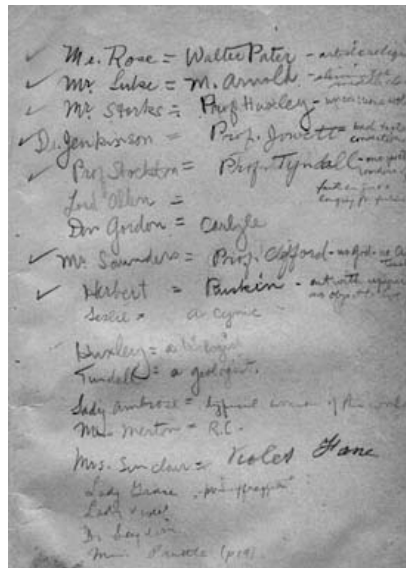
Widely denounced as a sinister invitation to hedonism, *The Renaissance* elicited a rhetoric of outrage that conjoined all the norms of English life in their common vulnerability to Pater's subversive creed. Thus W. J. Courthope spoke for many in 1876 when he denounced Pater's volume as a betrayal not only of English society, but of English masculinity: 'In common, we believe, with most Englishmen, we repudiate the effeminate desires which Mr. Pater, the mouthpiece of our artistic "culture", would encourage in society'. The suspicions insinuated by the label 'effeminate' of course became increasingly damaging during the century as this quality became more narrowly and explicitly associated with homosexual behavior.¹

Concerning the second: R. L. Nettleship and Benjamin Jowett, both of whom had been involved in the handling and containment of the Pater-Hardinge 'affair', had strong academic and personal ties to Hopkins, whom both had known from his undergraduate days and for whom both would later supply the academic references that would secure his appointment to a Classics professorship in Dublin in 1884. Anticipating his possible renewal of friendship with Pater, they might well have advised or hinted that Hopkins would do well to avoid such company and its possible taint, especially as a Roman Catholic curate in an overly Anglican Oxford, an Oxford that would look upon a Jesuit with suspicion anyway. Concerning the third: Hopkins might well have known from Pater or someone else about Solomon's conviction. Since Hopkins had met Solomon at least twice in 1868 — on the second occasion clearly in the company of Pater, one of Solomon's closest friends — Hopkins might very well have inquired, however naively, about this 'wandering Jew', especially since various objects of his handiwork decorated Pater's Bradmore Road residence, objects that Hopkins would have recognised as by Solomon. Concerning the fourth: Hopkins definitely knew of Mallock's *New Republic*, with its portrayal of Pater as 'Mr. Rose', for he wrote jokingly to his mother on 12 February 1879: 'Sir Gore

'Leslie', as well as for Pater's disappointing encounter with Hardinge later in life, see Donoghue, p.61. In *A Usable Past: Essays on Modern and Contemporary Poetry* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), Paul Mariani writes: 'Hopkins mentions Mallock twice in two letters written in February 1879, and he seems to have read Mallock's *The New Republic*' (p.119).

¹ James Eli Adams, 'Gentleman, Dandy, Priest: Manliness and Social Authority in Pater's Aestheticism', *ELH*, 59.2 (1992), pp.441-66 (p.441).

[Ouseley] (ghastly as this is, what else can you say? — his name in a book of Mallock's would become Sir Bloodclot Reekswell)' (*Letters* III, p.153). Concerning the fifth: Hopkins may not have known of Browning's dismissal from Eton under suspicion of paederasty, but Mark Pattison's diary entry concerning that hand-holding tea at the Paters' in 1878, with the 'paw dandling' Browning in attendance, suggests that Hopkins might well have been introduced to Browning after being stationed in Oxford later that year. Whatever one decides about Hopkins's inclusion amidst this scandalous Paterian world, Donoghue's phrasing seems as true for the Jesuit Hopkins of the late 1870s as for the pre-Jesuit Hopkins of the late 1860s: 'Hopkins still kept doubtful company'.



***La clef for
W. H. Mallock's *New Republic****

Although, 'after November, 1879, Hopkins made two further visits to Oxford: a brief appearance at St. Aloysius's on 11 September 1883, and a somewhat longer stay in May 1886' — Higgins does not believe that Hopkins had an opportunity to visit Pater on either occasion, since Pater had 'resigned his Brasenose tutorship in 1883 in order to concentrate on writing *Marius the Epicurean*'.¹ Regardless of whether or not they again met, Pater's influence over Hopkins certainly continued, even if only textually, for 'Walter Pater's presence in Gerard Manley Hopkins's life and work was much more than an undergraduate

¹ Higgins, 'Piecemeal', p.180.

phenomenon'.¹ Concerning Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* and *Imaginary Portraits*, published in 1885 and 1887, respectively, Downes suggests that 'given Hopkins' enormous interest in letters, it is unthinkable that he did not know them, [though] there is no extant evidence that he did'.² Even if one embraces the requirement for 'the verifiable' and brushes aside Hopkins's awareness of Pater's mature scholarship and fiction, Hopkins must have been, even as an undergraduate, inordinately versed in Pater's elaborate *Weltanschauung*, his 'bleak-faced Neology'. In fact, Pater's collection of tenets is so consistent that he was able to underscore in the third edition of his *Renaissance* (1888) and afterwards: 'I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by [this book's "Conclusion"]' (*Renaissance* 1893, p.186, Pater's footnote).³

The last passage of that 'Conclusion' encapsulates a *Weltanschauung* that could not but have influenced Hopkins as a young Oxonian and later as a poet and professor:

We are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve — [...] we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among 'the children of this world', in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion — that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

(*Renaissance* 1893, p.190)

¹ Higgins, 'Essaying', p.77.

² Downes, *Portraits*, p.46.

³ About this footnote added to *The Renaissance*, William Shuter writes: 'Pater has not changed his mind; he has only explained it more fully' — 'Pater, Wilde, Douglas and the Impact of "Greats"', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 46.3 (2003), pp.250-78 (p.266). This desire to 'explain it more fully' is also evident in the writings of others in or around Pater's circle:

Pater published *Marius the Epicurean*, his Bildungsroman, in 1885, when he was in his 46th year; Wilde wrote *De Profundis* in 1897, when he was in his 43rd year; Douglas wrote his *Autobiography* in 1927, when he was 57. While all three writers reflect on the earlier views they have abandoned or modified, they differ in the stress they place on the continuity between their earlier and later selves. Insofar, however, as this continuity is stressed, it is represented in language we recognize as belonging to the discourse of Greats. (*Ibid.*, pp.265-66)

Hopkins's absorption of this *Weltanschauung*, as well as its phrasing, is evident almost immediately: 'Within two months of meeting his new instructor, "as Pater says" had become a popular qualifying statement' for Hopkins.¹ This absorption is already evident in the six aesthetically-tinged, philosophical essays written under Pater's tutelage, essays that constitute *Notebook D.III* of the Hopkins Manuscript Collection at Campion Hall, Oxford — 'Essays / for W. H. Pater Esq. / Gerard M. Hopkins'. From that moment forward, Hopkins would continue to engage, adjust, and adopt various Paterian notions, the foremost of those being the necessity for moments lived 'simply for those moments' sake'. That particular Paterian notion, however qualified or made to accord with Christian teaching, would constitute a lasting influence (or 'underthought') over Hopkins, whose responses to it bespeak far more than intellectual sparring between a don and an undergraduate, between the 'High Priest of the Decadents' and a priest of the Jesuits:

The 'underthoughts' which link Hopkins's canon to Pater's are verbal witnesses to a very rare phenomenon: a friendship, an understanding and rapport based upon personal and intellectual ties lessened by time but never severed. As *Marius the Epicurean* explains, 'the saint, and the Cyrenaic lover of beauty, it may be thought, would at least understand each other better than either would understand the mere man of the world. Carry their respective positions a point further, shift the terms a little, and they might actually touch'.²

Had Hopkins and Pater, both of whom died in middle age, lived longer, their 'respective positions' might indeed have touched, for this Catholic priest was becoming ever more 'decadent'; and this Decadent, ever more 'catholic'.³ Nonetheless, to brush aside their 'respective positions' for a moment is to see how linked in 'temperament' these two friends and literary artists actually were: they were linked by their understanding and use of what Hopkins aptly coins 'underthought'.

'Underthought' is indeed what links Hopkins's canon to Pater's; and, in the case of these two Uranians, one of the by-products of an acquisition and thorough mastery of 'underthought' was an ability to tease from the canonical

¹ Higgins, 'Essaying', p.80.

² *Ibid.*, p.94.

³ Hopkins's growing 'decadence' and his acquiescence to it was illustrated in the last chapter through a close reading of his 'Epithalamion' (1888). As far as Pater's growing 'catholicism' is concerned, one should consider an unpublished, manuscript essay found among his papers after his death, 'The Writings of Cardinal Newman' — Houghton Library (Harvard University) MSS, Eng. 1150. About this unpublished essay and Pater's general approach to Newman, Donoghue writes: 'He thought of Marius moving toward a [...] slowly attained acquiescence in Christianity. [...] His model for this achievement was Newman. [...] As he proceeds [in his essay about Newman], he enters more sympathetically into Newman's progress toward religious belief. [...] In the later years Newman was particularly evident, an exemplary figure of possibility' (pp.96-97).

texts and artworks of Western culture the paederastic elements that had usually, out of necessity, been rendered opaque. In a discussion with his friend A. W. M. Baillie about Greek lyrical passages (about which Hopkins had begun writing a book), Hopkins explains his coinages ‘overthought’ and ‘underthought’:

In any lyric passage of the tragic poets [...] there are — usually [...] — two strains of thought running together and like counterpointed; the overthought that which everybody, editors, see [...] and which might for instance be abridged or paraphrased in square marginal blocks as in some books carefully written; the other, the underthought, conveyed chiefly in the choice of metaphors etc used and often only half realised by the poet himself, not necessarily having any connection with the subject in hand but usually having a connection and suggested by some circumstance of the scene or of the story. [...] The underthought is commonly an echo or shadow of the overthought, something like canons and repetitions in music, treated in a different manner, but that sometimes it may be independent of it [...] an undercurrent of thought governing the choice of images used. (14 January 1883, *Letters III*, pp.252-53)

In a letter to his close friend R. W. Dixon, Hopkins illustrates the way that ‘underthought’ eludes the grasp of most readers — since ‘the overthought [is] that which everybody, editors, see’ — and he does so by considering what may be the most paederastic passage in all of Shakespeare:

You remember the scene or episode of the little Indian boy in the *Midsummer Night*: it is, I think, an allegory, to which, in writing once on the play, I believed I had the clue, but whether I am right or wrong the meaning must have in any case been, and Shakspeare must have known it wd. be, dark or invisible to most beholders or readers [...] (15-16 August 1883, *Letters II*, p.115)¹

¹ The paederastic dynamic surrounding Oberon’s desire for Titania’s Indian pageboy, a changeling, has been commented on repeatedly. The following are representative examples: In ‘Fertile Visions: Jacobean Revels and the Erotics of Occasion’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 39.2 (1999), pp.327-56, Douglas Lanier writes: ‘Titania tells us [that] Oberon the fairy king’s desire for a young Indian boy has disrupted the seasonal cycle, with disastrous results for the kingdom’s bounty [...] Titania’s language of parentage — “progeny”, “parents” — underscores the fruitless fruit of Oberon’s misdirected attachment to the boy, which falls ambiguously between pederasty, paternalism, and an inappropriate attachment to male courtiers’ (pp.333-34). In ‘A *Midsummer Night’s Dream*: “Jack Shall Have Jill; / Nought Shall Go Ill”’, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Critical Essays*, ed. by Dorothea Kehler (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.127-44, Shirley Nelson Garner writes: ‘Titania’s attachment to the boy is clearly erotic. [...] Puck describes Oberon as “jealous”, and his emphasis on the “lovely boy”, the “sweet” changeling, and the “loved boy” suggests that Oberon, like Titania, is attracted to the child’ (pp.129-30). See also Bruce Boehrer, ‘Economies of Desire in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 32 (2004), pp.99-117. My personal favourite is the gloss provided for Oberon’s line ‘I only want the little Indian boy’ in *William Shakespeare’s ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ — A Playscript for Younger Students*, ed. by Geof Walker (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, [n.d.]): ‘The reason

In typical Uranian fashion, Hopkins reveals to Dixon that some form of ‘underthought’ is at play in Shakespeare’s ‘allegory’, though neither Shakespeare nor Hopkins deigns to reveal what that ‘underthought’ is. As an exercise in Uranian ‘suggestiveness’, Hopkins displays, by employing ‘underthought’ in the passage above, what ‘underthought’ is. Such a ‘suggestiveness’ has ever been a feature of paederastic writing, particularly after the ascendancy of Christianity, a ‘suggestiveness’ and an ‘undercurrent of thought governing the choice of images used’ that probably left the conventional Dixon clueless as to its meaning, though the above would have been fully appreciated by Pater, one of the foremost Victorian practitioners of this technique, a technique that renders meaning ‘dark or invisible to most beholders or readers’, but not to the intended audience — though, in many ways, Hopkins handles this technique more deftly and purposefully than does his friend and former academic coach, even if ‘often only half realised by the poet himself’.

However, beyond a shared appreciation for the Uranian potential of ‘underthought’ — a reading and writing technique that Hopkins first witnessed, in any striking way, while under Pater’s tutelage — there were more holistic concepts that Hopkins would, despite adjustment, absorb from the Paterian *Weltanschauung*, concepts that speak less to how one reads and writes, and more to how one fashions one’s self and approaches one’s life. At the core of this *Weltanschauung* is a heightened form of *carpe diem* that Pater describes as ‘moments lived simply for those moments’ sake’.

Moments lived ‘simply for those moments’ sake’ — as early as his ‘Diaphaneitè’ essay, presented before the Old Mortals in July 1864 (and believed to be an extension of the no-longer-extant ‘Fichte’s Ideal Student’), that dictum infused Pater’s writings with a caution against squandering opportunities, Pater insisting that ‘to most of us only one chance is given in the life of the spirit and the intellect, and circumstances prevent our dexterously seizing that one chance’ (‘Diaphaneitè’, *Miscellaneous*, p.220).¹ Much later, in *Marius the Epicurean*, Pater’s protagonist illustrates this ‘dexterous seizing’ by sacrificing himself for a beloved ‘friend’:

At last, the great act, the critical moment itself comes, easily, almost unconsciously. [...] In one quarter of an hour, under a sudden, uncontrollable impulse, hardly weighing what he did, almost as a matter of course and as lightly

for [Oberon and Titania’s] argument is the little Indian boy ... Oberon is jealous that Titania spends more time with him than with himself’ (p.12). The ellipsis, supplied by Walker, leaves much to the young imagination.

¹ Samuel Roebuck Brooke (1844-98) — a Corpus Christi undergraduate; an acquaintance of Hopkins; a former, disgruntled member of the Old Mortality Society; and a founding member of the Hexameron Society, which sought to counterbalance the Old Mortals — wrote in his diary that Pater’s lecture was ‘one of the most thoroughly infidel productions’ he had ever heard, and denounced him to other Oxonians, especially H. P. Liddon. The portions of Brooke’s diary that deal with this episode are published in Seiler, *A Life*, pp.11-13.

as one hires a bed for one's night's rest on a journey, Marius had taken upon himself all the heavy risk of the position in which Cornelius had then been — the long and wearisome delays of judgment, which were possible; the danger and wretchedness of a long journey in this manner; possibly the danger of death. He had delivered his brother, after the manner he had sometimes vaguely anticipated as a kind of distinction in his destiny; though indeed always with wistful calculation as to what it might cost him: and in the first moment after the thing was actually done, he felt only satisfaction at his courage, at the discovery of his possession of 'nerve'. (II, p.213)

Over time, this early Paterian notion of moments lived 'simply for those moments' sake' was recast by Pater into the 'martyrdom for friendship's sake' displayed above, a martyrdom that became the principal ennobling act of his mature *Weltanschauung*, an act first depicted in his second edition of *The Renaissance* (1877) through the tale *Li Amitiez de Ami et Amile*, a thirteenth-century French romance, the addition of which allows Pater to connect 'medieval, Christian culture with the tradition of homosexual friendship in Greek culture'.¹ According to Pater, Amis and Amile had 'a friendship pure and generous, pushed to a sort of passionate exaltation, and more than faithful unto death. Such comradeship, though instances of it are to be found everywhere, is still especially a classical motive' ('French', *Renaissance* 1893, p.7).

As with his 'Conclusion', Pater most fully depicts this 'classical motive' — expressed in *Amis and Amile* as an exultant and passionate friendship 'more than faithful unto death' — in *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas* (1885), a novel that not only portrays the sensations and ideas of a protagonist from Classical Rome, but also the sensations and ideas of Pater's immediate contemporaries, whom he frequently addresses in authorial asides: 'Let the reader pardon me if here and there I seem to be passing from Marius to his modern representatives — from Rome, to Paris or London' (*Marius*, II, p.14).² For Pater, the benefit derived from this constant shift in time and location is that these moments lived 'simply for those moments' sake', whether ancient or modern, constitute a 'cultural continuum', particularly when endowed with 'classical motive'. The 'cultural continuum' that Pater constructs is in direct contradiction to Michel Foucault's claims (as well as those of most Social Constructionists) that such a continuum is inherently anachronistic, whether in word or concept. However, for Pater culture is always, by necessity, a continuum:

¹ Dellamora, 'French', p.143.

² Donoghue writes: '*Marius the Epicurean* is more a spiritual romance than a novel' (p.188).

[John] Nichol envisioned history Romantically, in a fashion similar to Edmund Burke, as a vital organic and evolutionary continuum [...] There was no place in this vision for ruptures or discontinuities. As with Blake and Pater, the ages were all thought to be equal now.¹

Further, by choosing Imperial Rome as his setting, Pater is also contradicting a widely held Victorian notion — here phrased by J. A. Symonds — that this ‘classical motive’, expressed through paederasty, did not have the same meaning or meaningfulness for the ancient Romans that it had had for the earlier Greeks:

Greece merged in Rome; but, though the Romans aped the arts and manners of the Greeks, they never truly caught the Hellenic spirit. Even Virgil only trod the court of the Gentiles of Greek culture. It was not, therefore, possible that any social custom so peculiar as paiderastia should flourish on Latin soil. Instead of Cleomenes and Epameinondas, we find at Rome Nero the bride of Sporus and Commodus the public prostitute. Alcibiades is replaced by the Mark Antony of Cicero’s *Philippic*. Corydon, with artificial notes, takes up the song of Ageanax. The melodies of Meleager are drowned in the harsh discords of Martial. Instead of love, lust was the deity of the boy-lover on the shores of Tiber.²

It is to those ‘shores of Tiber’ that Pater turns in order to trace a continuum from Greece to Rome, from Rome to Paris and London, drawing his reader’s attention, sole-thoughted, to one boy there, a boy who will serve as his means of depicting ‘Greece merged in Rome’, as well as ‘the Hellenic spirit’ — Marius the Epicurean.

Pater’s novel is tinged with paederasty from the start. As a wealthy orphan, Marius soon finds himself at a Platonic academy in Pisa, under the private coaching of Flavian, a student three years his senior. In Flavian, Marius immediately perceives ‘something [...] a shade disdainful, as [Flavian] stood isolated from the others for a moment’, something that sets Flavian apart from his companions and establishes him as ‘prince of the school’, allowing him ‘an easy dominion over the old Greek master by the fascination of his parts, and over his fellow-scholars by the figure he bore’ (*Marius*, I, pp.49-50).³ Predictably, ‘over Marius too his dominion was entire’, enhanced because Flavian has been ‘appointed to help the younger boy in his studies’ (I, p.50). From the moment of their introduction, Flavian begins to dominate Marius through prurient glances, visual insinuations that take a keen hold upon Marius and assure him of their

¹ Franklin E. Court, *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Culture and Politics of Literary Study, 1750-1900* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), p.139.

² John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion* (London: Privately printed, [1901]), p.72.

³ In ‘Simeon Solomon: Artist and Myth’, in *Solomon, a Family of Painters: Abraham Solomon (1823-1862), Rebecca Solomon (1832-1886), Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)* (London: Inner London Education Authority, 1985), pp.24-27, Lionel Lambourne suggests that Solomon was Pater’s model for Flavian in *Marius the Epicurean*.

impending 'friendship': 'There was pleasantness also for [himself, as] the newcomer in the roving blue eyes which seemed somehow to take a fuller hold upon things around than is usual with boys. Marius knew that those proud glances made kindly note of him for a moment, and felt something like friendship at first sight' (I, p.49). This 'friendship at first sight' soon broadens beyond a tutorial relationship, until Marius 'became virtually [Flavian's] servant in many things', experiencing a fascination that 'had been a sentimental one, dependent on the concession to himself of an intimacy, a certain tolerance of his company, [that Flavian] granted to none beside' (I, pp.50-51). Through this 'intimacy [...] granted to none beside', Marius is taught 'many things' — the deliberate vagueness of such a description lending a prurient suggestiveness to this passage, a prurient suggestiveness that is intensified by this pedagogical 'friendship' being labelled 'that feverish attachment to Flavian, which had made [Marius] at times like an uneasy slave' (I, p.234).

However 'uneasy', Marius nonetheless yields himself to 'that feverish attachment to Flavian' — in much the same way that Flavian 'had certainly yielded himself, though still with untouched health, in a world where manhood comes early, to the seductions of that luxurious town' (I, p.53). By 'yielding himself' and his developing 'manhood' to 'the seductions of that luxurious town', a younger Flavian had acquired erotic experiences that served to transform him into a sort of 'prince' with 'dominion over' others, mere 'servants', 'uneasy slaves' overwhelmed by his 'proud glances' — or, as with Marius, 'granted' friendship and perhaps erotic instruction. Not surprisingly, Marius soon becomes fluent concerning Flavian's lascivious sexual encounters, causing him to wonder

sometimes, in [Flavian's] freer revelation of himself by conversation, at the extent of his early corruption. How often, afterwards, did evil things present themselves in malign association with the memory of that beautiful head, and with a kind of borrowed sanction and charm in its natural grace! To Marius, at a later time, [Flavian] counted for as it were an epitome of the whole pagan world, the depth of its corruption, and its perfection of form. (I, p.53)

Lost early, Flavian's sexual innocence was replaced by 'corruption', a corruption that intrigues his contemporaries, as does his 'perfection of form': 'His voice, his glance, were like the breaking in of the solid world upon one, amid the flimsy fictions of a dream. A shadow, handling all things as shadows, had felt a sudden real and poignant heat in them' (I, p.53). Given the 'poignant heat' of the above, it is crucial to remember exactly who is feeling that 'heat': 'the old Greek master [fevered] by the fascination of [Flavian's] parts' and 'his fellow-scholars [fevered] by the figure [Flavian] bore'. In essence, the 'old Greek master' is heated by Flavian's 'parts'; Flavian's fellow students, by his 'figure': the first seems a fascination with the erotic possibilities that those 'parts' could afford; the second, a more holistic admiration that covers a multitude of latent desires. Lest readers of *Marius the Epicurean* downplay Flavian's 'corrupting' influence, Pater further insinuates that

meantime, under his guidance, Marius was learning quickly and abundantly, because with a good will. There was that in the actual effectiveness of [Flavian's] figure which stimulated the younger lad to make the most of opportunity; and he had experience already that education largely increased one's capacity for enjoyment. (I, p.53)

Having reached a potent 'manhood', Flavian employs 'the actual effectiveness of his figure' to 'stimulate the younger lad', a lad who accepts this 'education' with 'good will', having learned 'to make the most of opportunity', especially an opportunity that 'largely increased one's capacity for enjoyment'. Textually, Pater has constructed this 'intimacy [...] granted to none beside' as a moment of paederastic pedagogy and practice — Flavian 'stimulat[ing] the younger lad' both sexually and intellectually, becoming the 'inspirer' to Marius the 'hearer'.

In typical Paterian fashion, Flavian chooses to augment his erotic tutelage of Marius with a book, a book whose very title seems an insinuation, for Pater has opted for its more colloquial form — *The Golden Ass* — rather than *Metamorphoses*. Abounding in incidents comic, intrusions supernatural, and affairs erotic, this collection of Grecian tales, reworked into Latin by Lucius Apuleius of Madaura (123-170 CE), becomes, for these boys, 'the golden book', a book 'which awakened the poetic or romantic capacity as perhaps some other book might have done, but was peculiar in giving it a direction emphatically sensuous' (I, p.54). In fact, Flavian's copy of this book is itself a paederastic insinuation in 'a direction emphatically sensuous', for it is undoubtedly a gift presented by 'the rich man, interested in the promise of the fair child born on his estate, [who] had sent him to school' (I, p.52). This rich man's erotic 'interest in the promise of the fair child' can be surmised by the choice and choiceness of his gift, a contemporary romance packed with eroticism, a romance whose costly packaging literally drips with passionate exclamation, decoration, and perfume:

The 'golden' book of that day [was] a gift to Flavian, as was shown by the purple writing on the handsome yellow wrapper, following the title — *Flaviane!* — it said,

<i>Flaviane!</i>	<i>Flaviane!</i>	<i>Flaviane!</i>
<i>lege</i>	<i>Vivas!</i>	<i>Vivas!</i>
<i>Feliciter!</i>	<i>Floreas!</i>	<i>Gaudeas!</i>

It was perfumed with oil of sandal-wood, and decorated with carved and gilt ivory bosses at the ends of the roller. (I, pp.55-56)

Although inscribing 'books' with salutations such as *lege feliciter* (suggesting 'read in good health') had a long Latin history,¹ what is intriguing in this

¹ About the Roman tradition of inscribing formal salutations onto or within 'books', see Charles W. Hedrick, *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), pp.205-06. I am employing the term 'book', though, in most cases, this literally means 'scroll'.

particular case is that the sequence of salutations seems drawn, almost verbatim, from a volume presented as a gift to Valentine, perhaps the saint:

The Valentine in question is to be identified with the dedicatee of the *Calendar of 354*, which is basically a traditional pagan calendar with some Christian elements added. It served as a New Year's present (that is, for January 1, 354), and was inscribed to him with legends executed and signed by the Christian calligrapher Furius Dionysius Filocalus: VALENTINE FLOREAS IN DEO, VALENTINE VIVAS FLOREAS, VALENTINE VIVAS GAUDEAS, and VALENTINE LEGE FELICITER.¹

If Pater did draw these inscriptions from this gift to Valentine, then the gift to Flavian acquires even greater paederastic connotations, as a love-gift from that rich man, a gift mirroring the sort of gift traditionally associated with St Valentine's feast-day, February 14. If this decorated volume is, in some sense, a 'Valentine' gift, then Pater could hardly have failed to recognise its association with the celebration from which St Valentine's Day, in part, had derived — the Roman celebration of the Lupercalia, the 'Feast of Wolves', held on February 15th.² The Lupercalia was perhaps the most eroticised celebration in the ancient Roman calendar, a festival widely known in the nineteenth century through Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88), which describes the event in chapter 36. For two millennia, the Lupercalia has been promoted and banned, decried and explained in various ways, though all sources affirm the sheer eroticism it was expected to elicit:

[The Lupercalia] is a mid-February ritual, at which youths run naked (except for sashes of goatskins) through the Palatine area in the center of the city. During their revels the boys would strike women with their goatskins to induce fertility.³

¹ Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Chaucer and the Cult of Saint Valentine* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 1986), pp.48-49.

² Concerning this link between St Valentine's Day and the Roman festival of Lupercalia, see J. Hillis Miller, 'Sam Weller's Valentine', in *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices*, ed. by John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.93-122 (p.97). 'The Lupercalian explanation for the origins of the love-cult of St. Valentine has been resurrected by [Alfred] Kellogg and [Robert] Cox, but in a most unconvincing way. They attempt to show a continuity between the time that the Lupercalia were forbidden by Pope Gelasius I and the outbreak of Valentine poetry at the end of the fourteenth century' (Kelly, p.60). About the tradition of St Valentine's Day as 'a promiscuous festival' in Renaissance Britain, see François Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.105-07.

³ Rudolph Joseph Schork, *Latin & Roman Culture in Joyce* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), p.92.

There were sacrifices on that day, of he-goats and she-goats, which the Lupercal priests skinned, in order to clothe themselves in these bloody hides, which were reputed to increase the warmth of desire and to confer abounding ardor upon the lascivious worshipers of the god Pan. Sacred Prostitution was thus the soul of the Lupercalia.¹

Apparently, the Lupercalia had the ultimate aim of promoting both human and animal fertility in the agro-urban community. [...] Ovid explains the Lupercalia on the strength of an oracle [...] reputed to have said to Romans who were worried about their population numbers: 'Let the sacred he-goat penetrate the matrons of Italy!' In AD 494, Pope Gelasius I christianised the Lupercalia to celebrate the purification of the Virgin.²

Given the above, this scroll sent to Flavian as a lover's gift may indeed embody a touch of dangerous, paederastic 'underthought', though Flavian seems unlikely to have shared the worry of Apuleius's 'transformed boy' who is *all ass*: 'I reckoned I would protect my behind from the attacks of the wolves'.³ From whatever source these inscriptions derive or 'underthought' they might suggest, Flavian nonetheless recognises that this elaborate gift is wrapt with clear intentions towards himself, from a 'wolf' who seems to have feasted already upon his lamb-like innocence, for Flavian 'had certainly yielded himself, [...] in a world where manhood comes early, to [...] seductions'. This scroll, a phallus-shaped gift dripping with passionate exclamation, decoration, and perfume — not

¹ Paul LaCroix, *History of Prostitution, Among All the Peoples of the World, From the Most Remote Antiquity to the Present Day*, 2 vols (New York: Covici, Friede, 1931), I, pp.197-98.

² Robert Turcan, *The Gods of Ancient Rome: Religion in Everyday Life from Archaic to Imperial Times* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.65.

³ Lucius Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* (New York: Penguin, 1999), p.137. Considered in its paederastic sense, even paederastic 'wolves' — men exhibiting the aggressive virility expressed in and exorcised by the Lupercalia — were preferable, for both Apuleius and Lucian, to the effeminate priests of Cybele (the *galli*), who were also roaming the countryside, as David F. Greenberg explains in *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990):

When the veneration of Cybele was first introduced to Rome during the Second Punic War, the Romans disdained her emasculated priests, and forbade citizens from undergoing initiation. But the cult spread as the orientalization of the Empire progressed. Bands of *galli* roamed the countryside dressed as women [...] In the *Metamorphoses*, also known as *The Golden Ass*, Apuleius portrays the *galli* as passive homosexuals who seek out virile young peasant lads to satisfy their cravings; Lucian paints a similar picture in *Lucius, or the Ass*. However, none of the Hellenistic sources mention ritual homosexuality. (P.98)

This more 'ritual homosexuality', which neither Apuleius nor Lucian criticises, is the form of institutionalised paederasty common to the Greco-Roman world, that paederasty to which the Uranians were attracted and that Flavian's owner/patron seems to be practising and fostering, in a rather costly fashion.

to mention the seductive content of the text it contains — seems just the sort of choice, seductive gift that ‘a wealthy individual who had his own slaves, including quite likely his own special “reserve stock” of *pueri delicati*’,¹ would bestow upon his favourite from among his collection of delicate slave-boys expected to perform erotic and other intimate services, such as the services depicted on the Warren Cup (as discussed in ‘Chapter One’). In more modern phrasing, Flavian is clearly a ‘kept boy’.

Adding further ‘underthought’ to the above is a detail from Pater’s life. The bestowal or loan of an erotic volume as a form of dangerous insinuation or initiation has a biographical referent for Pater, a biographical referent hinted at in the text. Only a few pages after describing this gift to Flavian, Pater contemplates the appeal Apuleius’s *Golden Ass* would have for the young:

But the marvellous delight, in which is one of the really serious elements in most boys, passed at times, those young readers still feeling its fascination, into what French writers call the *macabre* [...] And the scene of the night-watching of a dead body lest the witches should come to tear off the flesh with their teeth, is worthy of Théophile Gautier. (*Marius* I, pp.60-61)

This allusion to Gautier becomes biographically suggestive when brought into proximity with the events surrounding a sunny afternoon Pater spent on a boating-party in 1875 with the paederastic Oscar Browning and his young Etonians. As a result of this excursion, Pater found himself embroiled in a complaint that he had encouraged William Graham, one of Browning’s pupils, to read Gautier’s *Mademoiselle de Maupin*:

My dear Browning,

I was not at all amused but much pained at the letters you enclose [from those scandalised by this rumour]. You heard all I said to Graham. I think it is not possible that I mentioned the book in question. I should greatly disapprove its being lent to any boy or young man, or even allowed in his way, and it would be quite impossible for me to recommend it to anybody. I read it years ago but do not possess it. Please give an unqualified denial to the statement that I approved anything of the kind. [...] I remember that, the subject arising in the natural course of conversation, I mentioned an innocent sort of ghost story by Gautier as a very good specimen of its kind. I am sorry now that I did so, as I can only suppose that the report in question arose in this way.²

¹ John Pollini, ‘The Warren Cup: Homoerotic Love and Symposial Rhetoric in Silver’, *Art Bulletin*, 81.1 (1999), pp.21-52 (p.36).

² Undated (though clearly from 1875), *Letters of Pater*, p.16. ‘James FitzJames Stephen complained that a boy at Browning’s [boarding-house at Eton] had been lent a novel by Gautier with Walter Pater’s approval’ (Richard Davenport-Hines, ‘Oscar Browning’, *DNB*).



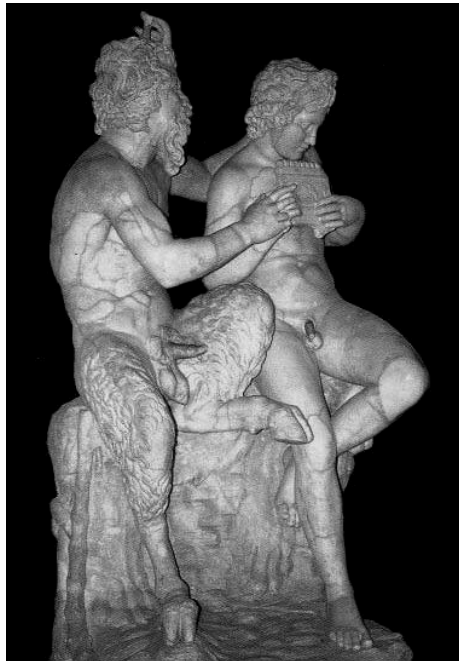
Pan and a Goat

Roman

Marble, ca. 1st century CE

(from the large peristyle of the Villa dei Papiri, Herculaneum)

Gabinetto Segreto, Museo Archeologico Nazionale Napoli, Naples, Italy



Pan Teaching Daphnis to Play

Roman (copy of a lost Greek original
attributed to Heliodorus, ca. 100 BCE)

Marble, ca. 2nd century CE (from Pompeii)

Museo Archeologico Nazionale Napoli, Naples, Italy

Since Pater could hardly have forgotten that occasion a decade earlier, the comment in *Marius* about Gautier's ghost stories recalls, rather pruriently, that moment when Pater stood accused of attempting to corrupt a young Etonian in 'a direction emphatically sensuous' with a book no less erotic than Apuleius's.

The Golden Ass does indeed brim with eroticism, including the Greco-Roman interest in bestiality, as Mark D. Jordan relates, drawing attention to one passage in which a homoerotic orgy is blent with the bestial:

In Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, one of the best-known ancient Latin novels, the priests of Cybele purchase a donkey, who happens to be our unlucky hero Lucius in animal form. There is some suggestion that they mean to enjoy his sex immediately, but their interest turns to a 'built' farmer whom they invite to their private banquet in a small town. Their well-plotted orgy is prevented by the braying of Lucius, who summons the locals.¹

Consider that scene as it appears in Apuleius's novel, the metamorphosed Lucius having just been purchased by Philebus (whose name means 'lover of youth') to pleasure himself and his fellow priests of the Syrian goddess:

'Look, girls, what a handsome wee slave I've brought for you!' The 'girls' were in fact a bunch of catamites. Their joy was immediate and ecstatic [...] doubtless under the impression that some slave-boy had been procured to serve them. But when they saw that an ass was there [...] they turned up their noses, and taunted their master.²

They visited the baths and returned from there spick and span, bringing with them as a dinner-guest a peasant of powerful physique, especially chosen for the capacity of his loins and lower parts. Those most filthy reprobates [...] were fired with unspeakable longing to perform the most despicable outrages of unnatural lust. They surrounded the young fellow on every side, stripped off his clothes, laid him on his back, and kept smothering him with their abominable kisses.

[After Lucius's outraged braying at this sight,] several young men from a neighbouring village [...] burst suddenly in [...] and caught the priests red-handed, engaged in those obscenely foul practices.³

¹ Mark D. Jordan, 'The Pope Converts: Imagination, Bureaucracy, Silence', in *Theology and Sexuality*, ed. by Eugene F. Rogers (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp.259-74 (pp.263-64).

² Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, trans. by P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp.155-56.

³ *Ibid.*, p.158. The metamorphosed protagonist of Pseudo-Lucian's *The Ass* is also bought by Philebus to pleasure 'a crowd of perverts, Philebus's coworkers', who are also less pleased by the prospect than Philebus had anticipated, wishing 'that what he had purchased was a real man', like the youth they would subsequently abduct: 'One time we dropped in on a village in the region, and they hunted down a hefty young man, one of the villagers, hauling him off to the place were they happened to be staying. Then they

It is noteworthy that, although Apuleius's tale chides these priests of Cybele for the hypocrisy of their professed vows of chastity and for assuming the passive role in adult homoerotic activities, it does not chide the 'young fellow' who is 'abducted' to penetrate them. In typical Greco-Roman fashion, Apuleius holds a distinction between 'the homoerotic' (especially in relation to adult passivity) and 'the paederastic', with the latter treated as just as normal or common as heterosexual activity — that is, unless one's sexual partner is an ass, though the bestiality motif is treated with humour rather than disgust, recalling the more elevated forms of it practised by the likes of Zeus with Leda, Europa, and Ganymede. The normalcy and commonality afforded 'the paederastic' is displayed in the following, a passage in which a rural boy who despises the transformed Lucius accuses him, in front of their master, of fictive crimes:

'To crown all his other villainies, [this ass] now causes further trouble by exposing me to fresh dangers. Whenever he spies a traveler — it could be an elegant lady, a grown-up girl, or an innocent young boy — he hastily shrugs off his load, sometimes throwing off his saddle as well, and makes a wild dash towards them; ass though he is, he aspires to be a lover of humans. He knocks them to the ground, eyes them fondly, and seeks to indulge his bestial urges with love-making at which Venus frowns. He even makes pretence of kissing [...] Just now, for example, he caught sight of a splendid young woman. [...] He made a mad dive at her. Jolly gallant that he is, he had her down on the filthy ground, for all the world as if he were going to mount her there and then before everyone's eyes. If her weeping and wailing hadn't roused some travelers to rush to her defence, to snatch her from between his hooves and free her, the poor woman would have been trampled on and torn apart'.¹

Given that it abounds with such a spectrum of eroticism, *The Golden Ass* seems just the sort of choice, seductive gift a paederastic 'inspirer' would send as an insinuation in 'a direction emphatically sensuous'. Further, not only had

passively underwent from the villager all the usual things so much enjoyed by such evil perverts' — Pseudo-Lucian, *The Ass*, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, trans. and ed. by B. P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp.589-618 (pp.608-09).

¹ Apuleius, *Golden Ass*, p.133. In Pseudo-Lucian's earlier version of the tale, the mule driver, 'an unholy little urchin', makes the same accusation:

'This ass, master, I don't know why we feed him, as he's terribly lazy and slow. What's more, he's now taken up another bad habit. Whenever he sees a beautiful young woman or girl or boy, he kicks up his hooves and makes off after them at a run, like a real man in love, making advances to his beloved [...] and he bites them under the appearance of a kiss and struggles to get near them [...] Just now, while carrying wood, he saw a woman going off into a field. He shook off and scattered all the wood on the ground, and he knocked the woman down on the road and wanted to make her his, until different people ran up from different directions and defended the woman from being ripped apart by this fine lover here' — Pseudo-Lucian, *The Ass*, pp.605-07.

Apuleius's salacious, bestial romp found its way into the hands of Flavian (and subsequently Marius), but the gift-giver — 'the rich man, interested in the promise of the fair child born on his estate' — had encased it with delicate intricacy and emblazoned it thrice with Flavian's exclamatory name. This was an elaborate gift wrapt with clear intentions towards Flavian, a youth who 'had certainly yielded himself, [...] in a world where manhood comes early, to [...] seductions'. A rather-Uranian use of *textual insinuation as sensual initiation* is at play here, anticipating Dorian's comment to Lord Henry about the gift of the 'golden book': 'You poisoned me with a book once' (*Dorian* 1890, p.97).



Drinking cup (kylix) depicting scenes from a symposium

Greek (attributed to the Foundry Painter)

Red-Figure terracotta, Late Archaic or Early Classical Period (ca. 480 BCE)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

In a narratorial aside, Pater broadens the scope of this particular textual stimulation — this awakening in 'a direction emphatically sensuous' — by raising to a universal level this interaction between Marius, Flavian, and Apuleius's book: 'If our modern education, in its better efforts, really conveys to any of us that kind of idealising power, it does so [...] oftenest by truant reading; and thus it happened also, long ago, with Marius and his friend' (I, p.54). In other words, there are many 'golden books'; and, according to two very different figures, Pater had supplied several of his own. Wilde asserted, 'I never travel anywhere without [*The Renaissance*] [...] it is the very flower of decadence'¹; Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902), the founder of Rhodesia and of the Rhodes Scholarship, that 'he traversed the South African veldt in the company of both Marcus Aurelius and *Marius the Epicurean*'.² As with the folded-over volume of John Keats's poetry found in the pocket of the drowned Percy Bysshe Shelley, one measures a volume's 'weight in gold' by its being carried about.

¹ As quoted in Ellmann, p.301.

² Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.72.

While these truants are exploring the tales of Apuleius and each other, Marius begins to consider Flavian the embodiment of his own ‘Cyrenaic philosophy, presented thus for the first time, in an image or person, with much beauty and attractiveness’ (*Marius* 1885, I, p.230),¹ the embodiment of a philosophy that fuels ‘his own Cyrenaic eagerness, just then, to taste and see and touch’ (I, p.201).² To see and touch (and, blushing, taste) what? — if not Flavian’s ‘beauty and attractiveness’. This is a lingering question made all the more salacious by the playful syntax of the former quotation in its entirety:

[Marius’s] Cyrenaic philosophy, presented thus for the first time, in an image or person, with much beauty and attractiveness, *and touched also, in this way*, with a pathetic sense of personal sorrow — a concrete image, the abstract equivalent of which he discovered afterwards, when that agitating personal influence had settled down for him, clearly enough, into a theory of practice.

(*Marius* 1885, I, pp.230-31, emphasis added)

This *mélange* of ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ — the ‘touched also, in this way’ — develops into a pederastic, pedagogical intimacy, an intimacy partly facilitated by Apuleius’s erotic text, a text that ‘awakened’ its reader in ‘a direction emphatically sensuous’, such that the young Cyrenaic Marius is overwhelmed by an ‘eagerness [...] to taste and see and touch’ both Flavian’s body and the ‘aesthetic life’ he has come to embody, a feverish eagerness that Marius had caught from the lips of Flavian, in much the same way that the older boy had caught the refrain of his subsequent poem and the plague of his subsequent death: ‘[Flavian] had caught his “refrain”, from the lips of the young men, singing because they could not help it, in the streets of Pisa’ (I, p.104).

Alas, overcome by a fever seemingly caught ‘from the lips of the young men [...] in the streets of Pisa’, Flavian ‘lay at the open window of his lodging, with a fiery pang in the brain, fancying no covering thin or light enough to be applied to his body’ (I, p.112), an advantageous situation indeed, for Pater is at liberty, given Flavian’s feverish state, to situate this nude, dying youth at a voyeuristic vantage point. While lying naked at the open window, attended only by Marius (everyone else fearing contamination from the plague), Flavian would,

¹ In a few cases, I have preferred and given preference to the phrasing of the 1st edition: in these instances, the citation reads ‘*Marius* 1885’.

² The Cyrenaic school of philosophy, which flourished in the city of Cyrene from about 400 to 300 BCE, was notable for its tenets of hierarchical Hedonism derived from Socrates and Protagoras. Late Cyrenaicism and Epicureanism are only distinguishable from each other in details, not fundamental principles, though, for Marius and for Pater, the distinct details that Epicurus held and advocated — that a proper knowledge of death makes one enjoy life the more, that wise men avoid taking part in public affairs, that one should not marry and beget children — were important. Donoghue glosses Pater’s Cyrenaicism as ‘the assertion that the best way to live is to crowd as many pulsations as possible into one’s inevitably brief life, and that the best way to do this is by cultivating art for art’s sake’ (p.57).

‘at intervals, return to labour at his verses, with a great eagerness to complete and transcribe the work’, a work that is ‘in fact a kind of nuptial hymn’ (I, p.113), an epithalamion lightened by passages like the following: ‘*Amor* has put his weapons by and will keep holiday. He was bidden go without apparel, that none might be wounded by his bow and arrows. But take care! In truth he is none the less armed than usual, though he be all unclad’ (I, p.113).

This is a curious passage indeed, for Flavian’s Cupid — unclad like himself, stripped of all weaponry except for his phallus, a phallus fully capable of spoiling and despoiling — is merely a refashioning of Apuleius’s amorous Cupid. Although Apuleius suggests that, while sleeping naked like Flavian, Cupid resembles little ‘that winged, bold boy, of evil ways, who wanders armed by night through men’s houses, spoiling their marriages’, Cupid’s ‘inborn wantonness’ (I, p.63) nonetheless ever accompanies his potent beauty, even in repose, a beauty that Pater textually caresses by describing the shoulders of this ‘winged god’, then the way his damp plumage moves across those shoulders, then how ‘smooth he was’:

Love himself, reclined there, in his own proper loveliness! [...] [with] the locks of that golden head, pleasant with the unction of the gods, shed down in graceful entanglement behind and before, about the ruddy cheeks and white throat. The pinions of the winged god, yet fresh with the dew, are spotless upon his shoulders, the delicate plumage wavering over them as they lie at rest. Smooth he was. (I, pp.74-75)¹

In all of his resplendent tactility, this ‘petulant, boyish Cupid of Apuleius’ serves ‘to combine many lines of meditation, already familiar to Marius, into the ideal of a perfect imaginative love, centred upon a type of beauty entirely flawless and clean — an ideal which never wholly faded from his thoughts’ (I, p.92). That Marius should choose to unify symbolically Flavian — his ‘epitome of the whole pagan world’ and ‘his own Cyrenaic philosophy [...] in an image or person’ (I, pp.53; 234) — and the Cupid of Apuleius is not surprising, especially since Flavian’s appearance ‘was like a carved figure in motion [...] but with that indescribable gleam upon it which the words of Homer actually suggested, as perceptible on the visible forms of the gods’ (I, p.50).

¹ For an anecdote about Solomon (who may have served as the model for Pater’s Flavian) appearing as Cupid at a costume party, see James M. Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York: Viking, 1999), pp.179-81. I wish to thank Dr Saslow, Professor of Renaissance Art and Theater at The City University of New York, for corresponding with me by E-mail about this point.



Cupid Interceding with Zeus for Psyche
Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino) (1483-1520)
Fresco, 1518-19
Villa Farnesina alla Lungara, Rome, Italy



Bow-Carving Cupid
Parmigianino (Francesco Mazzola) (1503-40)
Oil on wood, ca. 1533-34
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria

However, although resembling a god, Flavian is not one, and consequently reposes, in all of his naked, dying splendour, ‘with a sharply contracted hand in the hand of Marius, to his almost surprised joy, winning him now to an absolutely self-forgetful devotion’ (I, p.118), a devotion consummated through a rather-nuptial embrace, as Flavian, barely conscious, is held by Marius amid the scattered fragments of his own epithalamion, the *Pervigilium Veneris*¹: ‘In the darkness Marius lay down beside him, faintly shivering now in the sudden cold, to lend him his own warmth, undeterred by the fear of contagion which had kept other people from passing near the house’ (I, p.119).

Even after Flavian’s death, Marius clings, in memory, to Flavian’s body, the body of a ‘friend’ whom he now clearly recognises as his ‘belovèd’:

It was to the sentiment of the body, and the affections it defined — the flesh, of whose force and colour that wandering Platonic soul was but so frail a residue or abstract — he must cling. The various pathetic traits of the beloved, suffering, perished body of Flavian, so deeply pondered, had made him a materialist, but with something of the temper of a devotee. (I, p.125)

This description seems a Paterian embellishment on Henry Wallis’s painting *The Death of Chatterton* (for which Pater’s acquaintance George Meredith [1828-1909] had served as the model), though Pater provides his own Roman Thomas Chatterton with a *Divo Amico* to soothe his passing, to hold his chilling hand, recalling one of the last poems composed by John Keats, Chatterton’s staunchest devotee and defender:

This living hand, now warm and capable
Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
And in the icy silence of the tomb,
So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
That thou would wish thine own heart dry of blood
So in my veins red life might stream again,
And thou be conscience-calm’d — see here it is
I hold it towards you — ²

¹ Probably written in the second or third century CE, the anonymous *Pervigilium Veneris* (*Vigil of Venus*) celebrates the annual rejuvenation of Nature through the goddess. Of Pater’s attribution of this poem to Flavian, a poem that Pater has here translated, Donoghue suggests that it is ‘a freedom Pater takes because no other poet is known to have written it’ (p.193). ‘The question regarding the author of the *Pervigilium Veneris* is still a *lis sub judice*. Aldus, Erasmus, and Meursius, attributed it to Catullus; but subsequent editors have, with much more probability, contended that its age is considerably later’ — [Anonymous], ‘The Vigil of Venus: Translated from the Latin’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 53.332 (June 1843), pp.715-17 (p.716). About ‘the blatant sexuality of the *Pervigilium Veneris*’, see Thomas M. Woodman, *Politeness and Poetry in the Age of Pope* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1989), p.61.

² Elizabeth Cook, ed., *John Keats* (Oxford Authors series) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.331. In ‘Wilde the Journalist’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar*



The Death of Chatterton

Henry Wallis (1830-1916)

Oil on canvas, 1856

Tate Collection, London, UK

Solemn years pass before Marius develops another ‘friendship’, this time with a young Praetorian guard named Cornelius, ‘a very honourable-looking youth, in the rich habit of a military knight’, whose voice is so entrancing that Marius, rather romantically, ‘seemed to hear that voice again in his dreams, uttering his name’ (I, p.167). As they depart together for Rome, these two travellers, who have only just met, begin a conversation that

left [them] with sufficient interest in each other to insure an easy companionship for the remainder of their journey. In time to come, Marius was to depend very much on the *preferences*, the personal judgments, of the comrade who now laid his hand so brotherly on his shoulder. (I, p.168, emphasis added)

These ‘preferences’ (a word that, even for the Victorians, often possessed homoerotic and paederastic connotations) determined the *intention* behind this new hand laid ‘brotherly’ upon Marius’s shoulder, the hand of an Imperial guard who ‘seemed to carry about with him, in that privileged world of comely usage to which he belonged, the atmosphere of some still more jealously exclusive circle’ (I, p.169). Unlike Flavian, who had surrounded himself with flamboyance, who had garnered the admiring gazes of his fellows, and who had expired as an exhibitionist at a casement, in the nude, Cornelius surrounds himself with an atmosphere both discreet and graceful, an atmosphere about which he manoeuvres with the ease of an initiate — undoubtedly a physical initiate — for ‘the discretion of Cornelius, his energetic clearness and purity, were a charm, rather physical than moral [...] with its exigency, its warnings, its restraints’ (I,

Wilde, ed. by Peter Raby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.69-79, John Stokes writes: ‘[Wilde] never makes explicit references to his sexuality, but he does return to topics that have a long homoerotic history: Keats and Chatterton, [etc.]’ (p.77).

p.234). Cornelius's 'discretion' displays itself as a physical 'charm', a charm that protectively (over)shadows his intimacy with Marius, like 'the atmosphere of some still more jealously exclusive circle', a circle perhaps analogous to the modern Western concept of 'homosexual code' (to borrow phrasing employed by Linda Dowling), a 'code' that often gains discretion through ambiguity, an ambiguity about which Pater was himself well versed.¹

Not surprisingly, one of the novel's most flagrantly ambiguous passages follows a criticism of the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE), who was self-fashioned as a Platonic philosopher-king, for despising the 'charm' of the human body (the emphasis is added):

And here again, in opposition to an inhumanity like *this*, presenting *itself* to [Marius] as nothing less than a kind of sin against nature, the person of Cornelius sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body; at first, as but one of the consequences of his material or sensualistic philosophy. To Cornelius, the body of man was unmistakably, as a later seer terms it, the one temple in the world ('we touch Heaven when we lay our hand upon a human body'), and the proper object of a sort of worship, or sacred service, in which the very finest gold might have its seemliness and due symbolic use.

(1885, II, pp.59-60)

A standard reading of the above would suggest that 'this' and 'itself' both refer to 'the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius' (a philosophy expressed in his *Meditations*), with the first sentence translatable into the following:

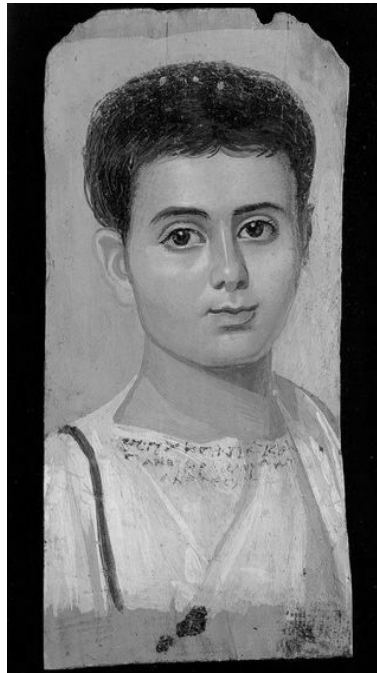
In opposition to an inhumanity like that presented by the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, a philosophy that Marius believed to be nothing less than a kind of 'sin against nature' because it despised the body, the person of Cornelius sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body.

Since the antecedent of 'itself' is syntactically ambiguous, another reading is possible, an erotic reading in which the antecedent is not the 'philosophy of Marcus Aurelius' or 'this', but instead 'the person of Cornelius':

In opposition to an inhumanity like that presented by the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, a philosophy that despises the body, the person of Cornelius, 'presenting' itself to Marius as nothing less than a kind of 'sin against nature', sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body.

¹ Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), not one of Pater's intimates, registered the following impression after meeting Pater in 1886: '[Pater's] manner is that of one carrying weighty ideas without spilling them' — as quoted in Paul D. L. Turner, *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p.101. Donoghue asserts that this discretionary 'manner' may have involved a conscious split into a private self and a constructed, public self: 'In the middle world one may choose to live by nearly any values, so long as one doesn't overtly challenge the dominant forces in law and government. Or one can divide one's life into two parts, public and private, and live differently in each' (p.317).

This second alternative — which describes the physical interaction between Marius and Cornelius as a ‘sin against nature’, a traditional euphemism for homoeroticism and paederasty oft employed in the *Old Bailey Proceedings* — allows Pater to establish an opposition between the Stoic asceticism of Marcus Aurelius and the Epicurean eroticism of Marius with Cornelius. This subversive reading is facilitated and substantiated by Cornelius’s rather prurient insistence that ‘the body of man was [...] the one temple in the world’ and that ‘we touch Heaven when we lay our hands upon a human body’.



**Fayum mummy portrait of a boy
inscribed with his name, *Eutyches***

Roman (from Roman Egypt)

Encaustic on limewood, ca. 100-150 CE

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA

Cornelius, ‘the comrade who now laid his hand so brotherly on [Marius’s] shoulder’, inaugurated an intimacy that is not fully appreciated by Marius until their stay together at White-nights, Marius’s childhood home: ‘It was just then that Marius felt, as he had never done before, the value to himself, the overpowering charm, of his friendship. “More than brother!” — he felt — “like a son also!”’ contrasting the fatigue of soul which made himself in effect an

older man, with the irrepressible youth of his companion' (II, p.209).¹ Amidst the tranquillity of their stay at White-nights and their leisurely journey back to Rome, Marius begins to appreciate the paederastic overtones inherent in his relationship with the 'irrepressibly young' Cornelius — for, in this relationship, Marius is cast in the role of 'inspirer' rather than 'hearer'. These overtones are accentuated as they wander

hither and thither, leisurely, among the country-places thereabout, [...] [coming] one evening to a little town [...] which had even then its church and legend — the legend and holy relics of the martyr Hyacinthus, a young Roman soldier, whose blood had stained the soil of this place in the reign of the emperor Trajan.
(II, p.210)

Pater's choice of the name 'Hyacinthus' for this martyr — especially since he was a Roman soldier as young and as Christian as Cornelius — serves as a Classical allusion to the paederastic beloved of Apollo, a boy killed by the machinations of Zephyr, a lesser deity angered that the boy's ardour rested with another. Similarly, a jealous and self-deified Trajan martyred the young Roman Hyacinthus because of his love for Christ, a devotion that Trajan could also not accept gracefully. Seemingly a composite of several martyrdoms of St Hyacinths during the reign of Trajan (one of those, of a Chamberlain to the Emperor),² this martyrdom, as a fictional detail supplied by Pater, suggests that an analogy is

¹ This reference to 'more than brother' derives from the intimacy between David and his 'friend' Jonathan, as expressed in 2 Samuel 1.26: 'My brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women' (KJV). To illustrate that, in the nineteenth century, this phrase would have been interpreted within the context of that 'friendship', consider the opening line of Richard Parkinson's poem 'Jonathan's Farewell to David': 'Farewell! Farewell! the word has pass'd, oh! more than brother dear!' — *Poems, Sacred and Miscellaneous* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1832), p.36. In *The Sexual Perspective*, Cooper writes: 'The strong relationship between David and Jonathan continues to provide a means of suggesting the sensitivities of the homosexual presence' (p.xvii). In 'The Ladder of Love', in *Plato's Symposium*, trans. by Seth Benardete, with commentaries by Allan Bloom and Seth Benardete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp.55-178, Allan Bloom writes:

The relationship between David and Jonathan is the only example in the Hebrew Bible of what one would call an admirable friendship. It is a source of outrage to Jonathan's father, Saul, that his son prefers his friend to his father, which he indeed does. For Saul, the primacy of the family relations is so great that the threat to them posed by this friendship can only appear a perversion and a crime. In ancient Hebrew, there is no distinct word for one's friend; it is the same as that for one's neighbor or fellow. (Pp.62-63)

² For the various St Hyacinths of the 2nd century CE, see The Benedictine Monks of St Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate, *Book of the Saints: A Dictionary of Servants of God Canonised by the Catholic Church: Extracted from the Roman & Other Martyrologies* (London: A. & C. Black, 1921), p.139.

being drawn between Marius's relationship to Cornelius and Apollo's paederastic relationship to Hyacinth. Unlike Marius's earlier relationship with Flavian — an interaction with Cyrenaic philosophy and its 'eagerness [...] to taste and see and touch' (I, p.201) — Marius's relationship with Cornelius is an encapsulation of the perfect and eternal love of 'comrades' expressed by the likes of Apollo and Hyacinth, the core love of Pater's *Weltanschauung*, a love that he elucidates in *Plato and Platonism*:

Brothers, comrades, who could not live without each other, they were the most fitting patrons of a place in which friendship, comradeship, like theirs, came to so much. Lovers of youth they remained, those enstarred types of it, arrested thus at that moment of miraculous good fortune as a consecration of the clean, youthful friendship, 'passing even the love of woman' [...] A part of their duty and discipline, it was also their great solace and encouragement. The beloved and the lover [were] side by side through their long days of eager labour, and above all on the battlefield. (P.231)

Beyond such mortal 'friendship' and 'comradeship' — 'the beloved and the lover side by side', which between Marius and Flavian elaborated into a kind of touch, between Marius and Cornelius into a kind of art — Marius also interacts, in much the same way, with aesthetic and philosophical masterpieces, an interaction that elaborates into a kind of 'abstract friendship', a kind of 'mystic companionship': 'With this mystic companion he had gone a step onward out of the merely objective pagan existence. Here was already a master in that craft of self-direction, which was about to play so large a part in the forming of human mind, under the sanction of the Christian church' (*Marius*, II, pp.50-51).¹ Although 'yearning [...] for audible or visible companionship' (1885, II, p.95), Marius finds, besides his relationship with Cornelius, a novel companionship both inaudible and invisible, arising not from intimacy with highly impassioned 'friends' like Flavian or beloved 'comrades' like Cornelius, but from aesthetic and philosophical masterpieces, masterpieces that allow for an intimate familiarity with eminent minds, whether living or dead:

On this day truly no mysterious light, no irresistibly leading hand from afar reached him; only the peculiarly tranquil influence of its first hour increased steadily upon him. [...] Companionship, indeed, familiarity with others, gifted in this way or that, or at least pleasant to him, had been [...] the chief delight of the journey. And was it only the resultant general sense of such familiarity, diffused through his memory, that in a while suggested the question whether

¹ What must be kept in mind is that Marius's preferred proximity to early Christianity arises *only* because he finds no other alternative from which to choose: 'To understand the influence upon him of what follows the reader must remember that it was an experience which came amid a deep sense of vacuity in life. The fairest products of the earth seemed to be dropping to pieces, as if in men's very hands, around him. How real was their sorrow, and his!' (II, pp.128-29).

there had not been — besides Flavian, besides Cornelius even, and amid the solitude which in spite of ardent friendship he had perhaps loved best of all things — some other companion, an unfailing companion, ever at his side throughout; doubling his pleasure in the roses by the way, patient of his peevishness or depression, sympathetic above all with his grateful recognition [...] of the fact that he was there at all? (II, pp.65-67)

As this ‘familiarity’ intensifies, Marius no longer questions the tentative existence of this ‘abstract friend’, this *familiar spirit*, for ‘that divine companion figured no longer as but an occasional wayfarer beside him; but rather as the unfailing “assistant”, without whose inspiration and concurrence he could not breathe or see, instrumenting his bodily senses, rounding, supporting his imperfect thoughts’ (II, p.70). Further, ‘the resultant sense of companionship, of a person beside him, evoked the faculty of conscience’ (II, p.71), a conscience that Marius recognises as also present in the early acolytes of Christianity: ‘Surely, in this strange new society he had touched upon for the first time to-day — in this strange family, like “a garden enclosed” — was the fulfilment of all the preferences, the judgments, of that half-understood friend, which of late years had been his protection so often amid the perplexities of life’ (II, p.107).¹ The vagueness of Pater’s phrasing — ‘that half-understood friend’ — allows this description to fit equally his ‘friend’ Cornelius and his ‘abstract friend’. Marius’s ‘sense also of a living person at his side’ (II, p.218) — a sense that his ‘abstract friend’ provides — serves to tranquillise and to inspire him, to augment his sensations and to solidify his thoughts, such that even his feverish flailings on his deathbed are transformed into a sensual massage, as he is prepared by a group of Christians for his nuptial consummation with Death, figured as Christ (an image that would have held great appeal for Digby Dolben):

¹ This interest in certain aspects of early Christianity has a biographical referent for Pater: ‘Knowing that the peace of heart he once knew was ultimately a religious state, Pater began in 1878 attending the very Catholic liturgical services at St. Alban’s, Holborn, and St. Austin’s in the New Kent Road. These highly ritualistic services, reviving the spirit of early Christianity, began to bring some rest to his disquietude and also rendered special satisfactions to his aesthetic nature’ (Downes, *Portraits*, pp.59-60). Hilliard explains the added incentive behind Pater’s visits, at least to one of those churches: ‘Among those who regularly visited St. Austin’s and enjoyed its colourful ritual (without believing yet in Christianity) was Walter Pater, aesthete and historian of the Renaissance. His intimate friend was Richard Charles Jackson (Brother à Becket), a lay brother and so-called professor of Church History at the priory. At Pater’s request Jackson wrote a poem for his birthday:

Your darling soul I say is enflamed with love for me;
 Your very eyes do move I cry with sympathy:
 Your darling feet and hands are blessings ruled by love,
 As forth was sent from out the Ark a turtle dove! (P.193)

The people around his bed were praying fervently — *Abi! Abi! Anima Christiana!* [*Depart! Depart! Christian soul!*] In the moments of his extreme helplessness their mystic bread had been placed, had descended like a snowflake from the sky, between his lips. Gentle fingers had applied to hands and feet, to all those old passage-ways of the senses, through which the world had come and gone for him, now so dim and obstructed, a medicinale oil. It was the same people who, in the gray, austere evening of that day, took up his remains, and buried them secretly, with their accustomed prayers; but with joy also, holding his death, according to their generous view in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom; and martyrdom, as the church had always said, a kind of sacrament with plenary grace. (II, p.224)

Contrary to his previous fears that ‘from the drops of his blood there would spring no miraculous, poetic flowers’ (II, p.214), Marius’s ‘martyrdom’ springs forth as beautifully as did the flower commemorating Apollo’s beloved Hyacinth, for his ‘martyrdom’ results from actualising the Paterian ideal of ‘dexterously seizing’ the profound moment, from a willingness to sacrifice himself by taking the place of his beloved Cornelius, who was then under arrest, suspected of being a criminal, a Christian: ‘He had delivered his brother, after the manner he had sometimes vaguely anticipated as a kind of distinction in his destiny’ (II, p.213). By chronicling this imaginary ‘martyrdom for friendship’s sake’, and by casting it as the principal ennobling act of a life well lived, Pater has indeed voiced ‘an eloquent utterance’, an utterance validating homoerotic and pederastic passions as a heightened form of ‘friendship’ and ‘comradeship’, whether experienced in art or in life, an utterance validating a ‘cultural continuum’, particularly when that continuum is endowed with ‘classical motive’: ‘Had there been one to listen just then, there would have come, from the very depth of his desolation, an eloquent utterance at last, on the irony of men’s fates, on the singular accidents of life and death’ (II, pp.214-15).

Against the ‘eloquent utterance’ that ends Pater’s novel, Higgins’s claim that ‘like many Victorians [...] the one aspect of his “being” that [Pater] would and could not explore was his sexual identity, specifically his homoerotic sensibility’,¹ seems untenable. When Pater suggests that ‘of other people we cannot truly know even the feelings’, each having ‘a personality really unique’ (*Marius* I, p.138), he means only, contrary to Higgins’s claim, that *absolute* empathy is elusive. Nevertheless, aesthetic creation does allow a powerful intellect to ‘project in an external form that which is most inward in passion or sentiment’ (‘Winckelmann’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.168). It does allow others to perceive the world from his perspective: ‘Then, if we suppose [someone to be] an artist, he says to the reader, — I want you to see precisely what I see’ (‘Style’, *Appreciations*, p.28). In the creation of literature, this capacity for inspiring others with one’s ‘own strength and noble taste in things’ (*Platonism*, p.232) allows for the expression of the ‘most inward in passion or sentiment’, which is

¹ Higgins, ‘Piecemeal’, p.177.

especially attractive for a homoerotic or paederastic writer whose ‘being’ is particularly ‘inward’, as was the case with both Pater and Hopkins.

Recognising that methods of concealment, as well as revelation, are inherent to literary expression, such individuals acquire scrupulosity in regard to words and their phrasing, something Marius praises in Flavian:

For words, after all, words manipulated with all his delicate force, were to be the apparatus of a war for himself. To be forcibly impressed, in the first place; and in the next, to find the means of making visible to others that which was vividly apparent, delightful, of lively interest to himself, to the exclusion of all that was but middling, tame, or only half-true even to him — this scrupulousness of literary art actually awoke in Flavian, for the first time, *a sort of chivalrous conscience*. (I, p.96, emphasis added)

Far more than an idyllic notion, this ‘chivalrous conscience’ becomes, for Flavian,

a principle, the forcible apprehension of which made him jealous and fastidious in the selection of his intellectual food; often listless while others read or gazed diligently; never pretending to be moved out of mere complaisance to other people’s emotions: it served to foster in him a very scrupulous literary sincerity with himself. (I, p.103)

Because of his ‘scrupulous literary sincerity’, Flavian only finds palatable those qualities essential for greatness in literary masterpieces, qualities that Pater enumerates: ‘It is on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it’ (‘Style’, *Appreciations*, p.36). This greatness allows a master of letters to display ‘the unique word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, essay, or song, absolutely proper to the single mental presentation or vision within’ (p.27) — in other words, an ‘absolutely sincere apprehension of what is most real to him’ (p.34). By continual, scrupulous interaction with such literary masterpieces, a reader such as Flavian, with a copy of Apuleius in hand, encounters the interior lives of others: ‘Not less surely does it reach a genuine pathos; for the habit of noting and distinguishing one’s own most intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds’ (‘Postscript’, *Appreciations*, p.266).

Since it promised the power of ‘entering [...] into the intimate recesses of other minds’, Pater’s subjective approach to art became particularly attractive, by the 1880s — the decade that saw the emergence of the Uranian movement proper, according to Timothy d’Arch Smith — to ‘a new generation of literary men [who] began accepting homosexual sentiment as “part of the whole range of feeling which waited to be explored”, some claim[ing] that homosexuality was

often linked to the “artistic temperament”¹. This ‘small band of elite “Oxonian” souls’² embraced Pater’s Decadent vision, a vision proclaiming that ‘all art has a sensuous element, colour, form, sound’ (‘Winckelmann’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.167), a sensuous element that Pater made a habit of teasing from masterpieces of canonical culture, casting over the Victorian appreciation of literature and art a homoerotic and paederastic tint that is most noticeable in his treatment of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), about whom he writes: ‘Though [Leonardo] handles sacred subjects continually, he is the most profane of painters’ (*Renaissance* 1893, pp.93-94).

Because this ‘sensuous element’ must be teased out of masterpieces by the likes of Leonardo, it requires certain uncommon skills in reading; hence, as Dellamora observes, ‘Walter Pater promoted within the emergent academic field of literary criticism an oppositional mode of reading motivated by an affirmation of sexual and emotional ties between men’.³ The result was that a new generation of literary men, under Pater’s influence, began to employ their ‘artistic temperaments’ to craft profane, cloistral atmospheres conducive for the display of their own ‘erotic sentiments’, atmospheres hidden by Hopkinsian ‘underthought’. Yet these ‘elite Oxonian’ displays were only one aspect of the Uranian renaissance surfacing in Victorian society, which explains why Pater extends this sensuous vision far beyond his Oxonian contemporaries, suggesting that ‘not only scholars, but all disinterested lovers of books, will always look to [literature], as to all other fine art, for a refuge, a sort of cloistral refuge, from a certain vulgarity in the actual world’ (‘Style’, *Appreciations*, p.14). As far as its paederastic implications, Pater is ever conscious that his and his contemporaries’ works are part of a ‘cultural continuum’, a ‘classical motive’ that flows — despite the obstacles of ‘a certain vulgarity in the actual world’ (as for Gosse, a reference to the Victorian populace)⁴ and the claims of modern scholars (such as Foucault) — from the shores of the Tiber to the shores of the Thames, from the Greco-Romans to those of today, as Rictor Norton asserts:

Homosexuality is a broad stream which continues to run despite being dammed up and channelled off by social control. The evidence of history points to repression rather than construction as the shaping force of queer identity and

¹ Hilliard, p.197.

² David J. DeLaura, *Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold, and Pater* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p.230.

³ Richard Dellamora, *Apocalyptic Overtures: Sexual Politics and the Sense of an Ending* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), p.67.

⁴ ‘Ultimately, Pater’s views delineate, without coming to terms with, a public attitude that he could not overcome, ignore, or accommodate’ — Michael Patrick Gillespie, *Oscar Wilde and the Poetics of Ambiguity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), p.9.

culture. The opportunities for expressing queer desire have been increasingly restricted in modern times, but the desire remains the same.¹

Although Pater equally asserted that homoerotic and paederastic desires had flowed from the Greco-Roman period to his own, he recognised that, more often than not, they had done so underground. Such an existence, analogous to Cecilia's hidden church, was required in order to thwart hostile 'social control'. Hence, Pater believed that only within a 'cloistral refuge' could such desires be given their fullest expression, the only lingering problem being the construction and maintenance of such a 'refuge', a problem Pater addresses biographically through Leonardo and fictively through Marius.²

Because Pater's Marius 'remained, and must always be, of the poetic temper' (*Marius*, I, p.153), he needed such a 'cloistral refuge' from the vulgarity

¹ Rictor Norton, 'Essentialism', in *A Critique of Social Constructionism and Postmodern Queer Theory*, 1 June 2002 <<http://www.infont.demon.co.uk/social03.htm>> [last accessed 23 March 2006].

² While considering the proverbial 'homosexual closet' in *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), William N. Eskridge quotes John Horne Burns (1916-53), the author of *Lucifer with a Book* (1949), a novel in which a coterie of young homosexuals plays a crucial role:

The closet then became a metaphor for 'the absolute necessity for secrecy from the majority (which, immediately, included your family and the police, but also all other heterosexuals) regarding the truth of your sexuality'. At the same time the closet was a secret haven, it was one that an increasing number of homosexuals wanted to escape. Burns in the 1950s described his publication of *Lucifer* as his way to 'come out of the cloister'. (P.58)

In *The Social and Political Thought of Bertrand Russell: The Development of an Aristocratic Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Philip Ironside considers the impact that such a 'cloister' had on Bertrand Arthur William Russell (3rd Earl Russell; 1872-1970), the British philosopher, mathematician, and Nobel Laureate in Literature:

In [Bertrand] Russell's case, a conventional post-Wildean view of homosexuality was reinforced by a reluctance or inability to establish any degree of intimacy with members of his own sex. [...] The concealment of his feelings became habitual, [...] and after 1901 it again became something of a refuge: 'For my part', he wrote in 1902, 'I am constructing a mental cloister, in which my inner soul is to dwell in peace, while an outer simulacrum goes forth to meet the world. In this inner sanctuary I sit and think spectral thoughts'. [...] Russell's experiment with the 'double' does illustrate that the *fin de siècle* taste for masks was as prevalent as was the imitation of Pater's prose. (P.48)

This 'closet' became all the more necessary after Wilde's trials, as Lisa A. Golmitz notes: 'The conviction of Wilde in 1895 forced Aestheticism's promoters, of all sexual persuasions, back into the closet. [...] In 1895, public leniency for the Aesthetic project disappeared. The public art forum that Wilde had created in the 1880s was gone'— 'The Artist's Studio', in *Reading Wilde: Querying Spaces*, ed. by Marvin H. Taylor and Carolyn Dever (New York: NYU Press, 1995), pp.43-52 (pp.43-44).

of the outside world, a world unappreciative of ‘revelation, vision, the discovering of a vision, the *seeing* of a perfect humanity, in a perfect world’ (II, p.218). Although ‘his own temper, his early theoretic scheme of things, would have pushed him on to movement and adventure’, Marius’s life actually pushed him inwards, a ‘movement of observation only, or even of pure meditation’ (II, pp.208-09), a movement described in Pater’s *Renaissance* as ‘observation [...] dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind’ (‘Conclusion’, 1893, p.187), a meditative chamber suitable for intimate interaction with the highest forms of culture, forms that Pater describes as ‘the brightest enthusiasms the world has to show’ (‘Winckelmann’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.183), enthusiasms that allow the intellect ‘to feel itself alive’ (p.183).

Since he had lived his childhood in a ‘coy, retired place’ where nothing happened ‘without its full accompaniment of thought or reverie’ (I, p.13), for Marius ‘the whole of life seemed full of sacred presences’ (p.17). His familiarity with these ‘presences’ became as much a ‘manner of life’ (p.148) as it would for the young Leonardo, about whom Pater observes: ‘He learned [at Florence] the art of going deep, of tracking the sources of expression to their subtlest retreats, the power of an intimate presence in the things he handled’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.81). Dwelling within the ‘subtlest retreats’ — as Leonardo would later, in the Renaissance — Marius’s ‘manner of life’ allowed him to ‘become aware of the possibility of a large dissidence between an inward and somewhat exclusive world of vivid personal apprehension, and the unimproved, unheightened reality of the life of those about him’ (I, p.133), a world that considered his Cyrenaic idealism as nothing more than an elevated, pompous form of Hedonism. The Roman world was unable to recognise that the ‘criterion of values’ for Marius’s Cyrenaic philosophy was ‘not pleasure, but fulness of life, and “insight”’ (I, pp.152; 151), in much the same way that the Victorian world was unable to recognise the same for Pater’s Cyrenaic philosophy — even members of his own coterie, such as Wilde. ‘I wish they wouldn’t call me “a hedonist”’, Pater commented to Gosse in 1876, after reading a newspaper article that made reference to him. ‘It produces such a bad effect on the minds of people who don’t know Greek’.¹ This ‘bad effect’ was what the wider Victorian world stood aghast at, aghast that such a ‘hedonistic’ Cyrenaic philosophy ever inspired its followers with an ‘eagerness, just then, to taste and see and touch’ (1885, I, p.199), an ‘eagerness’ so unlike the ‘immobility’ that Marius characterises as ‘a sort of ideal in the Roman religion’ (II, p.178) and culture, a characterisation that, by his continual authorial asides, Pater manages to extend to his own ‘immobile’ and ‘blasé’ contemporaries, whose opposition to his ‘hedonism’ was usually couched in religious terms, particularly in regard to the ‘sins of Sodom’ to which his ‘hedonism’ was rightly thought to give license.

What nullifies much of the baseness attributed by society to such a ‘hedonism’ is that the Cyrenaic ‘eagerness’ that Pater advocates can, in fact,

¹ As quoted in Edmund Gosse, ‘Walter Pater: A Portrait’, *Contemporary Review*, 67 (December 1894), pp.795-810; reprinted in Seiler, *A Life* (this passage is from p.191).

motivate someone like Marius to dive into ‘that full stream of refined sensation’ (II, p.26), to live forever in that

school of Cyrene, in that comparatively fresh Greek world, [where] we see this philosophy where it is least *blasé*, as we say, in its most pleasant, its blithest and yet perhaps its wisest form, youthfully bright in the youth of European thought. But it grows young again for a while in almost every youthful soul. It is spoken of sometimes as the appropriate utterance of jaded men; but in them it can hardly be sincere, or, by the nature of the case, an enthusiasm. [...] The Cyrenaic doctrine, then, realised as a motive of strenuousness or enthusiasm, is not so properly the utterance of the ‘jaded Epicurean’, as of the strong young man in all the freshness of thought and feeling, fascinated by the notion of raising his life to the level of a daring theory, while, in the first genial heat of existence, the beauty of the physical world strikes potently upon his wide-open, unwearied senses. He discovers a great new poem every spring, with a hundred delightful things he too has felt, but which have never been expressed, or at least never so truly, before.

(II, pp.15-17)

This Cyrenaic ‘eagerness’ to dive into ‘that full stream of refined sensation’, an ‘eagerness’ expressed most authentically by the utterances of a ‘strong young man in all the freshness of thought and feeling’, is what attracted Pater both erotically and intellectually, is what inspired him to seek paederastic ‘hearers’ from among Balliol undergraduates like Hardinge or from among London actors like Eversfield. Pater’s desire for contact with such ‘wide-open, unwearied senses’ is what made him willing to risk scandal and possible arrest — perhaps even Marius’s ‘martyrdom’ for love’s sake — though he hoped that a protective discretion like Cornelius’s would provide him with a ‘cloistral refuge’ from the vulgar, their gossip, and their draconian laws, hence protect him from the fate of Johnson, Solomon, Browning, and Wilde. Pater’s actualisation of such a discretion is what fostered that absence of directly biographical evidence that made him ‘arguably the most private Victorian’, a factor that lends to Marius much of his autobiographical resonance.

As ‘the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world’ (‘Conclusion’, *Renaissance* 1893, pp.187-88), the refined Cyrenaic doctrine that surrounded Marius with a ‘cloistral refuge’ came linked to an attendant loneliness, a loneliness that began to dissipate under the realisation that his maturing aesthetic sensibility could be employed to express his most inward impressions, a sensibility that Pater describes in his *Renaissance*:

The basis of all artistic genius lies in the power of conceiving humanity in a new and striking way, of putting a happy world of its own creation in place of the meaner world of our common days, generating around itself an atmosphere with a novel power of refraction, selecting, transforming, recombining the images it transmits, according to the choice of the imaginative intellect.

(‘Winckelmann’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.170)

Acquiring this sensibility, a sensibility that perceives humanity in ‘a new and striking way’, a sensibility that allows one ‘to burn always with this hard, gem-like flame [and] to maintain this ecstasy’, suggests Pater, ‘is success in life’ (‘Conclusion’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.189). This success bestows a ‘colourless, unclassified purity of life, with its blending and interpenetration of intellectual, spiritual, and physical elements, still folded together, pregnant with the possibilities of a whole world closed within it’ (‘Winckelmann’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.174), an imaginative world impregnated by a Paterian sensibility, as is illustrated by Flavian as he shares his copy of Apuleius with Marius:

The two lads were lounging together over a book, half-buried in a heap of dry corn, in an old granary — the quiet corner to which they had climbed out of the way of their noisier companions on one of their blandest holiday afternoons. They looked round: the western sun smote through the broad chinks of the shutters. How like a picture! and it was precisely the scene described in what they were reading, with just that added poetic touch in the book which made it delightful and select, and, in the actual place, the ray of sunlight transforming the rough grain among the cool brown shadows into heaps of gold. (I, p.55)

Such may have been the glories of an adolescence lived in Imperial Rome, with its transforming freedoms — but what of the glories of an adolescence lived in Victorian London? Anticipating this question, Pater responds with a challenge, asserting that ‘life in modern London even, in the heavy glow of summer, is stuff sufficient for the fresh imagination of a youth to build its “palace of art” of’ (*Marius* II, p.17), a palace where humanity and its mores are ‘freshly’ perceived and expressed, whether in modern London or in ancient Rome.

Embracing Pater’s mature dictum that ‘what we need in the world, over against that [bland existence that others lead], is a certain permanent and general power of compassion — humanity’s standing force of self-pity’ (*Marius* II, p.182), Marius sought for a ‘humanity, a universal order, the great polity, its aristocracy of elect spirits, the mastery of their example over their successors’, a ‘fresh’ humanity whose mores are ‘more than an intellectual abstraction’ (II, pp.11-12). Only in the early Christian concept of a ‘supreme city, [an] invisible society, whose conscience was become explicit in its inner circle of inspired souls’ (II, p.10), did Marius find this ‘humanity’. In this ‘fresh’ faith’s ‘humanity, or even its humanism, in its generous hopes for man, its common sense and alacrity of cheerful service, its sympathy with all creatures, its appreciation of beauty and daylight’ (II, p.115), Marius found materials from which to build his own ‘palace of art’, inspired by ‘a cleansing and kindling flame at work in [early Christianity and its rites], which seemed to make everything else Marius had ever known look comparatively vulgar and mean’ (II, p.131). For Pater, as well as for his Marius, this early church was a potent symbol, for it was within just such a ‘supreme city’, an ‘invisible society’, an ‘inner circle of inspired souls’ that Pater envisioned the paederastic Hellenism that he advocated finding a space to flourish, at least for its ‘palace of art’.

This subsequent refinement (not change of perspective) was due, in great measure, to the maturing of ideas that Marius had embraced under Flavian's influence, ideas that were further developed and adjusted through contact with Cornelius and the humanity of Cornelius's church, ideas that were augmented through intimacy with his own 'divine companion': this is an apt expression of the subsequent refinement in Pater's own perspectives and perceptions, as is made clear by that footnote that he later added to the then-infamous 'Conclusion' of his *Renaissance*. In fact, this subsequent refinement can be illustrated by pairing a précis of *The Renaissance* with a précis of *Marius the Epicurean*, with the following attempting to don Pater's baroque style:

Expanding his time and vitality, first by refining his sympathy with the old masters — especially Renaissance artists who derived their sweetness from the Classical world and their curious strength from the Medieval, a combination of the profane and the sacred — then by exploring the finer gradations of the modern arts of music, poetry, and painting — an aesthete exposes his sensual organs to the strange pagan beauties of art and mood and personality that are never flaccid, even in Christian culture, beauties that penetrate and stimulate and attune his otherwise brief and trivial life, filling it with as many brilliant sins and exquisite amusements as possible, impregnating him with culture and solace and grace, leaving behind only a relish, a longing for those experiences to happen again. (*Renaissance*, my précis)

In Christianity's humanistic ideal of a youth who, although parting with everything for his cause, still announces his success, as if foreseeing his own worship amid the vulgar pagan world — Marius had found an imaginative stimulus, a possible conscience, a chivalry analogous to his own ample vision of that perpetual companion who was diffused through his memory of strange souls, transforming his vague hopes into effective desires, doubling his pleasures, bringing him gratitude for all aspects of his life, anticipating one great act, one critical moment, which, though it comes easily, changes him and his life forever. (*Marius*, my précis)

Notice how the first involves a form of self-refinement through contact with the choicest of aesthetic and philosophical works, stimulating and attuning one's brief life in order to create a form of exquisite 'self-culture'; the second, a renunciation of everything, even one's brief life, if that is what is required to achieve an ideal, an ideal bastioned by a 'sort of chivalrous conscience'. This refinement of perspective — the distinct difference between the Pater of *The Renaissance* and the Pater of *Marius the Epicurean* — is something that even many in Pater's coterie seem to have been unable to grasp, despite its centrality to Pater's concept of a 'supreme city', an 'invisible society', an 'inner circle', despite the fact that they were the individuals Pater expected to constitute that 'city', 'society', 'circle'. While *The Renaissance* sought to justify a necessary first step — the development of 'self-culture' — *Marius the Epicurean* sought to broaden that 'culture' beyond the 'self', beyond 'the individual in his isolation'.

Pater fully recognised that this second step often requires an act of renunciation for the ‘greater good’.

Although ‘Chapter Five’ will deal more fully with how this relates to Wilde, let it merely be noted that this Paterian concept of renunciation, of a youth parting with everything for his cause, was beyond Wilde’s comprehension, hence worthy of his humoured or peeved disdain. In *The Critic as Artist*, Wilde expresses through Gilbert that ‘self-denial is simply a method by which man arrests his progress, and self-sacrifice a survival of the mutilation of the savage, part of that old worship of pain which is so terrible a factor in the history of the world’.¹ While the Pater of *The Renaissance* might well have seconded this claim, the Pater of *Marius the Epicurean* had come instead to appreciate both ‘self-denial’ and ‘self-sacrifice’, had come instead to realise that the ultimate refinement of ‘self-culture’ resides in knowing how to assist one’s ‘comrades’ as well as the wider culture, in knowing how to facilitate the ‘cultural continuum’ (a phrase employed here in its fullest paederastic and homoerotic sense) — even if that assistance requires one to remain silent and/or to stand aside, a form of Paterian ‘martyrdom’ ever accompanied by Marius’s fear that ‘from the drops of his blood there would spring no miraculous, poetic flowers’ (II, p.214). This acquiescence is a Paterian willingness to accept banishment, if need be, alongside those scurrilous free spirits whom Dante relegates to the Vestibule of Hell as ‘unworthy alike of heaven and hell [...] [and placed in] that middle world in which men take no side in great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make great refusals’ (‘Sandro Botticelli’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.43).

Given the advantages of having acquired an aesthetic education complete with ‘all the finer sorts of literature’ (*Marius*, I, p.147), complete with an appreciation of the vulgarity and meanness of conventional humanity, Pater, like his persona Marius, felt compelled to enlighten others, to assist the wider culture, to maintain the ‘authentic’ cultural continuum stretching back to the Greeks — even though Pater recognised that this ‘assistance’ might only ever be appreciated by an extremely limited Decadent and Uranian audience, his ‘inner circle’. This is Pater’s conciliatory, not dissident impulse, for he was fully aware that his own Cyrenaic doctrine ‘with its worship of beauty — of the body — of physical beauty’ would only ‘perform its legitimate moral function, as a “counsel of perfection”, for the few’ (*Marius* 1885, II, p.32).

In Leonardo da Vinci, Pater found an exemplar of this ‘counsel of perfection’, an exemplar who ‘seemed to his contemporaries to be the possessor of some unsanctified and secret wisdom’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.78), a wisdom that transformed his studio into a form of Platonic academy ‘for the few’, specifically for

¹ Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.1108-55 (p.1122).

Andrea Salaino, beloved of Leonardo for his curled and waving hair [...] and afterwards his favourite pupil and servant. Of all the interests in living men and women which may have filled his life at Milan, this attachment alone is recorded. And in return Salaino identified himself so entirely with Leonardo, that the picture of *St. Anne*, in the Louvre, has been attributed to him. It illustrates Leonardo's usual choice of pupils [...] men with just enough genius to be capable of initiation into his secret, for the sake of which they were ready to efface their own individuality. [...] Out of the secret places of a unique temperament [Leonardo] brought strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown.

(1893, pp.91-92)¹

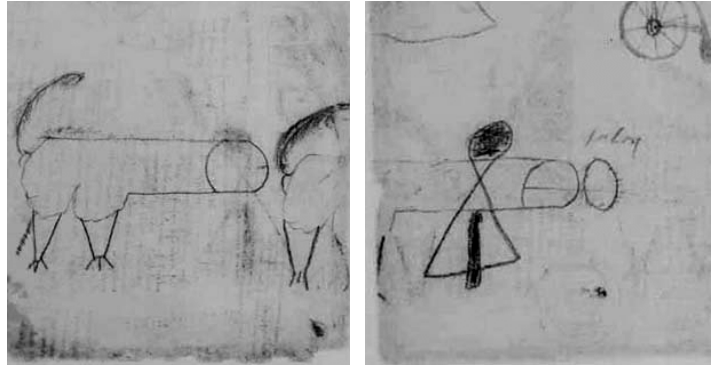
Necessity dictated that the eroticised 'wisdom' into which young Giacomo Salai (Pater's Andrea Salaino)² was to be 'initiated' remain a 'secret', as Leonardo knew from personal experience. In early April 1476, an anonymous message was delivered to the Ufficiali di Notte e dei Monasteri at the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, accusing Leonardo of *sodomia* with a seventeen-year-old model and prostitute, Jacopo Saltarelli. As a result, Leonardo spent two months in prison awaiting the court's decision: 'Though the charges were later dismissed for lack of evidence, and even though death was not the usual sentence for those convicted, the possibility of a capital sentence gave the more cautious good reason to be discreet'.³ After this ominous experience, Leonardo indeed became more discreet, with his desires eventually directed, more safely, towards his young apprentices, apprentices who were primarily chosen, as Pater asserts, for their beauty, as with Salai, chosen for 'his curled and waving hair'. Nevertheless, two manuscript pages of what is now the *Codex Atlanticus* (f. 132^v, 133^v) indiscreetly evince — in either a playful or a taunting way — that the relationship between Leonardo and his favoured Salai was far from chaste or covert:

¹ Pater's use of the word 'men' seems a deliberate attempt to disguise the fact that Leonardo's principal 'pupil', Giacomo Salai, was only a boy. The painting referred to is Leonardo's *The Virgin and Child with St Anne* (oil on wood; 1510; Musée du Louvre, Paris, France).

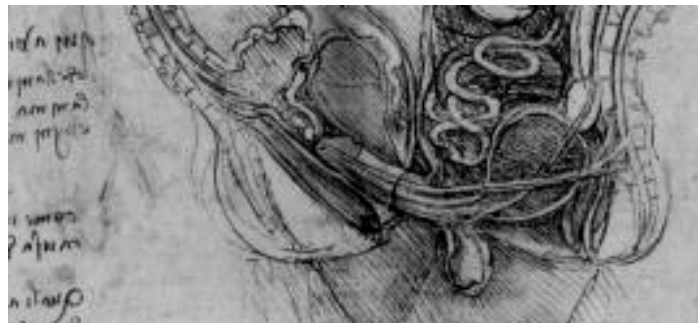
² In Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*, ed. by Kenneth Clark (New York: Collins, 1967), Clark observes that 'there was no such painter as Andrea Salaino. The name seems to be due to a confusion between Andrea Solario and Giacomo Salai. The latter was the boy with curly hair who joined Leonardo in 1490 and stayed with him throughout his life' (p.116, note). About the problematic name of Giacomo Salai, Wayne V. Andersen writes: 'Freud was under the impression that Salai and Giacomo were separate boys, but Salai's documented name was Giacomo de' Caprotti detto Salaij. I have found him also referred to as Andrea Salaino' — *Freud, Leonardo Da Vinci, and the Vulture's Tail: A Refreshing Look at Leonardo's Sexuality* (New York: Other Press, 2001), pp.133-34. The engraving by Charles Henry Jeens that appears on the title page of Pater's *Renaissance* is based on a chalk drawing attributed, at the time, to Leonardo, and believed to be a portrait of Salai (which it might actually be).

³ Greenberg, p.308. See also James M. Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), p.197; Andersen, pp.97-100.

After 1490 [when Leonardo took him in at the age of ten], he was no longer called Giacomo, but Salai. In 1490, Leonardo would have been thirty-seven or thirty-eight. Thought to be the clearest piece of evidence that Leonardo used Salai sexually is a cartoonish sketch in one of Leonardo's notebooks. It depicts a line of walking phalluses aimed at a circle, a hole that is assumed to be an anus [...] Above the circle is inscribed "Salai". [...] On the same sheet are Leonardo's invention of a bicycle and a sketch of the male head in profile.¹



Codex Atlanticus, f. 132^v, 133^v (details)
 [Household of ?] Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)
 Autograph paper codex, ca. 1478-1518
 Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, Italy



Coition Sheet (detail)
 Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)
 Pen and ink on paper, ca. 1492
 Royal Library, Windsor Castle, Windsor, UK

¹ 'Salai' means 'little devil'; see Anderson, p.134. By comparing these cartoonish sketches with Leonardo's *Coition Sheet*, it becomes immediately apparent that these 'prancing penises', as well as the 'bicycle' sketch, are not from Leonardo's hand, and were probably sketched by one or more of his apprentices (the 'bicycle' perhaps from a model that Leonardo had already fabricated).

However, since nothing about these phallic images in the *Codex Atlanticus* bespeaks the hand of Leonardo, they were likely drawn in a playful way by Salai himself (with someone noting this by supplying the boy's name) or by one or more of Leonardo's other apprentices, as a taunting commentary on the sodomitical acts that were either explicit or implicit in Salai's position as the artist's favourite, both in the studio and in the bedroom. A pair of penises prancing towards a hole labelled 'Salaj' is a secret best veiled from the eyes of the many (which certainly accounts for those two halves of a severed manuscript sheet being pasted to mountings by Pompeo Leoni at the end of the sixteenth century, concealing those prancing penises until restoration work on the *Codex Atlanticus* in the 1960s). This salacious (or 'Salai-cious') drawing provides a clue to unravelling the paederastic pedagogy 'encoded' within Leonardo's aesthetic works, a paederastic 'Da Vinci Code' that was of particular interest to Pater and his Uranians, those masters of 'underthought'. This was a 'code' that could only be unravelled by an initiate for whom 'the veil that [...] lay over the works of the old masters of art' had been lifted.

As if schooled, like Salai, by a Leonardo, Marius had acquired 'a peculiar manner of intellectual confidence, as of one who had indeed been initiated into a great secret [...] Though with an air so disengaged, he seemed to be living so intently in the visible world! [...] The veil that was to be lifted for him lay over the works of the old masters of art' (*Marius*, I, pp.157). This 'intellectual confidence', a confidence that emboldened and enabled Marius to unexpurgate the subtleties of ancient art, had been gained through

refining all the instruments of inward and outward intuition, of developing all their capacities, of testing and exercising one's self in them, till one's whole nature became one complex medium of reception, towards the vision — the 'beatific vision', if we really cared to make it such — of our actual experience in the world. Not the conveyance of an abstract body of truths or principles, would be the aim of the right education of one's self, or of another, but the conveyance of an art — an art in some degree peculiar to each individual character.

(I, p.143)

At a Classical academy, an academy resembling, at least in paederastic import, the studio of Leonardo — 'the school, one of many imitations of Plato's Academy in the old Athenian garden, lay in a quiet suburb of Pisa, and had its grove of cypresses, its porticoes, a house for the master, its chapel and images' (I, p.46) — Marius had gained an idiosyncratic education in the Platonism that Pater considered 'a highly conscious reassertion of one of the two constituent elements in the Hellenic genius, of the spirit of the highlands namely in which the early Dorian forefathers of the Lacedæmonians *had secreted their peculiar disposition*, in contrast with the mobile, the marine and fluid temper of the littoral Ionian people' (*Platonism*, pp.200-01, emphasis added). Pater's verb 'secreted' is a portmanteau of erotic suggestion, especially if 'disposition' is interpreted erotically: the Dorian 'disposition' was *secret—ed*, conveyed in secret from an

‘inspirer’ to his ‘hearer’; the Dorian ‘disposition’ was *secrete—d*, conveyed as a fluid (ejaculate) from an ‘inspirer’ into his ‘hearer’.¹ However, as Symonds explains in *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, for the Dorians this erotic relationship conveyed more than pleasure, more than a ‘disposition’ fostered by ejaculations ‘secreted in secret’. It literally conveyed the essence of the pederastic continuum — establishing, through a private pedagogy, a physical, mental, and emotional intimacy that was so durable that it became a revered ‘institution’ in Doric society:

The lover taught, the hearer learned; and so from man to man was handed down the tradition of heroism, the peculiar tone and temper of the state to which, in particular among the Greeks, the Dorians clung with obstinate pertinacity. Xenophon distinctly states that love was maintained among the Spartans with a view to education; and when we consider the customs of the state, by which boys were separated early from their homes and the influences of the family were almost wholly wanting, it is not difficult to understand the importance of the pederastic institution. The Lacedæmonian lover might represent his friend in the Assembly. He was answerable for his good conduct, and stood before him as a pattern of manliness, courage, and prudence. Of the nature of his teaching we may form some notion from the precepts addressed by the Megarian Theognis to the youth Kurnus. In battle the lovers fought side by side.²

Praised for its common sense by Benjamin Jowett and the other Oxford dons,³ Pater’s *Plato and Platonism* asserted discreetly that ‘the institutions of Sparta [which Symonds describes above] bore directly upon those of Victorian England’⁴ — or, more aptly, ‘bore directly into’ the educational institutions of

¹ In *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), William Armstrong Percy III notes that, in 1907, the classicist Eric Bethe ‘claimed that Dorian warriors solemnly and ritually injected youths anally with semen to make them grow strong and brave, much as certain primitive societies still did in his day. Bethe’s contemporaries almost unanimously rejected the analogy’ (p.17). ‘Bethe maintained that the pederastic initiation of Dorian youths into manhood had a sacral character. Since rituals of manhood were holy among the Dorians, their pederastic practices did not constitute true homosexuality but a type of phallus-worship: “The love act itself, as a holy act, in a holy place, was consummated according to officially recognized usages”’ (p.32). It is difficult to speculate whether Pater would have agreed or not with Bethe’s historical claim, a claim considered insupportable by Bethe’s immediate contemporaries and by scholars today. However, the sacramental quality of Bethe’s claim — that Greek pederastic acts constituted an absolute commingling of the sacred and the profane — might well have appealed to Pater on a philosophical and emotive, if not historical level.

² Symonds, *Greek Ethics* [1901], p.13.

³ See Robert and Janice A. Keefe, *Walter Pater and the Gods of Disorder* (Athens: Ohio State University Press, 1988).

⁴ Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s’, p.3. The sentence in full reads: ‘It is clear, for example, that Pater himself believed that the institutions of Sparta bore directly upon those of Victorian

Victorian England, especially after educators such as William Johnson (*later* Cory) and Oscar Browning had begun ‘secreting their peculiar disposition’ into the orifices, carnal or cerebral, of many a submissive Etonian. The key phrase here is ‘asserted discreetly’. Since these lectures were originally delivered to undergraduates in an introductory philosophy course — or, as Pater expresses in his prefatory note, ‘The Lectures of which this volume is composed were written for delivery to some young students of philosophy’ — and since these lectures were delivered in his official capacity as a university lecturer and published while he still retained that position, Pater could hardly have ‘asserted indiscreetly’ about Plato’s ‘paederastic pedagogy’. These ten lectures were designed to provide an overview of the Platonic canon; the Socratic Method; Socrates’ responses to Pre-Socratic philosophies about motion, inertia, and number; the differences between Xenophon’s Socrates and Plato’s; the Socratic conflict with sophistry; Plato’s theory of Ideas and his strategies of dialectic; the political and social dimensions of Plato’s ideal state; and Plato’s relationship to creativity. Only two of these lectures even vaguely consider paederasty: lecture six, ‘The Genius of Plato’, and eight, ‘Lacedæmon’. However, the little that can be gleaned from *Plato and Platonism*, such as the portmanteau ‘secreted’, is paederastically expressive and choice.

Surprisingly, few of Pater’s contemporaries, including Jowett, seem to have recognised or particularly considered the book’s subtle veneration of Dorian (or, early Spartan) paederastic practices:

These bodies [of the young male Spartans], moreover, are shaped by a discipline in which normative Victorian masculinity is perpetually violated: this emphatically conservative and masculine society articulates its social authority through the anathematized practice of pederasty. Yet Pater’s sympathy to this transgressive discipline was not idiosyncratic: in contemporary reviews, [...] Pater’s account of Sparta was ‘universally admired’.¹

Whether encapsulated in Spartan discipline or Platonic dialogues, the ‘paiderastic institution’ engendered a receptive temperament or ‘disposition’ in the young Greeks of antiquity, a temperament marked by the ‘strict indifference’ that Pater believed essential for encountering, whether in literature or in life, the brilliance of an individual like Plato:

England: the parallels he draws between the education of Spartan youth and the public schools and universities of England are too insistent for us to think otherwise’.

¹ Adams, p.461. Dorian paederasty was first dealt with in detail by Karl Otfried Müller in his *Die Dorer: Geschichten hellnischer Stämme und Städte*, which was translated into English by Henry Tufnell and George Cornwall Lewis as *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1830). This book considers Greek paederasty to have been an essential aspect of Greek culture. Dowling writes: ‘Whatever we decide, it is clear that Müller’s *Dorians* was a favorite book with Pater’ (‘*Ruskin’s*’, p.3). For ‘Dorianism’ as a broader concept for Pater and his contemporaries, see Dellamora, *Apocalyptic*, chapter 2.

The business of the young scholar therefore, in reading Plato, is not to take his side in a controversy, to adopt or refute Plato's opinions, to modify, or make apology for, what may seem erratic or impossible in him; still less, to furnish himself with arguments on behalf of some theory or conviction of his own. His duty is rather to follow intelligently, but with strict indifference, the mental process there, as he might witness a game of skill; better still, as in reading *Hamlet* or *The Divine Comedy*, so in reading *The Republic*, to watch, for its dramatic interest, the spectacle of a powerful, of a sovereign intellect, translating itself, amid a complex group of conditions which can never in the nature of things occur again, at once pliant and resistant to them, into a great literary monument. (*Platonism*, pp.10-11)¹

Pruriently, Pater suggests that the brilliance of Plato, a brilliance enacted in his dialogues, arose from the same 'sensuous faculty' that made him a superior lover, for he too 'had secreted [his] peculiar disposition', into the boy Aster: 'Just there, then, is the secret of Plato's intimate concern with, his power over, the sensible world, the apprehensions of the sensuous faculty: he is a lover, a great lover, somewhat after the manner of Dante' (p.135).² For Pater, as for Plato, the educational was ever blent with the physical and the emotional, an aspect of his life and works that has proven problematic, both biographically and critically.

Although sharing many of Pater's acquaintances and desires, as well as writing his only approved biography — that is, 'approved' as far as Pater's fastidious and protective sisters Hester and Clara were concerned³ — Arthur C. Benson nonetheless recognised the moral problems arising from such a unification of Plato's pedagogy and Dante's idealised love, compelling him to question: 'Isn't it really rather dangerous to let boys read Plato, if one is desirous that they should accept conventional moralities?'⁴ Symonds also pondered this question, as Dowling relates:

No wonder Symonds in concluding *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891), the last of the homosexualist apologias he was to have printed during his lifetime, should suggest that those who insist on punishing homosexuals at law would do better instead to 'turn their attention to the higher education' being carried on in

¹ In 'Pater as Don', *Prose Studies*, 11.1 (1988), pp.41-60, William Shuter writes: 'In the study of Plato [according to Pater] no examinable skill is so essential as a receptive disposition, for Plato's philosophy "does not provide a proposition, nor a system of propositions, but forms a temper"' (p.53).

² Dowling writes: 'Pater [...] seems to have been persuaded that an education conducted along the old lines of Greek paiderastia [...] would genuinely fulfill the liberal ideal of education' (*Hellenism*, p.102).

³ See Donoghue, p.104.

⁴ David Newsome, *On the Edge of Paradise: A. C. Benson: The Diarist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.194. About Benson's comments on Pater, Shuter writes: '[Pater's homoerotic temperament] was therefore always something of an open secret [...] By way of confirmation Benson merely points to the body of Pater's work, which, he supposes, speaks for itself' ('Outing', p.480).

English public schools and universities. For it was just there that the ‘best minds of our youth are ... exposed to the influences of a paederastic literature at the same time that they acquire the knowledge and experience of unnatural practices’.¹

One must bear in mind that, in Benson’s case, this question about the dangers arising from *boys reading Plato* concerns ‘conventional moralities’ only, for Benson seems unlikely to have been personally scandalised by the paederastic pedagogy that Pater sanctioned or advocated: ‘While not truly Uranian, Benson nevertheless hovered dangerously near Uranian sympathies’.² In fact, Benson would later provide a biographical introduction and notes for the 1905 edition of *Ionica*, a ‘classic paean to romantic paiderastia’³ by William Johnson (*later Cory*), one of the founding and most influential of the Uranians (or, as Timothy d’Arch Smith labels him, one of the most influential ‘Uranian precursors’). ‘A vigorous intellect, classicist, and master at Eton’, Johnson had ‘a romantic belief in Platonic paiderastia’,⁴ the very paederasty that Symonds considers above and that was originally expounded to him in a letter from Johnson, a letter that was considered in ‘Chapter One’. As with Pater’s friend Oscar Browning a few years later, a scandal drew Johnson (formerly one of Browning’s teachers) away from his beloved Eton: ‘Johnson was to leave Eton abruptly in 1872 after what appears to have been a parent’s complaint about his overly intimate relationship with a pupil’.⁵ As the provider of a biographical introduction and notes for Johnson’s *Ionica* and as the writer of Pater’s biography, Benson was one of those best qualified to answer his own rhetorical question, ‘Isn’t it really rather dangerous to let boys read Plato, if one is desirous that they should accept conventional moralities?’

While visiting Oxford in search of biographical materials about the elusive Pater, Benson gained a definitive answer to his own question, finding that Pater had always been a wanton ‘corrupter of youths’, had always been that wanton returning from ‘upstairs’ with two ‘feminine’ youths in tow whom Pattison had observed in 1878. In *On the Edge of Paradise: A. C. Benson: The Diarist*, David Newsome relates:

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.129.

² D’Arch Smith, p.7.

³ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.114. William Johnson (*later Cory*), *Ionica* [Parts I and II], by William Cory, with biographical intro. and notes by Arthur C. Benson (London: George Allen, 1905).

⁴ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.87.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.87, note. For Kincaid’s discussion of both Johnson and Browning, see *Child-Loving*, pp.232-34. D’Arch Smith notes that Oscar Browning had been one of Johnson’s pupils at Eton (p.6). See also Ari Adut, ‘A Theory of Scandal: Victorians, Homosexuality, and the Fall of Oscar Wilde’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 111.1 (2005), pp.213-48 (p.225).

If the writing of *Walter Pater* took under three months, at least the research behind it had proved ticklish and delicate, as [Edmund] Gosse had warned [Arthur Benson] it would. There were ‘dark areas’ in Pater’s life. Benjamin Jowett had gained possession of certain compromising letters which he had threatened Pater he would publish should he ever think of standing for university office. Arthur’s reaction was instinctively to defend Pater’s male friendships as never being anything but ‘frigidly Platonic’. After he had visited Oxford and talked with Herbert Warren at Magdalen about the Aesthetic Movement generally, he was less happy. ‘It will want great care’, he wrote. This was ‘rather a dark place, I’m afraid. But if we give boys Greek books to read and hold up the Greek spirit and the Greek life as a model, it is very difficult to slice out one portion, which was a perfectly normal part of Greek life, and to say that it is abominable etc. etc. A strongly sensuous nature — such as Pater and Symonds — with a strong instinct for beauty, and brought up at an English public school, will almost certainly go wrong, in thought if not in act’.¹

Warren’s assessment of Pater seemed tenable to Benson, at least as biographer, especially since Pater had always fashioned himself as a receptive student of Plato,² a paederastic lover whose philosophical strength came from a ‘strongly sensuous nature’ that, as with Marius, rested in the education of the eyes — for the artist, as well as the philosopher, implores his students: ‘I want you to see precisely what I see’ (*Appreciations*, p.28). In fact, Marius cultivated

the capacity of the eye, inasmuch as in the eye would lie for him the determining influence of life: he was of the number of those who, in the words of a poet who came long after, must be ‘made perfect by the love of visible beauty’. The discourse was conceived from the point of view of a theory Marius found afterwards in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, which supposes men’s spirits susceptible to certain influences, diffused, after the manner of streams or currents, by fair things or persons visibly present — green fields, for instance, or children’s faces — into the air around them, acting, in the case of some peculiar natures, like potent material essences, and conforming the seer to themselves as with some cunning physical necessity. (*Marius*, I, p.32)

A necessity both ‘cunning’ and ‘physical’ — Pater’s phrasing echoes his ‘secret—ed’ and ‘secrete—d’, and posits that those with a ‘receptive’ or ‘susceptible’ temperament (those with ‘peculiar natures’, like Marius and Plato) are brought tantalisingly and tauntingly close to ‘potent material essences’, hence are more easily impregnated, in a paederastic sense, by a ‘peculiar disposition’.

This ‘receptivity’, a receptivity that Pater believed to be characteristically present in children, became an ideal for Marius, such that he himself hoped to maintain ‘the unclouded and receptive soul quitting the world finally, with the same fresh wonder with which it had entered the world still unimpaired’ (II,

¹ Newsome, p.192.

² The progression from the ‘receptive’ to the ‘active’ role in Decadence is considered in ‘Chapter Five’.

p.220), for this receptivity is not limited by chronological age. Even in mid-life, ‘Winckelmann looked at life with a fresh, childlike eye’¹ — or, as Pater phrases this himself in regard to Winckelmann’s admiration for all things Greek: ‘Greek sensuousness [...] is shameless and childlike’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.177). Robert Currie suggests that Pater adopted or adapted this linkage of ‘Greek sensuousness’ with childhood from Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), causing Pater to believe that, ‘in the nineteenth century, only the child, or the naive genius, might enjoy the immediacy of Greek life’,² an ‘immediacy’ that could only be maintained in adulthood through continual interaction with the young, an interaction about which Marius elaborates in his diary: ‘I notice sometimes what I conceive to be the precise character of the fondness of the roughest working-people for their young children. [...] What is of finer soul, or of finer stuff in things, and *demands delicate touching* — to [the roughest worker] the delicacy of the little child represents that: it initiates him into that’ (II, pp.180-81, emphasis added). If even the most illiterate, vulgar, and rough worker is somewhat initiated into this ‘finer soul’ through physical and emotional contact with his own children, how much more so for someone with refined sensibilities like Marius, someone who has already been fully initiated into the pleasures and philosophies of the ‘immediacy of Greek life’?

Since this ‘Greek sensuousness’ was, for the Uranians, linked with the ‘delicacy of the [...] child’, Pater portrays Marius as someone compelled to perform the ‘legitimate moral function’ of his Cyrenaic philosophy, the “‘counsel of perfection”, for the few’ (1885, II, p.32)³ — though, in this case, for a few boys of receptive temperament, boys with the potential to become his inspired ‘hearers’. As if by a stage direction ‘Enter boy’, such a boy duly appears, a boy whose countenance seems to ‘demand delicate touching’, a boy whose ‘capacity of the eye’ seems to display his receptivity, a boy whose subsequent ‘blush’ seems to suggest that he already recognises the eroticism that his person provokes:

Marius became fluent concerning the promise of one young student, the son, as it presently appeared, of parents of whom Lucian [of Samosata] himself knew something: and soon afterwards the lad was seen coming along briskly — a lad with gait and figure well enough expressive of the sane mind in the healthy body, though a little slim and worn of feature, and with a pair of eyes expressly designed, it might seem, for fine glancings at the stars. At the sight of Marius he paused suddenly, and with a modest blush on recognising his companion [Lucian], who straightway took with the youth, *so prettily enthusiastic*, the freedom of an old friend. (II, p.144, emphasis added)

¹ Richard Dellamora, ‘The Androgynous Body in Pater’s “Winckelmann”’, *Browning Institute Studies*, 11 (1983), pp.51-68 (p.64). See also Donoghue, p.183.

² Robert Currie, ‘Pater’s Rational Cosmos’, *Philological Quarterly*, 59 (1980), pp.95-104 (p.101).

³ In a passage soon to be quoted, Winckelmann claims that ‘[The ancients] went so far as to cite their [paederastic] inclination as testimony of their morality’.



Title Page Illustration for Pater's *Renaissance*

Charles Henry Jeens (1827-79)

Engraving [from the Leonardoesque original below], 1876-77

Half-Length Study of Young Boy in Three-Quarter View Facing to the Right

Giovanni Agostino da Lodi (active ca. 1495 – ca. 1520)

Red chalk on paper (Louvre 2252)

Département des Arts Graphiques du Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

This lad's 'modest blush' gains its import and importance only when 'so prettily enthusiastic' is interpreted in the Uranian sense Pater supplies it in his essay on Winckelmann, where *enthusiast* encodes 'paederast' and *enthusiasm* 'paederastic desire' (though these terms apply equally to the paederastic 'hearer'). Seen in this way, that 'modest blush' suggests a secret shared, an intimacy unmentionable, a reaction spontaneous; it also suggests the implication of '[Lucian] took with the youth [...] the freedom of an old friend'. In particular, Marius is struck by the effect the boy's 'enthusiasm' has upon Lucian, for it alters his normal demeanour, with Marius 'fancying that the lad's plainly written enthusiasm had induced in the elder speaker somewhat more fervour than was usual with him' (II, p.144).

As a result of this 'plainly written enthusiasm', an 'enthusiasm' that provokes 'more fervour than usual', Lucian and this lad, whose name is Hermotimus, immediately fall into conversation, a conversation that is, in fact, an abbreviated translation of Lucian's dialogue *Hermotimus, or The Rival Philosophies* (ca. 165 CE). What is noteworthy here is not the dialogue itself: to compare Pater's translation with that of the Fowlers' four-volume Clarendon edition of *The Works of Lucian of Samosata* (1905) is to see how few liberties

Pater has actually taken in his condensed translation.¹ However, what *is* noteworthy is the way that Pater frames the dialogue. Although attendant throughout and sitting on the same marble bench as Lucian and Hermotimus, Marius is cast as a mere voyeur. Although Hermotimus is, in Lucian's original, a bearded adult who has already been studying Stoicism for twenty years, Pater converts him into a boy. Although 'the nature of love and friendship' is not its theme, Pater maintains the original's Socratic intimacy by allowing only two participants, recalling the intimacy of a dialogue like *Lysis*, where Socrates facilitates a discussion that, despite its rhetorical incompleteness and lack of direction, nonetheless blossoms into a 'friendship' between the aged philosopher and the young lovers Menexenus and Lysis:

I said, however, a few words to the boys at parting: O Menexenus and Lysis, how ridiculous that you two boys, and I, an old boy, who would fain be one of you, should imagine ourselves to be friends — this is what the by-standers will go away and say — and as yet we have not been able to discover what is a friend!²

These Paterian choices — the passive observation by Marius, the alteration of Hermotimus into a boy, the retention of only two participants — exponentially heighten the paederastic suggestiveness, with Marius literally initiated by Lucian into the ways one 'becomes fluent concerning the promise of one young student'. Hence, the import of this dialogue hinges less upon what it might have meant for Lucian and young Hermotimus, and more upon its lingering meaning for Marius, the Epicurean voyeur whose perceptions are never actually divulged. In the lacuna that exists between what Marius observes and what he does not say, much suggestion resides.

What provides the occasion for Pater's suggestiveness is that, at the time he was writing *Marius the Epicurean*, Lucian's oeuvre exhibited contradictory stances towards paederasty, a disparity that arose because the seventy or more works then attributed to him included works now attributed to Pseudo-Lucian (denoting one or more of his later imitators). Although the majority of his works satirize paederasts as satyrs ever wallowing in profligacy and banality — as in *A Professor of Public Speaking*, *Alexander the False Prophet*, *The Passing of*

¹ Lucian of Samosata, *Hermotimus, or The Rival Philosophies*, in *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1905]), II, pp.41-90.

² Plato (Benjamin Jowett, trans.), *Lysis, or Friendship*, in *The Dialogues of Plato Translated into English with Analyses and Introductions by B. Jowett, M.A., in Five Volumes*, 3rd edn rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892), pp.39-76 (p.75). This is also available in a recent edition: Plato, *On Homosexuality: Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1991). 'The *Hermotimus* is, of all of Lucian's works, the closest to a Platonic dialogue' — Eleanor Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address: From Herodotus to Lucian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.131.

Peregrinus, and *The Ignorant Book Collector* — several of those that are now attributed to Pseudo-Lucian treat paederasty quite differently. In one case — the dialogue *Erôtes* (now dated ca. 300 CE) — paederasty is actually proven superior to heterosexuality, with Callicratides of Athens, the winner of the debate, contrasting the needed mechanism of procreation (heterosexuality) with the management of chaos (paederasty). For Callicratides, paederasty displays chaos conquered, an abstract expression of civilisation's gradual triumph over necessity, with paederasty changing, as the boy matures, into a permanent bond of friendship.¹ In essence, the Lucian Marius observes is the Lucian Pater constructs; and, proficient in Lucian's dichotomous oeuvre, Pater understandably preferences and accentuates the Lucian believed to have written the *Erôtes*, and ignores or diminishes the more recognisable Lucian, the Lucian whose *Dialogues of the Gods* chides a foolish Zeus for fawning over Ganymede, a rustic lad of limited intellect and narrow potential.²

Besides the paederastic potential it affords for an intimate dialogue between the writer of the *Erôtes* and a school-boy, by choosing Lucian as Marius's guest, Pater is also recalling Marius's earlier experiences with Flavian, since the comic novel *Lucius, or The Ass* — 'which Latin readers found expanded in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius'³ — was then attributed to Lucian. In essence, *Lucius, or The Ass* was one of the influences on Apuleius's *Metamorphoses, or The Golden Ass*, 'the golden book' that, for Marius and Flavian, had 'awakened the poetic or romantic capacity [...] giving it a direction emphatically sensuous' (I, p.54). Pater subtly alludes to this work by his choice of phrasing: 'All philosophers, so to speak, are but fighting about the "ass's shadow"' (II, p.168).⁴ The 'golden ass's shadow' had indeed been cast over Marius's life, a shadow that he now has an opportunity to cast anew, in a way becoming to himself, by

¹ Often appearing as a triad, the Erôtes were the winged gods of love — Erôs (love), Pothos (longing for something absent), and Himeros (desire because of proximity to an object): 'Pothos seizes you to fill you with languorous desire for a girl or boy you cannot possess. [...] Himeros, which is related to *pothos*, seems to refer to a more pressing desire that comes even closer to fulfillment' — Claude Calame, *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p.31.

² For a volume that contrasts Plato's *Symposium* with Lucian's various attacks on paederasty, see John Jay Chapman, *Lucian, Plato and Greek Morals* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931). In 'Reconsiderations About Greek Homosexualities', in *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West*, ed. by Beert C. Verstraete and Vernon Provencal (Binghamton, NY: Haworth, 2005), pp.13-62, William Armstrong Percy III describes Chapman's 'appalling' volume as 'a scathing attack on pederasty in Plato and its insidious, perverting influence on western culture' (p.50, note 10).

³ David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.192. This is now attributed to Pseudo-Lucian.

⁴ The Fowlers' translation reads: 'His teachers' sparrings with our shadows (for we are not there)' (p.59).

making a gift of a book in a ‘handsome yellow wrapper [...] perfumed with oil of sandal-wood, and decorated with carved and gilt ivory bosses at the ends of the roller’, a book upon which his exquisite handwriting — handwriting that had contributed to his being appointed an intimate secretary to the Emperor — could ‘enthusiastically’ inscribe a suitable ‘Valentine’ greeting:

Hermotimus!
lege
Feliciter!

Hermotimus!
Vivas!
Floreas!

Hermotimus!
Vivas!
Gaudeas!



Skyphoi (drinking cups) with Erôtes

Roman

Silver, Late 1st century BCE – early 1st century CE

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA



Relief with Erôtes

Roman (after a Hellenistic original)

Marble, ca. 1st century CE

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria

There are other aspects of Pater's translation of Lucian's *Hermotimus* that serve to link it with the *Erôtes*, then attributed to Lucian. While Pater's translation deviates little from the Fowlers' later version in its handling of how the dialogue moves from a contemplation of the 'the fairest of all men' (II, p.160)¹ to a contemplation of 'a certain woman of a fairness beyond nature' (II, p.169)² — echoing the debate at the centre of the *Erôtes* — unlike the Fowlers' translation, Pater's continues beyond the dialogue itself, the very last sentences of the chapter in which this translation appears revealing that, given an *Erôtes* choice between 'the fairest of all men' and 'a certain woman of a fairness beyond nature', Marius, like a paederastic Paris, would choose the former as the outright victor. After making an excursion so he can walk the boy home,³ Marius recalls a memorable passage from the dialogue he has just overheard, a passage that seems to focus on Hermotimus: 'And we too desire, not a fair one, but the fairest of all. Unless we find him, we shall think we have failed' (II, p.171). Marius seems to have found him. Hermotimus — that boy who had just claimed, 'I am trying with all my might to get forward. What I need is a hand, stretched out to help me' (II, p.148)⁴, recalling Keats's lines 'This living hand, now warm and capable / Of earnest grasping [...] see here it is / I hold it towards you' — seems the literal embodiment of the paederastic ideal, 'the fairest of all'. While playing voyeur to Lucian's conversation with Hermotimus, while observing the ways that a paederastic 'inspirer' becomes 'fluent concerning the promise of one young student', while contemplating this youth 'so prettily enthusiastic', this youth with a 'sane mind in the healthy body', this youth 'with a pair of eyes expressly designed, it might seem, for fine glancings at the stars' — Marius seems to have become more than enamoured. Everything about precocious Hermotimus seems consistent with 'the fairest of all' whom an 'inspirer' like Marius would seek as his 'hearer'. Put simply, 'the lad's plainly written enthusiasm had induced in [Marius] somewhat more fervour than was usual with him', and Marius seems to be hoping that, in the end, he will not be forced to admit to Hermotimus, as Lucian had, 'How slippery you are; how you escape from one's fingers' (II, p.164).

¹ 'The handsomest of mankind' (Fowlers' trans., p.67).

² 'A certain lady of perfect beauty' (Ibid., p.83).

³ This is a rather curious detail. The passage (II, p.170), with my comments interspersed, reads: 'The disputants parted [Marius is not one of the disputants in the dialogue, which suggests that only Lucian and Hermotimus are parting from one another]. The horses were come for Lucian [This suggests that Lucian will henceforward be "out of the picture"]. The boy went on his way, and Marius onward [This suggests that they are going in the same direction, though Marius continues in that direction after seeing Hermotimus home], to visit a friend [Marius's spontaneous decision "to visit a friend" seems an excuse to buffer the innuendo associated with walking this boy to his door] whose abode lay further ["Further" than what, if not the abode of Hermotimus?]. Indeed, Marius now knows where to send the gift I posit hypothetically above.

⁴ '[I am] still on the lower slopes, just making an effort to get on; but it is slippery and rough, and needs a helping hand' (Fowlers' trans., p.42).

Lucian's Socratic tutelage had its Sophistic counterpart in the tutelage of Marcus Cornelius Fronto (100-170 CE), 'the favourite "director" of noble youth', a contemporary of Marius who bestowed on his own 'hearers', like Marcus Aurelius, a complex code of conduct, 'an intimate practical knowledge of manners, physiognomies, smiles, disguises, flatteries, and courtly tricks of every kind — a whole accomplished rhetoric of daily life' (I, p.222).¹ The disparity between the tutelage of Lucian (and potentially of Marius) and the tutelage of Fronto is the same disparity that exists between the 'elevated' and the 'carnal' Uranians, the gulf that separates Pater and Hopkins from Wilde.

In contrast to the Sophistic tutelage of Fronto, the 'elevated' Socratic tutelage that Pater advocates does not recommend continual interaction with, manipulation of, or an affront to the existent, canonical, wider culture. Instead, it recommends interaction with a submerged culture, a culture (mis)labelled as 'subversive', even though, from the Uranians' histrionic perspective, it is the only 'authentic' Western culture. Although forced into submerged obscurity by the wider culture — except during a few halcyon moments such as the Greco-Roman period and the Renaissance — this more 'authentic' Western culture is ever maintained by a community of 'enthusiasts' who possess paederastic and homoerotic sensibilities, a community that Pater made the very cornerstone of his own attempts to assist the wider culture by restoring the 'Hellenic tradition', by elevating this 'invisible society' into the 'supreme city', despite an assurance that only a few would understand or approve:

Pater's writings are full of references to secret societies [...] a utopian vision of community seen from the margins of society. Invariably the binding secret remains obscure: it seems to designate a particular state of mind or mode of existence rather than a body of discursive lore, and hence is not to be revealed, only experienced. In this sense, a form of secret society is implicitly constituted in virtually all of Pater's accounts of the reception and transmission of artworks or cultural traditions — as, for example, 'the Hellenic tradition' constructed in 'Winckelmann'. Many critics have commented on the pronounced homoerotic character of these communities of 'enthusiasts', as Pater refers to Winckelmann; certainly the 'secret' into which Leonardo initiates young men seems as much sexual as artistic. [...] Pater's rhetoric clearly suggests a calculated affiliation of

¹ Marcus Aurelius was eighteen at the time Fronto began to address him as 'Beloved Boy'. See the letter (ca. 139 CE) from Fronto to Marcus Aurelius titled 'A Discourse on Love', which begins: 'This is the third letter, beloved Boy, that I am sending you on the same theme' — Charles Reginald Haines, trans., *The Correspondence of Marcus Cornelius Fronto with Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Lucius Verus, Antoninus Pius, and Various Friends* (New York: Putnam, 1919), p.21. This is not meant to imply that Marcus Aurelius was a paederast himself. In *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), Thomas K. Hubbard writes: 'The emperors' attitudes toward homosexuality varied greatly. Hadrian was explicitly and publicly homosexual in his orientation [...] On the other hand, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius both disapproved of pederasty' (p.443).

his aestheticism with homoerotic subcultures that still remain shadowy in recent social and literary histories of Victorian England.¹

Beyond accentuating the similarities between Marius's receptive temperament, Socratic tutelage, and Christianity's early secrecy, one passage also provides an example of Pater's 'calculated affiliation' with that shadowy, secret society implicitly constituted in his texts, a society of 'enthusiasts' who would have appreciated the paederastic and homoerotic subtleties concealed behind his description of a Christian sanctuary, of all things. Pater's informed reader — a Uranian 'enthusiast' — would have recognised in the following a discreet, metaphorical insight into Marius's potential instruction of that 'young student', that boy described as 'so prettily enthusiastic': 'Faithful to the spirit of his early Epicurean philosophy and the impulse to surrender himself, in perfectly liberal inquiry about it, to anything that, as a matter of fact, attracted or impressed him strongly, Marius informed himself with much pains concerning the church in Cecilia's house' (II, p.109). This sentence seems tame enough — that is, until brought into proximity with that boy who is evidently the object of Marius's erotic desires. If Marius had 'the impulse to surrender himself [...] to *anything* that [...] attracted or impressed him strongly', such that he 'informed himself' about it (as he had concerning the church in Cecilia's house), then what about his impulse, initially suggested and illustrated by Lucian, to become 'fluent concerning the promise of one young student'? Can Marius's 'impulse' be anything other than a salacious desire to 'surrender himself' to that youthful companion? — a boy 'so prettily enthusiastic', a boy who had 'attracted or impressed him [as] strongly' as the Christian church hidden within Cecilia's house, where 'there reigned throughout, an order and purity, an orderly disposition, as if by way of making ready for some gracious spousals. The place itself was like a bride adorned for her husband' (II, p.97).

Seen in this light, that boy 'so prettily enthusiastic' in whom Marius is also attracted becomes a paederastic 'bride adorned for [his] husband', becomes a 'hearer' adorned for nuptials with Marius the 'inspirer'. Further, since these religious rites in Cecilia's house are described as 'a half-opened book to be read by the duly initiated mind' (II, pp.134-35), they also recall Marius's attendance at the deathbed of his beloved Flavian, a youth whose copy of Apuleius lay half-opened nearby, a youth whose last moments were spent crafting the *Pervigilium Veneris* as a form of epithalamion, a traditional hymn sung as a couple is ushered towards the consummation of their 'gracious spousals'. This also recalls Cupid's 'gracious spousals' in Apuleius's tale, a marriage interwoven with the act of Jupiter being attended by the Olympian version of Marius's beloved boy, the most potent of celestial paederastic icons, Ganymede:

¹ Adams, p.454.

Thereupon [Jupiter] bade Mercury produce Psyche in heaven; and holding out to her his ambrosial cup, "Take it", he said, "and live for ever; nor shall Cupid ever depart from thee". And the gods sat down together to the marriage-feast. On the first couch lay the bridegroom, and Psyche in his bosom. *His rustic serving-boy bare* the wine to Jupiter; and Bacchus to the rest. (I, pp.90-91, emphasis added)¹

Cecilia's secret church, Marius's increasing 'fluency' about that young student, Flavian's deathbed epithalamion, Apuleius's description of the attendant Ganymede — this blent insinuation reveals Pater's mastery of self-referentiality, especially when the contents of his *Renaissance, Plato and Platonism*, and a dozen other works are brought to bear upon this text and its context. It evinces that, taken as a whole, *Marius* and the rest of the Paterian canon constitutes a cornucopia of paederastic nuance, desire, and practice, a veritable Symposial banquet that enacts a paederastic pedagogy equally elevated, subtle, and cultivated.

A paederastic education capable of cultivating a rustic Trojan shepherd into the servant and beloved of Jupiter, of elevating a Ganymede from a 'rustic serving-boy bare' into the 'rustic serving-boy [who] bare the wine to Jupiter' (Pater playfully choosing his verb to allow for naked paederastic 'underthought') — such an education is most cogently elucidated, at least in its more contemporary sense, in Pater's essay on the archaeologist and art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, an essay that Dellamora suggests is so 'deeply felt' because of 'the depth of affinity between these two men', for 'both [Pater and Winckelmann] shared an erotic temperament and wrote especially for young men'.² Beyond his published volumes — *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in Malerei und Bildhauerkunst (Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture, 1755)*, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums (The History of Ancient Art, 1764)*, and *Monumenti antichi inediti, spiegati ed illustrati (Unpublished Ancient Monuments, Explained and Illustrated, 1767)* — Winckelmann's influence over his period was augmented by his roles as Papal Antiquary and as the tutor of young European aristocrats. In essence, although not directly a Renaissance personage, Winckelmann nonetheless provided Pater with a historical counterpart to himself, a scholar of the paederastic continuum stretching unbroken from the Greco-Roman period to the modern. He also provided Pater with an occasion to explore, rather daringly, 'the homoerotic tradition of Western culture at a point of origin in Plato's

¹ Apuleius's views on paederasty are partly explained by the following: 'In his *Apology*, Apuleius asks: "Would you deny that Solon was a serious philosopher because he wrote that most lascivious line, 'yearning for thighs and sweet lips'?"' — as quoted in David Mulroy, trans. with intro. and commentary, *Early Greek Lyric Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.204, note 6. Solon's statement, in its entirety, is more poignant than the above quotation suggests: 'Till he loves a lad in the flower of youth, / Bewitched by thighs and by sweet lips' — as quoted in translation in Hubbard, *A Sourcebook*, p.454.

² Dellamora, 'Androgynous', p.51.

dialogues’, and, even further, to (re)consider a historical personage who, more openly than himself, ‘pursued romantic attachments with young men’.¹ In the case of Winckelmann, the difference between the theoretical and the actual, between the scholarly and the sexual only involved a slight shift in medium, a shift that Pater planned both to explore and exploit.



Erôs of Tespia

[Copy of a work by Lysippos, late 4th century BCE]

Roman

Marble, mid 2nd century CE

Vatican Museum, Vatican

After being appointed to tutor Friedrich Wilhelm Peter Lamprecht (1728-97), son of the chief magistrate of Hadmersleben, in Sachsen Anhalt, Germany,² Winckelmann soon exceeded his tutorial role, his illicit ‘friendship’ with the

¹ Dellamora, ‘Androgynous’, pp.52; 53.

² Denis M. Sweet, ‘The Personal, the Political, and the Aesthetic: Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s German Enlightenment Life’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 16.1-2 (1988), pp.147-62 (p.151). See also Whitney Davis, ‘Winckelmann Divided: Mourning the Death of Art History’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 27.1-2 (1994), pp.141-60. In ‘The Discreet Charm of the Belvedere: Submerged Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century Writing on Art’, *German Life and Letters*, 52.2 (1999), pp.123-35, Jeff Morrison considers the ‘students’ and ‘studies’ of Winckelmann: ‘These men would then be brought to Italy after a period of preparatory study for individual tutoring. At its simplest we could have here a pragmatic, eighteenth-century adaptation of the Socratic method. But it is surely more than this. We have a striking coincidence of sexual agenda and pedagogic method, a coincidence so strong that the two become inseparable’ (p.128).

younger Lamprecht evolving into ‘the great love of Winckelmann’s life’.¹ This situation became ‘a composition in pedagogy and passion’, such that ‘when Winckelmann left the Lamprecht family house in the spring of 1743 to take up a position as assistant headmaster in a school in Seehausen, the young Lamprecht followed, taking up residence in Winckelmann’s room and continuing with his lessons’ for the next five years, lessons flushed with a ‘desire that blends eros, pedagogy, and aesthetics’.² Twenty years would pass before Winckelmann encountered the ‘one more Lamprecht in his life’, a young baron of Livonia, Friedrich Reinhold von Berg (1736-1809), with whom, some scholars assert, he shared ‘a specific instance of homoerotic practice’.³ Winckelmann later instructed other aristocrats — ‘young princes from Germany’ — and this instruction was ‘marked by the same elan and pedagogic purpose as his friendships with Lamprecht and Berg’: his most noteworthy student of this period being Leopold III Friedrich Franz (1740-1817), the ruling prince of Anhalt-Dessau, ‘who was twenty-five when he sought out Winckelmann in Rome’.⁴ In these descriptions, Winckelmann is noticeably defined as a homoerotic and paederastic ‘inspirer’, an ‘inspirer’ equal to a Jove, a Socrates, a Marius, or a Leonardo, though an ‘inspirer’ who would be murdered before he had an opportunity to meet the one individual seemingly destined to become his principal ‘hearer’, the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who nonetheless remained a lifelong admirer: ‘Pater imagines what would have happened if Winckelmann and Goethe had met. It is a homosexual fantasy’.⁵

To elaborate more fully than in the ‘Introduction’: If, as Kevin Parker suggests, ‘Winckelmann’s relation to the Greeks is rather explicitly erotic’ and ‘informed by a certain very stylized homoerotics’,⁶ then Pater’s relation to Winckelmann is much more so, for his essay about this archaeologist and art critic literally undulates with stylised homoeroticism — though ‘Greek enthusiasm’ or ‘paederasty’ describes far better Winckelmann’s style and the style of Pater’s responsive essay. Pater found in Winckelmann a practitioner of a blend of Platonism, paederasty, and aesthetic instruction designed to ‘inspire’ young aristocrats, most of whom were at least twenty years younger than Winckelmann, highlighting that Winckelmann’s desires were less egalitarian and more paederastic in nature. Notice how Pater’s description of Winckelmann’s approach to boys and young men — in this case, to their depiction in antique art — seems almost a voyeuristic approach to a naked Flavian reclining at a window or to a dew-bespotted Cupid in much the same pose:

¹ Kevin Parker, ‘Winckelmann, Historical Difference, and the Problem of the Boy’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 25.4 (1992), pp.523-44 (p.532).

² Sweet, pp.152-53.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.153-54.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.155.

⁵ Donoghue, p.157.

⁶ Kevin Parker, pp.528; 532.

Greek sculpture deals almost exclusively with youth, where the moulding of the bodily organs is still as if suspended between growth and completion, indicated but not emphasised; where the transition from curve to curve is so delicate and elusive, that Winckelmann compares it to a quiet sea, which, although we understand it to be in motion, we nevertheless regard as an image of repose; where, therefore, the exact degree of development is so hard to apprehend.

(*Renaissance* 1893, p.174)

Nevertheless, Winckelmann's 'temperament' *did* apprehend those physical subtleties, for he had developed, according to Pater, bold 'new senses' that endowed him with a paederastic acumen in regard to puerile beauty, a Grecian subject hitherto taboo in Western society, at least since the ascension of Christianity:

That world in which others had moved with so much embarrassment, seems to call out in Winckelmann new senses fitted to deal with it. He is in touch with it; it penetrates him, and becomes part of his temperament. He remodels his writings with constant renewal of insight; he catches the thread of a whole sequence of laws in some hollowing of the hand, or dividing of the hair; he seems to realise that fancy of the reminiscence of a forgotten knowledge hidden for a time in the mind itself. (1893, pp.154-55)

Pater suggests that 'this key to the understanding of the Greek spirit, Winckelmann possessed in his own nature' (1893, p.175), possessed as a serenity of temperament that influenced his 'handling of the sensuous side of Greek art', a serenity recognisable in his 'absence of any sense of want, or corruption, or shame' (p.176). Winckelmann's method of 'handling of the sensuous side' — particularly 'the sensuous backside' — is given a rather phallic thrust, at least rhetorically, when Pater claims that 'penetrating into the antique world by his passion, his temperament, [Winckelmann] enunciated no formal principles, always hard and one-sided' (p.176). 'Temperament' here is synonymous with 'disposition', which serves to link his 'penetrating into [...] by his passion, his temperament' with the Dorians' 'secreted their peculiar disposition'.

Through such descriptions — descriptions as paederastic and homoerotic as those of his biographical subject — Pater asserts that 'nothing was to enter into [Winckelmann's] life unpenetrated by its central enthusiasm' (p.144), an enthusiasm that even in 'the protracted longing of his youth is not a vague, romantic longing', for Winckelmann 'knows what he longs for, what he wills. Within its severe limits his enthusiasm burns like lava' (p.148), an enthusiasm and an 'affinity with Hellenism [that] was not merely intellectual' (p.152), an enthusiasm and an affinity arising from 'his romantic, fervent friendships with young men':



St Michael the Archangel (detail)
Guido Reni (1575-1642)
Oil on canvas, 1635
Santa Maria della Concezione dei Cappuccini
Rome, Italy



Christ Appearing to the Virgin (detail)
Guido Reni (1575-1642)
Oil on canvas, ca. 1608
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK

This enthusiasm, dependent as it is to a great degree on bodily temperament, has a power of reinforcing the purer emotions of the intellect with an almost physical excitement. That this affinity with Hellenism was not merely intellectual, that the subtler threads of temperament were inwoven in it, is proved by his romantic, fervent friendships with young men. He *has known*, he says, many young men more beautiful than Guido [Reni]'s archangel. These friendships, bringing him *into contact* with the pride of human form, and staining the thoughts with its bloom, perfected his reconciliation to the spirit of Greek sculpture. (P.152, emphasis added)¹

Brought 'into contact' with 'the pride of human form', Winckelmann had indeed 'known [...] many young men more beautiful than Guido [Reni]'s archangel', had 'known' them in the intimate ways that had damned the men of Sodom, for Pater is employing here, as already noted, the language of Genesis 19.5 — 'And [the men of Sodom] called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them' (KJV); '[...] Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them' (NIV). Pater implicitly suggests that 'we see [in these "romantic, fervent friendships"] the native tendency of Winckelmann to escape from abstract theory to intuition, to the exercise of sight and touch' (1893, p.147). As biographer, Pater assumes that, inspired by the beauty of these young German aristocrats, Winckelmann performed with them and with others pedagogical 'exercises of sight and touch', an assumption supported by the memoirs of Giacomo Casanova:

Early that morning I go without knocking into a small room in which [Winckelmann] was usually alone copying out some antique inscription, and I see him hastily leave a boy, at the same time quickly setting his breeches to rights. I pretend to have seen nothing. [...] The Bathyllus, who was indeed very pretty, leaves.²

¹ Pater would have had leisure to contemplate the painting to which Winckelmann refers, *St Michael the Archangel* (1635) by Guido Reni (1575-1642), since a large copy hangs in the chancel of the chapel of Jesus College, Oxford. This copy was a gift from Thomas James Warren-Bulkeley (7th Viscount Bulkeley; 1752-1822), who had acquired it on his 'grand tour' of the Continent. Winckelmann's comment, in the original, alludes to a letter about the painting, a letter sent by Guido Reni to Monsignor Giovanni Massani, Housemaster to Pope Urban VIII: 'I should like to have had the brush of an angel or forms of paradise, to form the archangel and to see him in heaven, but I was unable to ascend so high, and on earth I sought them in vain. So I looked at the form that I established for myself in my idea' — as quoted in Giovan Pietro Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, trans. by Alice Sedgwick Wohl, with notes by Hellmut Wohl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 [1672]), p.59.

² Giacomo Casanova, *History of My Life*, vols 7-8, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p.193. The allusion is to a startlingly beautiful boy who was Anacreon's alleged lover during his exile on Samos: 'I see a godlike portrait there; / So like Bathyllus! — sure there's none / So like Bathyllus but the

Winckelmann immediately justified his activities to Casanova as follows:

‘Know’, he said, ‘that not only am I not a pederast, but that all my life long I have declared it inconceivable that the inclination could have exercised such an attraction on the human race. If I said this after what you have just seen you would pronounce me a hypocrite. But here is the truth of the matter. In the long course of my studies I first came to admire, then to idolize the ancients, who, as you know, were almost all of them buggers without concealing the fact, while a number of them even immortalized the charming objects of their love by their poems and even by magnificent monuments. Indeed, they went so far as to cite their inclination as testimony of their morality [...] I felt a kind of disdain and even of shame because in this respect I did not in the least resemble my heroes. At considerable cost to my self-esteem, I felt that I was in a way contemptible, and, unable to convict myself of stupidity merely by cold theory, I decided to seek the light of practice. [...] Having so resolved, I have been applying myself to the matter for the past three or four years, choosing the prettiest Smerdiases in Rome; but all to no avail: when I set to work, *non arrivo* (“I get nowhere”). To my dismay I always find that a woman is preferable in every respect’.¹

Although awkwardly compromised, although recasting his interrupted ‘tutorial’ as an attempt to illumine himself through paederastic practice, Winckelmann nonetheless admitted candidly to Casanova that his own Classicism was an attempt to reconstruct the paederastic culture that had flourished among the ancients — ‘almost all of them buggers without concealing the fact’ — a Hellenic culture that often lingers only as pitiable fragments buried beneath the earth or in the (un)consciousness of man, as Pater explains:

This testimony to the authority of the Hellenic tradition, its fitness to satisfy some vital requirement of the intellect, which Winckelmann contributes as a solitary man of genius, is offered also by the general history of the mind. The spiritual forces of the past, which have prompted and informed the culture of a succeeding age, live, indeed, within that culture, but with an absorbed, underground life. The Hellenic element alone has not been so absorbed, or content with this underground life; from time to time it has started to the surface; culture has been drawn back to its sources to be clarified and corrected. Hellenism is not merely an absorbed element in our intellectual life; it is a conscious tradition in it. (*Renaissance* 1893, p.158)

sun!’ — Thomas Moore, trans., ‘[Which Now in Veiling Shadow Lies]’, in *Odes of Anacreon* (Philadelphia, PA: Hugh Maxwell, 1804), p.104 (lines 4-6).

¹ Casanova, *My Life*, trans. by Trask, pp.193-94. Morrison suggests that ‘perhaps some dark intuition of this took Winckelmann south to Italy — and so nearer to Greece, where homosexuality, scholarship and art had historically proven a productive combination’ (p.126). See also Robert Aldrich, *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy* (London: Routledge, 1993); Joseph A. Boone, ‘Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism’, *PMLA*, 110.1 (1995), pp.89-107.

This passage asserts a necessity for ‘zealous archaeology’ (*Greek Studies*, p.157), in the scientific and anthropological sense employed by Winckelmann, a sense that is, in many ways, diametrically opposed to the use made of the term by Foucault in *L’Archéologie du Savoir* (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1969), where Foucault questions the specificity of Western thought and concentrates instead on the differences by which ‘meaning’ is formulated within particular epochs. Unlike Foucault, Pater advocates bringing ‘to the surface’ those earlier materials that have ever ‘prompted and informed’ Western culture, revealing ‘its sources’ and delineating ‘the general history of the mind’. For Pater, as for Winckelmann, all cultural roads, all ‘archaeological’ pursuits inevitably lead back to Greece, where the ‘Hellenic element’ that they both so prized was widely celebrated and cultivated.¹

Neither absorbed nor content with its underground life, this ‘Hellenic element’ — in the paederastic sense that Winckelmann understood and experienced it — had also ‘started to the surface’ in Victorian culture, as a seedling nurtured by Pater and his coterie. Nevertheless, as Wilde would come to illustrate both textually and literally, ‘those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril’, a peril that extended beyond those who tilled the Uranian soil to those who gathered what Hopkins, in that fragmentary poem composed upon Pater’s dinner acceptance, calls the ‘brightest blooms’, those blooms with the ‘sweetest nectar’. Pater and his coterie fully recognised the real peril involved in cultivating this paederastic flower and in ‘staining the thoughts with its bloom’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.152). They also fully recognised that the particular blooms that sprang from their own cultivation of this ‘Hellenic element’ would only be appreciated and discreetly sanctioned by individuals with ‘peculiar natures’ (*Marius* I, p.32), individuals who, like Winckelmann, possessed ‘this key to the understanding of the Greek spirit’ in their own ‘natures’, individuals who, like Pater, Hopkins, and Wilde, were masters of the Classics studied in Oxford’s *Literae Humaniores* (or Greats), a bountiful bouquet of Greco-Roman paederastic nuances. After gathering a score of paederastic blooms from the dialogues of Plato, the apprenticeships of Leonardo, and the criticisms of Winckelmann, Pater crafted, particularly in his *Renaissance*, a pedagogical laurel that would wreath the scholarly and sexual temperaments of many an Oxford Uranian like Hopkins, as well as many a modern ‘Uranian’ (even if they know it not).

Despite the fact that, when Pater’s essay on Winckelmann appeared in the *Westminster Review* in January 1867, it did so anonymously, Hopkins is likely to have known much of its substance, even if uncertain of Pater’s authorship (given that Hopkins knew the essay at all). This essay on Winckelmann, published six months before Hopkins graduated from Oxford, was still being drafted while Hopkins was busily preparing with Pater for his finals in

¹ It is worth noting that Pater seems to have delivered the first ever lectures on Classical archaeology at Oxford University — in the autumn of 1878. See Linda Dowling, ‘Walter Pater and Archaeology: The Reconciliation with Earth’, *Victorian Studies*, 31 (1988), pp.209-31.

Greats. This was a period during which, according to Nixon, ‘Pater would have shared much of his scholarship with Hopkins’.¹ Perhaps after a rhetorical question like ‘And what does the spirit need in the face of modern life?’ — a question with its attendant answer of ‘The sense of freedom’ (‘Winckelmann’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.184) — Pater had vaguely insinuated to Hopkins about ‘the theme of sexual freedom latent in Winckelmann’s notion of Greek nakedness’.² Much later, as a professor himself, Hopkins must have ruminated over the discussions he had had with Pater, discussions that had certainly been tinged with a Winckelmannesque appreciation for a Hellenic culture in which paederasty was more than a valued aspect, for the Greeks had inaugurated a pedagogical tradition that still occasionally surfaces, in all of its emboldened nakedness, in Western culture, flaunting about *en plein air* in the likes of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’, a poem that fulfils Pater’s insistence that the aesthetic goal is ‘to create, to live, perhaps, a little while beyond the allotted hours, even if it were but in a fragment of perfect expression [...] something to hold by amid the *perpetual flux*’ (*Marius*, I, p.155), something stable amid the Heraclitean changes in life and culture that Hopkins considers in ‘That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection’. Beyond its intrinsic value discussed in the previous chapter, the Paterian quality of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ — a poem that, according to Nixon, is an expression of the ‘Paterian notions of the wholeness of male sexuality’³ — seriously challenges Norman White’s dismissal of the poem as an improvisational fragment and as a collection of ‘landscape descriptions [that] have no force of plot behind them’.⁴ As a poetic masterpiece, Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ warrants what Marius refers to as ‘some ampler vision, which should take up into itself and explain this world’s delightful shows, as the scattered fragments of a poetry, till then but half-understood, might be taken up into the text of a lost epic, recovered at last’ (II, pp.219-20). This would certainly fulfil at least half of the title of Michael Lynch’s article about the poet’s homoeroticism — ‘Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves’⁵ — and would situate the poem into its proper Paterian context, allowing it to be judged in accordance to Paterian criteria of aesthetic excellence.

Exhibiting the same literary scrupulosity that, in Flavian, Pater describes as ‘a sort of chivalrous conscience’, Hopkins, in his ‘Epithalamion’, ‘manipulated [words] with all his delicate force, [...] making visible to others that which was vividly apparent, delightful, of lively interest to himself’ (*Marius*, I, p.96) — which was a woodland where bathing boys abound and where a prurient stranger

¹ Nixon, p.168.

² Henry Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature from Winckelmann to the Death of Goethe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), p.21.

³ Nixon, p.194.

⁴ Norman White, ‘Hopkins’ Epithalamion’, *Hopkins Quarterly*, 3-4 (1977-78), pp.141-59 (p.157).

⁵ See Michael Lynch, ‘Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves’, *Hopkins Quarterly*, 6 (1979), pp.107-17.

advances until, erotically inspired by the boys' nakedness, he undresses and bathes alone in a vacillating stream, a stream aflow with masturbatory connotations. Like the church in Cecilia's house, the 'branchy bunchy bushybowered wood' within which Hopkins has chosen to conceal his most delicate homoerotic and paederastic expression is 'a bride adorned for her husband' (II, p.97), an appropriate occasion indeed for a nuptial epithalamion. Contrary to White's insistence that these 'landscape descriptions have no force of plot behind them', the 'Epithalamion', as well as its landscape, is planted with a 'temperament' rather than plotted with action, a 'receptive temperament' that Pater attempted to instil in students like Hopkins, imploring his 'hearers' 'to watch, for its dramatic interest, the spectacle of a powerful, of a sovereign intellect, translating itself, amid a complex group of conditions which can never in the nature of things occur again' (*Platonism*, p.11). Essentially, the 'Epithalamion' allows Hopkins to translate his own 'sovereign intellect', to display 'the power of entering [...] into the intimate recesses of other minds' ('Postscript', *Appreciations*, p.266), in this case his own. For Hopkins as well as for Pater, these 'secret places of a unique temperament' ('Leonardo', *Renaissance* 1893, p.92) seem 'to designate a particular state of mind or mode of existence rather than a body of discursive lore, and hence [are] not to be revealed, only experienced',¹ experienced as an education of the senses, an education that — for Hopkins as much as for the continuum of Plato, Marius, Leonardo, Winckelmann, and Pater — 'blends eros, pedagogy, and aesthetics'.² For Pater, this involves the acquisition of 'appreciation', of 'style', of the skill to influence others in turn:

Greatness in literary art depends on a rich and expressive style that places it architecturally within the great structure of human life, using fine, scholarly speech to express an inner vision that informs and controls, has compass and variety, is allied to great ends, has depths of revolt and largeness of hope — the writer giving each unique phrase, sentence, structural member, and the entire composition a similar unity with its subject and with itself, providing a cloistral refuge from the vulgarity of the actual world, allowing his readers to see precisely what he sees, to enter into the intimate recesses of his own mind and sentiments. (*Appreciations*, my précis)

After addressing his reader as his 'hearer' — the beloved of traditional paederastic pedagogy — Hopkins invites his reader to participate aesthetically in the creation of a mutual fantasy, to observe the transformation of a voyeuristic stranger from 'listless' to 'froliclavish'. This is the skill of 'influence' about which Pater speaks. 'The basis of all artistic genius', writes Pater, 'lies in the

¹ Adams, p.454.

² Sweet, p.153. This education also had religion thrown into the mix, which would have made it far more congenial for Hopkins: 'The interdependence of the rhetorics of aesthetics, religion and [...] homosexuality in the case of Winckelmann should, then, be clear' (Morrison, 'Discreet', p.132).

power of conceiving humanity in a new and striking way, of putting a happy world of its own creation in place of the meaner world of our common days' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.170), a world created through an 'interpenetration of intellectual, spiritual, and physical elements' (p.174), a world abounding with a 'Cyrenaic eagerness [...] to taste and see and touch' (*Marius*, I, p.201), an eagerness to dive into what Marius calls 'that full stream of refined sensation' (II, p.26). For Hopkins, this 'full stream of refined sensation' spills forth from youthful bodies, bodies of 'limber liquid youth' that yield 'tender as a pushed peach' ('Bugler's First Communion', lines 22-23), bodies that 'Winckelmann compares [...] to a quiet sea, which, although we understand it to be in motion, we nevertheless regard as an image of repose' (*Renaissance* 1893, p.174). In contrast to Winckelmann's youthful bodies in their sculptural repose, Hopkins's are 'fretted' with a masturbatory fever that drives them to hurl themselves into a river 'boisterously beautiful', a fever that also drives the prurient imagination of a 'listless stranger [...] beckoned by [their] noise', a stranger who gazes, unseen, until

This garland of their gambol flashes in his breast
 Into such a sudden zest
 Of summertime joys
 That he hies to a pool neighbouring.

This 'pool neighbouring' is a place of seclusion where the stranger, perhaps ashamed to swim naked with the randy boys, can appease his own sensual urges, a place described as 'sweetest, freshest, shadowiest; / Fairyland'. Impassioned far by the boys' voluptuous accents, Hopkins's 'listless' stranger undresses and bathes alone, allowing the water, described as a 'heavenfallen freshness', to 'break across his limbs / Long', an act that changes his state from 'listless' to 'froliclavish' as he embraces and is embraced by the watery hand of God. Through this baptismal conversion, Hopkins illustrates Pater's tripartite division of humanity: 'Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among "the children of this world", in art and song' ('Conclusion', *Renaissance* 1893, p.190). Hopkins's epithalamic stranger exchanges his 'listlessness' for 'high passions' ('higher' certainly than the passions of the bathing boys); and, wiser still, Hopkins's 'hearer' and narrator together construct a paederastic and homoerotic epithalamion, a poetic unification of Greco-Roman 'art and song'.

However, few artists, Pater observes, capture a 'quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love' (p.190), all of which accompany Hopkins's creation of the 'Epithalamion'. Beyond the naked bathers and their voyeur bathed in 'high passions', both the narrator and the 'hearer', the artistic participants of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion', are bathed in insight, in that 'quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love' — especially given the elegiac quality of the poem as it relates to Digby Dolben. For Hopkins, as for Marius, 'the whole of life seemed full of sacred presences' (I, p.17), presences that bestow not only passion (however

'high'), but also serenity, 'the absence of any sense of want, or corruption, or shame' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.176). While on a spiritual retreat in early September 1873, Hopkins seems to have acquired just such a 'serenity' in regard to Dolben, who had died, disturbingly for Hopkins, outside of the Roman Catholic fold: 'I received as I think a great mercy about Dolben' (*Journals*, p.236).¹ On several occasions elsewhere, Hopkins uses this same phrasing to describe an assurance he believes he has been 'granted' of someone's salvation — in the following case, his grandfather's:

I receive it without questioning as a mark that my prayers have been heard and that the queen of heaven has saved a Christian soul from enemies more terrible than a fleet of infidels. Do not make light of this, for it is perhaps the seventh time that I think I have had some token from heaven in connection with the death of people in whom I am interested.

(Letter to his mother, 9 October 1877, *Letters* III, p.148)

With its accompanying elegiac tint, this 'serenity' about Dolben (however questionable the circumstances from which it arose) adds the final flourish to Hopkins's strikingly Paterian 'Epithalamion', for 'there [had] come, from the very depth of his desolation, an eloquent utterance at last, on the irony of men's fates, on the singular accidents of life and death' (*Marius*, II, pp.214-15), in this case a late poem that serves as a remembrance of Dolben's accidental drowning as well as the love he had inspired while alive.

If, as Pater insists, the greatness of literary art depends on 'the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it' ('Style', *Appreciations*, p.36), then, contrary to White's dismissal of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' as 'second-hand impressions pasted together',² the poem is indeed a masterpiece, displaying *all* the qualities Pater deemed essential in art. As the last chapter elucidated, Hopkins's Whitmanesque 'Epithalamion' serves as an imaginative lesson in Keatsian beauty and serenity; as a protest against conventional morality and its conception of the body; as a lyrical blending of Classical, Christian, Romantic, and Victorian themes; as an elegy on the death of Hopkins's beloved Dolben; as an affirmation of sexual freedom and mortal beauty; as a paederastic creed as controversial as anything written in the decades following by the other English Uranians.

¹ This 'mercy' probably involved the fact that, 'after [Dolben's] death, there was found among his papers the beginning of a letter to his father asking to be absolved of his promise not to be baptized [into the Roman Catholic Church before graduating from university], in case of any dangerous accident or illness' (*Dolben* 1915, p.cvii). Hopkins may have learned, through Bridges or Dolben's former intimate Alfred Thomas Wyatt-Edgell (*later* Lord Bray; 1849-1928), of this unfinished letter and may have embraced the hope that it had, in some way, lent Dolben a form of 'plenary grace'.

² White, 'Epithalamion', p.159.

Missing the plot, the temperament, and the mastery of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' — as has been the case with most literary criticism — stems almost entirely from a refusal to recognise Hopkins as Pater's Decadent pupil, a pupil fully versed in the paederastic culture that flourished among the ancients ('almost all of them buggers without concealing the fact') as well as among his own contemporaries, a pupil who had developed that paederastic 'temperament' that Pater describes as 'a sort of chivalrous conscience', and the later Uranians, as 'the New Chivalry'.¹ In White's case, the mistake stems from a belief that 'the person who most influenced Gerard Hopkins's writings was John Ruskin',² a belief that allows him to claim elsewhere that 'for one term Hopkins was coached by W. H. Pater of Brasenose, but direct influence is not obvious'.³ Hopkins often was, it must be admitted, strikingly Ruskinian in his love of Aristotelian particulars and their arrangements; however, it was at the foot of Pater — the foremost Victorian unifier of 'eros, pedagogy, and aesthetics' — that Hopkins would ever remain. The 'direct influence' of Pater on Hopkins is indeed 'obvious', if one cares to look.

While 'Pater imagines what would have happened if Winckelmann and Goethe had met [...] a homosexual fantasy',⁴ it is also possible to imagine what would have happened if Pater and Hopkins had not — a paederastic and 'homosexual' vacuity. The result would likely have been a very different Hopkins, a Hopkins far less Decadent and Uranian, a Hopkins far less suggestive, multifaceted, and grand. The result would also have been a very different Pater, a Pater whose paederastic pedagogy would not have had its greatest flowering, a flowering not in his own works, but in a work by his ablest 'hearer', 'the fit executant' who managed to seize and size Pater's elaborate *Weltanschauung* into a single, masterful poem, the ultimate tribute to Pater's paederastic pedagogy.



Castor and Pollux (?)
 ('San Ildefonso Group')
 Roman
 Marble, ca. 1st century CE
 Museo Nacional del Prado
 Madrid, Spain

¹ This is most prominently displayed in Edwin Emmanuel Bradford's title *The New Chivalry and Other Poems* (London: Kegan Paul, 1918).

² Norman White, *Gerard Manley Hopkins in Wales* (Bridgend, Wales: Seren [Poetry Wales Press], 1998), p.7.

³ Norman White, 'Gerard Manley Hopkins', *DNB*.

⁴ Donoghue, p.157.

**Epitaph:
'Worthy of Uranian Song'**

The boy, who had been to a dance the night before, remained asleep. He lay with his limbs uncovered. He lay unashamed, embraced and penetrated by the sun. The lips were parted, the down on the upper was touched with gold, the hair broken into countless glories, the body was a delicate amber. To anyone he would have seemed beautiful, and to Maurice who reached him by two paths he became the World's desire. (E. M. Forster, *Maurice*)¹

'A musical composer's notes, we know, are not themselves till the fit executant comes, who can put all they may be into them',² wrote Walter Pater in 'Emerald Uthwart', a short story concerned with how, as members of a conservative society, Victorian or contemporary, 'you thwart' a youth who tries 'to burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, [who tries] to maintain this [Paterian] ecstasy' (*Renaissance* 1893, p.189).³ This claim about the 'fit executant' may have been as true for Pater's doctrines as for any composer's notes, perhaps gaining their fullest expression through an epithalamion by one of his students. Gerard Manley Hopkins may well have been the 'fit executant' of Pater's homoerotic and paederastic doctrines, doctrines derived from an erotic nature that they had both come to appreciate in themselves while yet undergraduates at Oxford, for 'often the presence of this nature is felt like a sweet aroma in early manhood' ('Diaphaneité', *Miscellaneous*, p.221).

Whilst Pater was his Greats coach and Digby Dolben his desired beloved, Hopkins must have resembled Pater's protagonist, the 'gem-like' Emerald, 'a rather sensuous boy!' (p.174), with qualities like those preferred and praised by Plato: 'conservative Sparta and its youth; whose unsparing discipline had doubtless something to do with the fact that it was the handsomest and best-formed in all Greece' (p.182).⁴ Like the young Spartans, Pater's Emerald

¹ E. M. Forster, *Maurice: A Novel* (New York: Norton, 1971), pp.146-47.

² Walter Pater, 'Emerald Uthwart', in *Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays*, 1st edn (London: Macmillan, 1895), pp.170-214 (pp.191-92).

³ Pater's choice of the name 'Uthwart' also derives from its possible pronunciation as 'athwart', a word with implications of 'queer': 'The word "queer", of course, itself means *across* — coming from the Indo-European root *-twerkw*, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist), English *athwart*' — see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'Six Queer Habits' <<http://www.duke.edu/~sedgwick/WRITING/HABITS.htm>> (her personal homepage) [last accessed 25 June 2004].

⁴ Shuter observes: 'In "Emerald Uthwart", written while he was offering his lectures on Plato and Platonism, Pater gave a full-length imaginative portrait of his "ingenuous and

displays that receptive disposition that another ‘great lover of boys and young men’, according to Pater, praised as “‘full of affections, full of powers, full of occupation’”, for “‘the younger part of us especially (more naturally than the older) receive the tidings that there are things to be loved and things to be done which shall never pass away’” (p.171). As with these youths, Emerald had received such ‘tidings’ through a paederastic intimacy in which he was the receptive partner, both physically and intellectually: ‘Submissiveness! — It had the force of genius with Emerald Uthwart. In that very matter *he had but yielded to a senior against his own inclination*’ (p.188, emphasis added), a senior under whose influence ‘scholarship attains something of a religious colour’ (pp.188-89). After duly locking his Roman chamber against the intrusive Casanova, Winckelmann would indeed have appreciated Emerald’s ‘submissiveness’, as well as Pater’s ‘enthusiastic’ description of it, a Decadent wordplay that recalls Hopkins’s fragmentary statement about a ‘three-healed timber [...] right rooting in the bare butt’s wincing navel’ (*OET*, p.155).¹

A ‘surface’ reading of its ‘overthought’ suggests that Emerald ‘had *but* yielded to a senior’ in the sense of ‘had *only* yielded to a senior’, yielded in some way, likely intellectual. A ‘symbolic’ reading of its ‘underthought’ suggests that Emerald ‘had *butt-yielded* to a senior’ — even if, initially, he had done so ‘against his own inclination’, ‘wincing’ at the prospect of complete paederastic openness and submissiveness, Hopkins’s ‘bare butt’s wincing navel’. As a result of eventually yielding, ‘his submissiveness [...] made him therefore, of course, unlike those around him’, for it ‘was a secret; a thing, you might say, “which no one knoweth, saving he that receiveth it”’ (p.189), an erotic and intellectual openness transforming ‘he that receiveth it’ (the vagueness of ‘it’ allowing for transgressive vagaries) into someone like Flavian’s Marius, Leonardo’s Salai, Winckelmann’s Lamprecht, Pater’s Hardinge, or Hopkins’s ‘hearer’, someone noticeably different from ‘those around him’, someone who would have appreciated the eroticism that swells in the following description of Emerald’s own maturing ‘manhood’:

Preceptores, condiscipuli, alike, marvel at a sort of delicacy coming into the habits, the person, of that tall, bashful, broad-shouldered, very Kentish, lad; so unaffectedly nevertheless, that it is understood after all to be but the smartness properly significant of change to early manhood, like the down on his lip. Wistful anticipations of manhood are in fact aroused in him, thoughts of the future; his ambition takes effective outline. The well-worn, perhaps

docile” youth. The rigors of Uthwart’s mental and ethical training at school and at Oxford are explicitly compared to those prescribed in the *Republic*, and the paederastic eros of his relationship with the slightly older James Stokes is represented in the language of the *Phaedrus* (‘Greats’, p.254).

¹ The etymology of ‘butt’ (in the sense of physiognomy) seems to derive from Middle English, probably akin to Middle English *buttok*, ‘buttock’ (*OED*). ‘Butt’ also has the meaning of ‘a backstop for catching arrows shot at a target’ — a meaning that allows for Hopkins’s playfulness.

conventional, beauties of their 'dead' Greek and Latin books, associated directly now with the living companion beside him [that senior to whom he had 'but yielded'], really shine for him at last with their pristine freshness; seem more than to fulfil their claim upon the patience, the attention, of modern youth.

(P.184)¹

Although, like Whitman, Emerald could find no 'fit expression' for his erotic intimacy with that senior, for his 'love that dare not speak its name' — he did find, through the symbolism of Pater's art, what Marius describes as 'an eloquent utterance at last':

He finds the Greek or the Latin model of their antique friendship or tries to find it, in the books they read together. None fits exactly. It is of military glory they are really thinking, amid those ecclesiastical surroundings, where however surplices and uniforms are often mingled together; how they will lie, in costly glory, costly to them, side by side, (as they work and walk and play now, side by side) in the cathedral aisle, with a tattered flag perhaps above them, and under a single epitaph. (P.185)

If scholars were to drape Hopkins and Pater, both of whom had advanced, advocated, and/or practised a similar paederastic pedagogy, both of whom had been motivated by 'a chivalrous conscience', both of whom had lent a hand to puerile pupils whom they pruriently called 'hearers', both of whom had found their erotic desires 'costly to them' — if scholars were to drape them under one flag, could that flag be any other than the symbol that Whitman calls 'the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven', a 'branchy bunchy bushybowered' flag capable of concealing paederastic intimations or intimacies from the unappreciative, embarrassed, or spiteful glances of society, an emerald flag flown by those 'you thwart'? What then as a 'single epitaph'?² Could scholars place Pater and Hopkins under any more befitting epitaph than 'Uranian'? 'Uranian' is the 'fit expression', the one expression that would link them, as part of a continuum, with the paederastic poets, prose writers, and painters who flourished in England from William Johnson (*later* Cory; 1823-92)

¹ In *The History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. by George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), Henri I. Marrou explains:

For the Greeks, education — *paidea* — meant, essentially, a profound and intimate relationship, a personal union between a young man and an elder who was at once his model and his initiator — a relationship on to which the fire of passion threw warm and turbid reflections. Throughout Greek history the relationship between master and pupil was to remain that between a lover and his beloved. (P.31)

² The seriousness that Pater would have attributed to such a question is displayed in the opening sentence of 'Emerald Uthwart': 'We smile at epitaphs [...] smile, for the most part, at what for the most part is an unreal and often vulgar branch of literature; yet a wide one, with its flowers here or there' (p.170).

to Ralph Nicholas Chubb (1892-1960), those Uranian descendents of the Victorian Decadents, whose father had been none other than Pater himself. ‘Uranian’ is indeed the befitting epitaph for two literary artists ever inspired by Grecian passion and poesy, a passion and poesy ‘fathered’, as was the ‘foam-born’ Aphrodite, from the ejaculate that had spilled from Uranus’s severed genitals,¹ genitals that, despite being considered impotent for conventional procreativity, had nonetheless filled the world with passionate creativity, had given birth to Love.² Hopkins, a professed celibate who dubbed himself ‘Time’s eunuch’ (‘[Thou Art Indeed Just]’, line 13), expresses much the same about his own poetry:

The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong
 Spur, live and lancing like the blowpipe flame,
 Breathes once and, quenched faster than it came,
 Leaves yet the mind a mother of immortal song. (‘To R.B.’, lines 1-4)

However controversial, this claim about the fitness of this ‘single epitaph’ is not entirely novel, for it was made by the Uranians themselves, situating Pater, as they did, within their own fold and beneath the folds of the emerald flag they flew. In *The Academy* on 11 October 1902, Lionel Johnson — a Uranian poet, a Roman Catholic, and a friend of the late Pater — published ‘Walter Pater’, a memorial that draws to a close with:

¹ From Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 176-206. ‘As for the genitals, just as he first cut them off with his instrument of adamant and threw them from the land into the surging sea, even so they were carried on the waves for a long time. About them a white foam grew from the immortal flesh, and in it a girl formed. [...] Gods and men call her Aphrodite, because she was formed in foam’ — Hesiod, *‘Theogony’ and ‘Works and Days’*, trans. by M. L. West (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.8-9. It is my belief that the ‘Uranians’ conceived of their name dualistically, as deriving from the ‘heavenly’ love described in Plato as well as from Aphrodite’s birth as described by Hesiod. The octave of Theodore Wratislaw’s ‘To a Sicilian Boy’, in *Caprices* (1893), seems to allude to the Uranian dimension of the birth of Venus, and of Cupid consequently:

Love, I adore the contours of thy shape,
 Thine exquisite breasts and arms adorable;
 The wonders of thine heavenly throat compel
 Such fire of love as even my dreams escape:
 I love thee *as the sea-foam loves the cape*,
 Or as the shore the sea’s enchanting spell:
 In sweets the blossoms of thy mouth excel
 The tenderest bloom of peach or purple grape. (Emphasis added)

² In Tom Stoppard’s play *The Invention of Love* (1997), the Classicist and poet A. E. Housman encounters, on an imagined journey down the river Styx, the intellectual currents of Victorian Oxford life, individuals such as Jowett, Pater, and Wilde. Stoppard’s title suggests an appreciation that this form of love had found, in individuals like Housman, a new invention of itself.

Patient beneath his Oxford trees and towers
 He still is gently ours:
 Hierarch of the spirit, pure and strong,
 Worthy Uranian song.¹

Meanwhile, unlike that ‘hierarch of the spirit, pure and strong’, there were other Uranians *without* ‘a chivalrous conscience’, Decadent types who were attempting to rally the same troops under much the same emerald symbolism, though preferring an emerald carnation sprouting from the buttonhole of their evening dress.² Paul Fussell describes this dichotomy cogently, though with too little tactility: ‘At its most pure, the program of the Uranians favored an ideal of “Greek love” like that promulgated in Walter Pater’s essay on Winckelmann, stressing the worship of young male beauty without sex. But very frequently such highmindedness was impossible to sustain, and earnest ideal pedophilia found itself descending to ordinary pederastic sodomy’.³ Hence, unlike their Paterian counterparts, whose idealism encompassed far more than ‘ordinary pederastic sodomy’, these ‘other Uranians’ bestowed *only* ‘passion’, passion devoid of ‘serenity’ and ‘purity’, passion devoid of an ‘absence of any sense of want, or corruption, or shame’,⁴ passion devoid of the refined qualities that Pater and Lionel Johnson considered essential:

Yet the most radical claim of the new Uranian poetry [represented by writers like Lionel Johnson] would always be that it sang the praises of a mode of spiritual and emotional attachment that was, at some ultimate level, innocent or asexual.⁵

The great significance of [Lionel] Johnson’s work as a Uranian poet thus becomes his attempt to defend the older tradition of pederastic Hellenism in the face of the newer sexual realism in male love being asserted in the early 1890s by such writers as Symonds and [Theodore] Wratislaw and indeed by [Lord Alfred] Douglas himself.⁶

¹ Lionel Pigot Johnson, ‘Walter Pater’, in *Poetical Works of Lionel Johnson* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), pp.287-89, lines 53-56. For his idealisation of Pater, see Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.137-38; for his attack on Symonds’s overt eroticism, see pp.135-37.

² See Karl Beckson, ‘Oscar Wilde and the Green Carnation’, *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 43.4 (2000), pp.387-97.

³ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory: Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.284.

⁴ See Peter Swaab, ‘Hopkins and the Pushed Peach’, *Critical Quarterly*, 37.3 (1995), pp.43-60. Swaab makes much the same division: ‘If we are to see Hopkins in relation to Victorian voices of homosexuality, then he has much more in common with figures mainly conciliatory to social orthodoxies (Symonds, Carpenter, arguably Pater) than with pervasively dissident figures such as Swinburne, Solomon, and Wilde’ (p.50).

⁵ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.115.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.137. In 1893, Wratislaw published his sonnet ‘To a Sicilian Boy’, a sonnet that is representative of this encroaching realism, particularly *via* its title/address.

The foremost of those busily popularising and actualising the ‘newer sexual realism’ was Oscar Wilde. Although Dowling displays reticence about including Wilde in her list of Uranians above (despite including his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas), she nonetheless relates: ‘Pater never ceased to realize that the danger to homoerotic Hellenism might in fact come not from the predictably uncomprehending barbarians alone but also from the Greeks themselves: Socrates’ teaching had been corrupted by Alcibiades, his own had been mistaken by Wilde’.¹

What demarcated these two Uranian camps — Pater’s and Wilde’s — was not their choice of the emerald flag or the emerald flower, but the way they saw the same paederastic and homoerotic positionality, the way they (mis)constructed and (mis)construed Pater’s elaborate *Weltanschauung*, the way they handled ‘the distinction that Pater drew between his Platonic aestheticism and the more bodily and decadent aestheticism that was being associated with Wilde’.² Since Wilde and his coterie provided the second of these camps or paths, it is to Wilde as Alcibiades that the next chapter turns.³

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.140. D’Arch Smith broadens this, suggesting that, in much of the Decadence of the 1890s, ‘the aesthetics of Pater and the Greek ideal were being slightly perverted and misinterpreted’ (p.2). I would replace the word ‘slightly’ with ‘highly’. Monsman describes this aptly as ‘Oscar Wilde’s seductive (mis)constructions of Paterian aesthetic theories’ (‘Platonic’, p.28). That Wilde never acknowledged this himself is revealed in a letter, ca. 18 February 1898, Wilde claiming that ‘To have altered my life would have been to have admitted that Uranian love is ignoble’ — Rupert Hart-Davis, ed., *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1962), p.705.

Curiously, it seems that the Greco-Roman culture so prized by Pater was itself destroyed by eroticised paederasty, if the ancient historian Procopius of Caesarea, author of *The Secret History*, is correct: ‘Procopius, who wrote in the early sixth century [...] tells how the Vandals captured Rome by selecting three hundred boys of good birth “whose beards had not yet grown, but who had just come of age”, and sent them to Roman patricians to serve as house slaves, a capacity in which they would have been subject to sexual exploitation. On a predestined day they killed their masters, facilitating the capture of the city’ — David F. Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p.249.

² Monsman, ‘Platonic’, p.26.

³ I am here differentiating between two forms of erotic positioning, as well as the fulfilment and outcome of such erotic attachments. My differentiation is not contradictory to Brian Reade’s claim in *Sexual Heretics: Male Homosexuality in English Literature from 1850 to 1900* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970) that there were two forms of Victorian derivation for the thing he labels ‘homosexual sentiment’ (about this claim I am in tentative agreement):

By 1870 two contrasted streams of homosexual sentiment were especially noteworthy: one from the Oxford Movement with its undercurrent of emotional friendship as expressed by Newman and Faber; the other from the muscular Christianity of Dr Arnold at Rugby School, a somewhat inarticulate trend. Although these two streams were opposed, in fact they were joined at the point in a friendship where emphasis is placed on overtones of self-sacrifice. (P.29)



W. Graham Robertson
John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)
Oil on canvas, 1894
Tate Collection, London, UK¹

Since 'self-sacrifice' for love's sake was the Paterian ideal, Pater and his 'philosophy' can be seen as the confluence, after 1873, of these two Victorian streams — though these two streams would, in due course, separate again and differently. After their confluence in Pater, these two streams separated into those Uranians with a 'chivalrous conscience', like Hopkins, and those without it, like Wilde. For the first group, 'Emerald' was a flag to be flown; for the second, a carnation to be flaunted.

¹ W(alford) Graham Robertson (1866-1948) — an artist, a friend of Wilde, and a London dilettante — was actually twenty-eight at the time this portrait was painted. With his brush, Sargent has managed, perhaps intentionally, to capture Robertson's remarkable youthfulness in a tone similar to Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*.

— Chapter Five —

**‘Paedobaptistry’:
Wilde as Priapic Educationalist**

**‘Liable to Misconstruction’:
Pater’s Evaluation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray***

I have an emerald, a great round emerald, which Caesar’s minion sent me. If you look through this emerald you can see things which happen at a great distance. Caesar himself carries such an emerald when he goes to the circus. But my emerald is larger. I know well that it is larger. It is the largest emerald in the whole world. You would like that, would you not? Ask it of me and I will give it you.

(Oscar Wilde, *Salomé*)¹

Informed of the death of his former friend and mentor Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde immediately retorted: ‘Was he ever alive?’² Such was Wilde’s biting jest in 1894, a year before he would find himself the defendant in the most (in)famous set of Victorian trials, as well as ‘the most famous pederast in the world’s history’.³ Wilde’s question sprang from a perspective on Pater that J. A. Symonds equally shared, a perspective Symonds expresses in a letter to Henry Graham Dakyns as ‘[Pater’s] view of life gives me the creeps [...] I am sure it is a ghastly sham’, and in a letter to Mary Robinson as ‘I cannot sympathize with Pater’s theory of life [...] I have always thought it the theory of one who has not lived & loved’.⁴ Denis Donoghue suggests that these letters imply that ‘if Pater is

¹ Oscar Wilde, *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.583-605 (p.601).

² Recorded by Max Beerbohm — as quoted in Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, rev. edn (New York: Knopf, 1988), p.52. ‘In later life he disparaged Pater as man, as writer, and as an influence, as Robert Ross noted with some distress’ (Ibid.).

³ Rupert Croft-Cooke, *Feasting with Panthers: A New Consideration of Some Late Victorian Writers* (London: W. H. Allen, 1967), p.176.

⁴ Letter to Dakyns, after 20 February 1873 — from Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, eds, *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, 3 vols (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1967-69), II, p.273. Letter to Robinson, 30 March 1885 — from R. M. Seiler, ed., *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1980), p.124.

indeed a lover of young men, I wish he would act boldly upon his desires and stop etherealizing them in that sickly way'.¹ According to Linda Dowling, Symonds's assessment of Pater stems from his own attempts, in word and deed, 'to discard the crippling sexual sublimations of the Platonic eros' advocated by Pater, while still keeping 'the ideal of Dorian comradeship' — in essence, from his attempts 'to free himself and the English Uranians from one half of the inheritance of Oxford Hellenism'.² Rather than be 'crippled' like Pater by the 'sexual sublimations' advocated by Socrates and his Victorian acolyte, Benjamin Jowett, both Symonds and Wilde decided instead to emulate Alcibiades, by embracing the erotic potential tacitly afforded Socratic eros, an erotic potential it had always been accused of actualising anyway. Although their views were similar in this regard, Wilde, with Alcibiades' drunken flair, would make a grander entrance into the Victorian symposium than would Symonds, becoming the spokesman for the 'newer sexual realism'.



Socratic Love

Edouard-Henri (Paul) Avril (1849-1928)
Lithograph with watercolour, 1906

Plate VIII of the 1906 Paris edn
of *De figuris Veneris* (1824)
by Friedrich Karl Forberg (1770-1848)
British Library, London, UK³

¹ Denis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995), p.40.

² Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.130. For Symonds's distrust of 'Uranian eros', see pp.128-38.

³ Although he claims that Socrates went no further than what is displayed in this illustration, Alcibiades nonetheless affirms that this portrayal of Socrates as 'sexually aroused' is no exaggeration: 'Socrates is erotically attracted to beautiful boys, and is always hanging around them in a state of excitement' — Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. by Christopher Gill and Desmond Lee (New York: Penguin, 2006), p.69.

Although one became a flamboyant dandy on the vanguard of Late-Victorian society and the other remained a reserved Oxford don whose appearances before the public were usually in print, Wilde and Pater were nonetheless friends — and had been so since 1877, when Wilde was still an undergraduate at Magdalen College.¹ The eventual breach between these two friends was the result of a bevy of ‘boys’ and a single text. This bevy included John Henry Gray, a Decadent poet and later Roman Catholic priest, a ‘stunner’ soon to be supplanted in Wilde’s affections by Lord Alfred Douglas (‘Bosie’), a promiscuous aristocrat who dabbled in Uranian verse and dawdled in his Oxford studies, as well as flaunted a lack of discretion that would ultimately spur Wilde’s demise and imprisonment. As early as 1891, Pater had begun to concede that Wilde was far too dangerous a person to know — probably through details supplied by their mutual friend Lionel Johnson, the person who would later fatefully introduce Wilde to Douglas, his friend from Winchester College, a public school.² Pater responded accordingly. The text that additionally provoked this breach, a text equally indiscreet, was *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, still in manuscript in 1890 when it was shown to Pater in the hope that he would review it, which he later did.³ In such a public venue as a review, there was much that Pater needed to avoid, namely that Wilde’s relationship with John Gray was intimately bound together with the text, as Richard Ellmann explains:

To give the hero of his novel the name of ‘Gray’ was a form of courtship. Wilde probably named his hero not to point to a model, but to flatter Gray by identifying him with Dorian. Gray took the hint, and in letters to Wilde signed himself ‘Dorian’. Their intimacy was common talk.⁴

To Wilde’s surprise and displeasure, Pater took the occasion of this review not to flatter, elucidate, or cloak, but to distance himself as much as possible from both Dorian and his corrupter, Lord Henry Wotton — both of whom were unmistakably modelled on himself and the ideas he had expressed in his volume *The Renaissance*, for ‘Wilde evidently intended [Lord Henry] to be recognizably Paterian’.⁵ Although, in principle, Pater would have seconded

¹ See Ellmann, pp.83-84; Donoghue, p.81.

² Ellmann, p.324. See Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.136. In ‘Oscar Wilde: The Myth of Martyrdom’, *Historian*, 77.2 (2003), pp.30-38, Trevor Fisher suggests that ‘Wilde and Douglas [...] conducted themselves with such astonishing indiscretion that it is remarkable they survived as long as they did’ (p.34).

³ Donoghue, p.83. See *An Inquiry into Oscar Wilde’s Revisions of ‘The Picture of Dorian Gray’* (New York: Garland, 1988), pp.38, 63, and 114, where Donald Lawler suggests that Pater ‘was privy to Wilde’s first manuscript revisions and had been asked to make suggestions for improvement’.

⁴ Ellmann, pp.307-08.

⁵ Donoghue, p.85. Lord Henry’s verbal sparring is clearly derived from Pater’s *Renaissance* (and often borders on plagiarism); however, Lord Henry’s name seems to have derived from another source — the scandalous aristocrat Lord Henry Somerset

Wilde's claim that 'life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts'¹ — in his signed review, 'A Novel by Mr. Oscar Wilde', published in the periodical *The Bookman* in November 1891, Pater complained that

A true Epicureanism aims at a complete though harmonious development of man's entire organism. To lose the moral sense therefore, for instance, the sense of sin and righteousness, as Mr. Wilde's heroes are bent on doing as speedily, as completely as they can, is to lose, or lower, organisation, to become less complex, to pass from a higher to a lower degree of development. [...] Lord Henry, and even more the, from the first, suicidal hero [Dorian], loses too much in life to be a true Epicurean — loses so much in the way of impressions, of pleasant memories, and subsequent hopes, which [Basil] Hallward, by a really Epicurean economy, manages to secure.²

(1851-1926), who was obliged to flee to the Continent after his irate wife had publicised his sexual relationship with a young commoner named Henry Smith (Somerset had first met Henry when the boy was only seven, but they seem not to have become intimate until Henry was about seventeen). Although, in a review for the *Pall Mall Gazette* (30 March 1889), Wilde chides the exiled Lord Henry for his *Songs of Adieu* — 'He has nothing to say and says it' — Wilde seems to have later reconsidered the potential of this erotic exile, and decided to give him 'something to say': the choicest of Pater's expressions — see Timothy d'Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), pp.24-27. See also Robert K. Martin, 'Parody and Homage: The Presence of Pater in *Dorian Gray*', *Victorian Newsletter*, 63 (1983), pp.15-18. In 'Self-Plagiarism, Creativity and Craftsmanship in Oscar Wilde', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 41.1 (1998), pp.6-23, Josephine M. Guy relates: 'So when in "The Critic as Artist" Wilde uses Arnold's language, or Pater's in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the strategy is knowing and careful — their ideas are never passed off as Wilde's own. Rather, in these instances, borrowing has become a strategy of allusion, an act of display rather than disguise' (p.7).

¹ In this chapter, the quotations from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* derive from two sources: the original *Lippincott* version of 1890 (used as the base text), as well as the authoritative version published by Harper Collins. The reason for employing one or the other is the markedly better sense or more suggestive phrasing that it provides, as well as the presence of those discussions about murder that are absent from the *Lippincott* version. Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine: A Popular Journal of General Literature, Science, and Politics*, 46 (July 1890), pp.3-100 [Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott]; abbreviated as *Dorian* 1890. Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.17-159; abbreviated as *Dorian* 1891. This particular quotation is from *Dorian* 1890, p.66. All quotations from Wilde's other works are taken from *The Complete Works*.

² Walter Pater, 'A Novel by Mr. Oscar Wilde' [Review of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*], *The Bookman: A Monthly Journal for Bookreaders, Bookbuyers and Booksellers*, 1.2 (November 1891), pp.59-60 — reprinted in *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Karl Beckson (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.83-86 (pp.84-85).

Obviously, by late autumn 1891, Pater had become familiar enough with Wilde's dangerous companions — the fictive Dorian Gray and the affected John Gray, among others — familiar enough to desire distance:

Pater's sense of the relation between Lord Alfred and Wilde, added to common rumor about Wilde's sexual life, made him decide that minor textual changes in *Dorian Gray* were not enough. He could have avoided having anything further to do with the book. Instead, with unusual boldness, he arranged to review it and took the occasion to repudiate not only Lord Henry but his creator.¹

Of Dorian, it was said that 'these whispered scandals only lent him, in the eyes of many, his strange and dangerous charm' (*Dorian* 1890, p.74)² — but Pater was never one of the many. As Pater's earlier responses to the scandals of Oscar Browning and Simeon Solomon reveal, he only tolerated 'dangerous charm' until he himself risked being caught in the descending panther-cage: '[Pater] became prudent, but only when a scandal obtruded'.³ As Donoghue further explains: 'Most of Pater's friendships during his later years, if friendship is not too strong a word for them, were with writers [...] and he retained them in his circle unless prudence indicated that he should be rid of them'.⁴ Confronted with the increasing publicity of Wilde's 'dangerous charm', in both its flamboyant and its fictive forms, 'Pater realized that in the minds of Wilde's popular readership the ethics of Basil's timorous Platonism did not offset the gusto with which Dorian's flowers of evil blossomed. And in the inevitable controversy, Pater had no intention of carrying the blame for Wilde's exuberance'.⁵ As Wilde would

¹ Donoghue, p.84; 'Lord Alfred' should probably be replaced with 'John Gray' above.

² 'If anything, the severe legal penalties encouraged rather than deterred the antinomian Wilde' (Fisher, p.32).

³ Donoghue, p.36. However, his friendships with Oscar Browning and Simeon Solomon were certainly deeper than his sense of propriety or discretion. As Donoghue notes about Browning's scandal at Eton: 'None of these considerations made him unacceptable to Pater or to the Fellows of King's College, Cambridge' (p.37). As for Solomon's arrests and imprisonment: 'Pater at least went to the trouble of discussing the [1873] arrest with Solomon's sister Rebecca [...] Pater's affection for him was not diminished by the episode' (p.38). Browning's own disregard for scandalous associations continued throughout his life, such that, in his *Memories of Sixty Years at Eton, Cambridge and Elsewhere* (London: John Lane, 1910), pp.106-09, 182, Browning was still proclaiming loudly that the infamous Solomon had been his friend.

⁴ Donoghue, p.70.

⁵ Gerald Monsman, 'The Platonic Eros of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde: "Love's Reflected Image" in the 1890s', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 45.1 (2002), pp.26-45 (p.39). Monsman asks several apt rhetorical questions relating to this episode: 'When Wilde visited Oxford in February 1890, possibly with a draft of *Dorian Gray*, did Pater see an echo of Mallock's brutal caricature of himself in Lord Henry, whispering evil metaphors into the ear of the young man?' and 'Did Pater realize that his recurring language of erotic suffering and suggestive evocation of strange sins exacerbated sensual tendencies in impressionable minds? His note to the Conclusion of

explain years later to Robert Baldwin Ross (1869-1918): 'Dear Pater was always frightened of my propaganda'.¹



Oscar Wilde

Napoleon Sarony (1821-96)
 Photograph, 1882
 Prints and Photographs Division
 Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., USA

In this particular case, Pater was confronted with a pressing choice between public discretion and personal friendship. Wilde's cultivations in literature and in life had become too overtly scandalous and propagandistic for

The Renaissance indicates he would have' (pp.38; 40). About the intention of the Marquess of Queensberry's attorneys to use *Dorian Gray* as 'primary evidence for the defense', see Moe Meyer, 'Under the Sign of Wilde: An Archaeology of Posing', in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, ed. by Moe Meyer (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.75-109 (p.91).

In 'Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, and the Rhetoric of Agency', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 37.1 (2001), pp.85-110, David Foster describes this dangerous 'posing' that Pater found so threatening:

The controversy over *Dorian Gray* exacerbated what by 1890 had already become a rich intertext of posing [for Wilde]: the early stories, newspaper and magazine articles and photos, *Punch* caricatures, and word of mouth, all contributed to the complex public persona. The homoerotic overtones of Wilde's posing blended both assertion and evasion, deflecting direct attacks from those who were suspicious of what lay beneath the pose. (P.90)

¹ As quoted in Ellmann, p.84.

Pater's sense of security, such that Pater began, in turn, to cultivate as much distance between himself and his friend, in person and in print, as courtesy would allow: '[Lionel] Johnson's life was weird enough to interest Pater but not to make him afraid that he would be drawn into it. [...] This was the main worry in Pater's friendship with Wilde'.¹ Pater was hoping — perhaps hopelessly — that, by cultivating such a distance, he would spare himself the cage threatening to descend around Wilde and those nearby, a cage crafted legally by the Labouchère addition to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 (which extended the criminality of same-sex erotic practices) and emotively by the Cleveland Street Scandal of 1889 (which exposed a 'rent-boy' ring at 19 Cleveland Street in London's West End, a sort of 'telegraph-boy brothel' frequented by gentlemen and aristocrats, including Prince Edward — or so the Public Record Office documents concerning the investigation, released in 1975, suggest).² Wilde's connection to that underworld, at least textually, was boldly asserted by a review of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* published in *The Scots Observer* soon after the novel appeared in its original form, in *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1890:

Mr Wilde has brains, and art, and style; but if he can write for none but outlawed noblemen and perverted telegraph-boys, the sooner he takes to tailoring (or some other decent trade) the better for his own reputation and the public morals.³

The problem is that Wilde *did* follow this reviewer's advice: he began 'tailoring', which involved frequenting the elaborately decorated and perfumed rooms of Alfred Taylor in Little College Street, near Westminster Abbey, rooms where Taylor had amassed a collection of young 'stunners' from London's working classes, 'renters', male prostitutes all:

¹ Donoghue, p.80. In *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, Seiler merely notes: 'Their cordial relations may have been dampened by Pater's unsympathetic review of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*' (p.162).

² For a discussion of this scandal, as well as the Uranian fascination with telegraph-boys from the General Post Office ('The telegraph-boy appears to have provided the Uranians with a considerable erotic stimulus'), see d'Arch Smith, pp.27-29. See also H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Cleveland Street Scandal* (New York: W. H. Allen, 1976), pp.20-25; Morris Kaplan, 'Did "My Lord Gomorrah" Smile?: Homosexuality, Class and Prostitution in the Cleveland Street Affair', in *Disorder in the Court: Trials and Sexual Conflict at the Turn of the Century*, ed. by George Robb and Nancy Erber (New York: New York University Press, 1999), pp.78-99; Colin Simpson, Lewis Chester, and David Leitch, *The Cleveland Street Affair* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1976).

³ Thersites [the pseudonym of Charles Whibley], [Review of] *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in *The Scots Observer* (5 July 1890), as reprinted in Rupert Hart-Davis, ed., *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1962), p.265, note 2. In "'Culture and Corruption": Paterian Self-Development versus Gothic Degeneration in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 39.4 (2003), pp.339-64, Nils Clausson claims that, 'after June 20, 1890, the date the July issue of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* appeared, "Victorian literature had a different look"' (p.363).

What seems to characterize all Wilde's affairs is that he got to know the boys as individuals, treated them handsomely, allowed them to refuse his attentions without becoming rancorous, and did not corrupt them. They were already prostitutes. The excitement of doing something considered wrong, and the professional avarice of the blackmailing, extortionate, faithless boys, may have been as important for Wilde as sexual gratification.¹

Thus Wilde preoccupied himself with 'trade', with 'rent-boys' from 'grey, monstrous London [...] with its myriads of people, its sordid sinners, and its splendid sins' (*Dorian* 1891, p.47), living a life he would later summarise for Ross: 'I have fallen in and out of love, and fluttered hawks and doves alike. How evil it is to buy Love, and how evil to sell it! And yet what purple hours one can snatch from that grey slow-moving thing we call Time! My mouth is twisted with kissing, and I feed on fevers'.² Meanwhile, Pater was at Oxford, living and writing 'The Aesthetic Life':

It is part of [the aesthete's] tact, his finely educated sense of fitness, to dissimulate his interests, to say less than he really feels, to carry about with him in self-defence through a vulgar age a habit of reserve, of irony it may be, this again becoming in its turn but an added means of expression.³

Had Pater lived a year longer than he did — bypassing his heart attack on 30 July 1894 — he would, like most Victorians, have witnessed Wilde's publicised conviction, imprisonment, and complete disgrace, a disgrace facilitated by disclosures about Wilde's involvement with those young 'renters', his relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas, and his well-stained, hotel bed-sheets. As the 'gutter press' liked to chide in various ways, Wilde had become the ultimate embodiment of the 'Ass-thete', a puckish allusion to Wilde's role as the Victorian Bottom.⁴ When it came to the aesthetic (not the ass-thetic) life, Pater's

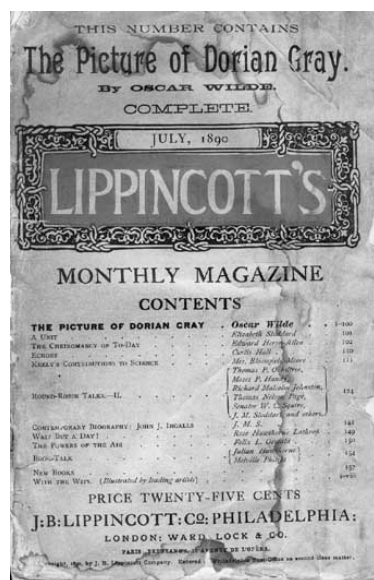
¹ Ellmann, p.390. For Wilde's interaction with Taylor's 'circle', see Ellmann, pp.389-91; for these sexual 'episodes' used against Wilde in court, see pp.441-42, 459-64, and 474-75. For considerations of 'renters' and their homoerotic and paederastic underworld, see Rupert Croft-Cooke, *Feasting with Panthers*; Rupert Croft-Cooke, *The Unrecorded Life of Oscar Wilde* (New York: David McKay, 1972); Michael S. Foldy, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde: Deviance, Morality, and Late-Victorian Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Jeffrey Weeks, 'Inverts, Perverts, and Mary-Annes: Male Prostitution and the Regulation of Homosexuality in England in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. by Martin Bauml Duberman, et al. (New York: Meridian, 1989), pp.195-211.

² Letter to Robert Ross, 14 May 1900, in Rupert Hart-Davis, ed., *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1962), p.828.

³ This is the last passage of an essay left unfinished at Pater's death — Houghton Library (Harvard University) MSS, Engl. 1150 (7), as quoted and punctuated by Donoghue, p.291.

⁴ Schmidgall notes that 'the pun [is the result] of a resourceful menswear firm in Chicago that, capitalizing on the publicity attending Oscar's visit to the city in 1882, sought to

instincts — even his instinct for dying — were uncommonly superb, leading Henry James to express in a letter to Edmund Gosse on 10 August 1894, just after Pater’s burial at St Giles’s Cemetery, Oxford: ‘[His death] presents itself to me — so far as I know it — as one of the successful, felicitous lives, and the time & manner of the death a part of the success’.¹ James was to prove prophetic. Had Pater lived even a little longer, he would have found himself inextricably bound within the Victorian period’s most scandalous tangle, a tangle comprised of Wilde, Lord Alfred Douglas, a dozen ‘renters’, soiled bed-sheets, and *Dorian Gray*, a tangle he could hardly have avoided as inspirer of much that the resultant trials condemned. This was a tangle into which he was inevitably drawn, though posthumously.



catch the eye with an advertisement featuring “Wild ‘Oscar;’ Or, Balaam, the Ass-thete” (*Stranger*, p.170). Such characterisations should be seen in relation to Ari Adut’s comments: ‘The proclivities of Wilde were [...] common knowledge in London for a long time before his tribulations began’ (p.214); ‘Wilde’s well-known homosexuality did not cause a scandal until his trials simply because it was not publicly denounced. People prattled — much and maliciously, but always in private’ (p.228) — ‘A Theory of Scandal: Victorians, Homosexuality, and the Fall of Oscar Wilde’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 111.1 (2005), pp.213-48.

¹ Rayburn S. Moore, ed., *Selected Letters of Henry James to Edmund Gosse, 1882-1915: A Literary Friendship* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), p.115. ‘Death spared [Pater] the tragedy of Wilde’s trial, a tragedy we can conceive only as the sacrifice of male homosexuality to male homophobia. But Pater’s homoeroticism cannot be represented in the terms of such a discourse’ — William F. Shuter, ‘The “Outing” of Walter Pater’, *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 48.4 (1994), pp.480-506 (p.506).

Pater would have cringed had he foreseen that his private intimations concerning *The Picture of Dorian Gray* would be invoked by Wilde, as he dramatically occupied the dock in the Old Bailey from 3 April till 31 May 1895, to justify the novel's published contents. Under cross-examination from Edward Carson during his first trial, Wilde claimed that he had never deleted anything from *Dorian Gray*, but had actually made an addition: 'In one case it was pointed out to me — not in a newspaper or anything of that sort, but by the only critic of the century whose opinion I set high, Mr Walter Pater — that a certain passage was liable to misconstruction, and I made an addition'.¹ For Wilde, addition was always preferable to deletion, for he disagreed with Pater — 'the only critic of the century whose opinion I set high' — that 'in literature, too, the true artist may be best recognised by his tact of omission' (*Appreciations*, p.15).² 'Tact' was never a Wildean virtue. Wilde subsequently testified that Pater had sent him several letters regarding *Dorian Gray* (letters no longer extant), the outcome of which was his modification of that overly suggestive passage Pater feared was 'liable to misconstruction'.³ That passage may have been, as Donald Lawler suggests,⁴ the one in which Basil Hallward questions Dorian about the ruin of his intimates: 'Why is your friendship so fateful to young men?' (*Dorian* 1890, p.79). At this point in the novel, Basil begins to provide a 'list of the debauched' for rhetorical support — the boy in the Guards, Sir Henry Ashton, Adrian Singleton, Lord Kent's son, the young Duke of Perth — a list that Dorian interrupts in the 1891 version: 'Stop, Basil. You are talking about things of

¹ As quoted in H. Montgomery Hyde, ed., *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*, 2nd edn (New York: Dover, 1973), p.109.

² In 'Pater's Sadness', *Raritan*, 20.2 (2000), pp.136-58, Jacques Khalip writes:

The type of currency that an absent, Paterian life comes unusually to promote is most striking when we recast that absence as the quality of countless 'unmentionables' during the nineteenth century who, like Pater himself, wore their silence, rather than hearts, on their sleeves as repressed proof of the love that dared not speak its name. The price paid by homosexuals is an oblivion that society campaigns for and enforces as the inevitable world both out of and into which homosexuals must be consigned. (P.147)

³ See Lawler, *Inquiry*, pp.55-56.

⁴ Lawler claims that 'there is only one instance in the final revision of *Dorian Gray* in which Wilde made the kind of addition to which he alluded at the trial. It follows a long series of detailed accusations by Basil Hallward of young men who had been ruined by an association with Dorian Gray. This would seem just the sort of passage to which Pater would take exception' (*Ibid.*, p.55, note). Monsman observes:

Wilde had begun his novel sometime late in 1889 and finished revising it in April or May of 1890; and he had visited Pater at Oxford on or about 15 February 1890. On that occasion Wilde also called on Lionel Johnson, who reported that Wilde had 'laughed at Pater: and consumed all my cigarettes'. If Pater *did* read the manuscript of *Dorian Gray*, this would have been the occasion, Wilde perhaps finding risible Pater's alarm at the corrupting influence of Dorian on his companions. ('Platonic', p.27)

which you know nothing' (*Dorian* 1891, p.112). This is indeed a passage 'liable to misconstruction', a passage with a suggestiveness to which Pater would have been extremely sensitive.

Like the painter Basil, whom he praises in his *Bookman* review, Pater always advised discretion, even in things only 'liable to misconstruction'; however, discretion was a quality Wilde rarely, if ever, enjoyed, and for Wilde enjoyment was everything. While Wilde's indiscretions were usually sexual, Pater's were usually textual — which perhaps prompted Wilde's acidic retort upon hearing of his former friend's death: 'Was he ever alive?' Well, Pater had lived, even if only textually; and his texts exercised an inescapable influence over Wilde, as Wilde's prison reading-lists reveal.

In *De Profundis*, Wilde asserts that 'with freedom, books, flowers, and the moon, who could not be happy?' (p.1039). However, during his imprisonment he had neither freedom nor emerald carnations (and only occasionally the variable moon), but books he was eventually permitted, upon approved request:

In July 1895 Wilde was allowed to choose fifteen books to be sent to him in prison: they included *The Renaissance*. Two months later he got *Greek Studies*, *Appreciations*, and *Imaginary Portraits*. Robert Ross, visiting Wilde in prison in May 1896, undertook to send him *Gaston de Latour* when it came out on October 6. A further list, submitted to the prison authorities on December 3, 1896, included Pater's posthumous *Miscellaneous Studies* (1895).¹

Another list, dated 29 July 1897, requests 'Walter Pater's posthumous volume of essays', though this was one of several volumes struck from the list by the prison governor.² Amidst this veritable library of Pater volumes, this small cell in the appropriately christened, but heteronymous 'Reading Gaol', Wilde constructed an epic epistle addressed 'Dear Bosie', a letter now called *De Profundis*.³ In this epistle, Wilde employs the language of Pater to explain the ways he had himself

¹ Donoghue, pp.85-86.

² Suzanne Tatian, of Reader Services at the William Andrews Clark Library, University of California, Los Angeles, kindly corresponded with me regarding a manuscript in the library's collection, 'Autograph list of books requested by Wilde from the prison authorities while at Reading. 1896' (Shelfmark: W6721L R825): 'Our list doesn't include any work of Pater's. [...] Merlin Holland's *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde* (4th Estate, 2000) mentions this and includes a few more lists than what we own. In those lists, works by Pater include *Renaissance*, *Greek Studies*, *Appreciations*, *Imaginary Portraits*, and *Essays*. A list at the P.R.O. from 29 July 1897 included "Walter Pater's posthumous volume of essays" but it was one of several that the new governor struck out'. Laurel McPhee, Assistant Librarian at the Clark Library, kindly seconded the above details in another E-mail.

³ It should be remembered that this title was invented for its posthumous publication in 1905. Although Wilde suggested the title *Epistola: In Carcere et Vinculis*, Robert Ross supplied the current title instead, based on a suggestion from E. V. Lucas.

been corrupted, initially by touches textual, then by touches sexual. This second touch (particularly that of Lord Alfred Douglas, whose life revolved, in Wilde's phrasing, around 'boys, brandy, and betting'¹) has received much, perhaps too much consideration of late in film, biographies, and criticism.² In contrast, it is to

¹ Letter to Robert Ross, ca. 29 June 1900, *Letters of Wilde*, p.831.

² As a scholarly choice, I have opted, beyond the confines of this footnote, neither to quote from nor to provide references to Neil McKenna's *The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Basic Books, 2005 [2003]), a biography that, although not apparently attempting to do so, strikingly supports my claims for including Wilde among the paederastic Uranian writers, a point cogently made by Jad Adams in his review of the biography:

This would be easier to enjoy as an epic of sexual liberation if Wilde and Co. really were arguing for the acceptance of love between man and man. In fact, as McKenna's extensive quotations make quite clear, many were standing up for the righteousness and desirability of sex between men and boys. McKenna exhaustively documents Wilde's relationships both with young men who were his social equals, and with the teenage working-class boys or 'chickens' who were to his taste. One encounter at a hotel in Worthing was with a 15-year-old boy, an event which, if it happened today, would have Wilde castigated as a celebrity paedophile — 'Strange Bedfellows', *The Guardian* [online edn], 25 October 2003 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/reviews/biography/0,6121,1070373,00.html>> [last accessed 25 May 2006].

In his biography (with its title befittingly derived from the most pornographic and repetitive of Victorian pseudo-memoirs, *My Secret Life* by Walter), McKenna seems surprised that, confronted with the detail that Wilde had practised anilingus on five messenger boys in a single evening, Aubrey Beardsley was 'shocked and rather disgusted', Beardsley feeling that 'to know that Oscar was a sodomite was one thing, to be forced to listen to the goriest of gory details was quite another' (McKenna, p.262). McKenna clearly disagrees with Beardsley's shock and disgust, since the entirety of his biography revels in such revelations. As a result, Wilde is reduced to his sex-drive: his every thought becomes priapic; almost every 'friendship' he forges becomes a sexual escapade that leaves behind scant intimacy and scant depth; his principal audience becomes the legion of servants puzzled as to the proper method for handling the residues with which Wilde has writ large his defiance of puritanical society, writ in a medium less conventional than that of the printed book or the Victorian broadsheet — 'bed sheets [...] stained with a mixture of vaseline, semen and excrement' (McKenna, p.222).

Were even a fraction of the soiled 'bed sheets' McKenna handles both accurate and aptly evaluated — which I believe they are (though I would, for starters, discard the overly-knowing, outrageousness, and unpublished memoirs of Trelawny Backhouse) — then, against the grain of McKenna's rhetorical claims for Wilde as a heroic 'sodomite', Wilde is recognisable as the Wilde I display: an Ass-thete who is strikingly shallow and best defined by Wilde's description of Dorian Gray as 'callous, concentrated on evil, with stained mein, and soul hungry for rebellion'. Despite its scholarly, conceptual, and other flaws, McKenna's biography should certainly be considered in any holistic engagement of Wilde's eroticism; however, for reasons scholarly rather than Beardsleyan, I have refrained from engaging it here. It should also be noted that McKenna rather disingenuously employs the term 'Uranian' throughout to designate materials, actions,

that earlier, textual touch that the following turns. Those ‘boys’ came and went, but Pater’s *Renaissance* was a permanent object to have and to hold, as Wilde explains: ‘I never travel anywhere without it; [...] it is the very flower of decadence; the last trumpet should have sounded the moment it was written’.¹ Even in prison, Wilde’s hand was ever upon that ‘holy writ’ of Decadence, prompting him to relate to Douglas: ‘I remember during my first term at Oxford reading in Pater’s *Renaissance* — that book which has had such a strange influence over my life’ (*De Profundis*, p.1022). About Wilde’s relationship to this volume, Ellmann relates: ‘Much of it, especially the celebrated “Conclusion”, he had by heart’.²

For the Victorians, the most controversial, hence influential section of *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* — titled *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* in the first edition so prized by Wilde — was its ‘Conclusion’, a conclusion for which Pater later provided the following footnote:

This brief ‘Conclusion’ was omitted in the second edition of this book, as I conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall. On the whole, I have thought it best to reprint it here, with some slight changes which bring it closer to my original meaning. I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by it.

(*Renaissance* 1893, p.186, emphasis added)³

and individuals better labelled, given his often dubious claims, ‘homosexual’ and ‘homoeotic’. In most cases the materials, actions, and individuals so labelled are indeed ‘Uranian’, though the import and importance of these are ‘Uranian’ in a ‘paederastic’ sense, not in the ‘androphilic’ sense McKenna asserts. In essence, the fatal, encompassing flaw of McKenna’s biography is that it fails to recognise that Wilde and his circle ‘were standing up for the righteousness and desirability of sex between men and boys’. While Walt Whitman’s desires were primarily androphilic, Wilde’s rarely were, adding a degree of specificity to Wilde’s self-evaluation — despite an elevated, histrionic tone inappropriate to the speaker and his circumstances — that ‘A poet in prison for loving boys loves boys. To have altered my life would have been to have admitted that Uranian love is ignoble’ — Letter to Robert Ross, ca. 18 February 1898, *Letters of Wilde*, p.705. Since this statement was made to Wilde’s most constant of friends, a fellow paederast who knew him better than most, his phrasing is authentic (however unreflective), rather than veiled: had Wilde intended, as McKenna would suggest, to describe himself as ‘A poet in prison for loving men’, he would have phrased it thus.

¹ As quoted in Ellmann, p.301.

² *Ibid.*, p.47.

³ While reviewing her friend-and-neighbour’s novel for *Macmillan’s Magazine* (June 1885), Mrs Humphry Ward suggests that *Marius* serves to recant the ‘Conclusion’ to *The Renaissance* (Donoghue, p.91). Donoghue partially agrees: ‘The book is indeed a revision of the Conclusion [...] But the motto of both books might well be the same: death is the mother of beauty’ (p.194). It might have been a recant or a revision, but it proved equally dangerous, as W. B. Yeats suggests: ‘It taught us to walk upon a rope tightly stretched through serene air, and we were left to keep our feet upon a swaying rope in a storm’ — in W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1955), p.303.

George Augustus Moore (1852-1933), a friend of Pater and acquaintance of Wilde, employs much the same phrasing while considering the influence and the evasiveness of Pater's style — 'all those lurking half-meanings, and that evanescent suggestion'.¹ 'Half-meanings' and 'suggestion' — these were the ways that Pater's textual touch, however scandalous, nonetheless maintained its discretion, as Lesley Higgins and James Eli Adams explain, respectively:

Pater, therefore, learned the art of indirection from two masterful practitioners, Socrates and Plato; he pursued a complementary approach in his own work through the multiple voices of ancient Greek writing, myth, and art.²

Invariably the binding secret remains obscure: it seems to designate a particular state of mind or mode of existence rather than a body of discursive lore, and hence is not to be revealed, only experienced. [...] Pater's rhetoric clearly suggests a calculated affiliation of his aestheticism with homoerotic subcultures that still remain shadowy in recent social and literary histories of Victorian England.³

Masked as a consideration of Dorian's 'yellow book' — reminiscent of Flavian's 'golden book' and of Wilde's description of *The Renaissance* as 'the golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty'⁴ — Wilde says much the same about Pater's style, though his description is far more insightful, and is Higgins and Adams elevated stylistically to the level of art:

The style in which it was written was that curious jewelled style, vivid and obscure at once, full of *argot* and of archaisms, of technical expressions and of elaborate paraphrases, that characterizes the work of some of the finest artists of the French school of *Décadents*. There were in it metaphors as monstrous as orchids, and as evil in color. The life of the senses was described in the terms of mystical philosophy. One hardly knew at times whether one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of some mediæval saint or the morbid confessions of a modern sinner. It was a poisonous book. The heavy odor of incense seemed to cling about its pages and to trouble the brain. The mere cadence of the sentences, the subtle monotony of their music, so full as it was of complex refrains and movements elaborately repeated, produced in the mind of the lad [Dorian], as he

¹ George Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man: Avowals*, 9th vol. of *The Collected Works of George Moore* in 21 vols (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922-24), p.166. See also Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.xv-vi, 92-94; Louis Auchincloss, *The Style's the Man: Reflections on Proust, Fitzgerald, Wharton, Vidal, and Others* (New York: Scribner's, 1994), pp.89-98, 'Pater and Wilde: Aestheticism and Homosexuality'.

² Lesley Higgins, 'Jowett and Pater: Trafficking in Platonic Wares', *Victorian Studies*, 37.1 (1993), pp.43-72 (p.59).

³ James Eli Adams, 'Gentleman, Dandy, Priest: Manliness and Social Authority in Pater's Aestheticism', *ELH*, 59.2 (1992), pp.441-66 (p.454).

⁴ As quoted in Ellmann, p.83.

passed from chapter to chapter, a form of reverie, a malady of dreaming, that made him unconscious of the falling day and creeping shadows.

(*Dorian* 1890, p.64)

Like all of his writings, Pater's *Renaissance* was obscure to some, vivid to others, depending on who was reading.¹

Current critical consensus suggests that Pater's intended audience was a select group of Oxford (under)graduates,² most of whom had homoerotic and/or paederastic 'dispositions' and had studied *Literae Humaniores* (or Greats), hence could read Plato in the original, augmented perhaps by the recent translations by Pater's mentor Benjamin Jowett, for 'the predominance and pre-eminence of "Jowett's Plato" was significantly unchallenged for more than sixty years'.³ For this group, Pater's *Renaissance* came as a revelation, revealing that an 'invisible society', an 'inner circle of inspired souls' like themselves, had been the

¹ 'In rhetorical terms, the appropriate figure is *amplificatio*, by which the writer works his material, as a scientist but also as any laborer or lover. [...] Some sentences are instances of "the productive ardour"; they come upon possibilities, contingencies, negligencies, and take them up' (Donoghue, pp.228-29). See Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against the Grain (À rebours)* (New York: Dover, 1969), p.186, where Huysmans considers such a style:

Of all forms of literature that of the prose poem was Des Esseintes' chosen favourite. [...] The novel, thus conceived, thus condensed in a page or two, would become a communion, an interchange of thought between a magic-working author and an ideal reader, a mental collaboration by consent between half a score persons of superior intellect scattered up and down the world, a delectable feast for epicures and appreciable by them only.

² Six representative cases are: David Hilliard, 'Unenglish and Unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality', *Victorian Studies*, 25.2 (1982), pp.181-210; Clay Daniel, 'The Religion of Culture: Arnold's Priest and Pater's Mystic', *Victorian Newsletter*, 72 (1987), pp.9-11; William F. Shuter, 'Pater as Don', *Prose Studies*, 11.1 (1988), pp.41-60; Adams (1992); Dowling, *Hellenism* (1994); Monsman, 'Platonic' (2002). Monsman refers to this group of readers as 'an inner circle of Oxonians' ('Platonic', p.28). In 'The Death of Euphues: Euphuism and Decadence in Late-Victorian Literature', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 45.1 (2002), pp.4-25, Lene Ostermark-Johansen writes: 'To Pater, both the writer himself and the audience for which he wrote were ideally scholars, more specifically philologists, going back to the roots of the individual word through an archaeological or geological excavation of the linguistic deposits of added and abandoned layers of meaning' (p.10).

³ Higgins, 'Platonic Wares', p.50. As Shuter notes: 'We know from the record of his library borrowings that Pater often studied Jowett's translations, and from a remark he made to Grant Duff we can conclude that, on the whole, he was critical of them; in a clear allusion to Jowett he said, speaking of Plato: "a more photographic translation than we yet have is a *desideratum*"' ('Don', p.55). The difference between Pater's approach to Plato and Jowett's is explained by Higgins: 'At the heart of Pater's enterprise is that which Jowett finds unspeakable: the body' (p.53). Monsman explains how 'central' Platonic thought was to Pater and Wilde: 'Both authors define the influence of beauty and love in terms of Plato's *Phaedrus*' ('Platonic', p.26).

rejuvenating force of Western culture in the Age of Leonardo and Michelangelo, and perhaps could become so again in the Age of Victoria. Phrased differently, after Pater had hung his own portrait gallery of Renaissance personalities (including such disparate characters as the non-Renaissance Winckelmann), a portrait gallery presented *via* the nuances of Platonic indirection, this select group found itself mirrored within a historical continuum, saw itself reflected as distinct and laudable, possessing an elite ‘consciousness’ or ‘sensibility’ that would be defended publicly, decades later, by Wilde’s brazen, courtroom apologia.¹ What Wilde failed to anticipate was that his own apologia for ‘The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name’ would become the last expression of this ‘suggestive’ language of erotic indirection, a language that had begun to peter out with Symonds’s death in 1893 and Pater’s in 1894, an opaque and multifaceted language that was replaced, during his three trials in 1895, with a turbulent directness, a directness that infiltrated the language of law, psychology, journalism, and the street, a directness that encouraged taxonomies such as ‘the homosexual’.²

However, for several millennia prior to 1895, the indirect, ‘suggestive’ language of Plato had served as a splendid vehicle for homoerotic and paederastic expression, so much so that Arthur C. Benson, Pater’s first and family-approved biographer, would confide to his own diary: ‘Isn’t it really rather dangerous to let boys read Plato, if one is desirous that they should accept conventional moralities?’³ The *real* dangers attributed to Pater’s use of such ‘suggestive’ language and to the education it inculcated are noted by Potolsky:

There has long been a threatening air surrounding accounts of Walter Pater’s influence on his students and disciples. The reserved Oxford don, whose staid but quietly subversive writings set the tone of the English *fin de siècle*, is regularly credited with destroying lives, undermining morals and contributing to the perversion of countless students.⁴

The dangers of Paterian education would seem to emerge in retrospect, only after their real consequences manifested themselves in the lives of the students.⁵

¹ Higgins suggests that ‘In general terms, Pater assembled writers and texts from classical and modern culture to constitute a counter- or sub-cultural canon: Ganymede, Zeno, Plato, Socrates, Sappho, Pindar, Myron, Catullus, [Leonardo] da Vinci, Montaigne, and most recently, for Pater, Johannes Winckelmann’ (‘Platonic Wares’, p.59).

² Fisher notes that ‘once [Wilde] had arrived in court he found himself powerless to prevent the attention of society being focused on what he called “uranian love” as it had never been before. Queensberry’s detectives tore aside the veil of secrecy which had concealed the gay sub-culture. A wave of puritan homophobia swept society’ (p.37).

³ David Newsome, *On the Edge of Paradise: A. C. Benson: The Diarist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.194.

⁴ Matthew Potolsky, ‘Fear of Falling: Walter Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* as a Dangerous Influence’, *ELH*, 65.3 (1998), pp.701-29 (p.701).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.704.

It is this subversive ‘suggestiveness’, evinced through language, education, and art, that is encapsulated in a series of Paterian questions levelled by Lord Henry in *Dorian Gray*: ‘Was it not Plato, that artist in thought, who had first analysed it? Was it not [Michelangelo] Buonarotti who had carved it in the coloured marbles of a sonnet-sequence?’ (1891, p.40). However, a third question is missing from this series and could equally have been asked: ‘Was it not Pater who had made it so bountifully modern?’

While Pater could expect his own readers, particularly those ‘elite “Oxonian” souls’ educated in *Literae Humaniores*, to be well versed in Plato, Wilde could subsequently expect those same readers to be well versed in Pater, could expect that they would recognise the Decadent seed from which *Dorian Gray* had sprung — *The Renaissance*. While Donoghue merely relates that ‘it is possible that Pater’s book, rather than [Joris-Karl] Huysmans’s *A Rebours* or another claimant, is the “yellow book” Wilde’s Lord Henry sends to Dorian Gray, who imitates it in his progress to immorality’,¹ Gerald Monsman supplies a convincing motive behind Wilde’s decision to allow or foster multiple claimants: ‘Wilde may have partially deflected criticism away from Pater by hinting that the model for Dorian’s poisonous book was Huysmans’s *A Rebours* (1884), [however] Pater’s theme of the transfiguring book lurks behind Dorian’s corrupting volume’.² Wilde muddies the water even further by claiming that ‘the book that poisoned, or made perfect, Dorian Gray does not exist; it is a fancy of mine merely’.³ Whether the ‘yellow book’ is or is not an allusion to Pater’s *Renaissance* does not alter the relative certainty that, besides a popular readership, a readership alternatively curious and scandalised, Wilde had also inherited a select group of readers who would have recognised the subtle shadow of Pater lingering over his only novel.⁴ This group would have recalled passages like the following while reading *Dorian Gray*:

[For Leonardo,] in such studies some interfusion of the extremes of beauty and terror shaped itself, as an image that might be seen and touched, in the mind of this gracious youth, so fixed that for the rest of his life it never left him; and as catching glimpses of it in the strange eyes or hair of chance people, he would follow such about the streets of Florence till the sun went down, of whom many sketches of his remain. Some of these are full of a curious beauty, that remote beauty apprehended only by those who have sought it carefully; who, starting

¹ Donoghue, p.80.

² Monsman, ‘Platonic’, p.40.

³ Letter to Ralph Payne, 12 February 1894, *Letters of Wilde*, p.352.

⁴ Some believe, based on circumstantial evidence, that Wilde had a hand in the writing or editing of the anonymous, pornographic novella *Teleny, or The Reverse of the Medal* (1893), subsequently published in two hundred copies by Leonard Smithers. Others disagree, usually on stylistic bases; see Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 2004), pp.207-08.

with acknowledged types of beauty, have refined as far upon these, as these refine upon the world of common forms. (*Renaissance* 1873, p.97)¹

In fact, the informed reader — the select, Decadent, Oxonian reader — would probably have recognised the very kernel from which *Dorian Gray* seems to have sprung, the end of Pater's most famous of cameos, that of *La Gioconda*:

The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea. ('Leonardo', *Renaissance* 1873, p.119)

If Lady Lisa is, as Pater asserts, the embodiment of the old fancy of perpetual life, then Dorian Gray, her younger Uranian nephew, is the new fancy of perpetual youth — for, until the novel's anticlimactic last page, Dorian retains his boyish, underage appearance, a detail that has been conveniently glossed over by most critics. As Dorian puts it, 'I shall be of age in less than a year'; and later, 'I was a school-boy when you knew me' (*Dorian* 1890, pp.34; 54).

Throughout the novel, Dorian encapsulates the sort of schoolboy Leonardo would have pursued through Florence, Des Esseintes through Paris, Aschenbach through Venice. In fact, Des Esseintes's prurient exploits with such a schoolboy seem to have infused *Dorian Gray*, a novel that borrows much from *À rebours*, and not merely its visual and episodic texture. Because it also demonstrates the subtle innuendo Wilde and his Dorian would have employed while attempting to acquire such a schoolboy from amid the byways of London, the following episode from Huysmans's novel has been quoted in full:

Still chewing the bitter cud of his disillusionment, [Des Esseintes] was walking one day all alone in the Avenue de Latour-Maubourg when he was accosted near the Invalides by a young man, almost a boy, who begged him to tell him the shortest way to go to the Rue de Babylone. Des Esseintes indicated his road and, as he was crossing the Esplanade too, they set off together.

The lad's voice, insisting, it seemed to his companion quite needlessly, on fuller instructions as to the way; — 'Then you think, do you? that by turning left, I should be taking the longer road; but I was told that if I cut obliquely across the Avenue, I should get there all the quicker', — was timid and appealing at the same time, very low and very gentle.

Des Esseintes looked him up and down. He seemed to have just left school, was poorly dressed in a little cheviot jacket tight round the hips and barely coming below the break of the loins, a pair of close-fitting black breeches,

¹ Scholarly readers will immediately recognise that I have, in all instances of quoting from Pater's 'Lionardo da Vinci' (from *Renaissance* 1873), replaced Pater's alternative spelling of 'Lionardo' with the more common 'Leonardo' (which Pater does himself in subsequent editions). Given its unfamiliarity, 'Lionardo' is a distraction that draws too much attention to its own leonine form.

a turn-down collar cut low to display a puffed cravat, deep blue with white lines, La Vallière shape. In his hand he carried a class book bound in boards, and on his head was a brown, flat-brimmed bowler hat.

The face was at once pathetic and strangely attractive; pale and drawn, with regular features shaded by long black locks, it was lit up by great liquid eyes, the lids circled with blue, set near the nose, which was splashed with a few golden freckles and under which lurked a little mouth, but with fleshy lips divided by a line in the middle like a ripe cherry.

They examined each other for a moment, eye to eye; then the young man dropped his and stepped nearer; soon his arm was rubbing against Des Esseintes', who slackened his pace, gazing with a thoughtful look at the lad's swaying walk.

And lo! from this chance meeting sprang a mistrustful friendship that nevertheless was prolonged for months. To this day, Des Esseintes could not think of it without a shudder; never had he experienced a more alluring liaison or one that laid a more imperious spell on his senses; never had he run such risks, nor had he ever been so well content with such a grievous sort of satisfaction.¹

Although Dorian begins as a far less 'knowing' schoolboy, he subsequently develops into a paederastic Des Esseintes in his own right, though a pursuer of schoolboys who himself retains the appearance of one, a detail that further heightens the paederastic import of Wilde's novel. Although Dorian may chronologically 'come of age', outwardly he will ever remain a schoolboy, an 'Adonis' like 'ivory and rose-leaves', 'a Narcissus' with the 'face of Antinoüs', a mystical representation of the 'harmony of soul and body' (1890, pp.4-9). This commingling of Basil's painterly touches, Dorian's 'perpetual youth', and Wilde's exploration of 'curious beauty' suggests that *The Renaissance* essay most embossed on *Dorian Gray* is 'Leonardo da Vinci', a claim enhanced here by intermingling Wilde's 1890 and 1891 versions of the novel.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the reader arrives at an aesthetic moment, the painter Basil Hallward perfecting his portrait of this Adonis-Narcissus-Antinoüs and suddenly realising: 'I really can't exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it' (*Dorian* 1890, p.4). Overshadowing Basil's aesthetic triumph is a burgeoning fear that the 'shallow, prying eyes' of the general public (1890, p.10) will recognise the painter's lingering glance of love:

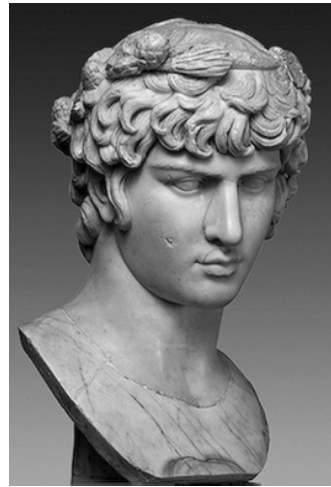
Two months ago I went to a crush at Lady Brandon's. [...] I suddenly became conscious that some one was looking at me. I turned half-way round, and saw Dorian Gray for the first time. When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious instinct of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with some one whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself.
(1890, p.6)²

¹ Huysmans, *À rebours*, pp.103-04.

² 'Basil's "secret" is the emotional turmoil of his infatuation with Dorian, a "romance of feeling" defined by the novel's allusive complexity as both Platonic and Paterian — the



Portrait of Antinoüs
 Roman
 Marble, ca. 125-138 CE
 Archaeological Museum of Olympia
 Olympia, Greece



Portrait of Antinoüs as Dionysus
 Roman
 Marble, ca. 130-138 CE
 Hermitage Museum
 St Petersburg, Russia

It is those eyes — the eyes of his sitter Dorian — that begin, in time, to recognise the depth of infatuation underlying Basil’s painted surfaces, especially given that Basil’s subsequent paintings are merely variations of Dorian-in-disguise, as with one in which, ‘crowned with heavy lotus-blossoms, you [as Antinoüs] had sat on the prow of Adrian’s barge, gazing across the green turbid Nile’ (1891, p.89). Besides, Dorian is meanwhile being ‘schooled’ by Lord Henry Wotton, schooled to probe beneath the ‘shallow’ surfaces of both canvases and humanity, to ‘pry’ deeply into artistic motives and personal desires, to do what Pater praises in Leonardo: ‘He learned [...] the art of going deep, of tracking the sources of expression to their subtlest retreats, the power of an intimate presence in the things he handled’ (*Renaissance* 1873, p.96). For Dorian, ‘the art of going deep’ is imbibed through the tutelage of Lord Henry, that ‘inspirer’ who is Wilde’s most Paterian creation. Throughout the novel, Lord Henry, in clearly Paterian fashion, espouses theories described as ‘poisons so subtle’ that their influence is barely felt by those they influence (*Dorian* 1890, p.30), such that Dorian ‘was [only] dimly conscious that entirely fresh influences were at work within him’ (1891, p.29; 1890, p.14 reads ‘entirely fresh impulses’). As a submissive ‘hearer’, Dorian becomes privy to and proficient in all of Lord Henry’s ‘wrong, fascinating, poisonous, delightful theories’ (1890, p.35), especially after

worship of a *meirakiskos* (young man) by his intellectually inspired lover’ (Monsman, ‘Platonic’, p.29).

embracing Lord Henry's recommendation that he 'cure the soul by means of the senses' (1890, p.16):

There were poisons so subtle that to know their properties one had to sicken of them. There were maladies so strange that one had to pass through them if one sought to understand their nature. And, yet, what a great reward one received! How wonderful the whole world became to one! (P.30)

Lord Henry's corrupting 'influence' is described as a series of distilled 'poisons', 'poisons' that a receptive Dorian imbibes until he begins to receive their 'great reward'.

Ever the *bon vivant* of conversational influence, Lord Henry luxuriates in Dorian's receptive disposition and his own sway over it: 'Talking to [Dorian] was like playing upon an exquisite violin. He answered to every touch and thrill of the bow. ... There was something terribly enthralling in the exercise of influence' (1891, p.39). Moreover, Lord Henry fully appreciates that the 'influence' that he exercises conversationally is also exerted by potent personalities captured aesthetically, a truth that Dorian will later realise for himself under the spell of Sibyl Vane's theatricality: 'She makes [her audience] as responsive as a violin' (1890, p.36). In other words, both Lord Henry and Sibyl force their audience — namely Dorian — into responsiveness, into a sympathy with themselves and their motives, a sympathy that Socrates praises in the *Phaedrus*:

But nobler far is the serious pursuit of the dialectician, who finds a congenial soul, and then with knowledge engrafts and sows words which are able to help themselves and him who planted them, and are not unfruitful, but have in them seeds which may bear fruit in other natures, nurtured in other ways — making the seed everlasting and the possessors happy to the utmost extent of human happiness. (As translated by Benjamin Jowett)¹

However, unlike Socrates' philosopher (whose motives are noble) and Sibyl (whose motives involve little more than the aesthetic expressiveness characteristic of Basil), when Lord Henry suggests that 'one should sympathise with the colour, the beauty, the joy of life' (1891, p.42), Wilde's reader recognises that Lord Henry is not sowing 'the seed everlasting' that Socrates promises will make 'the possessors happy to the utmost extent of human happiness'. Instead, the 'great reward' that Lord Henry promises is a heightened sympathy with life's 'poisons', life's 'sins' — for 'sin is the only color-element left in modern life' (1890, p.35), though a colour-element as complex as a Persian carpet.

¹ Plato, *On Homosexuality: Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991), pp.98-99.

As he ‘lounged in the Park, or strolled down Piccadilly’ (1891, p.47), places famed for illicit rendezvous,¹ Dorian made a habit of acquiring those sins so various, sins such as those Des Esseintes found with his Parisian schoolboy. ‘This grey, monstrous London of ours, with its myriads of people, its sordid sinners, and its splendid sins’ (1891, p.47) — the 1890 version reading ‘its splendid sinners, and its sordid sins’ (p.24) — is a passage clearly plundered from Pater: ‘In the streets of Milan, moved a people as fantastic, changeful, and dreamlike. To Leonardo least of all men could there be anything poisonous in the exotic flowers of sentiment which grew there. It was a life of exquisite amusements [...] and brilliant sins’ (*Renaissance* 1873, pp.101-02). With the sordid bravado of Robert Browning’s Fra Lippo Lippi, Wilde and his Dorian simply knot together their soiled bed-sheets and escape from the Paterian loft of aesthetic contemplation, rushing forth to find more palpable pleasures in the moonlit streets of Florence, Milan, Hyde Park, or Piccadilly. Like those once-pristine bed-sheets, Pater’s description of Leonardo — so brilliant, so exquisite — is twisted into another shape and purpose, a purpose so sordid, so *Gray*.

Nevertheless, even sins as fantastic, mercurial, and dreamlike as a kaleidoscope or a Persian-carpet lose their puzzlement, become merely a blended palette of grey after too much contemplation or indulgence: they then afford little save boredom, especially amidst the Decadent necessity to be ‘always searching for new sensations’ (*Dorian* 1890, p.17). As Lord Henry laughingly admits, ‘The only horrible thing in the world is *ennui*. [...] That is the one sin for which there is no forgiveness’ (1891, p.146), an admission that Donoghue explains: ‘In Pater and in the decadence he and Huysmans gave warrant for, the price one pays for extreme achievements of refinement is that there is no return from them, even as a vacation exercise, to common forms of existence. There is only further refinement, the last curiosity’.² Increasingly bored with this continual search for further sensations, for further refinements, Dorian does indeed become more horrible, more blandly grey — ‘callous, concentrated on evil, with stained mien, and soul hungry for rebellion’ (1891, p.137), ‘filled [...] with that pride of rebellion that is half the fascination of sin, and smiling, with secret pleasure’

¹ In ‘Say It with Flowers: The Poetry of Marc-André Raffalovich’, *College Literature*, 24.1 (1997), pp.11-27, Ed Madden notes: ‘In another poem in *Tuberose and Meadowsweet*, “Mystic Love”, Raffalovich writes of “London, the ways of Piccadilly”, alluding, perhaps, to a specific sexual geography of the city, to Piccadilly as a site for homosexual cruising’ (p.19). See also Wolf von Eckardt, Sander L. Gilman, and J. Edward Chamberlin, *Oscar Wilde’s London: A Scrapbook of Vices and Virtues, 1880-1900* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1987). For a more recent study of male prostitution in London’s Piccadilly Circus, see Mervyn Harris, *The Dilly Boys: Male Prostitution on Piccadilly* (London: Croom Helm, 1973).

² Donoghue, p.186. Besides Pater’s *Renaissance* and Huysmans’s *À rebours*, Wilde probably constructed his novel from other sources as well, namely Benjamin Disraeli’s *Vivian Grey* (1827), Charles Robert Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), and William Beckford’s *The History of the Caliph Vathek* (the English translation of which was first published in 1786).

(1890, p.73). Pater notes a similar effect upon Leonardo, though its cause is obviously less carnal and narcissistic than it is for Dorian: ‘This agitation, this perpetual delay, give him an air of weariness and ennui’ (*Renaissance* 1873, p.106).

At the end of the novel, Lord Henry exclaims, ‘Ah, Dorian, how happy you are! What an exquisite life you have had! You have drunk deeply of everything. You have crushed the grapes against your palate’ (*Dorian* 1890, p.96). This exclamation is half true: ‘happy’, no — ‘exquisite’, yes. As the ultimate *bon vivant* of Victorian Decadence, Dorian has indeed drunk deeply of everything, especially those Decadent poisons for which he has acquired a definite and definitive taste. As with most forms of palatable connoisseurship, aging bespeaks a degree of improvement; hence, Dorian discovers that the most potent vintages of those Decadent poisons were distilled in earlier ages.

In a particularly Paterian passage from chapter three, Wilde reminds his reader that ‘now and then a complex personality took the place and assumed the office of art; was indeed, in its way, a real work of art, Life having its elaborate masterpieces, just as poetry has, or sculpture, or painting’ (*Dorian* 1890, pp.30-31). For Dorian, Lord Henry’s personality and aphorisms have done just that. By asserting poignantly that ‘life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts’, such that ‘if a man treats life artistically, his brain is his heart’ (1890, p.66; 1891, p.153), Lord Henry posits a Decadent syllogism that *whatever a man can imagine his life can express*, for ‘there was no mood of the mind that had not its counterpart in the sensuous life’ (1890, p.69). Under the influence of this syllogism that blends art and life, Dorian comes to recognise that he also has ‘ancestors in literature [and art]’, complex personalities who, more so than Lord Henry, could take ‘the place and assumed the office of art’. Dorian soon feels ‘that he had known them all, those strange terrible figures that had passed across the stage of the world and made sin so marvellous, and evil so full of subtlety’ (1891, p.108) — the 1890 version reading ‘so full of wonder’ (p.76). Those figures, those complex personalities first introduced to Dorian through Lord Henry’s cultivated conversation and books, now become the principal influences over him, influences so ‘subtle’ that he could but wonder: ‘Had some strange poisonous germ crept from body to body till it had reached his own?’ (1890, p.75).

By continually pacing back and forth in his family’s portrait gallery, Dorian has indeed ‘crept from body to body till it [...] reached his own’. Amidst these wanderings, Dorian becomes increasingly intrigued by the portrait of his ancestor Philip Herbert, who was, according to a memoir from the time of the monarchs Elizabeth and James, “‘caressed by the court for his handsome face, which kept him not long company’” (1890, p.75).¹ After this suggestive

¹ In *Memoires of the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James* (1658, attributed to Francis Osborne), the passage reads ‘caressed by KING JAMES for his handsome face’ — as quoted in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Oxford English Novels series), ed. with intro. by Isobel Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.246.

anecdote, which leaves the reader wondering whether the royal court had caressed his ancestor's face literally or metaphorically,¹ Dorian continues:

Yet one had ancestors in literature, as well as in one's own race, nearer perhaps in type and temperament, many of them, and certainly with an influence of which one was more absolutely conscious. [...] He felt that he had known them all, those strange terrible figures that had passed across the stage of the world and made sin so marvellous and evil so full of wonder. (1890, pp.75-76)

After positing a veritable museum filled with portraits of homoerotic and paederastic ancestors, as well as their cultural residues, a museum in which Dorian's gallery constitutes only a meagre portion, Wilde, as one might expect, proceeds to convert *The Picture of Dorian Gray* into an elaborate catalogue of ancestral artists and philosophers who shared his Uranian 'temperament', a catalogue that displays a continuum passing through Plato, Michelangelo, Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Winckelmann — a list of lovers who find their contemporary encapsulation and manifestation, as Pater suggests in his review, in a proper Epicurean like Basil, a truth only belatedly recognised by Dorian in the novel and Wilde in the dock:

Basil would have helped him to resist Lord Henry's influence, and the still more poisonous influences that came from his own temperament. The love that [Basil] bore him — for it was really love — had something noble and intellectual in it. It was not that mere physical admiration of beauty that is born of the senses, and that dies when the senses tire. It was such love as Michael Angelo had known, and Montaigne, and Winckelmann, and Shakespeare himself. Yes, Basil could have saved him. But it was too late now.

(*Dorian* 1890, p.60)

The 'Love that dare not speak its name' in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michaelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michaelangelo, and those two letters of mine [to Douglas], such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the 'Love that dare not speak its name', and on account of it I am placed where I am now.

(From Wilde's apologia during the first of his two trials for 'gross indecency', 1895)²

¹ About his own protagonist, Huysmans relates: 'By a curious accident of heredity, this last scion of a race [Des Esseintes] bore a strong resemblance to the far-off ancestor, the mignon of Princes' (*À rebours*, p.2).

² As quoted in Ellmann, p.463. 'Pater, of course, had written about all these intellectual lovers, most recently of Montaigne and "Of Friendship" in *Gaston de Latour* (begun 1888)' (Monsman, 'Platonic', p.29).

The elaborate catalogue that is *Dorian Gray* also includes monarchs and their favourites — Richard II, James I, Edward II and his beloved Piers Gaveston — their presence masked by a masque of jewelled pomp and gift-giving:

Richard II. had a coat, valued at thirty thousand marks, which was covered with balas rubies. [...] The favourites of James I. wore ear-rings of emeralds set in gold filigrane. Edward II. gave to Piers Gaveston a suit of red-gold armor studded with jacinths, and a collar of gold roses set with turquoise-stones, and a skull-cap *parsemé* with pearls. [...] How exquisite life had once been! How gorgeous in its pomp and decoration! (1890, p.71)¹

Then, lest the homoerotic and paederastic elements of religion be overlooked, Wilde darts St Sebastian into his catalogue (1890, p.73).² This Wildean exploration of erotic portraiture has its antecedent in Pater's own erotic portrait of Leonardo, as well as many of the other portraits that constitute *The Renaissance*:

[Leonardo] plunged also into human personality, and became above all a painter of portraits; faces of a modelling more skilful than has been seen before or since, embodied with a reality which almost amounts to illusion on dark air. To take a character as it was, and delicately sound its stops, suited one so curious in observation, curious in invention. (1873, p.104)

Many of the figures who constitute this Wildean catalogue were first portrayed for Dorian in what he later dubs the 'yellow book', a dangerously direct allusion to Pater's *Renaissance*, lacking only its necessary italicisation: 'The Renaissance

¹ These are some of the most prominent paederastic/homoerotic figures of English history. A few years after Edward II died, Ranulph Higden explained the method of his death, which indicates its association with his homoeroticism: *cum veru igniti inter celenda confossus ignominioise peremptus* ('He was ignominiously slain with a fiery poker thrust into his anus') — from Caroline Bingham, *The Life and Times of Edward II* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p.197. What is important here, for all of these historical figures, is not whether the details about them are now considered historically accurate or not, but that they were thought to be accurate by Wilde and other Victorians. Regarding James I, see David M. Bergerson, *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 1999); Michael B. Young, *King James and the History of Homosexuality* (New York: New York University Press, 2000). For the homoeroticism of Richard II, particularly *via* Shakespeare's play, see Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapter four: 'The Homoerotics of Favoritism in Tragedy'.

² Sebastian, an intimate favourite of Emperor Diocletian, was appointed Captain of the Guard in the Imperial Roman Army. When Sebastian refused to denounce his acquired Christianity in 286 CE, Diocletian ordered that he be tied to a tree so that Mauretanian archers could riddle him with arrows. He was then clubbed to death and cast into a sewer. See his entry in Charles G. Herbermann, et al., ed., *The Catholic Encyclopaedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline and History of the Catholic Church* (New York: Robert Appleton, 1907-12), vol. XIII.

knew of strange manners of poisoning [...] Dorian Gray had been poisoned by a book' (1890, p.77). This 'yellow book' had been lent by Lord Henry, who roguishly anticipated that its collection of strange, suggestive poisons would overwhelm Dorian, despite the assertion he later makes to the contrary, as Ellmann explains:

When Dorian tells Lord Henry that the pseudo-*A Rebours* has corrupted him, his friend denies that this could happen. 'As for being poisoned by a book, there is no such thing as that. Art has no influence upon action. It annihilates the desire to act. It is superbly sterile. The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame. That is all'. But a book has completed for Dorian what Lord Henry began. We are not allowed to accept [Lord Henry] Wotton's judgment, for it has already been made clear that he himself, when he was sixteen, had been overwhelmed by a book. His book is also left unnamed, but its identity can be established from his talk. Lord Henry is forever quoting, or misquoting, without acknowledgment, from Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*.¹

Over time, the 'prying' Dorian comes to appreciate Lord Henry's intention behind loaning this volume: 'You poisoned me with a book once. I should not forgive that. Harry, promise me that you will never lend that book to any one. It does harm' (1890, p.97).

What a grand sentence is 'I should not forgive that' — one of those flagrant-yet-subtle displays of the opaque style Wilde had absorbed from Pater and his *Renaissance* — a portmanteau that provides potential for 'surface' and 'symbol' at once (to quote from the 'Preface' to *Dorian Gray*). *Should not* is curious phrasing at best, perhaps meaning *shall not*, perhaps meaning *ought not* — the first declares the unforgivable; the second recognises, playfully, something almost forgiven already, for Dorian indeed recognises that the lending of this book is consistent with Lord Henry's decadent personality and 'wrong, fascinating, poisonous, delightful theories':

For years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he never sought to free himself from it. He procured from Paris no less than nine large paper copies of the first edition, and had them bound in different colours, so that they might suit his various moods and the changing fancies of a nature over which he seemed, at times, to have almost entirely lost control. The hero, the wonderful young Parisian, in whom the romantic and the scientific temperaments were so strangely blended, became to him a kind of pre-figuring type of himself. And, indeed, the whole book seemed to him to contain the story of his own life, written before he had lived it. (1891, p.97)²

¹ Ellmann, p.317.

² The 1890 version reads 'could not free himself from the memory of this book', of which he had acquired a mere 'five large-paper copies of the first edition' (p.65).

The recognisable symptom provoked by this ‘dangerous novel’ (in the 1891 version, ‘wonderful novel’) is an arousal of ‘sinful’ curiosity, a curiosity that, in Dorian’s case, seems to make a fetish of one particularly perverse chapter, a chapter that he re-reads repeatedly:

The hero of the dangerous novel that had so influenced his life had himself had this curious fancy. In a chapter of the book he tells how, crowned with laurel, lest lightning might strike him, he had sat, as Tiberius, in a garden at Capri, reading the shameful books of Elephantis, while dwarfs and peacocks strutted round him and the flute-player mocked the swinger of the censor; and, as Caligula, had caroused with the green-shirted jockeys in their stables, and supped in an ivory manger with a jewel-frontleted horse; and, as Domitian, had wandered through a corridor lined with marble mirrors, looking round with haggard eyes for the reflection of the dagger that was to end his days, and sick with that ennui [...] that comes on those to whom life denies nothing; and had peered through a clear emerald at the red shambles of the Circus, [...] and heard men cry on Nero Cæsar as he passed by; and, as Elagabalus, had painted his face with colors, and plied the distaff among the women. (1890, p.76)¹

The Roman allusions in this ‘curious fancy’ would have passed unintelligibly by Wilde’s casual or common readers, readers without the ‘clear emerald’ of an education in *Literae Humaniores* to clarify their view, to enable them to appreciate the dangerous decadence hidden within these allusions — especially given that, even as late as 1993, the passage from which the allusion to Tiberius was taken required a fluency in Latin to grasp, since it had never been translated into English:

A passage from Suetonius’s *Lives of the Caesars* describes Tiberius’s use of erotica. (It is still not available in English translation [as of 1993]; the *Loeb Classical Series* leaves the offending text in Latin.) In addition to having his bedroom on Capri decorated with two expensive paintings by Parrhasios with obscene subject matter (one showing the *Archigallus* or eunuch high priest of Cybele in an indecent act, the other Meleager performing cunnilingus on Atalanta), Tiberius had pictures illustrating sexual positions placed throughout rooms used for copulation: ‘He decorated rooms located in different places with images and statuettes reproducing the most lascivious paintings and sculpture, which he amplified according to the books of Elephantis, so that no position he might order would fail to be represented’.²

¹ Huysmans also considers the erotic atmosphere surrounding Elagabalus — *À rebours*, pp.31-32. Simeon Solomon painted Elagabalus (the Roman emperor Aurelius Antoninus) dressed as a prophetess: *Helioabalus, High Priest of the Sun and Emperor of Rome, 118-122 AD* (1866; watercolour on paper; private collection).

² John R. Clarke, ‘The Warren Cup and the Contexts for Representations of Male-to-Male Lovemaking in Augustan and Early Julio-Claudian Art’, *Art Bulletin*, 75.2 (1993), pp.275-94 (p.287).

By repeatedly wandering through the erotic spectacle that was Tiberius's pleasure-palace (itself a catalogue of erotica worthy of *The Kama Sutra*), Wilde and his Dorian, 'the hero of [his] dangerous novel', repeatedly lift the poisoned chalice to their own and the reader's lips, although most readers have never recognised the draught it contains, or its erotic import so curious, so profane.

While snubbing Sibyl Vane — an actress who specialises in those Shakespearean roles allocated, on the Elizabethan stage, to a boy, recalling 'The Portrait of Mr. W. H.' — Dorian, the bestower of the poisoned chalice, reveals the stages of his own poisoning by saying, 'You have killed my love. You used to stir my imagination. Now you don't even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect' (1890, p.40). Initially, the influence of a personality or a work of art stirs the curiosity, then the imagination — which, for someone whose 'brain is his heart', is the seat of desire. The first is passive, the second active. Lord Henry insinuates as much to Basil, pointing out the latter's own influence over Dorian: 'Your portrait of him has quickened his appreciation of the personal appearance of other people. It has had that excellent effect, among others' (1890, p.33). These passages above taste of the tincture of Pater's *Renaissance*, particularly the draught of 'Leonardo':

In the streets of Milan, moved a people as fantastic, changeful, and dreamlike. To Leonardo least of all men could there be anything poisonous in the exotic flowers of sentiment which grew there. It was a life of exquisite amusements [...] and brilliant sins; and it suited the quality of his genius, composed in almost equal parts of curiosity and the desire of beauty, *to take things* as they came.

(1873, pp.101-02, emphasis added)

Although, initially, Dorian merely indulges in passive appreciation, a voyeuristic pleasure in Sibyl's theatricality, he is later moved to act, 'to take things', to assert his 'manhood'. In the culmination of this, Dorian grows bored and cruel, and a distraught Sibyl takes a draught of literal poison — prussic acid. Like his ancestor Leonardo, Dorian admits: 'I love beautiful things that one can touch and handle' (*Dorian* 1890, p.54). The erotic import of this statement is heightened by his subsequent comment to Basil: 'But the artistic temperament that they create, or at any rate reveal, is still more to me. [...] You have not realized how I have developed. I was a school-boy when you knew me. I am a man now. I have new passions, new thoughts, new ideas. I am different' (1890, p.54). In essence, Dorian has begun to mirror Wilde and his love of 'beautiful things that one can touch and handle', and later discard: 'I used to be utterly reckless of young lives: I used to take up a boy, love him "passionately", and then grow bored with him, and often take no notice of him. That is what I regret in my past life'.¹

¹ Letter to Reginald Turner, 21 June 1897, *Letters of Wilde*, p.616.

Curiosity leads to desire; desire leads to contact; contact leads to a requirement that the beautiful thing that has already been touched and handled be possessed, be *had*: 'Eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins, — he was *to have* all these things' (*Dorian* 1890, p.51, emphasis added). Beautiful things, whether aesthetic or fleshy, stir in Dorian obdurate passions, passions that require not only that beauty be touched and handled and possessed, but ultimately, ravished — with Dorian thrusting his claim of 'I am a man now' into the receptive body of humanity. For Dorian, desire has shifted to necessity: 'There were passions in him that *would* find their terrible outlet, dreams that *would* make the shadow of their evil real' (*Dorian* 1890, p.60, emphasis added). However, almost unexpectedly, Dorian finds that, by giving his passions outlet, by making his dreams real and expressed, by getting 'to know' beauty in every way (especially in its fullest biblical sense), his passions are only further stirred: 'The more he knew, the more he desired to know. He had mad hungers that grew more ravenous as he fed them' (1890, p.66). This is the 'ravenous' curiosity Dorian shared with his creator, whose punning search for 'wild joys and wilder sins' would lead to his tripartite ruin in the Old Bailey by mid-decade.

Dorian's earlier influences, such as the living personality of Lord Henry or those personalities living only in the likes of Pater's *Renaissance* — influences that aroused his curiosity, taught him what was possible, intensified his desires, and provoked his 'sinful' imagination — those influences inspire him, in turn, to create his own curious sins, sins as yet undepicted in art, as yet unconsidered by man, all 'those sins that seemed to be already stirring in spirit and in flesh, — those curious unpictured sins whose very mystery lent them their subtlety and their charm' (*Dorian* 1890, p.62).

'Culture and corruption [...] I have known something of both' (*Dorian* 1890, p.94) — Dorian speaks of 'culture' and 'corruption' almost as *past* influences, recognising with Pater and Lord Henry that he should indeed know something of both; for, like his fellow Decadents, Dorian considers 'culture and corruption' inextricably linked: 'Culture and corruption [...] I have know something of both. It seems to me curious now that they should *ever* be found together' (Wilde probably intending 'ever' in the sense of 'always'). As an artistic, philosophical, and practical movement, Victorian Decadence considered 'culture and corruption' at length, either recognising or establishing a link between them. This was a link that the Decadents found in their 'ancestors in literature' and in themselves, a link that culminated in a 'suggestive', eroticised style like that which Pater found in Leonardo: 'Curiosity and the desire of beauty — these are the two elementary forces in Leonardo's genius; curiosity often in conflict with the desire of beauty, but generating, in union with it, a type of subtle and curious grace' (*Renaissance* 1873, p.102). A style, a 'subtle and curious grace' — this is exactly what Lord Henry had cultivated in Dorian through 'culture and corruption', cultivated until Dorian merged and personified those 'two elementary forces' in himself.

When Lord Henry complains that the painter Basil ‘had no curiosity. It was his chief defect’ (1890, p.96), his point is that Basil did not understand this venomous quality — this stylised grace that is a mixture of curiosity and desire — whether this venomous quality resided in Lord Henry or in Dorian or in himself. Lord Henry’s claim is illustrated by the puzzlement Basil displays while naively interrogating Dorian in private: ‘Why is your friendship so fateful to young men?’ Perhaps after Pater had seen it in manuscript, Wilde’s alteration of this passage had merely been the replacement of the word ‘fatal’ with ‘fateful’; however, the implication of the passage remains the same. After providing a substantial list of ruined youths for rhetorical support, Basil charges Dorian with corrupting everyone ‘whom you become intimate with’ (1890, p.80), filling them ‘with a madness for pleasure’ (1891, p.112). This ‘madness for pleasure’ — abounding with those ‘mad hungers that grew more ravenous as [one] fed them’ — was the subtle poison common among the Victorian Decadents, at least those who were not endowed, like Basil, with that ‘sort of chivalrous conscience’ championed by Pater and his ‘elevated’ Uranian disciples like Lionel Johnson.

‘The common’ — Pater portrays Leonardo as ‘one who has thoughts for himself alone, [which is recognisable in] his high indifferentism, his intolerance of the common forms of things’ (*Renaissance* 1873, p.90); Wilde portrays Dorian as much the same. But what of those ‘uncommon’ poisons — ‘those curious *unpictured* sins whose very mystery lent them their subtlety and their charm’? What new colour-element of sin would Dorian, master of so many sinful colours, offer as a fateful (fatal) gift to later generations of young men? What flower of beauty would Dorian cultivate while motivated by feelings resembling those of Leonardo?

Other artists have been as careless of present or future applause, in self-forgetfulness, or because they set moral or political ends above the ends of art; but in [Leonardo] this solitary culture of beauty seems to have hung upon a kind of self-love, and a carelessness in the work of art of all but art itself. Out of the secret places of a unique temperament he brought strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown; and for him the novel impression conveyed, the exquisite effect woven, counted as an end in itself — a perfect end.

(*Renaissance* 1873, pp.110-11)

For Dorian, on the other hand, the ‘perfect end’ would be the achievement of a colour-element more mysterious and subtle, a flower more poisonous and charming than his friend Lord Henry could ever even have contemplated — a pleasure in the ultimate societal crime, a crime beyond that of murdering Basil, which led Dorian’s former intimate Alan Campbell to charge: ‘You have gone from corruption to corruption, and now you have culminated in crime’ (*Dorian* 1890, p.92). Alan assumes that the crime of murder is the ‘culmination’ of Dorian’s corruption: it is not. This murder has merely forecasted a new selection of pleasures—colours—flavours capable of arousing him — or, to use the murdered Basil’s words, has merely suggested to Dorian ‘an

entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style' (1890, p.9). The broader society of Victorian Decadents, personalities such as Lord Henry and his original, Walter Pater, would have considered the 'culmination' of corruption to be its own replication: tempting and corrupting Innocents until those Innocents themselves become Decadents capable of tempting and corrupting in turn. This is the cyclical sin for which many a Socrates has been accused, thwarted, punished, or executed — such that even Dorian claims that 'he would never again tempt innocence. He would be good' (1890, p.98), as if the hallmark of 'goodness' is a refusal to tempt or corrupt innocence.

For 'common' Decadence (if Decadence can be labelled such a paradoxical thing), the pattern of its replication is indeed cyclical: a Decadent uses his influential style, whether expressed through art or through life, to spark the curiosity of an Innocent. This Innocent, now curious, is enticed by the Decadent to imbibe sinful poisons, whether as theories, attitudes, or actions, poisons whose only consequence is to increase the Innocent's appetite for them. As a result, the Innocent begins to lose his innocence — hence, becomes 'corrupted' — through a futile attempt to satisfy his ever-growing and ever-more-complex appetites. Corruption merely leads to corruption until boredom forces the newly created Decadent (who was formerly the Innocent) to re-evaluate this process — in other words, to become imaginative. Though he may attempt otherwise, this re-evaluation inevitably takes one or both of two Decadent forms, each becoming a pleasure in itself: the pleasure of opting *not* to 'tempt innocence' and the pleasure of opting to corrupt as a form of art, as 'corruption for corruption's sake'. The first Decadent form is displayed in Dorian's boast that he has refrained from debauching a particular village girl of late — 'Suddenly I determined to leave her as flower-like as I had found her' (1890, p.94).¹ However, Lord Henry taunts Dorian with the impossibility of such a fantasy, positing that Dorian, despite his intentions, has at the very least broken the girl's heart and given her desires that none of her social class could ever fulfil. In fact, perhaps she has already drowned herself, like 'Lizzie' Siddal in John Everett Millais's famous painting, 'in some mill-pond, with water-lilies round her, like Ophelia' (1890, p.95). The second Decadent form needs no further elaboration after the preceding analysis of *Dorian Gray*, save to recall that Wilde and his circle actualised this 'corruption for corruption's sake' through their exploits with telegraph-boys and their influence over young intellectuals like André Gide (1869-1951): 'Wilde, I believe, did me nothing but

¹ Of this episode, Monsman writes:

If Dorian's 'great renunciation' is to spare a country maiden's virginity, then by contrast his 'excess' must be sexual indulgence. Dorian's soul undergoes the psychic disorder of erotomania described both in *The Republic* (IX) and in the *Phaedrus*. The philosophical lover's antithesis is not one who forgets himself 'in the love of physical visible beauty' but the decadent *non-lover* of Lysias's speech in the *Phaedrus*, one whose sensual desires are unmotivated by intellectual beauty. ('Platonic', p.35)

harm. In his company I lost the habit of thinking. I had more varied emotions, but had forgotten how to bring order into them'.¹

The first of these pleasures — *opting not to tempt innocence* — serves to improve the Decadent's self-mastery, patience, selectivity, and subtlety; the second — *opting to corrupt as a form of art* — serves to improve the Decadent's variety, scope, influence, and style. In both cases, the Decadent's potential for poisoning remains the same, a potential he cannot help but actualise, for his subtlety, his influence, and his style have become one with his life and his art, such that even in imprisonment or suicide the Decadent cannot bereave himself of his own 'poisonous' influence. In the end, Dorian may die physically, but his influence — captured as a 'surface' (Basil's restored painting) and as a 'symbol' (the scandalous reputation he has left behind) — has secured for him a degree of permanence, with Dorian merely becoming, at the very least, one of those 'ancestors' exerting his influence over the future through art and legend. Much the same can be said of Wilde, as aesthete, writer, transgressor, and 'martyr' for 'The Cause'.²

So, inevitably, this cycle begins anew, the Innocent replacing the Decadent who influenced him, continuing that lineage of influence that Pater so fully, perhaps fatally captured in *The Renaissance*, his chronicle of Decadent procreation or rebirth. In the following passage, Wilde elucidates the pattern and desire of 'common' Decadence, as well as the ways Lord Henry luxuriates in these:

And how charming [Dorian] had been at dinner the night before, as, with startled eyes and lips parted in frightened pleasure, he had sat opposite to [Lord Henry] at the club, the red candleshades staining to a richer rose the awakening wonder of his face. Talking to [Dorian] was like playing upon an exquisite violin. He answered to every touch and thrill of the bow. ... There was something terribly enthralling in the exercise of influence. No other activity was like it. To project one's soul into some gracious form, and let it tarry there for a moment; to hear one's own intellectual views echoed back to one with all the added music of passion and youth; to convey one's temperament into another as though it were a subtle fluid or a strange perfume; there was a real joy in that — perhaps the most satisfying joy left to us in an age so limited and vulgar as our own, an age grossly carnal in its pleasures, and grossly common in its aims. ... He was a

¹ From André Gide's diary entry, 1 January 1892, as quoted in Ellmann, p.355. For Gide's descriptions of his encounters with Wilde and their impact, see André Gide, *If It Die: ... [Si le grain ne meurt, 1924]*, trans. by Dorothy Bussy (London: Secker & Warburg, 1955).

² In a letter to Frank Harris, George Bernard Shaw provides the following assessment of Wilde, for whom he held great sympathy: 'Oscar was not sober, not honest, not industrious', but society made 'a hero of him [...] for it is in the nature of people to worship those who have been made to suffer horribly' — as quoted in Frank Harris, *Oscar Wilde: Including Memories of Oscar Wilde, by George Bernard Shaw* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1959), p.341.

marvellous type, too, this lad, whom by so curious a chance [Lord Henry] had met in Basil's studio; or could be fashioned into a marvellous type, at any rate. Grace was his, and the white purity of boyhood, and beauty such as old Greek marbles kept for us. There was nothing that one could not do with him. He could be made a Titan or a toy. (*Dorian* 1891, pp.39-40)

Nevertheless, however influenced by Lord Henry he may be, Dorian is not a 'common Decadent' is he? What then is the culmination of Dorian's idiosyncratic, procreant 'Ass-thetic'?

Prior to the silliness of his demise in the novel's final pages, Dorian is a figure poised to take 'art for art's sake' to an extreme that even Decadents like Lord Henry would have considered untenable, an extreme that probably furthered Pater's decision to side, in his literary review, with the naive, murdered Basil instead. Dorian is poised to move beyond 'corruption for corruption's sake' — about which Lord Henry claims, 'No other activity was like it' — to 'murder for murder's sake', Wilde finding a slight example of this pleasure in Huysmans's *À rebours*:

It was some years ago now since one evening in the Rue de Rivoli, [Des Esseintes] had come across a young scamp of sixteen or so, a pale-faced, quick-eyed child, as seductive as a girl. He was sucking laboriously at a cigarette. [...]

[Des Esseintes then takes the boy to Madame Laure's brothel and pays for his pleasures with several prostitutes, which leads Madame Laure to comment:] 'Ah, I understand; you rascal, you like 'em young, do you?'

Des Esseintes shrugged his shoulders. — 'You're wide of the mark! oh! miles away from it', he laughed; 'the plain truth is I am simply trying to train a murderer'. [...]

[Des Esseintes then explains to her his intention behind introducing the boy to the Parisian underworld:] 'I shall make him acquire the habit of these pleasures which his means forbid his enjoying [...] Then he will take to thieving to pay for his visits here; he will stop at nothing that he may take his usual diversions on this divan in this fine gas-lit apartment. If the worst comes to the worst, he will, I hope, one fine day kill the gentleman who turns up just at the wrong moment as he is breaking open his desk; then my object will be attained, I shall have contributed, so far as in me lay, to create a scoundrel, an enemy the more for the odious society that wrings so heavy a ransom from us all'.¹

In the same humoured tone with which Des Esseintes explains his murderous intention behind facilitating this young scamp's newly acquired addiction to refined brothel pleasures, Lord Henry exclaims to Dorian, whom Wilde's reader knows to be the murderer of Basil, 'Oh! anything becomes a pleasure if one does it too often' (*Dorian* 1891, p.152) — undoubtedly even the pleasure of murder. Hence, Dorian serves to encapsulate for Wilde both Des Esseintes and the 'young scamp of sixteen' whom Des Esseintes hopes to cultivate into a murderer.

¹ Huysmans, *À rebours*, pp.66-69.

However, if this young scamp, commanded by his loins, ever finds himself in a situation where murder becomes a necessity, it will be for self-preservation, not for dispelling his ennui (which is the function it seems destined to provide for Dorian). Notice the full speech from Wilde's novel: "Oh! anything becomes a pleasure if one does it too often", cried Lord Henry, laughing. "That is one of the most important secrets of life. I should fancy, however, that murder is always a mistake. One should never do anything that one cannot talk about after dinner". For Lord Henry, the dangers associated with murder involve conversation; for Dorian, commission.

'The Renaissance knew of strange manners of poisoning', Dorian observes, and the following is the most literal poisoning in *The Renaissance*:

The year 1483 — the year of the birth of Raffaella and the thirty-first of Leonardo's life — is fixed as the date of [Leonardo's] visit to Milan by the letter in which he recommends himself to Ludovico Sforza [the Duke of Milan], and offers to tell him for a price strange secrets in the art of war. It was that Sforza who murdered his young nephew [Gian Galeazzo] by slow poison, yet was so susceptible to religious impressions that he turned his worst passions into a kind of religious cultus, and who took for his device the mulberry tree — symbol, in its long delay and sudden yielding of flowers and fruit together, of a wisdom which economises all forces for an opportunity of sudden and sure effect.

(1873, pp.100-01)

Such passages were Decadent seeds that suddenly and surely yielded in Wilde and his like-minded contemporaries, real or fictive, a flower and a fruit that Pater, as well as Des Esseintes and Lord Henry, would have contemplated but would have avoided plucking, a flower and a fruit of which Dorian and his predecessor Ludovico Sforza (1451-1508) had become ardent horticulturalists. For Dorian and for Sforza, the 'sudden and sure effect' of murder, even 'by slow poison', was 'something terribly enthralling', for 'no other activity was like it'.

It must be admitted that Pater's consideration of Sforza is indeed disturbing, for Pater seems to enjoy the contrast between slowly poisoning a nephew and slowly developing a religious sentimentalism; however, the explanation behind this is rather simple. Wilde always enjoyed a pleasure; Pater, a paradox. When Donoghue writes that 'in Pater [...] death is the mother of beauty and the cause of our seeing beautiful things with a correspondingly acute sense of their transience',¹ his wording is precise: 'Death is [...] the cause of our *seeing* beautiful things'. This Paterian paradox recalls the fictional defence of Michelangelo made by Donatien Alphonse François (1740-1814), the Marquis de Sade, in his novel *Justine, or Good Conduct Well Chastised* (1791), a defence of

¹ Donoghue, p.24. Wolhee Choe similarly notes: 'Pater and Shelley place death, as aesthetic matter, even above life, although Pater pays greater attention to the grave and its attendant sorrows. [...] Contemplating death, Pater suggests, frees us and allows a saner perception of life' — in 'Walter Pater's "Romantic Morality"', *Victorian Newsletter*, 72 (1987), pp.12-17 (p.15).

Michelangelo for murdering, or at least revelling aesthetically in the murder of a young man in order to copy his agonies for a Crucifixion: ‘And, when Michelangelo wished to render a Christ after Nature, did he make the crucifixion of a young man the occasion for a fit of remorse? Why no: he copied the boy in his death agonies’.¹ That is the unravelling of the paradox for Pater, however Decadent, however cruel such a paradox may be. On the other hand, for Wilde the appreciation of ‘death agonies’ is something quite different, certainly involving more than a change of aesthetic perspective that transforms the writer and the reader, the artist and his viewer into what Seamus Heaney aptly dubs ‘the artful voyeur’.²

It is against Wilde’s description of Dorian as ‘callous, concentrated on evil, with stained mien, and soul hungry for rebellion’ (*Dorian* 1891, p.137) that Pater’s review of *Dorian Gray* should again be considered, particularly the following passage:

A true Epicureanism aims at a complete though harmonious development of man’s entire organism. To lose the moral sense therefore, for instance, the sense of sin and righteousness, as Mr. Wilde’s heroes are bent on doing as speedily, as completely as they can, is to lose, or lower, organisation, to become less complex, to pass from a higher to a lower degree of development. [...] Lord Henry, and even more the, from the first, suicidal hero [Dorian], loses too much in life to be a true Epicurean — loses so much in the way of impressions, of pleasant memories, and subsequent hopes, which [Basil] Hallward, by a really Epicurean economy, manages to secure.³

According to Pater, Dorian ‘loses too much in life to be a true Epicurean’, to have ‘a really Epicurean economy’, a personal economy translatable into ‘impressions’, ‘pleasant memories’, and ‘subsequent hopes’. By invoking ‘Epicureanism’ several times, Pater radically transforms the occasion of his *Bookman* review into an opportunity to direct readers away from Wilde’s immoral *Dorian Gray* and towards his own moral *Marius the Epicurean*. This redirection is more than a stratagem for self-preservation on Pater’s part. Remember that the most controversial section of Pater’s *Renaissance* — the ‘Conclusion’ that Wilde had memorised in its entirety — later acquired the following footnote:

¹ Marquis de Sade, *Justine, or Good Conduct Well Chastised*, in ‘*Justine*’, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, and *Other Writings*, trans. by Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove, 1990), pp.447-744 (p.552).

² Seamus Heaney, ‘Punishment’, in *New Selected Poems, 1966-1987* (London: Faber, 1990), p.72 (line 32).

³ Walter Pater, Review of *Dorian Gray*, reprinted in Beckson, ed., *Critical Heritage*, pp.84-85.

This brief 'Conclusion' was omitted in the second edition of this book, as I conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall. On the whole, I have thought it best to reprint it here, with some slight changes which bring it closer to my original meaning. I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by it. (1893, p.186)

As Pater's only completed novel, as the fuller expression of those Decadent views that Wilde had found so entrancing and memorable in *The Renaissance*, *Marius the Epicurean* — which William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) considered 'an example and the chief embodiment of Pater's dangerous teaching'¹ — is the one book curiously absent from Wilde's prison reading-lists. A veritable library of Pater without Pater's second masterpiece, the later, more elaborately developed 'yellow book'? Its absence is especially noteworthy given that, as Nils Clausson observes, *Dorian Gray's* 'indebtedness to Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* [...] is well established'.² Its absence from Wilde's prison reading-lists is perhaps much more revealing than the actual contents of those lists. So why no *Marius*? A rudimentary juxtaposition of the diaries of the two protagonists may serve as an answer for this, as well as for how Pater would have responded to the murderous desires surfacing at the end of Wilde's novel.

Accused of corrupting and subsequently destroying a score of Innocents, Dorian invites Basil upstairs to his childhood school-room to view his concealed diary, a diary that Wilde's reader knows to be nothing less than the horribly disfigured portrait of Dorian that Basil had painted long ago, a portrait that is now a revelation of absolute corruption expressed through varnished oil:

'My God! Don't tell me that you are bad, and corrupt, and shameful'.

Dorian Gray smiled. There was a curl of contempt in his lips. 'Come upstairs, Basil', he said, quietly. 'I keep a diary of my life from day to day, and it never leaves the room in which it is written. I shall show it to you if you come with me'. (*Dorian* 1891, p.114)³

In contrast, the following bespeaks the flavour of Marius's diary:

It was become a habit with Marius — one of his modernisms — developed by his assistance at [...] Emperor [Aurelius]'s 'conversations with himself', to keep a register of the movements of his own private thoughts and humours; not continuously indeed, yet sometimes for lengthy intervals, during which it was no idle self-indulgence, but a necessity of his intellectual life, to 'confess himself', with an intimacy, seemingly rare among the ancients. (*Marius* 1885, II, p.172)

¹ Potolsky, p.704.

² Clausson, p.343. Clausson further observes that, although 'the early chapters of *Dorian Gray* are dominated by the Paterian self-development plot', 'the Gothic plot in *Dorian Gray* is ultimately hostile to the progressive hopes held out by the Paterian plot of self-actualization' (pp.344; 362).

³ In *Dorian* 1890, this begins 'My God! don't tell me that you are infamous!' (p.81).

[From Marius's diary:] 'How little I myself really need, when people leave me alone, with the intellectual powers at work serenely. The drops of falling water, a few wild flowers with their priceless fragrance, a few tufts even of half-dead leaves, changing colour in the quiet of a room that has but light and shadow in it; these, for a susceptible mind, might well do duty for all the glory of Augustus.
(*Marius* 1885, II, p.180)

[From Marius's diary:] 'And what we need in the world [...] is a certain permanent and general power of compassion — humanity's standing force of self-pity — as an elementary ingredient of our social atmosphere, if we are to live in it at all. I wonder, sometimes, in what way man has cajoled himself into the bearing of his burden thus far, seeing how every step in the capacity of apprehension his labour has won for him, from age to age, must needs increase his dejection. It is as if the increase of knowledge were but an increasing revelation of the radical hopelessness of his position: and I would that there were one even as I, behind this vain show of things!' (Ibid., p.182)

[From Marius's diary:] 'In the mere clinging of human creatures to each other, nay! in one's own solitary self-pity, amid the effects even of what might appear irredeemable loss, I seem to touch the eternal. Something in that pitiful contact [...] is educed, which, on a review of all the perplexity of life, satisfies our moral sense, and removes that appearance of unkindness in the soul of things themselves, and assures us that not everything has been in vain'. (Ibid., p.184)

'Satisfies our moral sense', 'removes that appearance of unkindness', 'assures us that not everything has been in vain' — that is what Pater meant by an 'Epicurean economy' with its 'impressions', 'pleasant memories', and 'subsequent hopes'. Ellmann explains this concisely: '[Pater] objected that Dorian's and Lord Henry's hedonism left no place for the higher pleasures of generosity and renunciation'.¹ Unlike Pater's Marius, Wilde's Dorian has no moral sense, is the very appearance of unkindness (particularly as exposed by the 'truth' of his soiled portrait), and ever assures himself and Wilde's reader that he has lived for vanities alone (and certainly not in the spirit of a Dutch *vanitas* painting, exhorting the viewer to consider mortality and repent, though many critics have mistakenly found such an image in Dorian's nonsensical last moment on stage). The ultimate result is that, 'callous, concentrated on evil, with stained mien, and soul hungry for rebellion', Dorian is poised to become that monster in which we, members of a more 'civilised' society a hundred years after Wilde's fiction, now revel.

From August to November of 1888, while Wilde was busily crafting *Dorian Gray*, or just before, 'Jack the Ripper' was busily introducing Wilde's London and the modern world to one of its still-current fascinations — the serial-killer — a figure who serves to encapsulate several Decadent issues, as Wilde clearly recognised:

¹ Ellmann, p.318.

An obsession with unrequited love, violence, and death characterized the Decadents on both sides of the [English] channel. The presentation of love as unnatural and dangerous had its roots in the self-consciously gay writing of Oscar Wilde and the young French and English poets who admired him. [...] Masquerade, duplicity, and concealment seem to go hand in hand with violence.¹

[For Decadents like Wilde,] gay texts more openly equated death and violence with the forbidden.²

In his essay 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green' (1889)³ — also written while 'Jack the Ripper' was on his rampage, or just after — Wilde usurps the tone and theme of Thomas De Quincey's 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' (1827), and mischievously explores the disposition of one such murderer:

Charles Lamb's friend, Thomas Griffiths Wainwright [...] [was] of an extremely artistic temperament, [and] followed many masters other than art, being not merely a poet and a painter, an art-critic, an antiquarian, and a writer of prose, an amateur of beautiful things and a dilettante of things delightful, but also a forger of no mean or ordinary capabilities, and as a subtle and secret poisoner almost without rival in this or any age. (P.1093)

However, compared with the Whitechapel murders of 1888, the exploits of T. G. Wainwright (1794-1852) were mere trifles, as Wilde certainly recognised.

Daily newspaper coverage of the Whitechapel murders and the attendant gossip surrounding those events must have provided Wilde with a continual stream of murderous titillation, something to 'talk about after dinner'.⁴ Wilde's interest in these investigations probably increased substantially after 7 November 1888, the day that Francis Tumblety (ca. 1833-1903), an American quack doctor,

¹ Martha Vicinus, 'The Adolescent Boy: Fin de Siècle Femme Fatale?', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 5.1 (1994), pp.90-114 (p.93).

² Ibid., p.98. This link between Wilde's novel and Jack the Ripper's crimes is noted, though tritely handled, in Christopher S. Nassaar, 'Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Salome*', *Explicator*, 53.4 (1995), pp.217-20: 'My thesis here is that the influence of Jack the Ripper is discernible in some of Wilde's writings, especially *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Salome*' (p.217).

³ Oscar Wilde, 'Pen, Pencil, and Poison: A Study in Green', *Fortnightly Review*, 45 (January 1889), pp.41-54. The quoted passage is from *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.1093-1107.

⁴ 'The Ripper was the first sexual serial killer commanding international notoriety: he inaugurated the modern consciousness of such crimes [...] At their breakfast tables the British were confronted with the mechanisms of the vilest sexual homicide' (Richard Davenport-Hines, 'Jack the Ripper', *DNB*). In dramatic form, Terry Eagleton's character Wilde jokingly replies: 'If I'm not Jack the Ripper then maybe my father is. He has the requisite skills. He delves into bodies; so do I' — *Saint Oscar and Other Plays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p.54.

was taken into custody on charges of ‘gross indecency’ committed with four young men — John Doughty, Arthur Brice, Albert Fisher, and James Crowley.¹ Five days later, Tumblety was also charged on suspicion of having committed the Whitechapel murders, a charge Scotland Yard was unable to substantiate adequately. Although the British press never publicised Tumblety’s arrest (maintaining a silence prompted perhaps by Scotland Yard), North American newspapers did so immediately and with gusto.² Hence, Wilde could easily have learned of these charges *via* gossip within his Uranian circle or *via* details from American or Canadian newspapers, especially since a number of his friends and acquaintances were expatriates, such as Robert Ross from Canada, or were Americans, such as Edgar Saltus (1855-1921), another Decadent author.³ Four charges of sodomy and five charges of murder⁴ — that was indeed a catalogue of ‘sins’ worthy of a Dorian Gray. However, on 16 November, James L. Hannay, a magistrate of the Marlborough Street Magistrates Court, released Tumblety on bail, from whence he fled to the Continent on 24 November, assuring his own sanctuary and perhaps Wilde’s ennui, for even Wainewright, transported to a Tasmanian prison-colony, was more palpable a figure to contemplate than a fleeing Tumblety — though the latter still garners considerable attention, since he

¹ In ‘Jack the Ripper: Two Suspects “On Trial”’, *British Heritage*, 23.6 (2002), pp.19-25, Paul Begg and Stewart Evans write:

Because of his homosexual activities, it has been argued that Tumblety would not have murdered women because he was not attracted to that sex. However, there seems little doubt that he was bisexual and, in any event, there have been other examples of homosexual murderers killing and mutilating women. (P.25)

² Consider these American and Canadian newspaper headlines: ‘THE SAME TUMBLETY: “His Arrest in London not His First Experience”’ (*New York Times*, 19 November 1888). ‘DR. TUMBLETY: MORE ABOUT THE SUSPECTED WHITECHAPEL FIEND’ (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 November 1888). ‘A St. John Acquaintance Arrested: The Notorious Dr. Tumblety’ (*The Daily Sun*, St John, New Brunswick, Canada, 22 November 1888). ‘“Dr. Kumblety’s” Career: The Quack Doctor Supposed to Have Been Connected in the Whitechapel Murders’ (*Chicago Tribune*, 22 November 1888). ‘DOCTOR TUMBLETY’ (*The Daily Alta California*, San Francisco, 23 November 1888). ‘Dr. Tumblety in New York: Inspector Byrnes’ Detectives Have Been Watching Him Closely’ (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, New York City, 4 December 1888). ‘AH THERE! TUMBLETY: The Notorious Whitechapel Suspect and His Ways and Manners’ (*Bucks County Gazette*, Bristol, Pennsylvania, 13 December 1888). ‘OH! DR. TUMBLETY: He Was Charged with Being the Whitechapel Fiend – Where Is He Now?’ (*Atchison Daily Globe*, Kansas, 15 December 1888).

³ In *Oscar Wilde: Myths, Miracles and Imitations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), John Stokes notes that Wilde’s friend George Ives’s ‘extraordinary scrapbooks (they run for forty-five volumes) contain clippings on Jack the Ripper [...]’ (p.75).

⁴ The canonical list of the murdered is as follows: Mary Ann Nichols (31 August 1888), Annie Chapman (8 September 1888), Elizabeth Stride and Catharine Eddowes (30 September 1888), and Mary Jane Kelly (9 November 1888).

remains, for many specialists, the most viable suspect for ‘Jack the Ripper’, especially since this ‘sodomite’ kept and avidly displayed, as something to ‘talk about after dinner’ in tones of disgust, a collection of embalmed uteri of every class of woman.¹ Tumblety’s collection of uteri makes Frederick Rolfe’s revulsion towards the ‘female body’ — those ‘parrots crossed with jelly-fish’ — seem rather tame by comparison.

Whether Tumblety was or was not ‘Jack the Ripper’ is less important for the present consideration than that a disproportionate number of the ‘prime suspects’ were also implicated, in some way, in paederastic and/or homoerotic practices, particularly those practices provided by the ‘male brothel’ at 19 Cleveland Street, infamous for its scandal involving the ‘postal boys’ — such as Prince Albert Victor Christian Edward (1864-92; known informally as ‘Eddy’)² and his close friend and former tutor James Kenneth Stephen (1859-92).³ Others were involved in similar activities elsewhere — such as Tumblety and Montague John Druitt (1857-88). Druitt, who graduated in 1880 with third class honours in *Literae Humaniores* from New College, Oxford, had recently been dismissed from his post as assistant master at Eliot Place School, Blackheath, southeast of London, for ‘serious trouble’ (a euphemism for the fate of paederastic pedagogues like William Johnson and Oscar Browning),⁴ and was found drowned

¹ For a book-length argument that Tumblety is the most likely murderer, see Stewart Evans and Paul Gainey, *Jack the Ripper: First American Serial Killer* (New York: Kodansha International, 1995). Of particular curiosity is a letter from John George Littlechild (1848-1923; one of the ‘Ripper’ investigators from Scotland Yard; later privately hired to investigate Wilde in 1895) to George R. Sims, Esq., 23 September 1913, explaining why Tumblety was a ‘prime suspect’. Richard Davenport-Hines writes: ‘There was a sexual element to his homicidal excitement. He was daring, energetic, hate-ridden, cruel, and perhaps obsessed with wombs’ (‘Jack the Ripper’, *DNB*).

² Police documents from the Public Record Office (released in 1975) and the letters of the self-exiled Lord Arthur Somerset unequivocally link the later Duke of Clarence and his friend Stephen to the ‘Cleveland Street Scandal’. Although the British press avoided this, the American press was occasionally more forthright: ‘Cable reports from England announce that Prince Victor Albert [*sic*], eldest son of the prince of Wales and heir presumptive to the throne, has returned from India, where he had gone to escape the smoke of the Cleveland street scandal, in which he was mixed up’ (‘Prince Victor’, *Daily Northwestern*, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 26 May 1890). Chief Inspector Frederick George Abberline (1843-1929), the most prominent investigator in the ‘Jack the Ripper’ case, was also one of those handling the ‘Cleveland Street’ investigation — see Morris B. Kaplan, *Sodom on the Thames: Sex, Love, and Scandal in Wilde Times* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp.167-70.

³ While at Eton, Stephen had been a pupil of Oscar Browning and Francis Warre Cornish (a close friend of William Johnson, *later* Cory).

⁴ As reported in the *Acton, Chiswick, and Turnham Green Gazette* (5 January 1889). If his suicide was motivated by his dismissal, it seems all the more likely that his dismissal had involved disclosure of paederastic activities at George Valentine’s Eliot Place School, especially since his assistant mastership was only a second — and seemingly elective — career. By day, Druitt was a barrister, having been admitted to the Inner Temple on 17

in the Thames, at Chiswick, Middlesex, on 31 December 1888. This apparent suicide correlated with the end of ‘Jack the Ripper’ as a newspaper headline, suggesting to the Victorian press and to Scotland Yard, which subsequently closed its investigation, that the infamous ‘Jack’ had taken his own life. Years later, in a seven-page handwritten report, Sir Melville Macnaghten, Chief Constable, noted: ‘[Druitt] was sexually insane and from private info. I have little doubt but that his own family believed him to have been the murderer’.¹

What is striking here — even after a dismissal of the above suspicions as ‘spurious speculation’ — is that a correlation was drawn, at least by the Scotland Yard investigators and by later ‘Ripperologists’, between the paederastic and/or homoerotic dalliances of Tumblety, Druitt, Stephen, Prince Eddy, and others, and the propensity to commit the most famous criminal rampage of the Victorian period. In the hierarchy of ‘sins’, paederasty was (and often still is) seen as the pinnacle, an observation that was made in ‘Chapter One’ in relation to a 1993 review of a new supplement to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, a review in which the anonymous reviewer, despite noting the inclusion of various murderers, states that ‘the vilest person here commemorated is probably Frederick Rolfe, “Baron Corvo”’.² For that reviewer, what makes Rolfe the ‘vilest person here commemorated’ is undoubtedly that he was a Uranian writer and an unrepentant paederast. For modern Western society, there is at least one ‘sin’ viler than murder, and that is actualised paederasty: an individual capable of committing a paederastic act was (is) capable of anything, even the Whitechapel murders. For the nineteenth century, this connection between paederasty and murder was popularised by Ambroise Tardieu (1818-79), a French pathologist and expert on forensic medicine: ‘Finally, in more serious circumstances, pederasty has served as a pretext and as a kind of bait for murder, and has thrown

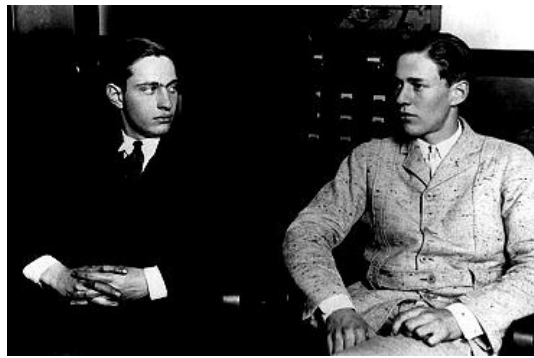
May 1882, and called to the Bar of the Inner Temple on 29 April 1885. He had chambers at 9 Kings Bench Walk, London. By night, this bachelor exercised some aspect or another of his assistant mastership, despite having a decently paid, legal career. A likely supposition is that he retained this ‘monetarily unnecessary’ post because he was sexually attracted to or sexual active with some of the boys. Put concisely, by retaining this ‘teaching’ post, he could live in residence with the boys at 9 Eliot Place, Blackheath.

¹ Melville Leslie Macnaghten (1853-1921), Memorandum, 23 February 1894, Public Record Office, MEPO 3/141, ff.177-83. The material on these suspects was gleaned from the following sources: Paul Begg, *Jack the Ripper: The Facts* (London: Robson, 2004); Donald Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2002); Philip Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1994); Colin Wilson and Robin Odell, *Jack the Ripper: Summing Up and Verdict* (London: Bantam, 1987). I aimed, in dealing with these sources, to gather consistent details; however, because I consider them, individually, a bit dubious as sources (although they seem ‘the standards’ in this area of historical criminology), I have refrained from including them in my ‘Bibliography’.

² Anonymous, Review, ‘Famous Foundlings — *Dictionary of National Biography: Missing Persons*, edited by C. S. Nicholls’, *The Economist*, 326.7798 (13 February 1993), pp.91-92.

in a new element, an unforeseen complication, in the medico-legal investigations which arise from serious crimes. [...] “It could be said that in Paris, pederasty is the school in which the most adept and bold criminals are trained”¹.

Wilde seems to have acknowledged and embraced this contemporary correlation — at least from society’s perspective — hence, his paederastic Dorian is intentionally *poised* to become ‘that Sforza who murdered his young nephew [Gian Galleazzo] by slow poison’, *poised* to become the budding Uranian replacement for Wainewright’s more gruesome descendent, ‘Jack the Ripper’.² This ‘poised’ becomes all the more potent if one acknowledges the ironic insincerity surrounding Dorian’s ‘suicidal’ demise, a Wildean wink at the morality of the British reading public, a public that would never have tolerated a perpetually young, perpetually unrepentant murderer left alive to wander perpetually through the darkened alleyways of London. To rip out the last page of Wilde’s novel is to release Dorian from Victorian constraint, to allow him to fulfil the role that Wilde has destined him to play: the ultimate, Victorian descendant of Wainewright and ‘Jack the Ripper’.



Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb

¹ Ambroise Tardieu, ‘On Pederasty and Sodomy’, Part III of *Forensic Study on Offences Against Public Decency*, 7th edn, trans. by Lindsay Robinson (2006 [1878]) <<http://www.thesymposium.co.uk/documents/tardieu.pdf>>; originally published as ‘Troisième Partie: De la Pédérastie et de la Sodomie’, in *Étude médico-légale sur les attentats aux mœurs*, 7th edn [1st edn, 1857] (Paris: J. B. Baillière, 1878), pp.194-294 (p.195).

² My use of the word ‘poised’ is crucial: I am *not* suggesting that Dorian achieved a mastery of ‘murder as a fine art’, but that Wilde has constructed him with that potential in mind. As for *the Dorian one finds within the confines of the novel*, I agree with Simon Joyce: ‘But if Dorian has some success embodying the goals and attitudes of the aesthetic movement, he is a major disappointment as a criminal. Dorian’s criminal centerpiece, the murder of the painter Basil Hallward, is particularly poor, and undertaken for the most pedestrian of motives’ — *Capital Offenses: Geographies of Class and Crime in Victorian London* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), p.184.

If contemporary films, novels, and newspaper headlines bespeak the current degree of curiosity, then we ‘Moderns’ find ourselves saying with Lord Henry, ‘I should like to know some one who had committed a real murder’ (*Dorian* 1891, p.147), perhaps to substantiate our own theories on the matter: ‘I should fancy that crime was to [the lower orders of society] what art is to us, simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations’ (1891, p.152). Although we, like Lord Henry, find our curiosity sparked by the Sforzas, Wainewrights, Rippers, Dorians, Leopolds & Loeb, and Hannibal Lectors of this world — all of those who kill or would willingly kill for pleasure’s sake — we, members of a more ‘civilised’ society, disclaim any actual understanding, and claim instead that a Decadence that allows for murder with neither ‘motive’ nor ‘insanity’ (those two concepts required by our great bastions of law and psychology) is impossible.¹ Nevertheless, ‘Dorian manages the murder [of Basil], and the

¹ Wilde has, in many ways, simply anticipated the likes of Leopold and Loeb. On 21 May 1924, Nathan Freudenthal Leopold (1904-71) and Richard Albert Loeb (1905-36), two charming and genius-level University of Chicago graduate students, sons of prominence and wealth, kidnapped and murdered Robert Emanuel ‘Bobby’ Franks (1909-24), a fourteen year old from their neighbourhood who was walking home from school. Confronted with a premeditated murder committed by two ‘sane’ criminals — criminals motivated by the excitement of the act — the press coined the term ‘thrill killing’. Once caught, the homoerotic dynamics surrounding their relationship and their crime became evident, though both the prosecution and the defence attempted to discuss these dynamics as little as possible. At one point, Defence Attorney Clarence S. Darrow ‘added that Loeb was not a homosexual, but Leopold was. [Darrow] hinted that Leopold was in love with Dick Loeb’ — Hal Higdon, *Leopold & Loeb: The Crime of the Century* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p.147. For the argument by State’s Attorney Robert E. Crowe that there was some form of ‘sexual perversion in the killing’, centring around the fact that they ‘had removed Bobby Frank’s trousers long before taking off the rest of his clothes’ and that ‘the coroner’s physician says that when little Robert Franks was examined, his rectum was distended’, see Higdon, pp.244-46. Even outside of the courtroom, the erotic dynamics of the relationship between Leopold and Loeb were not lost on contemporaries. In ‘Elite of the Jail Think Leopold “Ain’t So Much”’, an article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (4 June 1924), p.2, Tyrrell Krum writes: ‘All through their childhood and college days “Babe” Leopold and “Dicky” Loeb were constant companions [...] Their trail of learning and spending of their fathers’ fortunes was marked by their adhesive comradeship’ — as quoted in Paul B. Franklin, ‘Jew Boys, Queer Boys: Rhetorics of Antisemitism and Homophobia in the Trial of Nathan “Babe” Leopold Jr. and Richard “Dickie” Loeb’, in *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, ed. by Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp.121-48 (p.144, note 42). The use of the Whitmanesque phrase ‘adhesive comradeship’ suggested tactfully that they were lovers. However, the most revealing assessment was probably that of Harry Olson, Chief Justice of the Municipal Court of Chicago, and later famed for advocating Eugenics and the sterilizing of ‘defectives’: ‘This case is not so unique from a psychological standpoint that it will not frequently repeat itself. On the contrary, it is very common in criminology where one of the parties is homosexual’ — [Various], ‘The Loeb-Leopold Murder of Franks in

disposal of the body, as if De Quincey were right about murder's being one of the fine arts'.¹

If the revelry expressed in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' reveals anything, all that 'murder as pleasure' or 'murder as a fine art' requires — for Wilde no less than for Dorian — is a graduated reconsideration, a gradual moral negation distinct from Pater's aesthetic contemplation of the murderous Sforza or Hopkins's quasi-religious half-hope of an Afghan death for his bugler boy. Notice how, after killing his friend Basil (*Dorian* 1891, p.117), Dorian begins to reconsider him: 'Poor Basil! what a horrible way for a man to die!' (1891, p.121, emphasis added). His 'friend' becomes merely a 'man', then merely a 'thing': '[Besides] a horrible smell of nitric acid in the room [...] the thing that had been sitting at the table was gone' (1891, p.127, emphasis added). This reconsideration is more concisely expressed in a repeated refrain from Wilde's 'Ballad of Reading Gaol' (1898), a poem dedicated to a convict who was executed for slitting his wife's throat with a razor (recalling the *modus operandi* of 'Jack the Ripper'): 'Each man kills the thing he loves'.² Such a reconsideration — his 'friend' ultimately

Chicago, May 21, 1924' [in 6 parts], *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 15 (1924), pp.347-508 — part 6: 'Symposium of Comments from the Legal Profession' — (p.395). See Jonathan Simon, "'A Situation So Unique That It Will Probably Never Repeat Itself': Madness, Youth, and Homicide in Twentieth-Century Criminal Jurisprudence", in *Law's Madness* (The Amherst Series in Law, Jurisprudence, & Social Thought), ed. by Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas, and Martha Merrill Umphrey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp.79-118. About Wilde's influence on Leopold, Franklin writes:

A new homophobic spin in the press [came] when detectives discovered that [Leopold's] scholarly proclivities included the sexual and even the homosexual. In his confession Leopold revealed his familiarity with the work of Sappho [...] and admitted that had read Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* (1897), the most widely circulated English-language study of homosexuality at the time. He also expressed a great fondness for Pietro Aretino, the Italian Renaissance poet whose erotic verse he studied closely and considered translating, as well as Oscar Wilde, whom he identified as a 'pervert' and whom the press described as one of his 'heroes'. (P.130)

See also Higdon, p.83.

¹ Ellmann, p.316.

² 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol', in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.883-99. This particular phrasing is from line 37. '[Wilde] dedicated *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* to a fellow prisoner, Charles Thomas Wooldridge, who had been hanged for murdering his spouse. [...] A trooper in the Royal Guards, Wooldridge slit his spouse's throat three times with a razor. Since this was obviously a premeditated crime, he was sentenced to death on 7 July 1896' — Karen Alkalay-Gut, 'Aesthetic and Decadent Poetry', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Joseph Bristow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.228-54 (p.250). Note Dorian's comment after learning of Sibyl Vane's suicide: 'I have [...] murdered her as surely as if I had cut her little throat with a knife' (1891, p.79). See Gert Hekma, 'From Sade to Fassbinder: Aesthetics of Cruelty and Male Love in

becoming ‘the thing’ — is in drastic antipathy to Marius’s evaluation of the gladiatorial fights in the Roman amphitheatre:

There was something in a tolerance such as this, in the bare fact that [Emperor Aurelius] could sit patiently through a [gladiatorial] scene like this, which seemed to Marius to mark Aurelius as his inferior now and for ever on the question of righteousness; to set them on opposite sides, in some great conflict, of which that difference was but a single presentment. (*Marius*, I, p.241)

Or, this act of charity and utter forgiveness:

When a certain woman collected for interment the insulted remains of Nero, the pagan world surmised that she must be a Christian: only a Christian would have been likely to conceive so chivalrous a devotion towards mere wretchedness. ‘We refuse to be witnesses even of a homicide commanded by the law’, boasts the dainty conscience of a Christian apologist, ‘we take no part in your cruel sports nor in the spectacles of the amphitheatre, and we hold that to witness a murder is the same thing as to commit one’. (II, p.113)

Against the moral indictment and depth of the above, Wilde and his murderous Dorian seem, at best, strikingly shallow and affected, despite the fact that Wilde has fashioned his Dorian so that ‘he has something of the glamour of a Faust rather than the foulness of a murderer and drug addict’.¹ Pater and his Marius would have agreed heartily with the verity Wilde would later hypocritically preach to Douglas on six separate occasions in *De Profundis*: ‘The supreme vice is shallowness’.² Prison seems, at least on the ‘surface’, to have altered one of Wilde’s ‘Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young’, that ‘Only the shallow know themselves’ (p.1244). Not surprisingly, even in prison Wilde shallowly preferred the amoral Walter Pater of *The Renaissance* (1873) to the moral Walter Pater of *Marius the Epicurean* (1885). To Wilde’s humoured disdain, Pater had the worst of all habits — the habit of maturing.

Although Dorian could kill both his conscience and Basil, he nonetheless had to admit, ‘The dead linger sometimes. The man upstairs will not go away’ (*Dorian* 1891, p.124) — that is, until his former intimate Alan Campbell arrives with nitric acid. For dissolving Pater, Wilde chose instead the acidity of his wit, asking the one question he himself could best have answered: ‘Was [Pater] ever alive?’ A few years after snarling that vitriolic remark, Wilde awoke in Reading Gaol, awoke to the realisation that he had misread Pater’s *Renaissance*, had mapped his life according to faulty and shallow coordinates gleaned from a ‘golden book’, had failed to comprehend Pater’s apprehension that *The*

Homosexual Artists’, in *Alterity, Identity, Image: Selves and Others in Society and Scholarship* (Amsterdam Studies on Cultural Identity), ed. by R. Corbey and J. Th. Leerssen (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Editions Rodopi, 1991), pp.57-74.

¹ Ellmann, p.99.

² *De Profundis*, pp.981, 1002, 1005, 1020, 1021, and 1056.

Renaissance ‘might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall’.¹ Wilde had indeed been misled. He had taken the lesser of the ‘two Uranian paths’, the path of Pandemotic lust rather than Uranian love, the unfortunate path Alcibiades had taken long before, straight to the statue of Priapus, whose pedestal always bore, in the time of the Romans, an epigrammatic warning such as ‘If I do seize you, you shall be so stretched that you will think your anus never had any wrinkles’ or ‘Thou shalt fear this god and hold thy hand high: this is worth thy while, for lo! there stands ready thy cross, the phallus’.²

Since he had been impaled upon a phallic cross of his own erecting,³ it is understandable that Wilde had no place in his life or his prison cell for a book that would have acted as a conscience, that would have echoed Basil’s dismay: ‘My God! don’t tell me that you are bad, and corrupt, and shameful’. Pater’s *Marius* would have done just that.⁴ It would have reminded Wilde — self-dubbed ‘the pariah-dog of the nineteenth century’⁵ — of exactly what he had sacrificed and killed through the hubris of his legal attack on Douglas’s father, the Marquess of Queensberry, as well as through the sordid evidence that he had left behind, evidence submitted against him during his subsequent trials for ‘gross indecency’: not only his reputation, his literary career, his family, and his health, but also the aspirations of many like Symonds and Pater who had attempted to keep a tactful, homoerotic and paederastic flourish while yet in the public eye. The impact of Wilde’s fall is readily observable on the first group:

The real immoral certainty lay in Oscar’s appalling disregard of innocent bystanders who stood to be devastated by his pursuit of physical pleasures that, he later admitted, ‘wreck the soul’: his wife and two boys, of course; his mother; his close friends; the poor family butler; and many a young man, one imagines, whom he amused himself with and then carelessly discarded. His aestheticism was criminal more in the figurative than the literal sense.⁶

¹ In *A Usable Past: Essays on Modern and Contemporary Poetry* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), Paul Mariani writes: ‘As Hopkins knew, Pater was more of a moralist than Mallock gave him credit for. Had he not removed his famous “Conclusion” from the second edition of *The Renaissance* because it might be misused by the “wild” young? It is the kind of sacrifice of art for a higher good, as David Downes notes, that would not be lost on Hopkins’ (p.119).

² The first epigram is from *Priapeia: sive diversorum poetarum in Priapum lusus, or Sportive Epigrams on Priapus by Diverse Poets, in English Verse and Prose*, trans. by Leonard C. Smithers and Sir Richard Burton (Cosmopoli [a fictitious imprint; probably London]: [n.p.], 1890); the second, from Virgil (attributed), *Priapea*, 2.16.

³ See Robb, pp.35-39: ‘Wilde may have been “crucified” on the cross of public morality, but he supplied the hammer and the nails’ (p.37).

⁴ One could claim that Wilde was merely economising his requests, since *Marius* was in two volumes, rather than one. However, he requested Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* in two volumes and a complete set of Dickens’s works (see Ellmann, pp.508-10).

⁵ Letter to Leonard Smithers, 11 December 1897, *Letters of Wilde*, p.695.

⁶ Schmidgall, *Stranger*, pp.191-92.

Although more oblique, its impact on the second group was also shattering, as Dowling explains: 'In this moment [...] all the expanded scope Symonds had so cautiously, Pater so covertly, and Wilde so carelessly endeavoured to win for homoerotic imagination and experience would seemingly vanish overnight'.¹ Its impact on the second group can be gauged most clearly by considering its impact on Edward Carpenter.

After the death of J. A. Symonds in 1893, the Uranian poet Edward Carpenter believed that the mantle of 'homoerotic and paederastic apologist' had passed to him. In consequence, he began immediately to compose *Homogenic Love: and Its Place in a Free Society*, a pamphlet privately published by the Manchester Labour Press in 1894. However, given the fallout of Wilde's trials and imprisonment, it suddenly became untenable for Carpenter, despite his intentions, to include *Homogenic Love* in his 1896 collection *Love's Coming-of-Age*. As Carpenter would phrase this himself: 'The Wilde trial had done its work; and silence must henceforth reign on sex-subjects'.² For the next decade, the 'silence' that Carpenter forecasted remained — that is, until 1908, when he broke that silence himself by publishing *The Intermediate Sex: A Study of Some Transitional Types of Men and Women*, the first volume in English to affirm same-sex desires as well as have a wide readership.³

Beyond the textual, Carpenter also had more 'practical' Uranian aims that were thwarted by the Wilde catastrophe, principally his involvement in the organisation and curriculum of Abbotsholme, a school founded as an 'idyllic pastoral environment'⁴ on the banks of the Dove River in rural Derbyshire, a location that he felt would be conducive for the establishment of a Uranian utopia. Influenced by German naturists, Walt Whitman, and his friend Carpenter, Cecil Reddie (1858-1932) founded Abbotsholme as a far more overtly Uranian environment than even William Johnson's Eton College:

In 1905 Richard Ungewitter, then 36, published *Die Nacktheit (Nakedness)*, a slim book, daringly illustrated with photographs of his followers walking in woods. Over 90,000 copies were sold. A year later he set up a naturalist society, organised on masonic lines. [...] Werner Zimmermann, a Swiss, joined Ungewitter, and wrote widely and with great conviction about the benefits of bringing up children as naturists, arguing that they would not feel guilty about their bodies or their sexuality. His influence was widely felt. In England some boys' schools, most noticeably Bedales [founded in 1893], took up his ideas. Another was Abbotsholme, a progressive boys' school started in 1889. The school hymn 'The Love of Comrades' was adapted from Walt Whitman, the

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.141.

² Edward Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams, Being Autobiographical Notes*, 2nd edn (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1916), p.196.

³ Edward Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex: A Study of Some Transitional Types of Men and Women* (London: Sonnenschein, 1908).

⁴ David Hornbrook, *Education and Dramatic Art*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1998), p.5.

chapel and grounds were adorned with statues of joyous, naked boys, and in summer there was compulsory nude bathing in the river.¹

So, for six years at Abbotsholme, ‘The Love of Comrades’ was on everyone’s lips; and naked boys, both from marble and flesh, dotted the rural landscape without anyone feeling ashamed ... that is, till there interposed a Wilde.

Given the vehement castigation that Wilde’s trials elicited, Carpenter and his disciple Reddie were forced to drape their publications and their pupils anew. In fact, Victorian society intended to thwart the Uranian potential of such schools in the future by infusing these all-male educational environments with girls: ‘Within the boys’ schools there was a growing number of educators, such as the Reverend Cecil Grant, who favoured co-education because it was likely to lessen the risk of homosexuality in the public schools’.²

Wilde had indeed thwarted the Uranian dream of a less-clandestine venue, such as Abbotsholme, for practising a paederastic pedagogy. Wilde had indeed nullified much of the aesthetic, educational, and other capital that the Uranians had amassed by circulating pamphlets, poetry, essays, paintings, and photographic ‘studies’. Wilde had indeed killed the Uranian hope of exercising a broader cultural influence through periodicals such as the *Artist and Journal of Home Culture*, which tactfully printed Uranian material until Charles Kains Jackson resigned his editorship in 1894 (a serendipitous decision, especially given that, after Wilde’s trials a year later, it would have been untenable to circulate Uranian materials so openly). Nevertheless, the legend of ‘Wilde the martyr’ and the decadence of his *Picture of Dorian Gray* would continue to live beyond their author, as a lingering influence over many of the later Uranians, as is evinced by their texts and artworks. Although ‘the aesthetics of Pater and the Greek ideal were being slightly perverted and misinterpreted’ by Wilde and his coterie, suggests d’Arch Smith too slightly, their works like *Dorian Gray* did ‘set off a flood of paederastic material in the form of verse, prose and paintings as well as initiating a new trend in the art of photography’.³ In essence, Dorian became one of those ‘ancestors in literature’, such that, after his immortalisation on the canvas of fiction, paederastic and homoerotic literature would ever afterwards be branded, to some extent, as Wilde’s progeny — branded with his ‘wild joys and wilder sins’, branded with the blemish of the murderous Cain.⁴

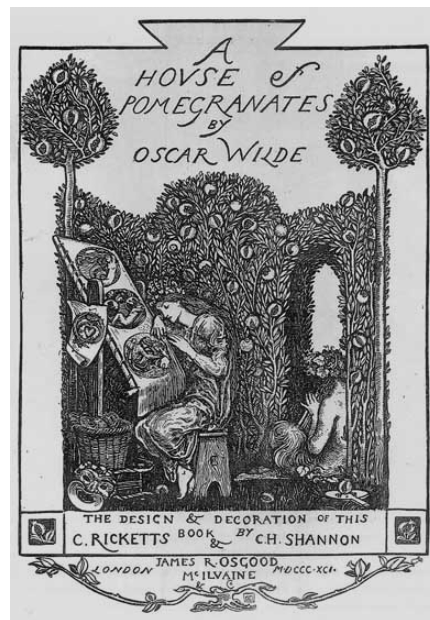
¹ Emmanuel Cooper, *Fully Exposed: The Male Nude in Photography* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.80.

² Roy Lowe, *Schooling and Social Change, 1964-1990* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.10.

³ D’Arch Smith, p.2. I obviously disagree with his use of the word ‘slightly’.

⁴ After the murder, on 20 April 1999, of twelve students and a teacher at Columbine High School, Jefferson County, Colorado, by Eric David Harris (1981-99) and Dylan Bennett Klebold (1981-99), two high school seniors who committed suicide at the scene, the following comment was made during a Congressional hearing: ‘Unhappily, no one knew that behind the fresh faces of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold lurked the picture of Dorian Gray’ — *Marketing Violence to Children: Hearing before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, United States Senate, One Hundredth Sixth Congress, First*

However, Wilde also had progeny who were neither textual nor pictorial — two charming and distanced sons, Cyril (1885-1915) and Vyvyan (1886-1967), sons whom Wilde seems to have intended to follow in his own heavy, Decadent footsteps, footsteps left across their nursery in the form of fairy tales. One of those tales, ‘The Young King’, is particularly subversive, with a paederastic import that will soon be considered at length — but first, it is necessary to defend a claim that, for Victorian Decadents like Wilde, precocious children like Cyril and Vyvyan could, given a proper environment, somewhere like Abbotsholme, perceive such an erotic import. To substantiate this claim, Henry James’s novel *What Maisie Knew* (1897) is uniquely suited — though, before reaching Maisie, the following needs to make a short excursion to a child who is a master of mirrors; for, as Wilde stresses in *Salomé*, ‘Only in mirrors should one look, for mirrors do but show us masks’.¹



Title Page for *A House of Pomegranates*
 Illustrated by Charles De Sousy Ricketts (1866-1931)
 and Charles Hazelwood Shannon (1863-1937)
 (London: James R. Osgood, 1891)

Session, May 4, 1999 (U.S. G.P.O., Supt. of Docs., Congressional Sales Office, 2001), p.31. Clearly, the murderous reputation of Dorian Gray continues to survive, and to have referential currency within Western society.

¹ *Salomé*, p.601.

**‘Somebody Killed Something: That’s Clear’:
James’s Approach to Childhood Knowing**

‘It seems very pretty’, [Alice] said when she had finished [reading ‘Jabberwocky’], ‘but it’s *rather* hard to understand!’ (You see she didn’t like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn’t make it out at all.) ‘Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas — only I don’t exactly know what they are! However, *somebody* killed *something*: that’s clear, at any rate —’

(Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*)¹

It may seem that Alice has gathered little from the poem ‘Jabberwocky’ — though eventually in *Through the Looking-Glass* she will have its problematic diction explained by the most famous of eggheads, Humpty Dumpty.² Despite being oblivious to its almost-Wittgensteinian language-game, its Anglo-Saxon parody, and its flurry of neologisms, Alice flawlessly latches onto its core meaning, so much so that few adults could probably better her three-word précis: ‘Somebody killed something’. Despite her gaps in understanding, despite her inability to define that ‘somebody’ or ‘something’, Alice nonetheless gathers the import of what she has read, recognising that someone has killed ‘the thing’.

In the preface to the New York edition of his novel *What Maisie Knew*, Henry James asserts (as readers might themselves suspect) that ‘the infant mind would at the best leave great gaps and voids’ in its understanding.³ Nevertheless, James later remarks, ‘Small children have many more perceptions than they have terms to translate them; their vision is at any moment much richer, their apprehension even constantly stronger, than their prompt, their at all producible, vocabulary’.⁴ James’s observations and Lewis Carroll’s language-game find their proper gloss in two of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s most notable of propositions: ‘The limits of my language mean the limits of my world’, and further ‘That the world

¹ Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, ed. by Susan L. Rattiner (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1999 [1872]), p.12. In *Henry James: The Major Novels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Judith Woolf writes: ‘If James’s ruthless logic, as he sets up the terms of his plot, reminds us of Humpty Dumpty’s, his child heroine, like Carroll’s, will walk safely and undaunted through what, to an older protagonist, would be a world made nightmarish by the reversal of all norms. *What Maisie Knew* is in some ways an *Alice Through the Looking Glass* for grown-ups’ (p.70).

² Carroll, *Looking-Glass*, pp.58-60.

³ Henry James, Preface to *What Maisie Knew*, *The Pupil, In the Cage* [New York edn], in *Literary Criticism: French Writers, Other European Writers, The Prefaces to the New York Edition* (New York: Library of America, 1984), pp.1156-72 (p.1160).

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.1160-61.

is *my* world, shows itself in the fact that the limits of the language (*the* language which I understand) mean the limits of *my* world'.¹ Despite 'great gaps and voids', children's perceptions are often 'much richer' than they 'have terms to translate them' into — hence, their inability to formulate adequate speech-acts poses 'the limits of [their] world', as well as provides an opportunity for the more mature to fill those 'great gaps and voids' with the pleasantness of Marius's childhood, until 'the whole of life seemed full of sacred presences' (I, p.17) — or else, rather selfishly, to convert the child into 'a deep little porcelain cup in which biting acids could be mixed' (*Maisie*, p.398).

Before considering Oscar Wilde's sons as an intended audience for 'The Young King', it is a necessary aside to consider James's novel, which is about a turbulent divorce and its aftermath as viewed by a child, drawing particular attention to a few passages that illustrate how far a child's language — and, consequently, societal navigation — can be expanded, even under questionable and morally reprehensible circumstances. In James's novel, mothers and fathers continually change partners and names, while Maisie herself becomes the pretext for all sorts of adult sexual intrigue.² Neglected and exploited by everyone around her, Maisie provides James with an opportunity to consider how far 'overthought' and 'underthought' can pass between an adult and a child — and the amount of passage, James suggests, is considerable.

What Maisie Knew is, according to James's narrator, the story of 'innocence so saturated with knowledge' (p.525),³ a knowledge that Maisie has derived through the continual (mis)use relatives have made of her as a plaything, a plaything in games they assume she will never fully comprehend:

'Poor little monkey!' [her mother] at last exclaimed; and the words were an epitaph for the tomb of Maisie's childhood. She was abandoned to her fate. What was clear to any spectator was that the only link binding her to either parent was this lamentable fact of her being a ready vessel for bitterness, a deep little porcelain cup in which biting acids could be mixed. They had wanted her not for any good they could do her, but for the harm they could, with her unconscious aid, do each other. (P.398)

The following snippet of conversation, made upon Maisie's return after six months spent with her father, reveals the first expression of this 'use':

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Ogden bilingual edn), trans. by C. K. Ogden, with intro. by Bertrand Russell (London: Routledge, 1992), propositions 5.6 and 5.62.

² See Cora Diamond, 'Henry James, Moral Philosophers, Moralism', in *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*, ed. by Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), pp.252-70.

³ In *The Negative Imagination: Form and Perspective in the Novels of Henry James* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), Sallie Sears goes as far as to suggest that 'one might call *What Maisie Knew* a latent pornographic novel' (p.27).

‘And did your beastly papa, my precious angel, send any message to your own loving mamma?’

[...]

‘He said I was to tell you, from him’, she faithfully reported, ‘that you’re a nasty horrid pig!’ (P.404)

Such is the beginning of Maisie’s education. However, Maisie soon enough decides, insightfully, not to play along, for ‘she had a new feeling, the feeling of danger; on which a new remedy rose to meet it, the idea of an inner self, or, in other words, of concealment’ (pp.405-06).¹ In other words, Maisie has begun to recognise the existence of ‘underthought’, that ‘everything had something behind it: life was like a long, long corridor with rows of closed doors. She had learned that at these doors it was wise not to knock’ (p.419); or, as the narrator further relates, ‘she had grown up among things as to which her foremost knowledge was that she was not to ask about them’ (p.419). However, the ‘why’ of this is also within Maisie’s grasp or, at the very least, her voyeuristic gaze:

It was in the nature of things to be none of a small child’s business, even when a small child had from the first been deluded into a fear that she might be only too much initiated. [...] [Maisie] learned on the other hand soon to recognise that patient little silences and intelligent little looks could be rewarded from time to time by delightful little glimpses. (P.511)

As James’s narrator explains, Maisie’s ‘sharpened sense of spectatorship’ — described as ‘an odd air of being present at her history [...] as if she could only get at experience by flattening her nose against a pane of glass’ (p.472) — brought ‘a high quickening of Maisie’s direct perceptions’ (p.467). As James emphasises in one of his notebooks: ‘EVERYTHING TAKES PLACE BEFORE MAISIE’.²

For the adults in James’s novel, innocence and its language ‘limit’ — its supposed language ‘barrier’ — serve rhetorical functions about which the child is only indirectly consequential. Accused of retaining letters to Maisie from her mother, Miss Overmore (who will later become Mrs Beale, the girl’s stepmother) responds: ‘They were not fit for the innocent child to see’ (p.428) — though it must be admitted that nothing contained in those letters could have been any more scandalous than her own conversations with young Maisie or within range of Maisie’s ‘spectatorship’. Notice her rather comical protest to Sir Claude,

¹ In ‘How Maisie Knows: The Behavioral Path to Knowledge’, *Studies in the Novel*, 15.3 (1983), pp.224-36, Geoffrey D. Smith writes: ‘Silence eventually brings rewards, for while Maisie withdraws from active social participation in the game, she observes and ascertains the rules that govern the adult players’ (p.226).

² F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock, eds, *The Notebooks of Henry James* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p.238.

Maisie's new stepfather and soon to be her own illicit lover — using Maisie, of course, as the pretext for meeting and carrying out their affair:

'How you talk to her!' cried Mrs. Beale.
'No worse than you!' he gaily rejoined. (P.488)

On one occasion, Sir Claude admits to Maisie:

'I'm talking to you in the most extraordinary way — I'm always talking to you in the most extraordinary way, ain't I? One would think you were about sixty and that I — I don't know what any one would think *I* am. Unless a beastly cad!' (P.629)

At another point, he makes a few lurid comments to Maisie about his own wife, Maisie's mother:

'I beg your pardon [...] for appearing to discuss that sort of possibility under your sharp little nose. But the fact is I forget half the time that Ida is your sainted mother'.
'So do I!' said Maisie. (P.470)

These passages illustrate how thoroughly Maisie is treated as someone who is not exactly an adult, not exactly a child. As a result, the language and other games in the novel blur the distinction between the 'conventional' and the 'unconventional', with the 'conventional' leading, inevitably, to the 'unconventional', particularly for Sir Claude, whose very name, in James's hands, seems an awkward clumping of the refined and the base.

Sir Claude had a habit of presenting Maisie with children's games, the instructions to which were far too complex for Maisie and her elderly governess to decipher; however, rather than admit their ignorance to Sir Claude, the girl and her governess spend the time they are believed to be playing these games discussing 'him' and the 'games' of his relationships:

[Sir Claude presented her with] ever so many games in boxes, with printed directions. [...] The games were, as he said, to while away the evening hour; and the evening hour indeed often passed in futile attempts [on the part of Mrs. Wix, the child's governess,] to master what 'it said' on the papers. When he asked the pair how they liked the games they always replied 'Oh, immensely!' but they had earnest discussions as to whether they hadn't better appeal to him frankly for aid to understand them. This was a course their delicacy shrank from [...] The answer on the winter nights to the puzzle of cards and counters and little bewildering pamphlets was just to draw up to the fire and talk about him; and if

the truth must be told this edifying interchange constituted for the time the little girl's chief education. (Pp.447-49)¹

In truth, these conventional and unconventional 'games' pale into insignificance next to the 'games' played by Maisie's mother and her new husband, by Maisie's father and his new wife, and by the two new stepparents together.² Hence, this game-motif becomes the *leit-motif* running through the fireside chats Maisie has with her governess Mrs Wix:

'Well, my dear, it's [your mother's] game, and we must just hold on like grim death'. Maisie could interpret at her leisure these ominous words. Her reflections indeed at this moment thickened apace. [...] She perceived [...] that something beyond her knowledge had taken place in the house. The things beyond her knowledge — numerous enough in truth — had not hitherto, she believed, been the things that had been nearest to her: she had even had in the past a small smug conviction that in the domestic labyrinth she always kept the clue. (P.460)

Or, as James's reader is told elsewhere, 'There was little indeed in the relations of her companions that [Maisie's] precocious experience couldn't explain' (p.435), for 'our young lady was led [...] to arrive at a dim apprehension of the unuttered and the unknown' (p.515).

To demonstrate Maisie's 'knowing' and its relationship to spectatorship, gaming, and language, it is beneficial to take a bit of a lengthy stroll in Kensington Gardens with her and her stepfather, five pages of James's novel condensed below:

'Upon my word he *is* making up to her!'

[Sir Claude's] allusion was to a couple who, side by side, at the end of the glade, were moving in the same direction as themselves. These distant figures, in their slow stroll (which kept them so close together that their heads, drooping a little forward, almost touched), presented the back of a lady who looked tall, who was evidently a very fine woman, and that of a gentleman whose left hand appeared to be passed well into her arm [...]

'Why, mercy — if it isn't mamma!'

¹ In 'What Maisie Knows: A Study of Childhood and Adolescence', *American Literature*, 36.4 (1965), pp.485-513, John C. McCloskey writes:

If one is tempted to regard Maisie as unusually precocious, one must remember that, unlike other children who have been learning in nursery and school those things which society regards as necessary and proper, she has had for years a peculiar empirical education tutored at times in the nature of the circumambient evil by Mrs. Wix, so that by adolescence she has learned the lessons of her environment well enough to appear unusually astute. (P.506)

² In 'Moral Geography in *What Maisie Knew*', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 48.2 (1978-79), pp.130-48, Jean Frantz Blackall suggests that 'the "games" figures ironically describe her condition and her perceptions of the world' (pp.134-35).

Sir Claude paused with a stare. 'Mamma? Why, mamma's at Brussels'.

Maisie, with her eyes on the lady, wondered. 'At Brussels?'

'She's gone to play a match'.

'At billiards? ["Billiards were her great accomplishment" (p.400)] You didn't tell me'.

'Of course I didn't!' Sir Claude ejaculated. 'There's plenty I don't tell you. She went on Wednesday'.

The couple had added to their distance, but Maisie's eyes more than kept pace with them. 'Then she has come back'.

Sir Claude watched the lady. 'It's much more likely she never went!'

'It's mamma!' the child said with decision.

They had stood still, but Sir Claude had made the most of his opportunity, and it happened that just at this moment, at the end of the vista, the others halted and, still showing their backs, seemed to stay talking. 'Right you are, my duck!' he exclaimed at last. 'It's my own sweet wife!'

He had spoken with a laugh, but he had changed colour, and Maisie quickly looked away from him. 'Then who is it with her?'

'Blest if I know!' said Sir Claude. [...]

[Maisie] studied the gentleman's back. 'Then is this Lord Eric?'

For a moment her companion made no answer [...] 'What do you know about Lord Eric?'

She tried innocently to be odd in return. 'Oh, I know more than you think! Is it Lord Eric?' she repeated.

'It may be. Blest if I care!'

Their friends had slightly separated and now, as Sir Claude spoke, suddenly faced round, showing all the splendour of her ladyship and all the mystery of her comrade. Maisie held her breath. 'They're coming!'

'Let them come'. And Sir Claude, pulling out his cigarettes, began to strike a light.

'We shall meet them!'

'No; they'll meet *us*'.

Maisie stood her ground. 'They see us. Just look'.

Sir Claude threw away his match. 'Come straight on'. The others, in the return, evidently startled, had half paused again, keeping well apart. 'She's horribly surprised and she wants to slope', he continued. 'But it's too late'. [...]

'What *will* she do now?' [Maisie] asked.

Sir Claude was at present in a position to say: 'Try to pretend it's me'.

'You?'

'Why, that I'm up to something'.

In another minute [her mother] had justified this prediction, erect there before them like a figure of justice in full dress. [...] 'What are you doing with my daughter? [...] I know your game, and I've something now to say to you about it'.

Sir Claude gave a squeeze of the child's arm. 'Didn't I tell you she would have, [Maisie]?'

'You're uncommonly afraid to hear it', [her mother] went on; 'but if you think she'll protect you from it you're mightily mistaken. [...] Should you like her to know, my dear [husband]?'

Maisie had a sense of her [mother] launching this inquiry at him with effect; yet [she] was also conscious of hoping that Sir Claude would reply in the affirmative. We have already learned that she had come to like people's liking her to 'know'. (This passage is from pp.494-99)

'To know' — this 'knowing', although not as developed in her as in her decadent parents and stepparents, allows Maisie nonetheless to navigate such situations with relative ease, to reach the core meaning or 'underthought' of such situations, all of which draws attention to the imaginative quality and irony of her mother's later statement that

'There have been things between us — between Sir Claude and me — which I needn't go into, you little nuisance, because you wouldn't understand them'. It suited her to convey that Maisie had been kept, so far as *she* was concerned or could imagine, in a holy ignorance and that she must take for granted a supreme simplicity. (Pp.549-50)

To solidify this point, consider the moment Maisie is told by Mrs Wix of the arrival of her stepfather to their hotel in France — where, of course, he has come principally for an adulterous dalliance with her stepmother:

'My poor dear, he has come!
 'Sir Claude?' Maisie, clearing the little bed-rug with the width of her spring, felt the polished floor under her bare feet.
 'He crossed in the night; he got in early'. Mrs. Wix's head jerked stiffly backward. 'He's there'.
 'And you've seen him?'
 'No. He's there — he's there', Mrs. Wix repeated. [...]
 'Do you mean he's in the *salon*?' Maisie asked again.
 'He's *with* her', Mrs. Wix desolately said. 'He's with her' [...].
 'Do you mean in her own room?' Maisie continued.
 She waited an instant. 'God knows!'

(This passage is from pp.612-13)¹

Well, not only God. Perhaps the more accurate conclusion to this exchange between Maisie and her governess is found in the last lines of the novel:

'Oh, I know!' the child replied.
 Mrs. Wix gave a sidelong look. She still had room for wonder at what Maisie knew. (P.649)

¹ In 'Closely Observed Texts: Learning from Reading: Henry James's novel *What Maisie Knew*', *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 28.2 (2002), pp.217-33, Graham Shulman writes: 'Maisie enters a new stage of development, a stage of growing conscious awareness of an adult sexual couple. This development in Maisie's consciousness is specifically linked with the inevitable forward movement of time' (p.224).

In relation to the present concern about literature *for* children — particularly as it relates to the next exploration, Wilde's sons as an intended audience for 'The Young King' — and not just literature *about* children, consider another short passage from *What Maisie Knew*, the last pleasant moment spent between the girl and her stepfather, Sir Claude. This is indeed one of the most ironic moments in the novel, as well as the most important (given the present speculations about Maisie and her 'knowing') for considering James's protagonist as a reader of children's literature:

They stood there and smiled, [Sir Claude] with all the newspapers under his arm and [Maisie] with the three books, one yellow and two pink. He had told her the pink were for herself and the yellow one for Mrs. Beale, implying in an interesting way that these were the vivid divisions in France of literature for the young and for the old. (P.636)

This is indeed humorous — Maisie's two pink volumes contrasted with her stepmother's more salacious 'yellow book' — as if one could question, save for a division in vocabulary, Maisie's ability to understand fully the contents of that French volume 'for the old'. One could speculate on the titles of those pink volumes, perhaps British or American imports like sentimental *Little Lord Fauntleroy* or moralising *Little Women*, all unworthy of a sensitive and experienced child like Maisie, especially since, as John C. McCloskey notes: 'There is little now in the situation, of which [Maisie] is the center, that eludes her. Her perception, her power of inference, her insight into character and motive make her expertly at home in the world from which her demand for exclusive possession will shortly force her, an adolescent, to emerge'.¹

It has not been uncommon for critics, from F. R. Leavis onwards, to complain that James (un)intentionally made *What Maisie Knew* into a comedy by endowing his young heroine with uncanny powers of moral navigation and personal insight.² However, this complaint is nullified if Maisie is recognised,

¹ McCloskey, p.507. For comment on James's novel, see Beverly Lyon Clark, *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children's Literature in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), chapter 3: 'Kiddie Lit in the Academy'.

² 'There remains, finally, the question of the tone of the novel, initially formulated by F. R. Leavis and Marius Bewley in their debate over whether James's "comedy" here is essentially Dickensian or Jacobean, informed by laughter or horror. The Jacobean argument has been elaborated by Martha Banta [...] and Sallie Sears' (Blackall, pp.146-47). For the novel's similarity to 'an extraordinarily high-spirited comedy', see F. R. Leavis, "'What Maisie Knew", A Disagreement by F. R. Leavis', in Marius Bewley, *Complex Fate: Hawthorne, Henry James and Some Other American Writers*, with an intro. and two interpolations by F. R. Leavis (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952), pp.119-26. For its similarity to a comedy of manners, see J. A. Ward, *The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp.82-83. In *Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Jesse Matz writes: '*What Maisie Knew* extends itself

instead, as a representative of a distinct species among the young, a species in which Lewis Carroll's Alice would equally have found her place: those treated as potential or fractal adults. In *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*, James R. Kincaid claims that

few would question that the innocent child was manufactured by Rousseau, with refinements by Wordsworth and a thousand lesser writers, interior decorators, and producers of greeting cards. Prior to the eighteenth century, says [Philippe] Ariès, nobody worried about soiling childish innocence because 'nobody thought that this innocence really existed'. Now, however, [in the Victorian period,] the notion that the child was innocent, valuable, and weak became common.¹

Maisie and Alice are neither innocent nor valuable nor weak — at least in the contexts of the texts that present them — yet, neither are they soiled by their trips down the rabbit-hole.² They are merely more 'knowing' than most adults (whether Victorian parents or those of today) would prefer, children who would rather not play games from paper boxes or read timid books in pink covers. They might, more scandalously and disconcertingly, expect relevance, beauty of language, unpatronizing plots, and the answers to all questions.

'But, Maisie and Alice are fictions' is the obvious retort to this assertion, though the sort of fictions that lead one to recall another set of precocious children, two sons and a daughter who were unrestricted by their famous father in almost every way — allowed to speak as equals to the adults of his circle, to mingle with his evening guests, to visit the studios of painters who specialised in the nude (and even to take lessons), to frequent salons full of freethinking artists and poets, to read any book. That the son Henry would become an unprecedented master of the English novel, that the son William would become a master of psychology as well as the founder of Pragmatism, that the daughter Alice would become a memorable diarist, perhaps as interesting as Dorothy Wordsworth — that would indeed be a triumvirate worthy of fiction, those three children from among the children of Henry James, Sr.³

beyond any real hope for aesthetic ingenuity, as James strays into a personification too much like what Sterne gives us in *Tristram Shandy*' (p.114). Contemporary critics have often avoided this debate through careful phrasing: in *Henry James and the Philosophical Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Merle A. Williams writes: '*What Maisie Knew*, with its unique blend of comedy, pathos and anguish, is a novel that is deeply concerned with ways of seeing the world' (p.27).

¹ James R. Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.72.

² 'This question of how Maisie is affected by what happens to her has in fact been a major debate in critical response to the novel: critics have been evenly divided between two contrasting views of Maisie at the end — damaged and corrupted or undamaged and uncorrupted' (Shulman, p.230).

³ For elaboration on the permissive atmosphere surrounding the James children — seemingly an outgrowth of the Fourierist ideas championed by their father — see the

Ever the narcissistic father, Oscar Wilde seems to have expected much the same ‘knowing’ to be reflected in the mirror of his own sons Cyril and Vyvyan, as is suggested by the subversive fairy tales he wrote and read to them, particularly the paederastic *tour de force* ‘The Young King’.



Henry James, Sr. and Henry James, Jr.

[Studio of] Mathew Brady (ca. 1823-96)
Half-plate daguerreotype, 1 August 1854
Houghton Library, Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

initial chapters of Sheldon M. Novick, *Henry James: The Young Master* (New York: Random House, 1996). For the overlap between Maisie’s story and James’s biographical details, see John Carlos Rowe, *The Other Henry James* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), chapter 5: ‘The Portrait of a Small Boy as a Young Girl: Gender Trouble in *What Maisie Knew*’ (pp.120-54).

**‘Little Porcelain Cup in Which Biting Acids Could Be Mixed’:
Wilde’s Sons as an Audience for ‘The Young King’**

I dreamed of the moisture of warm wet lips
Upon my lips.

Then sudden the shades of the night took wing,
And I saw that love was a beauteous thing,
For I clasped to my breast my curl-crowned king,
My sweet boy-king. (John Francis Bloxam, from ‘At Dawn’)¹

The lines above, from a poem by John Francis Bloxam, were published, perhaps unsurprisingly, in the only issue of *The Chameleon: A Bazaar of Dangerous and Smiling Chances* (December 1894), an Oxford periodical that, as Timothy d’Arch Smith relates, ‘received the full glare of publicity and ridicule in the Wilde trials’,² due in large part to a short story titled ‘The Priest and the Acolyte’, also written by Bloxam. That particular story aptly illustrates Martha Vicinus’s claim that ‘throughout Europe the boy became a vessel into which an author — and a reader — could pour his or her anxieties, fantasies, and sexual desires’,³ especially since Bloxam’s story centres around Ronald Heatherington, a priest whose vague yearnings become strikingly tactile after the appearance of Wilfred, the boy who is to serve as his ceremonial acolyte:

The priest sprang through the open window, and seizing the slim little figure in his arms, he carried him into the room. He drew the curtain, and, sinking into the deep arm-chair, laid the little fair head upon his breast, kissing his curls again and again.⁴

¹ As quoted in d’Arch Smith, p.56.

² *Ibid.*, p.54; see also pp.54-60.

³ Vicinus, p.91.

⁴ This passage is taken from John Francis Bloxam, ‘The Priest and the Acolyte’, reprinted in Brian Reade, ed., *Sexual Heretics: Male Homosexuality in English Literature from 1850-1900* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1970), pp.349-60 (p.353). For a facsimile of the single issue of this magazine published in 1894, see *The Chameleon*, with intro. by H. Montgomery Hyde and an essay by Timothy d’Arch Smith (London: The Eighteen Nineties Society, 1978). In *Pedophiles and Priests: Anatomy of a Contemporary Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Philip Jenkins writes: ‘A pederastic theme is overt in Bloxam’s work, but a fascination with the physical beauty of boys recurs in the work of other clergy and pseudoclergy, including Gerard Manley Hopkins and Frederick Rolfe’ (p.27). As yet another illustration of the current inability to address pederastic themes — even in scholarly contexts — consider the following description of Bloxam’s story in Colin Cruise, ‘“Pressing All Religions into His Service”: Solomon’s Ritual Paintings and Their Contexts’, in *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites*, compiled and ed. by Colin Cruise (London: Merrell, 2005), pp.57-63: ‘The

To the priest's pleased surprise, the boy returns his affection:

When they met in the vestry next morning, the lad raised his beautiful flower-like face, and the priest, gently putting his arms round him, kissed him tenderly on the lips.

'My darling! my darling!' was all he said; but the lad returned his kiss with a smile of wonderful almost heavenly love, in a silence that seemed to whisper something more than words.¹

No. 1

The Chameleon

'A Bazaar of Dangerous and Smiling Chances'
(R. L. STEVENSON)

Three Numbers } VOL. I. NUMBER 1. (Subscription, 1s per
a Year } Annon, Post Free
The Edition of each Number is limited to 500 numbered copies

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PHRASES AND PHILOSOPHIES FOR THE USE OF THE YOUNG. BY OSCAR WILDE	1
THE SHADOW OF THE END. BY J. G. NICHOLSON	4
A NEW ART: A NOTE ON THE POSTER	8
ON THE MORALITY OF COMIC OPERA	10
LES DÉCADENTS	16
JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE	17
OF 'THE VAGABONDS'	20
TWO POEMS. BY LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS	25
THE PRIEST AND THE ACOLYTE	29
LOVE IN OXFORD	48
JUDICIAL WIT OF RECENT TIMES	49
ON THE APPRECIATION OF TRIFLES	52
AT DAWN. BY BERTRAM LAWRENCE	59

LONDON: GAY AND BIRD
5 CHANDOS STREET, STRAND

Their secret intimacy flourishes until, one fateful evening, the rector of the church surprises the priest and acolyte *in flagrante delicto*:

The little lad sat on his knees with his arms closely pressed round [the priest's] neck and his golden curls laid against the priest's close-cut hair; his white night-shirt contrasting strangely and beautifully with the dull black of the other's long cassock.²

Recognising that their discovered intimacy, duly confessed, will inevitably spell their doom, or at least part them, this paederastic priest conducts a final, fatal communion, tinted with poison:

story ends with the Consecration of the Eucharist and the suicide of a priest and his beloved friend' (p.63). This phrasing recalls Jowett's disingenuous use of 'friend' to cloak Socratic paederasty.

¹ Bloxam, 'The Priest', p.353.

² Ibid., p.354.

Just before the consecration the priest took a tiny phial from the pocket of his cassock, blessed it, and poured the contents into the chalice. [...] [The priest] took the beautiful gold chalice, set with precious stones, in his hand; he turned towards [the boy]; but when he saw the light in the beautiful face he turned again to the crucifix with a low moan. For one instant his courage failed him; then he turned to the little fellow again, and held the chalice to his lips [...] The instant he had received, Ronald fell on his knees beside him and drained the chalice to the last drop. He set it down and threw his arms round the beautiful figure of his dearly loved acolyte. Their lips met in one last kiss of perfect love, and all was over.¹

This synthesis of paederasty and the dangerous chalice was not Bloxam's invention: from Classical Greece to Renaissance Italy to Victorian England, those upon the symposial couch, as in Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's *Bacchus*, were prone to extend the *kylix* (resembling a *scyphus* like the Warren Cup), a traditional paederastic gift for a beloved boy, the eroticism of such a symposial act heightened by the undraping of the sash and the presence of an overripe and bursting pomegranate, a traditional symbol of sexual experience.²

Given the paederastic import of Bloxam's story, it is not surprising that, once the Oxford University authorities became aware of its contents, this particular undergraduate periodical did not survive into a second issue. *The Chameleon's* editor, who was none other than Bloxam himself, also printed in this solitary issue Lord Alfred Douglas's poem 'Two Loves', with its (in)famous line 'I am the love that dare not speak its name', and Wilde's 'Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young', an epigrammatic series that, in association with 'Two Loves' and 'The Priest and the Acolyte', would be duly exploited against him during his trials. The last of these 'Phrases and Philosophies' — 'To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance' (p.1245) — was made incarnate in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a novel of narcissistic self-love, a novel itself for 'the Use of the Young'. What Wilde's contemporary readership never knew (and his readership today still fails to appreciate) is that *Dorian Gray* — in many ways the most Decadent of Victorian texts — was not initially composed to popularise the sensual values of Walter

¹ Bloxam, 'The Priest', pp.359-60.

² Pomegranates appear in four of Caravaggio's paintings: *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* (ca. 1592), *Bacchus* (ca. 1596), *Supper at Emmaus* (ca. 1601), and *Still Life with Fruit on a Stone Ledge* (ca. 1603). Given the ancient Roman atmosphere of *Bacchus*, it seems that Caravaggio is linking the bursting pomegranate with the detail that the Romans used its juice as a remedy for infertility and as an aphrodisiac. Further, the fruit is associated with the rape of Persephone, hence with sexual experience and the Underworld. After Demeter's impassioned appeal, Zeus requests Persephone's release from Hades; however, before leaving, Persephone eats some pomegranate seeds, which results in her required return for a third part of each year, symbolising how seeds are buried and reborn. About Caravaggio's use of various fruits for erotic suggestiveness, see Adrienne Von Lates, 'Caravaggio's Peaches and Academic Puns', *Words & Image*, 11.1 (1995), pp.55-60.

Pater's *Renaissance* or to rewrite Joris-Karl Huysmans's *À rebours*, but as a children's tale, a detail explained by Wilde's principal biographer, Richard Ellmann:

The ideas and themes he scattered were sometimes reaped by his young admirers. The novelist W. B. Maxwell, while a boy, had heard many stories from Wilde, and wrote one of them down and published it. He confessed to Wilde, whose face clouded, then cleared as he mixed approval with reproach, 'Stealing my story was the act of a gentleman, but not telling me you had stolen it was to ignore the claims of friendship'. Then he suddenly became serious: 'You mustn't take a story that I told you of a man and a picture. No, absolutely, I want that for myself. I fully mean to write it, and I should be terribly upset if I were forestalled'. This first mention of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* antedated by several years, Maxwell says, the actual composition.¹



Bacchus

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610)

Oil on canvas, ca. 1596

Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy

Wilde's novel was one of the most decried of the century, decried as the absolute flowering of the evils of Decadence: how much more repugnant would that flower have been had Wilde's Victorian detractors known that it had initially been told to a 'boy' (though his dates suggest that he might very well have been

¹ Ellmann, p.309.

in his teens)¹ named William Babington Maxwell (1866-1938), the son of his friends? Basil's question to Dorian about the ruin of his intimates could equally have been levelled at Wilde: 'Why is your friendship so fateful to young men?'

That the earliest form of *Dorian Gray* had been told to a boy or young man also draws into question Wilde's retort — in a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in early December 1891 — that his second volume of fairy tales had not been intended specifically for the young:

The writer of this review [...] starts by asking an extremely silly question, and that is, whether or not I have written this book for the purpose of giving pleasure to the British child. Having expressed grave doubts on this subject, a subject on which I cannot conceive any fairly-educated person having any doubts at all, he proceeds, apparently quite seriously, to make the extremely limited vocabulary at the disposal of the British child the standard by which the prose of an artist is to be judged! Now in building this *House of Pomegranates* I had about as much intention of pleasing the British child as I had of pleasing the British public.²

'Giving pleasure to the British child' might not have been Wilde's principal intention in constructing his second volume of fairy tales, *A House of Pomegranates* (1891), but he seems to have drawn a distinction, at least for himself, between the typical 'British child' and the likes of Maxwell or his own sons — especially since his son Vyvyan would later admit, 'He told us *all* his own written fairy stories suitably adapted for our young minds' (emphasis added),³ with 'suitably adapted' probably only involving compensation for 'the extremely limited vocabulary at the disposal of the British child'. Besides, as the following will suggest, Wilde was less intent on 'giving pleasure to the British

¹ Ellmann could very well be correct in labelling young Maxwell — as Maxwell does himself — 'a boy'. Whether the earlier, oral version of *Dorian Gray* was told to Maxwell as 'a boy' or as a teenager, it nonetheless suggests that Wilde had been ruminating over the details of this story 'of a man and a picture' for more than a decade before it assumed its published form in 1890. I have been unable to locate Maxwell's 'plagiarised' story, and must assume that it was published anonymously and/or in some minor journal or newspaper.

² *Letters of Wilde*, pp.301-02. In *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 1991), Jack David Zipes writes:

Wilde was highly disturbed by the way society conditioned and punished young people if they did not conform to the proper rules. [...] He had always been sensitive to the authoritarian schooling and church rigidity which most English children were expected to tolerate [...] [For that reason,] he clearly wanted to subvert the messages conveyed by [Hans Christian] Andersen's tales, but more important his poetical style recalled the rhythms and language of the Bible in order to counter the stringent Christian code. (P.114)

³ Vyvyan Holland, *Son of Oscar Wilde* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1957), p.45.

child' than on 'getting pleasure from the British child', especially if, as Lord Henry asserts, the ultimate pleasure is the exercise of influence, 'to convey one's temperament into another as though it were a subtle fluid [...] There was a real joy in that' (*Dorian* 1891, p.40). Put simply, given the first audience for *Dorian Gray*, Wilde's retort to the *Pall Mall Gazette* becomes disingenuous, becomes an act of essential and flagrant diversion, for he was not at liberty to assert that he *had* written those tales with an audience of children in mind, lest he be accused of attempting to 'corrupt the innocent', which was, in fact, what he was trying to do.

Wilde did have undistinguished contemporaries whose tales for boys could abound with paederastic content without drawing much or any publicity, even when those contemporaries attempted to court attention. In a dumbfounding piece of self-advertisement, Edward Irenaeus Prime-Stevenson (1858-1942) — sometimes referred to as 'The Father of Modern American Gay Literature' — writing under the pseudonym of Xavier Mayne, parades the paederastic nuances of his own 'subversive boys books', particularly *Left to Themselves: Being the Ordeal of Philip and Gerald*, which was published in the same year as Wilde's *House of Pomegranates*:

Fiction for young people that has uranian hints naturally is thought the last sort for circulating among British boys and girls. [Nevertheless,] in 'White Cockades', a little tale of the flight of the Younger Pretender, by E. I. Stevenson, issued in Edinburgh some years ago, passionate devotion from a rustic youth toward the prince, and its recognition are half-hinted as homosexual in essence. The sentiment of uranian adolescence is more distinguishable in another book for lads, 'Philip and Gerald', by the same hand: a romantic story in which a youth in his latter teens is irresistibly attracted to a much younger lad; and becomes, *con amore*, responsible for the latter's personal safety, in a series of unexpected events that throw them together — for life.¹

Wilde always garnered too much attention from the general public to be as overt and scandalous as Prime-Stevenson; nevertheless, despite his comments to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Wilde did construct tales for boys full of the 'sentiment of uranian adolescence', as Naomi Wood asserts:

Oscar Wilde's fairy tales are not often discussed in this [erotic] context, though his sexuality has been discussed extensively by a panoply of critics in the century since his death. Oscar Wilde's fairy tales encode the vision of an idealistic pederast, a man who loves beautiful youths; the style and content of his fairy tales offer a vision of love and beauty that urges a different aesthetic and moral relationship to the world and experience from the heavily censored and didactic productions of the Grimm brothers. Oscar Wilde's fairy tales

¹ As quoted in James Gifford, 'Left to Themselves: The Subversive Boys Books of Edward Prime-Stevenson (1858-1942)', *Journal of American and Comparative Cultures*, 24.3-4 (2001), pp.113-16 (p.113).

rhetorically create a new, morally sensual child by enacting Walter Pater's aesthetics.¹

Although specific pederastic practice is certainly not to be gleaned from the fairy tales, the fairy tales use the ideals and images surrounding Classical and contemporary homosexual discourses to offer an alternative, idealized form of love and morality, one that emphasizes spiritual procreancy, unselfish self-sacrifice, and, paradoxically, immersion in sensual experience as the means to true spirituality.²

Wilde's most conspicuously paederastic fairy tale — 'a distinctly more transgressive, though still by no means obtrusive, assertion of homosexual themes'³ — is 'The Young King' from *A House of Pomegranates*.⁴

Wilde's tale begins with a pair of sensual images, images seemingly constructed as an invitation for his sons Cyril and Vyvyan to admire voyeuristically the young king as exhibitionist — the first, this youth reclining provocatively in a sensual pose; the second, racing about the woodlands, barely clothed:

The lad — for he was only a lad, being but sixteen years of age — [...] had flung himself back with a deep sigh of relief on the soft cushions of his embroidered couch, lying there, wild-eyed and open-mouthed, like a brown woodland Faun, or some young animal of the forest newly snared by the hunters.

And, indeed, it was the hunters who had found him, coming upon him almost by chance as, bare-limbed and pipe in hand, he was following the flock of the poor goatherd who had brought him up, and whose son he had always fancied himself to be. ('King', p.213)

The pruriency of this passage is heightened exponentially when placed alongside biographical evidence for Wilde, such as the following passages from two letters to Robert Ross:

¹ Naomi Wood, 'Creating the Sensual Child: Paterian Aesthetics, Pederasty, and Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales', *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*, 16.2 (2002), pp.156-70 (p.156).

² *Ibid.*, p.167. According to Schmidgall, 'Oscar would never have been so foolish or artlessly forthright as to compose his tales in such a way as to make them specifically "about" the oppression or repression of homosexual identity [...] I suspect Oscar sprinkled just enough subtly strange hints throughout the stories to let the homosexual cognoscenti know of his fellow-feeling' (*Stranger*, p.153).

³ *Ibid.*, p.161.

⁴ Oscar Wilde, 'The Young King', in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.213-22.

My dearest Bobbie, Bosie has insisted on stopping here for sandwiches. He is quite like a narcissus — so white and gold. I will come either Wednesday or Thursday night to your rooms. Send me a line. Bosie is so tired: he lies like a hyacinth on the sofa, and I worship him.

You dear boy. Ever yours, Oscar¹

There is a great deal of beauty here [in Morocco]. The Kabyle boys are quite lovely. [...] Bosie and I have taken to haschish: it is quite exquisite: three puffs of smoke and then peace and love.²

The mountains of Kabylia [are] full of villages peopled by fauns. [...] We were followed by lovely brown things from forest to forest. The beggars here have profiles, so the problem of poverty is easily solved.³

The young king, ‘a brown woodland Faun’, would find his equivalent in the boys of Kabyle, ‘lovely brown things’ who followed Wilde and Douglas about the Moroccan woodlands (and certainly back to their rooms for ‘peace and love’ and a little remuneration, ‘so the problem of poverty is easily solved’) — though, in his later, more domesticated and palatial state, the young king, reclining ‘on the soft cushions of his embroidered couch [...] wild-eyed and open-mouthed’, would become the ‘hyacinth on the sofa’, Wilde’s beloved Lord Alfred Douglas.

Wilde’s sons would also have heard that the young king has a ‘strange passion for beauty that was destined to have so great an influence over his life’ (‘King’, p.214), a phrase that has its echo in their father’s claim to Douglas that ‘Pater’s *Renaissance* [...] has had such a strange influence over my life’ (*De Profundis*, p.1022), a phrase that reverberates in this tale, because, as Wood asserts, ‘Pater’s aesthetic credo in *The Renaissance* clearly informs Wilde’s fairy tales’.⁴ Pater’s volume also infuses this particular tale with a certain deadliness that is not merely textual. As Dorian explains, ‘The Renaissance knew of strange manners of poisoning’ (*Dorian* 1890, p.77) — one of the most memorable of these, according to Pater, at the hand of Ludovico Sforza, ‘who murdered his young nephew by slow poison’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.85). The figure of Sforza seems almost detectable behind the explanation of the death of the young king’s mother, just after giving him birth: ‘Grief, or the plague, as the court physician stated, or, as some suggested, a swift Italian poison administered in a cup of spiced wine, slew, within an hour of her wakening, the white girl who had given him birth’ (‘King’, p.213).

Wilde’s sons would also have been told that, because of his ‘strange passion for beauty’, the young king has a penchant for exploring his own palace, and that rumours describe him being found

¹ As quoted in Ellmann, p.385.

² Letter to Robert Ross, from Morocco, ca. 25 January 1895, *More Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (New York: Vanguard, 1985), p.128.

³ *Ibid.*, p.129.

⁴ N. Wood, p.161. See also Schmidgall, *Stranger*, p.150.

kneeling in real adoration before a great picture that had just been brought from Venice, and that seemed to herald the worship of some new gods. On another occasion he had been missed for several hours, and after a lengthened search had been discovered in a little chamber in one of the northern turrets of the palace gazing, as one in a trance, at a Greek gem carved with the figure of Adonis. He had been seen, so the tale ran, pressing his warm lips to the marble brow of an antique statue that had been discovered in the bed of the river on the occasion of the building of the stone bridge, and was inscribed with the name of the Bithynian slave of Hadrian. He had passed a whole night in noting the effect of the moonlight on a silver image of Endymion. ('King', p.214)

The passage above displays the young king as fascinated by those Classical epebes whom Dorian Gray had come to encapsulate for the painter Basil, since Dorian was an 'Adonis', 'a Narcissus' with the 'face of Antinoüs', the physical manifestation of the 'harmony of soul and body' (*Dorian* 1890, pp.4-9). In fact, the young king finds himself reflected in these aesthetic images, particularly in his bedroom, where 'a laughing Narcissus in green bronze held a polished mirror above its head' ('King', p.215). The face of the young king reflected in a mirror held by a patinaed Narcissus is a cogent illustration of Wilde's claim that 'to love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance', however fatal that narcissism is to oneself or to others.

As Pater relates in his *Renaissance*, Johannes Winckelmann had been equally stirred by those erotically suggestive, Grecian images: 'Suddenly he is in contact with that life, still fervent in the relics of plastic art' (1893, p.146), for 'Greek sculpture deals almost exclusively with youth, where the moulding of the bodily organs is still as if suspended between growth and completion' (p.174). However, Winckelmann later found this 'moulding of the bodily organs' in something far less frigid than marble:

That his affinity with Hellenism was not merely intellectual, that the subtler threads of temperament were inwoven in it, is proved by his romantic, fervent friendships with young men. He has known, he says, many young men more beautiful than Guido [Reni]'s archangel. These friendships [succeeded in] bringing him into contact with the pride of human form. (P.152)

Similarly, Wilde's young king also has more than Grecian marbles to stare upon, to caress, and to kiss, for he has in his service 'many young men more beautiful than Guido's archangel', young companions who answer to his every wish and whim:

[The young king] would sometimes be accompanied by the slim, fair-haired Court pages, with their floating mantles, and gay fluttering ribands; but more often he would be alone, feeling through a certain quick instinct, which was almost a divination, that the secrets of art are best learned in secret.

('King', p.214)

[After relating to his courtiers the three dreams that had revealed the inhumanity surrounding the making of his regalia,] he bade them all leave him, save one page whom he kept as his companion, a lad a year younger than himself. Him he kept for his service, and when he had bathed himself in clear water, [...] he put on [his goatherder clothing], and in his hand he took his rude shepherd's staff.

And the little page opened his big blue eyes in wonder, and said smiling to him, 'My lord, I see thy robe and thy sceptre, but where is thy crown?' (P.220)



Alessandro Alberti with a Page

Follower of Titian (Tiziano Vecellio, ca. 1488-1576)

Oil on canvas, mid 16th century

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA



This fairy tale began with several invitations to admire voyeuristically — the first, the image of the young king reclining in a sensual pose; the second, of the young king racing about the woodlands, barely clothed — and it ends, after a dozen such voyeuristic spectacles, with one that Wilde seems to have incorporated specifically with Cyril and Vyvyan in mind, for it relates to a repeated image from one of their favourite fairy tales, ‘The Selfish Giant’ — ‘[the trees] covered themselves with blossoms’ (p.284). When the nobles enter the cathedral, swords drawn to slay the young king for degrading his office and their esteem, they discover him awaiting his investiture and praying before the image of Christ:

And lo! through the painted windows came the sunlight streaming upon him, and the sunbeams wove round him a tissued robe that was fairer than the robe that had been fashioned for his pleasure. The dead staff blossomed [with] bare lilies that were whiter than pearls. The dry thorn blossomed [with] bare roses that were redder than rubies. Whiter than fine pearls were the lilies, and their stems were of bright silver. Redder than male rubies were the roses, and their leaves were of beaten gold. [...] He stood there in a king’s raiment, and the Glory of God filled the place. [...] And the people fell upon their knees in awe, and the nobles sheathed their swords and did homage, and the Bishop’s face grew pale, and his hands trembled. ‘A greater than I hath crowned thee’, he cried, and he knelt before him.

And the young King came down from the high altar, and passed home through the midst of the people. But no man dared look upon his face, for it was like the face of an angel. (‘King’, pp.221-22)

Although Cyril and Vyvyan would have heard that ‘no man dared look upon [the young king’s] face’ after his staff had been ‘covered [...] with blossoms’ and ‘the Glory of God [had] filled the place’, they would also have heard that ‘it was like the face of an angel’ — for the narrator, their father, always dared to look upon the face of beauty that others feared (however dangerous such a glance might be), and was inviting his sons to do so as well.

Although the prurient, sensual imagery of ‘The Young King’ may have gone unnoticed by Wilde’s sons — if one posits that they were less ‘knowing’ than Maisie, Alice, or the James children — the tale nonetheless provides Decadent, paederastic opportunities, especially if Wilde’s sons were to inquire while listening, ‘What is a Faun?’ ‘Who are the “new gods”?’ ‘Why does he love Adonis and Endymion so much?’ ‘Who was the Bithynian slave of Hadrian?’ ‘What do Court pages do?’

The most ‘dangerous’ sentence in ‘The Young King’ — a sentence that ignores all discretion, all parental tact — seems explicitly structured to elicit just such a question from either Cyril or Vyvyan, the answer to which must needs be paederastic, for it would be impossible to answer otherwise: ‘[The young king] had been seen, so the tale ran, pressing his warm lips to the marble brow of an antique statue that had been discovered in the bed of the river on the occasion of the building of the stone bridge, and was inscribed with the name of the

Bithynian slave of Hadrian'. This sentence seems to implore either Cyril or Vyvyan to inquire, 'What is his name?' — hence, providing an occasion for their father to insinuate about or expound upon the paederastic relationship between Emperor Hadrian (76-138 CE) and the Bithynian boy Antinoüs (111-130 CE), about a love that, from the Victorian period to today, 'dares not speak its name'.¹ Their father would have had much to say on that particular theme, since his letters to Ross abound with allusions to his feverish 'nights with Antinous'.²

However, there is more here than mere textual insinuation; for, as Gary Schmidgall observes, 'one sad result of this coincidence was that the avocation of youth-chasing on one hand and the vocation of fatherhood on the other began to produce unattractive, sometimes poignant coincidences'³ — one of those 'poignant coincidences' arising because, unlike Vyvyan, 'Cyril was rather more like the kinds of young men Oscar instinctively gravitated toward in his liaisons',⁴ which might explain why Vyvyan, who resembled his father more in disposition (and, later in life, became one of his father's most sympathetic of scholars), remained almost unmentioned in his father's conversations and letters, while 'I could not bear the idea of being separated from Cyril, that beautiful, loving, loveable child of mine, my friend of all friends, my companion beyond all companions'.⁵ However, preference aside, they were both his progeny, and Wilde seems to have enfolded them — Cyril in particular — directly into the dangerous, erotic atmosphere he had structured around himself, a poignant example being a summer holiday spent at the sea:

The Wilde family spent August and September of 1894 at the seaside in Worthing [...] Bosie was also a visitor at Worthing, and this was also when Oscar became friendly with an eighteen-year-old named Conway who was a newspaper boy on the pier at Brighton. [...] The boy became part of the family circle, a playmate, in effect, to both Oscar and his sons. But, as the Queensberry Plea of Justification stated, 'The said Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde upon several occasions in the months of August and September in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and ninety-four ... at the Albion Hotel Brighton in the same County did solicit and incite one Alfonso Harold Conway to commit sodomy and other acts of gross indecency and immorality with him'.⁶

It would certainly be more decorous to brush aside the paederastic import of this, to claim that this Worthing holiday had merely provided an opportunity for Wilde to spend a few paternal months with his sons, while also enjoying midnight frolics with 'Bosie' Douglas and the newly acquired Conway. Such a claim

¹ For an entire volume devoted to this paederastic relationship, see Royston Lambert, *Beloved and God: The Story of Hadrian and Antinous* (New York: Viking, 1984).

² Letter to Robert Ross, 20 February 1898, *Letters of Wilde*, p.705.

³ Schmidgall, *Stranger*, p.135.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.142.

⁵ *De Profundis*, p.1005.

⁶ Schmidgall, *Stranger*, pp.137-38.

would be easier to maintain were it not for Wilde's appreciation that his lover Lord Alfred Douglas had but three passions — 'boys, brandy, and betting'¹ — and that what Douglas was 'betting on' was the prospect of 'bedding' Cyril, the model for Wilde's 'young king'.

Before considering a vignette about Douglas's erotic hopes for Cyril, it is crucial to consider and mark one comment by Robert Ross, Wilde's most protective friend and former lover, as well as his literary and financial executor: 'The only [published] personal reflections to which any importance or belief can be attached are those by Monsieur André Gide and Ernest La Jeunesse'.² Ross's comment provides André Gide's autobiographical remembrances a degree of authenticity afforded to only one other, and it is in this light that one must consider the following vignette: Gide records that, after Douglas had described Cyril's beauty to him, Douglas 'whispered with a self-satisfied smile, "He will be for me"'.³ As with anyone given to betting, Douglas was counting on a little luck and a slight advantage, an advantage that Wilde's fairy tale might easily have provided, for that tale was a Decadent seed planted by Cyril's father, a father whose lover hoped to reap its bounty, and would likely have acted upon his desires for the 'young king' so 'wild-eyed' had Wilde's conviction and imprisonment for 'gross indecency' not interposed. As a result of their father's trials and incarceration, Cyril and Vyvyan never saw him again. Whisked away to the Continent to avoid the taint of his and Douglas's lingering stains, they left behind everything Wildean, even his name, becoming instead Cyril and Vyvyan Holland. The last word about this troubling episode rightly belongs to Cyril, who expresses that, after more than a decade of contemplation,

the more convinced I became that, first and foremost, I must be a *man*. There was to be no cry of decadent artist, of effeminate aesthete, of weak-kneed degenerate. [...] I am no wild, passionate, irresponsible hero. I live by thought, not by emotion.⁴

Cyril's comments, encapsulated in the allusive 'I am no wild', reveal the disparity between Wilde's expectations and the fate of the sons he had hoped would follow in his own Decadent footsteps, footsteps left across their nursery in the form of fairy tales, the most prurient being 'The Young King'. Wilde's sordid trials and complete disgrace insured that his influence over his sons would not continue as he had envisioned — and assured, as well, that Douglas would lose his 'chance'

¹ Letter to Robert Ross, ca. 29 June 1900, *Letters of Wilde*, p.831. One is reminded here of the statement attributed to Winston Churchill: 'Don't talk to me about naval tradition. It's nothing but rum, sodomy and the lash'. Douglas might well have profited from 'the lash' — though, in his case, it would probably have led to 'le vice anglais' (a love of the *flagellum*) rather than an improvement in discipline or character.

² As quoted in Ada Levenson, *Letters to the Sphinx from Oscar Wilde, with Reminiscences of the Author by Ada Levenson* (London: Duckworth, 1930), p.14.

³ See Gide, *If It Die*, pp.300-01. About Douglas's plans for Cyril, see d'Arch Smith, p.47.

⁴ As quoted in Vyvyan Holland, p.122.

with Cyril, a chance that Wilde does not seem to have been particularly averse about facilitating, for none knew his beloved Douglas's character and desires better than he.

For over a hundred years, legions of parents have unwittingly scattered Wilde's utterly Decadent, paederastic fairy tales across the nurseries of the world. It is an enduring benefit to Wilde's enduring fame that he had learned from Pater the secret of an enduringly evasive style — 'all those lurking half-meanings and that evanescent suggestion'.¹ Otherwise, bonfires aplenty would probably have consumed his works for children long ago. However, to see 'the red shambles of the Circus' properly, one must peer 'through a clear emerald' owned by a fiddling Nero (*Dorian* 1890, p.76) — which is a symbolic way of expressing that, to appreciate its 'underthought', one needs a Decadent perspective like the one he possessed and few 'enlightened' parents do. Fairy tales have always seemed a rather innocuous genre (at least the English variety), the last place one would expect to find an utterly Decadent, paederastic playfulness: however, once Wilde's 'agenda' is recognised, his fairy tales literally explode with erotic nuance.

Before returning to Wilde, consider the following passage of typical erotica, a masturbatory fantasy a bit banal, the sort of thing most parents would consider criminal or nearly criminal to read to a child, an act that would undoubtedly constitute 'corrupting the innocent':

His penis was very limp, so it took a long time to get himself going. 'Now I am going of!' he cried, and made himself very stiff and straight. 'Delightful', he cried, 'I shall go on like this forever'. Fortunately nobody saw him or heard him. Then he began to feel a curious tingling sensation all over him. 'Now I am going to explode', he cried. And he certainly did explode. There was no doubt about it.

The above may appear incompatible with the present considerations, a trite example of erotica lacking any Wildean flair. Nonetheless, the above is, in actuality, one of Wilde's fairy tales stripped of its 'surface' — or, to phrase this symbolically, seen through Nero's 'clear emerald' — a dangerously clear perspective Wilde thwarts for the typical reader by a few alterations, a few additions. Replace the word 'penis' with 'rocket' (an object very close in contour), add a few bombastic sound-effects, and 'The Remarkable Rocket' is ready for insertion into *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888):

The Rocket was very damp, so he took a long time to burn. At last, however, the fire caught him.

'Now I am going off!' he cried, and he made himself very stiff and straight. 'I know I shall go much higher than the stars, much higher than the moon, much higher than the sun. In fact, I shall go so high that —'

Fizz! Fizz! Fizz! and he went straight up into the air.

¹ Moore, *Confessions*, p.166.

‘Delightful!’ he cried, ‘I shall go on like this for ever. What a success I am!’

But nobody saw him.

Then he began to feel a curious tingling sensation all over him.

‘Now I am going to explode’, he cried. ‘I shall set the whole world on fire, and make such a noise that nobody will talk about anything else for a whole year’. And he certainly did explode. Bang! Bang! Bang! went the gunpowder. There was no doubt about it.

But nobody heard him, not even the two little boys, for they were sound asleep.¹

The above recalls Wilde’s later Worthing holiday with his sons, and his bombastic sexual exploits there with Douglas and Conway, though ‘nobody heard [them], not even the two little boys, for they were sound asleep’, or seemed to be (not that anyone was paying attention, except perhaps for Douglas).

Through such fairy tales, Wilde had found a vehicle for his own paederastic ‘agenda’, as well as a perfect cover for expressing what could not have been expressed so easily in another form, especially if one wished to extend one’s influence over ‘the British child’. Wilde had indeed assumed the duties of Rev. Canon Chasuble from *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Chasuble claiming, ‘I am not by any means a bigoted Paedobaptist’ (Act II)² — implying that, though he is a ‘Paedobaptist’ (or ‘sprinkler of children’), he is not of the bigoted sort. Wilde — another ‘Paedobaptist’, another ‘sprinkler of children’, another individual who liked ‘to convey [his] temperament [over] another as though it were a subtle fluid’ — has been permitted to sprinkle his ‘subtle fluid’ over the nurseries of the world, because parents, fortunately for Wilde, generally have an inability to read below the surface, particularly the surface of ‘Paedobaptistry’. They generally have no knowledge of the import of his ‘Preface’ to *Dorian Gray*: ‘All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril’ (1891, p.17).

The utter disparity between Pater’s ‘Epicureanism’ and Wilde’s ‘Paedobaptistry’ displays how divergent the two Uranian paths really are — one leading to Platonic aestheticism, the other to Priapic satiation; one leading to ‘a sort of chivalrous conscience’, the other to ‘a madness for pleasure’. This disparity involves the personal ethics of whether the proximity to the object of desire should be crossed or not, involves the presence or absence of self-mastery, involves a concern for the ‘problem of [and to] the boy’.

For Pater, this problem is ever filtered through one of his favoured concepts, *ascēsis* (rigorous ‘self-control’, ‘self-discipline’, or ‘self-mastery’)³ — and to be ‘no master of myself’, Hopkins asserts, ‘is the worst failure of all’

¹ Oscar Wilde, ‘The Remarkable Rocket’, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.294-301 (p.301).

² *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in *ibid.*, pp.357-419 (p.382).

³ In his ‘Preface’ to *The Renaissance*, Pater glosses this term as ‘the austere and serious girding of the loins in youth’ (1893, p.xxiii). See Donoghue, pp.79; 88.

(Retreat notes of 1888, *Sermons*, p.262). This failure to exercise self-mastery ruined more than Wilde himself, for it also ruined many of those boys and young men who had come into contact with him and his ass-thetic/erotic residues. Wilde and his coterie had taken the easier, less profound of the two Uranian paths, hence would never have appreciated the expression of love and the beauty of self-martyrdom that Uranians like Pater and Hopkins sought to actualise, to legitimise, and to capture aesthetically, a love and a self-martyrdom that was also cogently and heart-wrenchingly embraced by Terence Hanbury White (1906-64), a novelist who would, half a century later, walk the same ‘elevated’ Uranian path with a boy named Zed. As White relates on 18 September 1957:

I have fallen in love with Zed. [...] It would be unthinkable to make Zed unhappy with the weight of this impractical, unsuitable love. It would be against his human dignity. Besides, I love him for being happy and innocent, so it would be destroying what I loved. He could not stand the weight of the world against such feelings — not that they are bad in themselves. It is the public opinion which makes them so. In any case, on every score of his happiness, not my safety, the whole situation is an impossible one. All I can do is to behave like a gentleman. It has been my hideous fate to be born with an infinite capacity for love and joy with no hope of using them.

I do not believe that some sort of sexual relations with Zed would do him harm — he would probably think and call them *t’rific*. I do not think I could hurt him spiritually or mentally. I do not believe that perverts are made so by seduction. I do not think that sex is evil, except when it is cruel or degrading, as in rape, sodomy, etc., or that I am evil or that he could be. But the practical facts of life are an impenetrable barrier — the laws of God, the laws of Man. His age, his parents, his self-esteem, his self-reliance, the progress of his development in a social system hostile to the heart, the brightness of his being which has made this what a home should be for three whole weeks of utter holiday, the fact that the old exist for the benefit of the young, not vice versa, the factual impossibilities set up by law and custom, the unthinkable-ness of turning him into a lonely or sad or eclipsed or furtive person — every possible detail of what is expedient, not what is moral, offers the fox to my bosom, and I must let it gnaw.¹

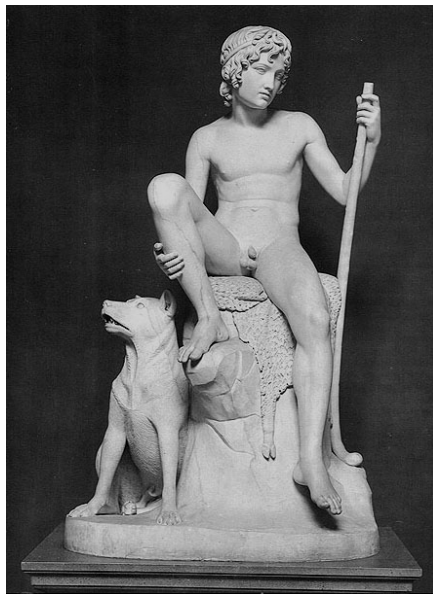
White’s comment that ‘the practical facts of life are an impenetrable barrier [...] [that] offers the fox to my bosom, and I must let it gnaw’ is the most profound expression of ‘elevated’ Uranian sentiment I have as yet encountered in my studies, and reveals that the Uranian continuum is still a vital aspect of the human condition and of aesthetic contemplation, reaching far beyond that ‘small band of elite “Oxonian” souls’² that many would dismiss as an aberrant or abhorrent

¹ As quoted in Sylvia Townsend Warner, *T. H. White: A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), pp.277-78. ‘White was so much of Hopkins’s mind’ (*Ibid.*, p.274).

² David J. DeLaura, *Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold, and Pater* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p.230.

cluster of ‘crazy’ Victorian poets or Oxford eccentrics, a cluster that the ‘legitimate’ powers of contemporary Western society — social, medical, ethical, religious, legal, political, scholarly, and familial — would dismiss as maladjusted, psychotic, immoral, sinful, unlawful, fringe, objectionable, and/or intrusive. Despite such dismissals, the Uranian continuum continues to surface, even today.

What follows is a consideration of that continuum — at least its more ‘elevated’ path taken by Hopkins, Pater, and later writers such as T. H. White — a consideration that will serve as a miniature of the entire volume. Befittingly, it will begin at the beginning, by considering the influence of the earliest Uranian, William Johnson (*later Cory*), whose paederastic pedagogy and collection of verses *Ionica* influenced many an Etonian such as Digby Mackworth Dolben, providing lessons in paederastic pedagogy, elevated friendship, erotic dalliance, and thwarted love, lessons that serve to elucidate the paederastic continuum stretching, unbroken, from Greco-Roman times to the present, a continuum that is evident in the works of such writers as E. M. Forster and Guy Davenport.



Shepherd

Bertel Thorvaldsen (ca. 1770-1844)
Marble, after 1817
Hermitage, St Petersburg, Russia

— Conclusion —

**‘The Daring of Poets Later Born’:
The Uranian Continuum, 1858-2005**

**‘Because Beneath the Lake a Treasure Sank’:
Johnson’s Shaping of *Ionica* and Dolben**

Boy, go convey this purse to Pedringano;
Thou knowest the prison; closely give it him.

[....]

Thou with his pardon shalt attend him still.
Show him this box; tell him his pardon’s in’t.
But open’t not, [...] if thou lovest thy life.

(Lorenzo to his pageboy, *The Spanish Tragedy*)¹

William Johnson (*later* Cory), who was educated at Eton and King’s College, Cambridge,² returned to Eton in 1845 as a Classics master, and taught there until he was dismissed in 1872 for exercising a paederastic pedagogy that Timothy d’Arch Smith describes as a ‘brand of passive inversion’.³ While at Eton, Johnson had an ‘ability to pick out apt and sympathetic pupils’, which, although praised educationally, created ‘a less palatable, deeper-seated reputation of a

¹ Thomas Kyd (attributed), *The Spanish Tragedy*, in Katharine Eisaman Maus, ed., *Four Revenge Tragedies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), III, iv, lines 61-73.

² At King’s College, Cambridge, Johnson was a celebrated student, gaining the Chancellor’s English Medal for a poem titled *Plato* in 1843, and the Craven Scholarship in 1844. He was appointed to an assistant mastership at Eton upon graduating from Cambridge. See William Johnson (*later* Cory), *Ionica* [Parts I and II], by William Cory, with biographical intro. and notes by Arthur C. Benson (London: George Allen, 1905), p.xii. All of Johnson’s poems are taken from this volume; abbreviated as *Ionica* 1905.

³ Timothy d’Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English ‘Uranian’ Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p.6. ‘In April 1872 Johnson suddenly resigned at Eton, and no one can be quite sure of the exact circumstances of his resignation. There is no question, however, that he was dangerously fond of a number of boys. Although he probably did not allow his affections to take any physical form, he permitted intimacies between the boys. This conduct was brought to the notice of the headmaster, James Hornsby, who demanded Johnson’s resignation, and Johnson retired quietly’ (Tim Card, ‘William Johnson Cory’, *DNB*).

wayward personality who “was apt to make favourites”¹. Among his ‘favourites’ were boys who would later distinguish themselves as Uranians, such as Howard Overing Sturgis (1855-1920), whose novel *Tim* (1891) is the tale of a love affair between two Eton boys; Reginald Baliol Brett (1852-1930; second Viscount Esher), whose collection of poems *Foam* (1893) is overshadowed by Johnson, of whom Lord Esher writes, ‘A teacher’s voice, so well obeyed, / Whose old tradition lingers yet’²; Archibald Philip Primrose (1847-1929; 5th Earl of Rosebery), who eventually became the British Foreign Secretary and briefly Prime Minister, as well as a patron of various Uranian circles in England and Italy; Oscar Browning, who himself returned to Eton as a master, only to be dismissed in 1875 under the same cloud as Johnson³; and Digby Mackworth Dolben, ‘a Christian Uranian’,⁴ whose influence over the group is only pitifully acknowledged, though he is memorable for his posthumous collection of poems edited by his friend and distant cousin, the then Poet Laureate Robert Bridges, and for serving as the muse for Gerard Manley Hopkins, who garlanded the drowned Dolben with a devotion like that of Marius the Epicurean for Flavian, for, in Hopkins’s words, ‘there can very seldom have happened the loss of so much beauty (in body and mind and life) and of the promise of still more as there has been in his case — seldom I mean, in the whole world’ (30 August 1867, *Letters* I, pp.16-17), or in Bridges’s less-impassioned assessment, ‘his early death endeared and sanctified his memory, [and] loving grief would generously grant him the laurels which he had never worn’ (*Dolben* 1915, p.viii).

That a number of young Etonians appreciated Johnson’s affections and returned them bountifully was a feature of his pedagogy that fostered enemies among his fellows:

The eccentric Cory, surrounded by intelligent and favoured boys, holding himself cynically aloof from the rest [of the Eton faculty and students] who persistently whispered among themselves that Cory ate opium, fell an easy victim to [Headmaster Dr James John] Hornby’s axe. Despite his meticulous preparation of lessons, his liberal ideas on education and his sensible and far-sighted tenet that the French language should be as compulsory as Latin in the curriculum, he was politely but firmly asked to resign. He was deeply hurt and

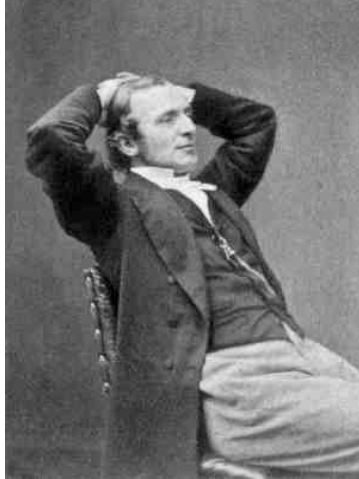
¹ D’Arch Smith, p.4.

² See *ibid.*, p.92. ‘Lord Esher we have noted to have been educated at Eton under Cory, to have been singled out by that unerring eye as a budding Uranian, and to become the author of a charming and grateful biography of his old teacher, *Ionicus* (1923). Esher embarked on a career in court circles and was responsible for the funeral arrangements of Queen Victoria’ (pp.90-91). He was also a close friend of Lord Arthur Somerset.

³ See Linda Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s Pied Beauty and the Construction of a “Homosexual” Code’, *Victorian Newsletter*, 75 (1989), pp.1-8 (pp.7-8). While a student at Eton, Browning was in the house of William Johnson (Richard Davenport-Hines, ‘Oscar Browning’, *DNB*).

⁴ D’Arch Smith, p.188. D’Arch Smith also observes that ‘The list of Cory’s pupils demonstrates his unswerving eye for a budding author’ (p.9).

he never forgave those who exiled him nor forgot the days with the pupils he loved. ‘I have undergone a very strange wounding’, he wrote to Francis Warre Cornish, ‘I feel a wish to hear children laughing’.¹



William Johnson (later Cory) Digby Mackworth Dolben

While yet at his beloved Eton — ‘my brethren and my home’ (‘Retrospect of School Life’, line 40) — Johnson left his mark upon the Uranian movement, a movement that was, in many ways, his creation — or, in the phrasing of d’Arch Smith, ‘Cory gave the Uranians at once an inspiration and an

¹ D’Arch Smith, pp.6-7. See Rupert Hart-Davis, ed. with intro., *The Lyttelton Hart-Davis Letters: Correspondence of George Lyttelton and Rupert Hart-Davis, 1955-1962* (London: John Murray, 1978-79), pp.19-20, where Johnson’s views on education, views strikingly parallel to Pater’s, are quoted:

You go to a great school not so much for knowledge as for arts and habits, for the habit of attention, for the art of expression, for the art of assuming at a moment’s notice a new intellectual position, for the art of entering quickly into another person’s thoughts, for the habit of submitting to censure and refutation, for the art of indicating assent or dissent in graduated terms, for the habit of regarding minute points of accuracy, for the art of working out what is possible in a given time, for taste, for discrimination, for mental courage, and for mental soberness.

Johnson’s influence was not limited to boys. Mary Elizabeth Coleridge (1861-1907), great-granddaughter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s elder brother, James, was educated in Classics and encouraged to write her own poetry by Johnson, who was her father’s friend. In one of those recurring ironies of fate, many of the poems that Johnson helped to foster appeared anonymously in *Fancy’s Following*, published by the Daniel Press in 1896 — at the instigation of Robert Bridges.

example'.¹ Johnson's influence sprang, in part, from the verses of his *Ionica*, a 'classic paean to romantic pæderastia',² privately printed in a limited edition by Smith, Elder & Co. in 1858 (at a cost of £40), and supplemented by *Ionica II* in 1877, privately printed by Cambridge University Press. These two collections (the latter constituting little more than a pamphlet) were subsequently reprinted by George Allen as a single volume bound in Eton blue in 1890 (though dated 1891) and reissued in 1905 with a biographical introduction by Arthur C. Benson³ — not that Benson's trite memoir was needed, since the autobiographical nature of *Ionica* is emphasised by its first poem, 'Desiderato', Johnson imploring his reader to 'seek for his heart within his book' (line 16), a book that constitutes a blazon and an apologia of the pæderastic pedagogy for which he would be banished from Eton:

And when I may no longer live,
They'll say, who know the truth,
He gave whate'er he had to give
To freedom and to youth. ('Academus', lines 37-40)

To youth, Johnson bestowed his passions for literature, art, and *carpe diem*, passions he often found reciprocated by his favoured Etonians:

[This boy] dares to speak of what he loves: to-day
He talked of art, and led me on to teach,

And glanced, as poets glance, at pages
Full of bright Florence and warm Umbrian skies;
Not slighting modern greatness, for the wise
Can sort the treasures of the circling ages.
('Study of Boyhood', lines 23-28)⁴

¹ D'Arch Smith, p.11.

² Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.114.

³ In the case of Johnson, Benson faced many of the same biographical conundrums that he had faced earlier with Pater, encapsulated in the warning by Francis Warre Cornish (1839-1916) that a biographical account of Johnson 'wd only stir the wasps who sit upon the tomb' — Magdalene College, Cambridge, Arthur Benson Diary, 9 (40), 25 November 1901. As a close friend of the deceased Johnson, and as the person who had already edited the substantial *Extracts from the Letters and Journals of William Cory* (Oxford: Printed for subscribers, 1897), Warre Cornish was uniquely positioned to make such a warning.

⁴ 'Thanks to Lord Esher's Appendix to his biography, *Ionicus*, which prints Cory's [handwritten] notes in his personal copy of *Ionica*, we know [...] that some of the poems were addressed to one of his favourite pupils, Charles Wood (later Viscount Halifax), although, as Cory noted, the subject was unaware of them' (d'Arch Smith, p.9).

To freedom, Johnson bestowed a bittersweet renunciation, recognising that a boyhood well-cultivated led to a flight of liberation from all who had mastered it, even through love — an inevitability Johnson characterises with greater finesse than does Hopkins, for Hopkins is plagued with fears for his beloved bugler boy whose ‘freshyouth [is] fretted in a bloomfall all portending / That sweet’s sweeter ending’ (‘Bugler’s First Communion’, lines 30-31). Johnson writes:

Why fret? the hawks I trained are flown:
 ’Twas nature bade them range;
 I could not keep their wings half-grown,
 I could not bar the change.

With lattice opened wide I stand
 To watch their eager flight;
 With broken jesses in my hand
 I muse on their delight. (‘Reparabo’, lines 13-20)

Johnson understood that, beyond Eton’s latticework, dangers awaited his young hawks — Hopkinsian embodiments of ‘air, pride, plume’ (‘Windhover’, line 9) — dangers they would have to face alone, though the possibility of their wounded return seems almost wished for by the falconer-poet:

And, oh! if one with sullied plume
 Should droop in mid career,
 My love makes signals: — ‘There is room,
 Oh bleeding wanderer, here’. (‘Reparabo’, lines 21-24)

These lines bespeak far too much humanity and nobility for readers to dismiss Johnson’s sentiments as merely maladjusted, psychotic, immoral, sinful, fringe, objectionable, and/or intrusive, despite the fact that his verses reject the system of controls over the body that Victorian society attempted to instil (and that contemporary society still does) — those permanent ‘jesses’, those ‘mind-forg’d manacles’ — drawing into question many of the established tenets of Victorian society (and those of today), providing an affront that fronted issues about love, youth, and freedom normally taken as categorical. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Johnson’s pedagogical practices and their attendant sentiments would find their most poignant elucidation in ‘A Masculine Culture’, Aphorism 259 of *Human, All Too Human* by Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900):

Greek culture of the classical era is a masculine culture. [...] The erotic relationship of the men with the youths was, to a degree we can no longer comprehend, the sole and necessary presupposition of all male education [...] All the practical idealism of the Hellenic nature threw itself upon this relationship, and young people have probably never since been treated with so much attention and kindness or so completely with a view to enhancing their best qualities (*virtus*) as they were in the sixth and fifth centuries — in

accordance, that is, with [Friedrich] Hölderlin's fine maxim 'for the mortal gives of his best when loving'.¹

Johnson did, indeed, 'give of his best when loving', and he dared to practise such a 'giving' despite stringent opposition — social, medical, ethical, religious, legal, political, educational, and familial — opposition that would, in time, (mis)label his love as 'corrupting', and banish him from Eton accordingly. Nevertheless, as a result of his paederastic pedagogy and his *Ionica*, Johnson fostered and forecasted, perhaps invoked, what would become the distinct positionality explored in the preceding chapters through the lives and writings of his more-famous contemporaries Hopkins, Pater, and Wilde — a positionality achieved by telling other tales, making other claims, positing other realities than those of his contemporaries or of our own. As the Uranian patron saint, William Johnson (*later Cory*) truly warrants, for good or ill, the title 'Sanctus pæderasta', for it was he who had passed on to his Etonians and their Oxford contemporaries this eccentric positionality, the Victorian segment of the paederastic continuum stretching unbroken from Greco-Roman times to today.



Love amongst the Schoolboys

Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)

Pen and ink over pencil on paper, 1865

Private collection

The salient features, dynamics, disparities, considerations, avoidances, and silences that surround this 'suspect' aspect of human existence, the aesthetic, emotional, and erotic expression of which, even today, properly warrants the title Lord Alfred Douglas bestowed upon it more than a century ago — 'The Love

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1878]), pp.121-22.

That Dare Not Speak Its Name’ — are aptly encapsulated in Johnson’s ‘An Invocation’, which begins:

I never prayed for Dryads, to haunt the woods again;
 More welcome were the presence of hungering, thirsting men,
 Whose doubts we could unravel, whose hopes we could fulfil,
 Our wisdom tracing backward, the river to the rill;
 Were such beloved forerunners one summer day restored,
 Then, then we might discover the Muse’s mystic hoard. (Lines 1-6)

Uncharacteristic for a poetic invocation, the above begins by asserting what will *not* be invoked: the hetero-erotic Dryads, those female spirits presiding over groves and forests when not pursued about their bower of bliss by lusty Satyrs. Not that Johnson spurned the Satyrs, for ‘more welcome [than the Dryads] were the presence of hungering, thirsting men’, those ‘whose hopes’, Johnson admits, ‘we could fulfil’ — though this ‘could’ is noteworthy and emphasised by repetition. Johnson dares to invoke, to vocalise a preference not for the ‘river’ of manhood but for the ‘rill’ of boyhood. Although Johnson asserts that the source of his own poetic inspiration, his Hippocrene, is found in the Helicon of male hearts — ‘And lo! a purer fount is here revealed: / My lady-nature dwells in heart of men’ (with ‘purer’ serving as a pun on *puer*, Latin and French for ‘boy’) — it should be noted that what flows therefrom is not a manly ‘river’ but a puerile ‘rill’, for these lines hold sway in a poem titled ‘A Study of Boyhood’ (lines 39-40). As with the beloved boy in ‘The Handsome Heart’ who serves as Hopkins’s ‘muse of mounting vein’ (line 10), Johnson’s Muse is also singular, disassociating this allusion from the nine, female Muses of mythology.

This passage further implies that if humanity were to treat culture with the same technique Hopkins employs in ‘Inversnaid’ — an ‘inverse made in verse’ — we would find ‘our wisdom tracing backward, the river to the rill’, tracing backward to the font of Western culture, to the Hippocrene of poetry, to ‘the Muse’s mystic hoard’, to the ‘Hellenic element’, to the paederastic love that, for the Uranians, would increasingly constitute their pride and their defiance, a conception of themselves as the inheritors of a ‘more authentic’ Western culture than their contemporaries understood, as Pater would later expound at length in his *Renaissance*. In a passing comment on Matteo Palmieri’s *La Città di Vita* (a comment considered in my ‘Preface’), Pater demarcates a position outside of society for himself and his defiant Uranian followers — many of whom had passed through Johnson’s tutelage, if only textually — by lending symbolic virtue to the human ‘incarnation of those angels who, in the revolt of Lucifer, were neither for Jehovah nor for His enemies’ (‘Sandro Botticelli’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.42), those scurrilous spirits whom Dante relegates to the Vestibule of Hell as ‘unworthy alike of heaven and hell, [...] [occupying instead] that middle world in which men take no side in great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make

great refusals' (p.43).¹ As Pater recognises in this passage, the positionality of the Uranians would likely remain that of the ultimate outsiders (barring some monumental cultural shift, a shift greater than Michel Foucault's 'ruptures' between 'epistemes'): the Uranians would likely remain boxed, partly of their own accord, inside the vestibule of Western society, if not of Hell.

By invoking the myth of Comatas, Johnson encapsulates this 'boxed' positionality more profoundly than Pater does through his own middling vestibule. Comatas, a young goatherd of Thurii, a Greek settlement on the gulf of Tarentum in southern Italy, after spying the nine Muses amidst their dance, sacrificed a goat in their honour: such an act was a Homeric triviality, almost an expectation, save that the goat was not his own, but his master's. Comatas's enraged master (clearly an early Capitalist), after a flourish of curses, sealed the goatherd within a cedarn chest, hoping to starve him to death. Fortunately for the coffered goatherd, the Muses got not only his master's goat but also his goad. Moved by Comatas's devotion, the Muses thwarted his death-sentence by sending bees to feed him honey through a slight crack in the cedarn chest:

the goatherd was shut up alive
 In a wide chest, through a king's high-handed arrogance;
 In his fragrant cedar chest he was fed by snub-nosed bees,
 Who came from the meadows to bring him tender flowers,
 Because the Muse had poured sweet nectar over his mouth.
 O Comatas, long gone! These pleasures were yours:
 A chest was your prison, too; you too were fed
 On honeycombs [...]²

For Johnson, this particular myth is pregnant with suggestive potential. Ever the Classicist, he expropriates this Grecian tale, transforming it into a fable of paederastic positionality, Victorian 'Otherness', and Uranian continuity:

Oh dear divine Comatas, I would that thou and I
 Beneath this broken sunlight this leisure day might lie;
 Where trees from distant forests, whose names were strange to thee,
 Should bend their amorous branches within thy reach to be,
 And flowers thine Hellas knew not, which art hath made more fair,
 Should shed their shining petals upon thy fragrant hair.

('An Invocation', lines 7-12)

That this allusion has submerged subtlety may seem difficult to appreciate, especially after the contents of the cedarn chest have been duly divulged — however, this poem was intended for a different readership than modern Victorianists, for a readership educated at Eton and/or Oxford in a 'Greats

¹ See Donald L. Hill's explanatory notes for this passage, *Renaissance* 1893, pp.336-38.

² Theocritus, *Theocritus: Idylls*, trans. by Anthony Verity, with intro. and notes by Richard Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.21.

curriculum' based on the close reading of Greek and Latin texts, a readership that would have appreciated with John Addington Symonds that 'paiderastia, or boy-love, was a phenomenon of one of the most brilliant periods of human culture',¹ the Greco-Roman. Johnson's direct address to Komatas would have been far more allusive to his Eton/Oxford coterie — a 'fellowship of paederasts' — than it would to most readers today, however scholarly, relying as it does on a Hellenistic intertextuality that Mark Andreas Seiler intricately analyses for an entire volume, his conclusions summarised by Robert Schmiel below:

Intertextual reference and self-reflexivity make clear that, in the Komatas fable, bees and honey are metaphors for poet and poetry. It is then apparent that the central story of Lykidas' song is a parable of sublimation [...] Of what sort is this spiritual poetry which has the power of the real in that it allows the enclosed Komatas to survive? It is the enveloping Other, the complement of existence in a chest.

Theocritus represents [the problem of the conversion or transformation of Eros and Force into a cultural product] in the story of Komatas who, enclosed in a chest, creates an *etos horion* [bucolic poem]. [...] [Various writers of the period] illustrate what we have found to be characteristic of the relationship between the poetry of Callimachos and Theocritus, reciprocal poetic reference, metaphorically the 'nourishing' and 'being-nourished' of Alexandrian poets.²

Or, as Seiler himself explains in a passage less erudite than most:

From references to older texts, the poet's own, and those of his contemporaries, elements of meaning accrue to the new text which are not accidental but essential for an understanding of the work's intent. The reciprocal reference between contemporary poets in particular is presented here in the center of the initiation-poem of the *Thalysia* [*The Harvest Festival*] with the familiar metaphor of bees and honey; the reciprocal nourishment of Komatas and the bees is a metaphor for the dialectical principle of intertextuality.³

To appreciate the choiceness of Johnson's allusion, one must recognise that the tale of Komatas was, for Alexandrian poets like Callimachus (ca. 280-245 BCE) and Theocritus (ca. 310-250 BCE), a 'parable of sublimation', of 'nourishing' and 'being-nourished' by honeyed poetry, especially when one is forced to survive within 'the enveloping Other, the complement of existence in a chest', an

¹ John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion* (London: Privately printed, [1901]), p.1.

² Robert Schmiel, '[Review of] Mark Andreas Seiler, *POI/HSIS POIH/SEWS: Alexandrinische Dichtung KATALEPTON in strukturaler und humanethologischer Deutung*. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Band 102 (Stuttgart und Leipzig: Teubner, 1997)', *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (20 June 1998) <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/1998/98.6.20.html>> [last accessed 23 March 2006].

³ As quoted in *ibid.*

existence only made tolerable through ‘the dialectical principle of [poetic] intertextuality’. This process — a process by which the ‘elements of meaning accrue to the new text which are not accidental but essential for an understanding of the work’s intent’ — facilitated a discreet complexity among its practitioners, a complexity rarely appreciated, attempted, or furthered, for its honeycomb is only (ful)filled through patient artistry, as Hopkins suggests: ‘Patience fills / His crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know’ (‘[Patience, Hard Thing!],’ lines 13-14). For the Uranians, this complexity was necessary for the sublimation of their sexuality into poetry and prose, a patient filling of crisp textual honeycomb that resulted in the mastery of a number of strategies for fulfilling what-cannot-be-fulfilled amid denials, scrupulosities, and beliefs; amid ethical, legal, and religious restrictions; amid the concern of Western society (in general) and Victorian society (in particular) to limit physical intimation and actualisation of homoerotic and paederastic desires. These Uranian strategies — a continual movement between what Hopkins labels ‘overthought’ and ‘underthought’ — are what lent Uranian writing, especially Hopkins’s, its stylistic complexity, its multi-faceted psychology, its uncanny audience-awareness, and its sense of daring and irony, a combination uncommon for English letters of that time.



John Addington Symonds

Before considering Uranian intertextual insinuation, it is useful, for contrast, to recall an example of purely textual insinuation, such as that found in the relationship between J. A. Symonds, John Conington, and William Johnson. After ‘Symonds found himself at Balliol [College, Oxford,] in the autumn of 1858 in a world where perfervid friendships between undergraduates, and to a lesser extent between undergraduates and dons, were commonplace if not quite unremarkable’,¹ Prof. Conington, who held the first chair of Latin literature, founded by Corpus Christi College, presented Symonds with a copy of the just-

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.86.

published *Ionica*.¹ The giving of this book was clearly an act of erotic insinuation, for, although ‘scrupulously moral and cautious’, Conington ‘sympathized with romantic attachments to boys’.² Conington expected that this freshman would warm to *Ionica*, that collection of poems tinged with paederasty written by his own friend Johnson. Further, Conington’s intimations were such that Symonds ‘learned the love story of its author William Johnson (now Cory) the Eton master, and the pretty faced Charlie Wood (now Lord Halifax) [...] who had been his pupil’.³ However, Symonds was *not* warmed by those poems and the accompanying story about Johnson and Wood ... he was fevered: ‘That volume of verse, trifling as it may appear to casual readers, went straight to my heart and inflamed my imagination’.⁴ Immediately and impulsively, Symonds wrote to Johnson at Eton, and received in reply ‘a long epistle on paiderastia in modern times, defending it and laying down the principle that affection between people of the same sex is no less natural and rational than the ordinary passionate relations’.⁵ Encouraged by this epistle and by Conington’s continued ‘fellowship’, Symonds began to insinuate textually on his own, which led, four years later, to the ruin of his university career and his health:

In November 1862 one of Symonds’s resentful friends, G. H. Shorting, circulated to six Fellows of Magdalen certain love-poems and passages of love-letters from Symonds. The implication was that Symonds intended corrupting the choristers of Magdalen. An inquiry was held in the college. On December 28 Symonds was acquitted, but the episode put him under such strain that his health deteriorated. He resigned his fellowship at Magdalen and moved to London.⁶

Because of the desires they provoked, the choristers of Magdalen Chapel were always posing problems for the Uranians (if Hopkins’s confession notes are at all representative); and the Symonds scandal — involving insinuation about those choirboys — displays why the textual was often far more dangerous than the intertextual.⁷

¹ D’Arch Smith, p.9.

² Phyllis Grosskurth, ed., *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds* (New York: Hutchinson, 1984), p.109.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Denis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995), pp.39-40.

⁷ In ‘Insisting on Orthodoxy: Robert Bridges’ Edition of Digby Dolben’s Poetry’, *Hopkins Quarterly*, 26.3-4 (1999), pp.82-101, Margaret Johnson describes a quasi-religious order that Dolben had joined:

Yet such autocephalous churches as the Benedictine order founded and headed by Father Ignatius ‘seemed to attract ... eroticism’; and in the very year that Dolben joined it, 1864, it was the subject of a scandal. One of the brothers wrote

William Johnson fully recognised the dangers inherent to the paederastic flora cultivated in his *Ionica*, flora that would find itself ‘leafing’ and ‘interleafing’ in the lives and textual ‘leaves’ of others, a continual branching of what Lionel Johnson aptly calls ‘their Virtuous Vice’,¹ a branching ultimately expressed by Hopkins’s epithalamic ‘branchy bunchy bushybowered wood’, the place where Johnson was last seen, reclining imaginatively with Comatas beneath ‘trees from distant forests, whose names were strange to thee’, trees that ‘should bend their amorous branches within thy reach to be’. Johnson and Comatas, engaged in the ‘truant reading’ that Pater praises, seem to be holding a reading party like those in the idylls of Theocritus:

Then thou shouldst calmly listen with ever-changing looks
 To songs of younger minstrels and plots of modern books,
 And wonder at the daring of poets later born,
 Whose thoughts are unto thy thoughts as noon-tide is to morn;
 And little shouldst thou grudge them their greater strength of soul,
 Thy partners in the torch-race, though nearer to the goal.
 (‘An Invocation’, lines 13-18)

Johnson is assured that Comatas, his mythological goatherd, would be moved through a range of emotions — ‘with ever-changing looks’ — were he to see the Uranian artistry that Johnson had himself nourished: the ‘songs of younger minstrels’ like those of his Etonian students Brett and Dolben; or the ‘plots of modern books’ like those of his student Sturgis. Reminiscent of the bee-carried honey of Alexandrian intertextuality, Johnson’s *Ionica* became a hoard of honeycomb, a supply of nourishment for sustaining others in their solitude, in the cedarn chest where modern Western society still hopes to starve their desires. At best, Comatas could but ‘wonder at the daring of poets later born’, wonder at the intertextual exchanges between his ‘partners in the torch-race, though nearer to the goal’.

This image of a torch-race seems pat, simplistic, clichéd — therein resides its opacity and its opulence. As with the allusion to Comatas, such pejoratives — pat, simplistic, clichéd — seem befitting, but only until the metaphor is set into a Greco-Roman context. Johnson is eliciting in his Classically-educated audience thoughts of the ancient Olympic Games, that blend of paederasty and manly sport, that voyeuristic spectacle of nude, oiled youths sporting about, garlanded by admiring gazes from the farthest reaches of the

a love letter to a choirboy. It was sent to a local newspaper which printed it under the heading, ‘Ignatius and his Singing Boys’, and added a homily on the dangers of monastic life which ‘cannot fail to produce abominations’ [...] Dolben cannot have been unaware of such homoerotic undercurrents in the order; they were matched by similar undercurrents at Eton. (P.92)

¹ Lionel Pigot Johnson, ‘A Sad Morality’, in *The Poetical Works of Lionel Johnson* (New York: Macmillan, 1915) — line 44.

Hellenic world. Only in the context of those appreciative gazes, garlands of laurel, and the immortality of sculptured marble — the Grecian form of paederastic permanence — does this torch-race emblazon its true import. While today such an Olympic spectacle and its attendant residues would be considered merely maladjusted, psychotic, immoral, sinful, fringe, objectionable, intrusive, and/or unthinkable, for Johnson, a Victorian Comatas, such a torch-race kindled his hope for a paederastic victory he did not expect himself to see, a hope expressed on several occasions in *Ionica*, Johnson forecasting that his beloved Etonians, honey-fed on his *Ionica*, would take up his pen, string his lute, brandish his sword, further the paederastic continuum, the intertextuality he had begun:

And yet, though withered and forlorn,
 I had renounced what man desires,
 I'd thought some poet might be born
 To string my lute with silver wires;
 At least in brighter days to come
 Such men as I would not lie dumb. ('A Separation', lines 43-48)

I shall not tread thy battle-field,
 Nor see the blazon on thy shield;
 Take thou the sword I could not wield,
 And leave me, and forget.
 Be fairer, braver, more admired;
 So win what feeble hearts desired;
 Then leave thine arms, when thou art tired,
 To some one nobler yet. ('A New Year's Day', lines 17-24)

The fourth stanza of 'An Invocation' prefigures the cataloguing of homoerotic and paederastic ancestors that constitutes the bulk of Pater's *Renaissance* and much of Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, those elaborate catalogues of artists and philosophers who shared this 'temperament' and constituted a continuum passing through Plato, Michelangelo, Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Winckelmann: 'Yet one had ancestors in literature, as well as in one's own race, nearer perhaps in type and temperament, many of them, and certainly with an influence of which one was more absolutely conscious' (*Dorian* 1890, pp.75-76). It is in this vein that the following should be considered:

As when ancestral portraits look gravely from the walls
 Upon the youthful baron who treads their echoing halls;
 And whilst he builds new turrets, the thrice ennobled heir
 Would gladly wake his grandsire his home and feast to share;
 So from Ægean laurels that hide thine ancient urn
 I fain would call thee hither, my sweeter lore to learn.
 ('An Invocation', lines 19-24)

By simile, Comatas has become the Uranian ‘grandsire’, Johnson the Uranian ‘sire’, and the young baron — like a Viscount Esher or Earl of Rosebery — the inheritor of the poetic halls they have left behind, the architectonic residue of their lives. Although turrets are the most phallic of architectural forms, the ‘new turrets’ that the young baron adds are less important here for their erotic contours than for the distant vistas they provide. These turrets are an apt description of the voyeuristic posturing that is the hallmark of Uranian verse — a construction of vistas, a proximity to the object of desire without that distance being defeated, at least artistically — a voyeuristic temperament unique in English letters, both aesthetically and psychologically, a temperament Johnson captures through addressing his beloved boy as ‘Idol, mine Idol, whom this touch profanes’ (‘Sapphics’, line 13).¹ This is the ‘elevated’ or ‘turreted’ positionality Johnson shared with Pater and Hopkins (and Wilde never understood), a state in which fevered passion is transmuted into eroticised friendship, devotion, and poetry:

Let the grey hermit Friendship hoard
 Whatever sainted Love bequeathed,
 And in some hidden scroll record
 The vows in pious moments breathed. (‘Deteriora’, lines 31-34)

In *Ionica*, the word ‘hoard’ repeatedly alludes to the ‘Muse’s mystic hoard’, to nurturing and being nurtured by honeyed poetry. However, the oppressive solitude accompanying this confinement in a cedarn coffer — the Vestibule of Hell into which modern Western society banishes a Doric lover such as Comatas — emboldens Johnson, despite the honey, to suggest an escape:

¹ In the ‘Memoir’ with which he prefaces Dolben’s published poems, Bridges provides his own perception of this ‘elevated’ positionality in terms of his distant cousin: ‘His affection [for his Eton schoolmate Martin le Marchant Hadsley Gosselin] was of the kind that recognises its imaginative quality, and in spite of attraction instinctively shuns the disillusionment of actual intercourse. In absence it could flourish unhindered, and under that condition it flowered profusely’ (p.xxix).

In quoting from Bridges’s ‘Memoir’, I have opted for the revised and corrected version in *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, ed. with ‘Memoir’ by Robert Bridges, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1915); abbreviated as *Dolben* 1915. In quoting from Dolben’s poetry, I have limited myself to the poems found in *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, ed. with ‘Memoir’ by Robert Bridges, 1st edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1911) rather than the sometimes more accurate *The Poems and Letters of Digby Mackworth Dolben, 1848-1867*, ed. by Martin Cohen ([Amersham,] England: Avebury, 1981). My reason for doing so is that the later Uranians only had access to Bridges’s editions (except for the occasional poem circulating in manuscript), and I am foremost concerned here with Dolben as a Uranian, rather than with the ultimate textual accuracy of the texts involved.

Or in thy cedarn prison thou waitest for the bee:
 Ah, leave that simple honey, and take thy food from me.
 My sun is stooping westward. Entrancèd dreamer, haste;
 There's fruitage in my garden, that I would have thee taste.
 Now lift the lid a moment: now, Dorian shepherd, speak:
 Two minds shall flow together, the English and the Greek.
 ('An Invocation', lines 25-30)

Curiously, the penultimate line of the poem labels Comatas a 'Dorian shepherd', which would draw a snide retort from any Classicist that 'Comatas was a goatherd; the shepherd was Lacon'. Johnson is intentionally 'mistaken' here. By exercising a prurient revisionism, he produces an intertextual allusion to Theocritus's fifth *Idyll*, a contest in hexameter couplets between the goatherd Comatas, who primarily boasts of the girls whose favours he enjoys — 'Soon I shall give my girl a ring-dove. It is perching / In the juniper tree, and that is where I'll catch it' — and the shepherd Lacon, who primarily boasts of the boys — 'I've a surprise gift, too: when I shear the black ewe / Cratidas will have its soft fleece for a cloak'.¹ Besides the fact that Comatas's cedarn coffer provides an apt parallel to the Uranian positionality, Johnson's discretion also warrants that he not be seen spending a summer afternoon frolicking with Lacon, the great defender of actualised paederasty. Nevertheless, by intentionally mislabelling Comatas a 'shepherd', Johnson discreetly alludes to Theocritus's idyllic debate between Comatas and Lacon, a debate over the respective virtues of the love of girls and of boys. More salaciously, this mislabelling suggests that, despite winning the singing contest, Comatas was nonetheless 'won over' by Lacon's claims for the preference of paederastic 'shepherding', with Comatas giving up his goats and girls and becoming instead an avid shepherd of boys. Most readers would never have noticed this revisionism; a few pedants might have squawked about the 'mistake'; but none, it seems, have ever praised the poet for the brilliance that this simple change displays, an overarching command of intertextual nuance. 'An Invocation' concludes with an appeal for the use of this fluid intertextuality, an appeal that is also the most concise elucidation of paederastic pedagogy that a Uranian ever penned — 'two minds shall flow together, the English and the Greek'. Such a flow can be seen in the intertextual intimacy between Johnson and his former Etonian Digby Mackworth Dolben.

¹ Theocritus, *Theocritus: Idylls*, trans. by Anthony Verity, p.21. This is not to suggest that Comatas did not appreciate the pleasures of paederasty, since he reminds Lacon of a past event involving the two of them: 'Don't you remember the time I battered your bum? / How you scowled and wriggled and clung to that oak!' (p.21). In *The Pipes of Pan: Intertextuality and Literary Filiation in the Pastoral Tradition from Theocritus to Milton* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), Thomas K. Hubbard explains: 'Comatas presumes to be Lacon's teacher and in some sense therefore his literary father — a relationship Lacon vehemently denies, like any emergent poet struggling to assert his independence and originality. Comatas reasserts his dominance in terms of sexual penetration of his younger counterpart, an event Lacon is here unable to deny' (p.3).

While reading Dolben's poems in manuscript, Johnson must have felt the feverous pleasure of influence that Wilde's Lord Henry describes:

No other activity was like it. To project one's soul into some gracious form, and let it tarry there for a moment; to hear one's own intellectual views echoed back to one with all the added music of passion and youth; to convey one's temperament into another as though it were a subtle fluid or a strange perfume; there was a real joy in that — perhaps the most satisfying joy left to us in an age so limited and vulgar as our own, an age grossly carnal in its pleasures, and grossly common in its aims. (*Dorian* 1891, pp.39-40)

Johnson would have recognised the echo of his own soul, intellectual views, and temperament in lines such as these by Dolben:

For the sweet temperance of your youth,
 Unconscious chivalry and truth,
 And simple courtesies;
 A soul as clear as southern lake,
 Yet strong as any cliffs that break
 The might of northern seas;

For these I loved you well, — and yet
 Could neither you nor I forget,
 But spent we soberly
 The autumn days, that lay between
 The skirts of glory that had been,
 Of glory that should be. ('To —', lines 19-30)

Particularly the 'St Michael' stanza of 'Homo Factus Est' caught Johnson's attention, and he 'marvelled that it could have been written by a schoolboy' (*Dolben* 1915, p.lviii).

Consistent with his belief that the Uranian movement proper did not begin until 1888, d'Arch Smith claims that 'had [Dolben] not died in 1867 at the very early age of nineteen he would undoubtedly have become involved with some of the group'.¹ However, by the time he left Eton at seventeen,² Dolben — who 'found himself writing perfect Uranian verse when intending or perhaps pretending to indite religious stanzas'³ — already possessed an uncanny sense of what constituted 'membership' in the Uranian circle, which is displayed by his

¹ D'Arch Smith, p.188.

² Dolben did not feel the same love for Eton that Johnson did. In a letter to his close friend V. S. S. Coles, Dolben writes: 'I positively hate the place. It is full of mental temptations that you know nothing of' (as quoted in 'Memoir', *Dolben* 1915, p.1). This was written before Dolben had fully developed, according to Bridges, 'his own subsequent affinity with Greek thought' (p.lvi).

³ D'Arch Smith, p.191.

discreet circulation of his own verses to sympathetic Uranians such as Johnson and Hopkins. In contrast, this circulation was far more restricted in terms of his friend, distant cousin, and Eton prefect¹ Robert Bridges, whose failure to appreciate that the privileges of friendship, family ties, and proximity do not necessarily extend to private papers provoked an archetypal bonfire resembling Hopkins's 'slaughter of the innocents':

One evening when I was sitting in [Dolben's] room and moved to pull out the [bureau] drawer where he kept his poems, the usual protest was not made. The drawer was empty; and he told me that he had burned them, every one. I was shocked, and felt some remorse in thinking that it was partly his dislike of my reading them that had led him to destroy them. (*Dolben* 1915, p.xxi)²

Of the most romantic of all [Dolben's] extravagancies, that idealization and adoration of his school-friend, which long after they were parted went on developing in his maturer poems, I have a better memory. It was well known to me in 1863, indeed the burning of the poems may have been due to the existence among them of poems to 'Archie': for Dolben would have been almost as reluctant to submit them to me as to the eyes of their unwitting object. (P.xxv)³

It slowly dawned on Bridges that Dolben was cautiously filtering which poems he was permitted to see, adding emphasis to the 'some' in statements like 'I send you some verses, as you were kind enough to wish for them' (p.lxxxiii). Eventually Bridges came to realise that Dolben's 'Greek sympathies' (p.xcix), not artistic coyness, determined which poems he was shown — as well as had fuelled the bonfire he himself had provoked. Despite his youth, Dolben was intuitive enough to recognise that Bridges, who shared none of his 'Greek sympathies', would never prove a sympathetic audience for much of his Uranian verse, which was insightful. Even after a lifetime of contemplation, Bridges, as editor of Dolben's poems, could only conclude, particularly of the early poems, which he (mis)labels 'sentimental trash' (p.xxiii): 'The reading of these poems makes one see why schoolmasters wish their boys to play games' (p.lv).

Upon discovering that Bridges had been shown several of his poems through a third party, Dolben inquired of him pointedly, though attempting to mask his displeasure: 'You were very welcome to see my verses, though I certainly should not have selected them to show you. *Did Coles or Hopkins give*

¹ The term 'prefect' may be too formal, though Bridges does note: 'I happened to be captain of the house [...] [and] enrolled Dolben among my fags, and looked after him' (*Dolben* 1915, pp.xi-ii).

² For Bridges's comment that 'my correspondence has unexpectedly recovered five of these burnt poems, preserved by a friend whom [Dolben] had allowed to copy them', see *Dolben* 1915, p.xxii, footnote.

³ 'Archie Manning' is the pseudonym by which Bridges disguises Martin le Marchant Hadsley Gosselin (1847-1905). For comment on Bridges's alteration of 'Marchie' Gosselin into 'Archie Manning' in the 'Memoir' and in Dolben's poetry, see Cohen, p.4.

them you, and why? Please remember to tell me' (*Dolben* 1915, p.xc; the emphasis is Dolben's). Beyond their divergence of opinion on religious devotion, as well as poetic style, the principal difficulty for Bridges as Dolben's future editor and critic was that his own erotic desires had never run parallel to his cousin's

Strange, all-absorbing Love, who gatherest
Unto Thy glowing all my pleasant dew,
Then delicately my garden waterest,
Drawing the old, to pour it back anew.
(['Strange, all-absorbing Love'], lines 1-4)

Such desires, desires that Dolben had shared with Vincent Stuckey Stratton Coles (1845-1929) and with Hopkins, proved problematic for Bridges, for he found himself, as editor, in a modern, scholarly conundrum: Dolben's poems would never allow for an absolute avoidance of this 'strange, all-absorbing Love'; and, given his own Georgian position as Poet Laureate, Bridges could hardly claim anachronism, heighten their 'homosocial' aspects, or disguise them as 'homosexual'. The only option available was a disingenuous excising of some materials and the alteration of others: 'It was Bridges' mission, in editing Dolben's works, to establish the young poet among the upholders of orthodox sexual expression in the face of clear evidence to the contrary'.¹ As Margaret Johnson further notes, a 'major blank in Bridges' account of Dolben's life occurs in the area of his relationships with other young men and masters at Eton',² with

the most remarkable example of this [being] his treatment of the poems addressed to [...] Gosselin, many of them mentioning him by name. Bridges insists that Dolben's affection was one-sided and that Gosselin was unaware of the strength of Dolben's emotional attachment to him; nevertheless, he felt it necessary to amend the poetry which might otherwise suggest an improper passion [...] [attempting to make that passion] seem no more than a boyish crush.³

As for Dolben's relationships with his masters at Eton, Margaret Johnson recognises that various lacunae exist, though not in the case of William Johnson, whom, she asserts, 'produced a revised edition of Dolben's poems. It has been suggested that Bridges' own edition of Dolben's poetry was undertaken, at least in part, in response to Cory's'.⁴ This detail is inaccurate: Johnson never produced an *edition* of Dolben's poems, though he did circulate handwritten copies among sympathetic readers such as J. A. Symonds, who 'already had his

¹ M. Johnson, 'Dolben', p.83.

² *Ibid.*, p.90.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.93-94. The portion of the 'Memoir' discussed by Margaret Johnson appears in *Dolben* 1915, pp.xxv-ix.

⁴ M. Johnson, 'Dolben', p.93.

eye on [Dolben's] work for he added four stanzas to [Dolben's] poem, "A Song", which he included in *Many Moods* (1878).¹

Such Uranian textual and intertextual exchanges involving Dolben's 'honeyed poetry' were what Bridges was attempting to curtail by solidifying his own claims over Dolben's poetic legacy — as family member, as friend, as former schoolmate, and finally as editor. Stultification of this Uranian 'infringement' on his cousin's legacy required that Bridges diminish any claim that, when not mediated through the Christian imagery of John Henry Newman, Frederick William Faber (1814-63), or Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-61), another of Dolben's distant relatives,² Dolben's 'strange, all-absorbing Love' was mediated through the Classical imagery into which he had been initiated by Johnson's paederastic pedagogy. Bridges merely notes that '[Dolben's] school-books brought him into contact with Greek poetry' (*Dolben* 1915, p.lviii). However, in spite of ardent attempts in his 'Memoir' and his editorial practices to excise or alter, to foster lacunae, and to chide Johnson for assuming the role of poetic 'sire', Bridges has been thwarted nonetheless — by Dolben's intertextuality.

Although for one untitled poem Dolben makes a proem from two lines of William Wordsworth's 'The Force of Prayer' — *What is good for a bootless bene? / The Falconer to the lady said* — recalling the falconry imagery of Johnson's 'Reparabo', the poem's most revealing intertextuality is derived from Johnson's treatment of Comatas, with Dolben asserting that 'from the great Poet's lips I thought to take / Some drops of honey for my parchèd mouth' ('[From the Great Poet's Lips]', lines 1-2): Johnson's allusion to Comatas has found another, younger wielder. However, Dolben soon realises that an over-dependence upon this intertextual nourishment — the honey from Johnson and from the Greeks Johnson had instilled a love for among his Etonians — has resulted in his own aesthetic passivity and lack of a breastplate or *lorica* (*Ionica* seems to have incorporated, for Johnson, this visual suggestiveness³), Dolben recalling Johnson's admonishment to his successor to 'leave thine arms, when thou art tired, / To some one nobler yet':

¹ D'Arch Smith, p.188. In an endnote, d'Arch Smith details that "A Song" was first printed in Symonds's privately circulated *Lyra Viginti Chordarum* (ca. 1878), p.33, under the title "Tema con Variazioni with a Prelude and a Finale", without the mention of Dolben. [...] It was one of the poems revised by Cory' (p.200, note) — making it likely that William Johnson (for decades one of Symonds's correspondents) had provided the occasion by which Symonds acquired a copy of the poem.

² For Dolben's appreciation of Faber, see *Dolben* 1915, p.xx. See Dolben's harsh comment regarding Clough's poetry in a letter to Bridges, p.lxxxviii, as well as Bridges's note 22, p.132. Since Dolben seems to have committed whole passages of Clough's poetry to memory, the comment in this letter seems less an expression of his own views than a stolen march on Bridges's expected retort. See Martin, *Hopkins*, p.82.

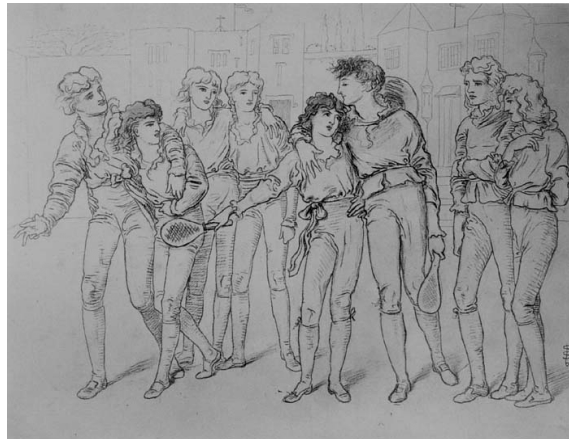
³ *Lorica* (after the Latin for 'breastplate') is a term for prayers such as 'St Patrick's Breastplate', prayers abounding with symbolism involving a Christian knight donning his armour for battle.

Alas! no armour have I fashioned me,
 And, having lived on honey in the past,
 Have gained no strength. (Dolben, 'A Poem without a Name I', lines 49-51)

Even if the cedarn, bee-attended chest (far more confining than the proverbial 'closet' of modern homosexual discourse) serves to foster creativity, it does so through an excess of solitude, and Dolben clearly desires more palpable contact than 'drops of honey from the great Poet's lips':

We seek for Love to make our own,
 But clasp him not for all our care
 Of outspread arms. ('[We Hurry On, Nor Passing]', lines 9-11)

This desire to 'but clasp him', so decadently phrased, is what Bridges, as editor, found most problematic and unpalatable in dealing with Dolben's poems.



Eton Schoolboys

Frederick Hollyer (1837-1933)

[Lost original by Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)]

Photographic print, [Lost original is dated 1867]

Private collection

Since he had himself been privy to Johnson's pedagogy at Eton,¹ as well as its influence over his cousin and others, Bridges's chiding of Johnson for taking particular interest in one passage from Dolben's 'Vocation', a passage intertextually related to Johnson's own 'Invocation', seems duplicitous.

¹ Johnson's influence extended far beyond the Classics; and, of this Bridges writes: 'I remember how I submissively concluded that it must be my own dullness which prevented my admiring Tennyson as much as William Johnson did' (*Dolben* 1915, p.xxi).

Nevertheless, Bridges writes: ‘It is strange to think of Cory copying out this’ (*Dolben* 1915, p.lvi). By such comments, Bridges attempted to distance his cousin, as much as possible, from Johnson and the ‘strange, all-absorbing’ desires that they had shared at Eton, though the only way he could find to do so was through frivolous editorial complaints:

We know, too, from Robert Bridges’s unnecessarily derogatory remarks in which he accuses Cory of the unlikely crime of inaccurate transcription and gross liberties with another’s text, that [Cory] took an interest in the poems of [...] Dolben.¹

Bridges’s strictures on Cory’s transcriptions of Dolben’s poems were first made in the four-page addenda and corrigenda he found necessary to issue as a supplement to the first edition of Dolben’s poems (London, 1911) and were later incorporated in the text of the second edition of 1915. At first sight, the list of variants is remarkable but it seems clear after a moment’s thought that Cory was *revising*, not transcribing.²

Although Bridges admits that Dolben’s poems ‘were jealously guarded by his family and a few friends’ (*Dolben* 1915, p.viii), he never accounts for how copies of those poems found their way into Johnson’s hands, and it seems likely that they had been given by Dolben himself. Bridges merely relates that ‘from [Johnson’s] MS. his friends took other copies’ (p.lviii), as was the case with Lord Esher, who informed Bridges that his own copies of six of these poems were ‘made in Wm. Johnson’s pupil-room three years after Dolben’s death’ (as quoted on p.136, note).

Only in the context of attacking Johnson as ‘transcriber’ — ‘We gladly dismiss Wm. Cory’s *heaven* for *hope* with the rest of his corruptions’ (*Dolben* 1915, p.138, note) — does Bridges deem it appropriate to quote from Dolben’s ‘Vocation’, a poem that he deceptively claims to be unworthy of inclusion in the collection, and has therefore excised:

If thus divinely fair
This image, carved in cold unfeeling stone
What must [Apollo] be, the living god himself!
My whole soul longs to see him as he is
In all the glory of immortal youth,
Clothed in white samite. (From ‘Vocation’, p.lvi)

Accompanying Dolben’s voyeuristic gaze is a forestalled desire to position himself as Hyacinth, the paederastic beloved of Apollo, a boy killed by the machinations of Zephyr, a lesser deity angered that the boy’s ardour rested with another. Dolben is ever mindful here that ‘Death / Is palpable — and Love’ (‘A

¹ D’Arch Smith, p.9.

² *Ibid.*, p.40, note.

Song', lines 11-12), with an earlier variant proving far more erotic: 'Love / Is palpable — and death' (*Dolben* 1915, p.137, note). This desire to assume the role of Hyacinth, even in his fateful mortality, is hardly surprising, given that Hyacinth was, for the artists of the nineteenth century, the most palpable of paederastic icons, and that visual depictions of his relationship with Apollo constituted a ready source of honeyed imagery for the paederastically-inclined. Later in 'Vocation', Dolben exclaims, 'Soon very soon, Apollo, O my love!' (p.lvi). These passages about Apollo, passages that garnered Johnson's lingering admiration, have a Keatsian palpability, a longing for touch that Dolben displays elsewhere, figuring himself as a homoerotic Pygmalion:

And, as the passionate sculptor who kissed
The lips of marble to red,
Ask I a breath that is part of my own,
Yet drawn from a soul more sweet; —

Or, as the shaft that upsoareth alone
Undiademed, incomplete,
Claim I the glory predestined to me. ('A Song of Eighteen', lines 23-29)

Such phrasing is not an anomaly, for Dolben has a penchant for casting himself in Hellenic roles — 'the glory predestined to me' — and in one case beckons the moon to gaze upon him as 'a new Endymion', as

The boy who, wrapped from moil and moan,
With cheeks for ever round and fair,
Is dreaming of the nights that were
When lips immortal touched his own.
('[Lean Over Me — Ah So]' , lines 8; 9-12)



***Arcadia* (detail)**

Thomas Cowperthwait Eakins (1844-1916)

Oil on canvas, ca. 1883

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA

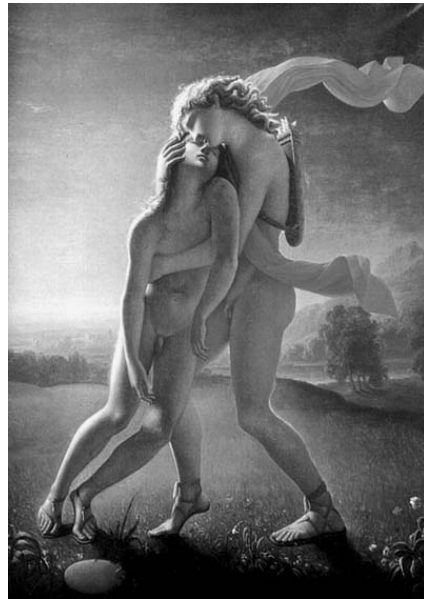


Apollo, Hyacinthos and Kyparissos Singing and Playing

Aleksandr Andreevich Ivanov (1806-58)

Oil on canvas, 1831-34

Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia



La mort d'Hyacinthe

Jean Broc (1771-1850)

Oil on canvas, 1801

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Poitiers, France

Through such lines, Dolben displays himself to be the poetic beloved that Johnson hoped to invoke, one in whom ‘two minds shall flow together, the English and the Greek’.

This confluence of ‘the English and the Greek’ is strikingly illustrated in ‘A Poem without a Name II’ (dated December 1866),¹ a love-poem that, less discreetly, might have borne the title ‘A Love without a Name’. In this poem, Dolben, like an impassioned museum curator, provides a tour of his own Comatas chest, a chest that constitutes a brilliant elucidation of the Uranian positionality, a positionality that would soon become, for this group, a form of self-fashioning no less marked than that of the Elizabethans, though taking a different stance, a stance gilded by an astonishing degree of secrecy. This secrecy was necessary for the Uranians, especially given the arguable immorality and assured illegality of their desires, desires that Dolben has depicted on the walls of his own cedarn chest, that positionality where ‘I keep, / Stored in a silent Treasury I know, / The pure reality’ (lines 35-37):

Within that Treasure-house of mine I wait,
I wait, with Erôs glowing at my side;
From him, the mighty artist, I have learned
How memories to brushes may be tied;
And tho’ I moistened all my paints with tears,
Yet on my walls as joyous imagery,
With golden hopes in framed, now appears
As e’er of old was dreamed to vivify
Ionian porticoes, when Greece was young,
And wreathed with glancing vine Anacreon sung. (Lines 48-57)

These allusions to ‘Ionian porticoes’ (an apt, architectonic description of Johnson’s *Ionica*) and to Anacreon (a Greek paederast who had poetically immortalised his favourites Cleobulus, Smerdies, and Leucaspsis) set the paederastic tone for Dolben’s subsequent description of the paintings that

¹ This poem was written after Dolben had left Eton (see *Dolben* 1915, p.131, note). Critics have continually noted that Dolben ‘failed’ his entrance examination to Balliol College, Oxford, and that this *ipso facto* indicates a lack of proficiency in Greek and Latin. Even Bridges lapses into this dubious claim while praising his cousin’s translation of a passage from Catullus: ‘It is interesting that this translation [...] should have been written by a boy who was unable to pass his entrance examination at Balliol college’ (*Dolben* 1915, p.134). Although ‘failed’ is *technically* accurate, it skirts the context of that failure: Dolben, in doubtful health, fainted before or during the examination (pp.cvi-vii); hence, he either did not begin or complete it. Besides, the Balliol entrance examination emphasised Latin as well as Greek, and Dolben’s relationship to Latin was less felicitous, as is explained by his private tutor, Constantine Prichard: ‘His Latin writing was rather drudgery to him ... he took much pains with it. ... His appreciation of classical poetry was very deep’ (as quoted on p.cx). Dolben approached the Classics (particularly in Greek) not as a scholar, but as a poet.

decorate the interior of his own cedarn chest, the walls of his treasure-house, 'joyous imagery' crafted by paints 'moistened [...] with tears':

And here, a stranded lily on the beach,
My Hylas, coronalled with curly gold,
He lies beyond the water's longing reach
Him once again essaying to enfold; —
Here, face uplifted to the twinkling sky
He walks, like Agathôn the vastly-loved.

[...]

And here, like Hyacinthus, as he moved
Among the flowers, ere flower-like he sank
Too soon to fade on green Eurotas' bank. (Lines 64-75)

That Dolben has decorated his own cedarn chest with images invoking Hylas and Hyacinth — the first the *erômenos* (or 'hearer') of Hercules, the second the *erômenos* of Apollo — would have been fully appreciated by the Doric goatherd Comatas, since among the ancient Dorians such images bespoke

the clean, youthful friendship, 'passing even the love of woman', which [...] elaborated into a kind of art, became an elementary part of [Doric] education. [...] The beloved and the lover, side by side through their long days of eager labour, and above all on the battlefield, became respectively, [*erômenos*], the hearer, and [*erastês*], the inspirer; the elder inspiring the younger with his own strength and noble taste in things. (Pater, *Platonism*, pp.231-32)

However, Dolben's poem is more an act of (inter)textual insinuation than of exhibitionism, hence he redirects its thrust towards his own 'hearer', his contemporary not Grecian reader. As a result, the poem 'passes from its poetic form into an epistolary address' (Dolben 1915, p.134, note):

But it is profanation now to speak
Of thoughtless Hellene boys, or to compare
The majesty and spiritual grace
Of that design which consummates the whole.
It is himself, as I have watched him, where
The mighty organ's great Teutonic soul
Passed into him and lightened in his face,
And throbbled in every nerve and fired his cheek.
(‘Poem without a Name II’, lines 76-83)

While playing voyeur to this boy he hopes will become his 'hearer' ('I have watched him'), Dolben comes to recognise that the boy has already been ravished — at least through art or a pedagogy like Johnson's — and Dolben's erotic description of that ravishment is lent utterly ejaculatory connotations, disguised as music. Dolben recalls watching 'the mighty organ' (rather Priapic phrasing to

be certain) penetrate the boy: ‘The mighty organ’s great Teutonic soul / Passed into him’. Although ‘great Teutonic soul’ suggests a German composition played upon an organ, the phrasing also seems to allude to the pro-Teutonic stance of Charles Kingsley (1819-75), who had acquired his Cambridge professorship in competition with Johnson two years before Dolben became a student at Eton.¹ Although the result of this ‘Teutonic’ ravishment appears almost transcendental, it also proves palpably tactile, for it ‘lightened in [the boy’s] face, / And throbbed in every nerve and fired his cheek’, a shiver and a blush that Dolben recognises because he has hitherto assumed the same passive role himself:

I will not sing my little puny songs.
[...]
Therefore in passiveness I will lie still,
And let the multitudinous music of the Greek
Pass into me, till I am musical. (‘After Reading Aeschylus’)

¹ Charles Kingsley seems a possible source for this allusion to the ‘great Teutonic soul’, either through his *Saint’s Tragedy* (a drama) or *The Roman and the Teuton* (a series of university lectures). *The Saint’s Tragedy, or, The True Story of Elizabeth of Hungary, Landgravine of Thuringia, Saint of the Romish Calendar*, with a preface by F. D. Maurice (London: J. W. Parker, 1848), has a passage where Epimetheus beckons:

Wake again, Teutonic Father-ages,
Speak again, beloved primeval creeds;
Flash ancestral spirit from your pages,
Wake the greedy age to noble deeds. (P.27)

The Roman and the Teuton: A Series of Lectures Delivered before the University of Cambridge, with a preface by Professor F. Max Müller (Cambridge and London: Macmillan, 1864), is the published version of a series of lectures delivered in 1860, directly after Kingsley had been appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge. Johnson was one of those who had been nominated for the position. After arriving at Eton in January 1862, Dolben might have learned of this from older Etonians such as Bridges, who were probably intrigued by the choice of Kingsley over Johnson:

In 1860 [Johnson] was passed over in favour of Kingsley, when the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, submitted his name to the Queen for the Professorship of Modern History at Cambridge. Four men were suggested, of whom Blakesley and Venables refused the post. Sir Arthur Helps was set aside, and it would have been offered to Johnson, if the Prince Consort had not suggested Kingsley. (Benson, ‘Introduction’, *Ionica* 1905, p.xx)

Although Kingsley’s overt anti-Romish stance would have been considered more than vile by Dolben, Dolben would have found passages like the following pleasantly suggestive: ‘I wish to impress strongly on your minds this childishness of our forefathers. For good or for evil they were great boys; very noble boys; very often very naughty boys [...] with a spirit of wild independence which seems to be strength; but which, till it be disciplined into loyal obedience and self-sacrifice, is mere weakness’ (*The Roman and the Teuton*, p.6).

The next lines of 'A Poem without a Name II' mark a transition, an extension beyond the liminal box, with Dolben, metaphorical paintbrush in hand, fulfilling Johnson's request to 'lift the lid a moment', to take up his pen, his lute, his sword, to become his Uranian successor:

See, Love, I sing not of thee now alone,
But am become a painter all thine own. (Lines 84-85)

This shift from passive to active, from the role of *erômenos* to that of prospective *erastês*, from the confines of an 'In-Vocation' to a more externalised 'Vocation' is demarcated in the last section of the poem by a volta — 'enough' — a volta that is less a renunciation of physical contact than a turning away from 'thoughtless Hellene boys' like Hylas and Hyacinth and towards the boy whom Dolben asks to have faith in him as prospective *erastês*: 'Enough, the yearning is unsatisfied, / Resolved again into a plea for faith' (lines 122-23). Through this appeal to 'faith', Dolben seeks to assure his prospective beloved that his love for him is 'elevated', a necessary assurance since, as John Chandos suggests, at public schools like Eton, 'romantic, sacrificial friendships and rabid sensual lusts all went on in the same community together'.¹ On the other hand, Symonds's actual remembrances of the situation at Harrow, one of Eton's rivals, seems to suggest that Dolben's more 'elevated' desire was a rarity:

One thing at Harrow very soon arrested my attention. It was the moral state of the school. Every boy of good looks had a female name, and was recognized either as a public prostitute or as some bigger fellow's 'bitch'. Bitch was the word in common usage to indicate a boy who yielded his person to a lover. The talk in the dormitories and the studies was incredibly obscene. Here and there one could not avoid seeing acts of onanism, mutual masturbation, the sports of naked boys in bed together. There was no refinement, no sentiment, no passion; nothing but animal lust in these occurrences.²

That Dolben's 'yearning is unsatisfied' (as of yet) alters neither his desire nor its potency, which arouses an immediate return to the former ejaculatory imagery, imagery that recalls the 'limpid liquid within the young man, / The vex'd corrosion' that Whitman describes as 'so pensive and so painful, / The torment, the irritable tide that will not be at rest' ('Spontaneous Me', lines 27-29). This is the desire of the *erastês* to assume the role of Doric ravisher, with Dolben displaying, as physical proof of his desire, 'some crystal drops of evidence' that he 'sought to draw from that full tide' of 'true elixir [that] is within', phrasing that suggests either the masturbatory production of ejaculate or the anticipatory drip of pre-ejaculate:

¹ John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p.301.

² *Memoirs of Symonds*, p.94.

Believe the true elixir is within,
 Although I sought to draw from that full tide
 Some crystal drops of evidence, to win
 A little vapour only — yet believe,
 Believe the essence of a perfect love
 Is there, and worthy. Not a tinge of shame
 My words can colour. Of *thine own* receive,
 Yes, of thy very being. It shall prove
 Indeed a poem, though without a name. (Lines 124-32)

As with the title, by replacing ‘poem’ with ‘love’, the final lines become, more daringly, ‘It shall prove / Indeed a love, though without a name’, a statement that would have predated Douglas’s (in)famous formulation by three decades.



Orpheus Series: The Last Chord

Fred Holland Day (1864-1933)
 Platinum print with hand-colouring, 1907
 Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
 Washington, D.C., USA

Johnson’s pleasure over such lines by his rightful successor must have proven bittersweet; for, although Dolben had indeed been able ‘to string [Johnson’s] lute with silver wires’, his death by drowning at nineteen (on 28 June 1867) had seemingly set aside that newly strung lute. Johnson must have lamented Dolben’s drowning as a partial submerging of his own hopes, ‘because beneath the lake a treasure sank’ (‘Epoch in a Sweet Life’, line 40). He must have felt that Dolben, like Adonais, was one of those ‘inheritors of unfulfilled renown’ — a Chatterton, a Sidney, or a Lucan.¹

¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, ‘Adonais’, line 397, in Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers, eds, *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose* (New York: Norton, 1977). There is a degree of truth to Bridges’s hyperbolic claim that ‘the poems which [Dolben] now began to produce will compare with, if they do not as I believe excel, anything that was ever written by any

Ironically, fate may have bestowed more through Dolben's death than it could ever have bestowed through longer life (and certainly more than Johnson had envisioned): many of Hopkins's best poems — impregnated with an elegiac longing for Dolben, his lost beloved and his muse — were the result. Inspired by a forever-unsatisfied yearning for Dolben, his 'dearest him that lives alas! away' ('[I Wake and Feel the Fell]', line 8), Hopkins took up that hollow lute and restrung it with gold, continuing that intertextual relationship as the 'thrice ennobled heir' of Johnson's legacy. Through Dolben, Johnson had unwittingly passed his legacy to Hopkins, a poet who was oblivious to his own impending fame, a poet who felt assured that the grandeur he was painting on the walls of his own cedarn chest would forever remain unappreciated, would follow him to the grave. Hopkins had no conception that, less than half a century after his death, his own cedarn chest would become canonical, would move the Uranian positionality into the pantheon of English literature. While I. A. Richards could assert definitively in 1926 that 'Gerard Hopkins [...] may be described, without opposition, as the most obscure of English verse writers',¹ the publication of the second edition of Hopkins's *Poems* in 1930 changed that forever, as the following comments from the 1930s attest:

[Hopkins] feared that he was 'Time's eunuch', contriving nothing that could survive; but his poetry was essentially enlightened, honest and rebellious, and made to last. (Hildegard Flanner)²

In fact the reviewer [of the 2nd edition of Hopkins's poems] ought to indulge not in criticism but in town crying. He ought, if he has it, to expound his conviction that Gerard Hopkins was a great poet. I have that conviction; and let me start to expound it. (Geoffrey Grigson)³

He is likely to prove, for our time and the future, the only influential poet of the Victorian age, and he seems to me the greatest. (F. R. Leavis)⁴

English poet at his age [of eighteen]' (*Dolben* 1915, p.xcviii). Dolben's poetry 'was much admired by Henry James. As it stands, it is among the best of the poetry of the Oxford Movement, and probably a longer life would have produced the mastery foreseen by Bridges and James' (Robert Bernard Martin, 'Digby Augustus Stewart Dolben', *DNB*).

¹ I. A. Richards, 'Gerard Hopkins', *Dial* (September 1926), pp.195-203; extracted in Gerald Roberts, ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), p.141.

² Hildegard Flanner, Review, *The New Republic* (4 February 1931), pp.331-32; extracted in *Hopkins: The Critical Heritage*, p.206.

³ Geoffrey Grigson, 'A Poet of Surprise', *Saturday Review* (14 February 1931), pp.237-38; extracted in *ibid.*, p.207.

⁴ F. R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932); extracted in *ibid.*, p.237. The structure of Leavis's sentence playfully implies that Hopkins is 'the greatest' Victorian poet or that Hopkins is 'the greatest' English poet (though the second option would necessarily entail the first).

The heroism that affects the English language, English poetry and us is Hopkins's. (F. R. Leavis)¹

The *patent* influence of Hopkins has therefore hardly had time to work itself into the body of English poetry. But the *latent* influence — that is a different question. It is a question of an impregnating breath, breathed into the ear of every poet open to the rhythms of contemporary life, the music of our existence, and the tragedy of our fate. Hopkins is amongst the living poets of our time, and no influence whatsoever is so potent for the future of English poetry.

(Herbert Read)²

Through the last poem he ever wrote, a sonnet addressed 'To R.B.', Hopkins elicited, perhaps unintentionally, a Marius-like devotion in his closest friend Robert Bridges, who would, three decades later, edit Hopkins's manuscripts as he had Dolben's. While reading this sonnet-letter in early May 1889, Bridges could not but have noticed that Hopkins — although still bemoaning the solitude of his cedarn chest — has nonetheless jettisoned his usual spiritual concerns and imagery, has managed 'to throw off the mask' of religiosity that Bridges always accused him of wearing, revealing, in the eleventh hour, a visage far more Johnsonian than Jesuitical:

The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong
 Spur, live and lancing like the blowpipe flame,
 Breathes once and, quenched faster than it came,
 Leaves yet the mind a mother of immortal song.
 Nine months she then, nay years, nine years she long
 Within her wears, bears, cares and combs the same:
 The widow of an insight lost she lives, with aim
 Now known and hand at work now never wrong.
 Sweet fire the sire of muse, my soul needs this;
 I want the one rapture of an inspiration.
 O then if in my lagging lines you miss
 The roll, the rise, the carol, the creation,
 My winter world, that scarcely breathes that bliss
 Now, yields you, with some sighs, our explanation.

After invoking the 'sweet fire', the 'sire of muse' — an encapsulation of the savour of the proffered honey, the continual torch-race, the Hippocrene, and the flowing rill of paederastic desire — Hopkins begs for 'one rapture of an inspiration', for a rapture from his 'winter world [...] that scarcely breathes that bliss', his own frigid and asphyxiating version of Comatas's cedarn chest and

¹ F. R. Leavis, 'Doughty and Hopkins', *Scrutiny* (December 1935), pp.316-17; extracted in Roberts, ed., *Critical Heritage*, p.325.

² Herbert Read, 'The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins', in *English Critical Essays of the Twentieth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp.351-74; extracted in *ibid.*, p.261.

Dolben's treasure-house. Attended not by a Dolbenian Erôs but by a Paterian fear that 'from the drops of his blood there would spring no miraculous, poetic flowers' (*Marius*, II, p.214), Hopkins never anticipated that those songs bemoaning his perpetual solitude would become the grandest Uranian expressions, the ultimate Uranian intertextual *tour de force*. By weaving into his own orchestrations the lesser songs of Johnson, Dolben, and a score of others, by merging 'the English and the Greek', by blending the Roman Catholic sacred with the homoerotic and paederastic profane, Hopkins had, unbeknownst to himself, extended the Uranian positionality, most profoundly, into the future.



Effet de lune, dit aussi Le Sommeil d'Endymion

Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson (1767-1824)

Oil on canvas, 1791

Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

**‘Lizard, the Greeks Called It’:
Guy Davenport and the Uranian Present**

‘Those deserts of immeasurable sand,

[....]

Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard’s love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,
Now teem with countless rills and shady woods,
Corn-fields and pastures and white cottages’.

(P. B. Shelley, *Queen Mab*, VIII, lines 70-76)

Timothy d’Arch Smith demarcates the closure of the Uranian movement as 1930 — which is also the year of Hopkins’s second edition — although he does include, as an appendix to *Love in Earnest*, a consideration of Ralph Nicholas Chubb (1892-1960), who continued to create illuminated, mytho-poetic, Uranian texts until his death. Despite d’Arch Smith’s scholarly demarcation, the Uranian continuum that began with Johnson’s *Ionica* in 1858 is still recognisable today in the works of a number of contemporary British and American authors, none more so than Guy Mattison Davenport, Jr (1927-2005). Davenport will serve as the final consideration of this volume, after his writings have been provided a post-Victorian context through E. M. Forster’s short story ‘The Classical Annex’ and the recent novels of Alan Hollinghurst.

In Forster’s posthumously published ‘The Classical Annex’, a museum Curator, after being informed of several breakages in the annex, visits the hall and discovers, among other things, that one of the statues has doffed its prudish fig-leaf: ‘The nude, now wholly so for the first time [since placed on exhibit], was a worthless late Roman work, and represented an athlete or gladiator of the non-intellectual type’.¹ After freshly stringing the fig-leaf, the Curator ‘embraced

¹ E. M. Forster, ‘The Classical Annex’, in *The Life to Come and Other Stories* (London: E. Arnold, 1972), pp.146-50; given its brevity, I have not provided page numbers. In “‘This Pother about the Greeks’’: Hellenism and Anti-Hellenism in 1914’, in *Ezra Pound and Poetic Influence: The Official Proceedings of the 17th International Ezra Pound Conference, held at Castle Brunnenburg, Tirolo di Merano*, ed. by Helen M. Dennis (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Editions Rodopi, 2000), pp.55-69, Diana Collecott writes: ‘Forster’s double entendres evoke Hellenism as a homoerotic code hidden within Paterian idealism and mediated by the English public school’ (p.65). For a brief consideration of ‘the manifold influence of E. M. Forster’s background as a classics scholar’ on ‘The Classical Annex’, particularly as this relates to the treatment, in Pseudo-Lucian’s *Erôtes*, of ‘the classical tale of a love-struck youth who one night sneaks into the temple of Aphrodite [...] and makes physical love to the famed statue of the goddess there by the sculptor Praxiteles’, as well as the ways in which this youth’s molestation of the statue from behind ‘reveals the love-struck youth’s homosexual orientation towards the statue’,

the stone buttocks [of the sculpture] and fastened the string above them', an embrace that proves rather arousing for the marble nude, and the Curator soon 'heard a string snap, and the fig-leaf whizzed across the room'. Since a number of the archaeological artefacts in the Classical Annex seem increasingly animated by an ominous 'spirit', the Curator, a religiously-minded Oxford graduate, takes refuge in an Early Christian sarcophagus and dispels the 'spirit' by crossing himself. He is willing to dismiss this experience as only 'a dream but for an obscene change in the statue's physique. [...] He glanced at the fig-leaf, now all too small. He backed away from [the statue], crossing himself constantly' as he flees the museum.

Upon arriving home, the Curator inquires as to the whereabouts of his son Denis, only to discover that Denis, on his way to the museum, must have passed him *en route*: 'They've won that [football] match and he wanted to tell you'. Amidst her comments, his wife adds a salacious detail: 'He's practically nothing on but his football shorts'. No longer mindful of his afternoon tea, the Curator rushes frantically to the museum, arriving to find that

none of the lights were on, which gave him hope. Then far away he heard a familiar, an adorable sound: a giggle. Denis was laughing at something. He dared not call out or give any sign, and crept forward cautiously, guiding himself by well-known objects [...] until he heard his son say, 'Aren't you awful?' and there was the sound of a kiss. Gladiatorial feints, post-classical suction, a brute planning its revenge. There was not a moment to lose, and as the giggling started again and soared up into hysterics against a ground-bass of grunts the Curator stepped into the Christian sarcophagus and made the sign of the Cross. Again it worked. Once more the Classical Annex and all its contents became still.

Then he switched on the light.

The remainder of Forster's story is a vignette from the future, a playful consideration of the public reception of the permanent, paederastic coupling of the boy and the Classical nude:

And in after years a Hellenistic group called The Wrestling Lesson became quite a feature at Bigglesmouth, though it was not exhibited until the Curator and the circumstances of his retirement were forgotten. 'Very nice piece, very decent' was Councillor Bodkin's opinion. 'Look 'ow the elder brother's got the little chappie down. Look 'ow well the little chappie's taking it'.

As a piece of paederastic erotica, this story exhibits the humour and Edwardian tact that characterises most 'literary' Uranian writing from the turn of the century until 1967, the year in which the Sexual Offences Act decriminalised — at least in England and Wales — 'buggery' and 'acts of gross indecency' committed in

see Steven Doloff, 'Passionate Statuary: A Look into "The Classical Annex" of E. M. Forster', *Notes and Queries*, 47.3 (2000), pp.342-43.

private between consenting males aged twenty-one or over (legislation that accepted the key recommendations, made public on 3 September 1957, of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution, chaired by John Wolfenden).¹ From that moment onwards, ‘homosexuality’ had gained both legal protection and literary freedom, neither of which necessarily extended to those whose desires were paederastic.

Although merely titillating, most ‘literary’ Uranian writing from the late-1890s till the late-1960s (such as Forster’s ‘Classical Annex’) was only intended for private circulation among intimates or was to be found in fringe journals or volumes published on the Continent: such is no longer the case. An example of the drastic changes in publishing venue and readership since 1967 can be seen in the critical acclaim given to Alan Hollinghurst (1954 –), whose ‘literary’ novels encapsulate and expand the ‘Pandemotic’ vices of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas rather than the prurient playfulness of E. M. Forster, novels that characterise the tone of post-1967 homoerotic and paederastic fiction on both sides of the Atlantic. A graduate of Wilde’s Magdalen College, Oxford, who taught English at various Oxford colleges before assuming a deputy editorship at the *Times Literary Supplement* (1982-95), Hollinghurst made his literary debut with *The Swimming-Pool Library* (1988), a novel that won the Somerset Maugham Prize. Its protagonist William Beckwith is a young aristocrat whose pleasures and promiscuity bespeak the utter decadence of his namesake William Beckford — or, as Colm Tóibín explains, ‘William moves around London like a predator turned philosopher’.² In accord with the worst Uranian excesses actualised by Wilde and his coterie, Hollinghurst establishes the novel’s predatory overtones by episodes like the following, a randy William returning to his apartment, where seventeen-year-old Arthur awaits him:

¹ See Leslie Moran, *The Homosexual(ity) of Law* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.1-2. In 1981, the Policy Advisory Committee on Sexual Offences, established by the British Home Office, recommended a minimum age of eighteen for homosexual acts, with a minority of the five members of the committee favouring a reduction to sixteen. In 1996, the European Commission of Human Rights (the ‘Strasbourg Court’) ruled that Euan Sutherland (then seventeen) could legally challenge Britain’s standing age-of-consent legislation, a challenge that led, in 2000, to the British Parliament reducing the age of consent to sixteen — however, the age of consent remains eighteen for sexual acts in cases where there is a relationship of trust between the parties (as, for example, between a teacher and a pupil). It is impractical, given the space required, to venture any comment on the multitudinous changes to state ‘sodomy laws’ in the United States of America. In June 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 in *Lawrence et al. v. Texas* that all such ‘sodomy laws’ are unconstitutional. For a transcript of this ruling, see <<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/02pdf/02-102.pdf>> [last accessed 23 March 2006]. The standard age of consent in the USA is eighteen (also applicable to those travelling abroad), though this varies by state.

² Colm Tóibín, ‘The Comedy of Being English’ [Review of Alan Hollinghurst, *The Line of Beauty* (2004)], *The New York Review of Books*, 52.1 (13 January 2005) <<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/17671>> [last assessed 15 January 2005].

The sky was uniformly grey, though a glare on the white frippery of the pavilion suggested a sun that might break through.

I was turning to leave when I spotted a lone Arab boy wandering along, hands in the pockets of his anorak, fairly unremarkable, yet with something about him which made me feel I must have him. I was convinced that he had noticed me, and I felt a delicious surplus of lust and satisfaction at the idea of fucking him while another boy waited for me at home.

To test him out I dawdled off behind the pavilion to where some public lavatories, over-frequented by lonely middle-aged men, are tucked into the ivy-covered, pine-darkened bank of the main road.¹

Such passages constitute the core ‘events’ of a Hollinghurst novel, events that, according to Sebastian Beaumont, exhibit the same banality that Wilde hypocritically preaches against in *De Profundis* — ‘the supreme vice is shallowness’ —

It’s not Hollinghurst’s habit of constantly writing about sex that makes *The Spell* [1998] so dull (some of his sequences in *The Swimming-Pool Library* are anything but boring), but the fact that he writes about such *selfish* sex. The sad thing is that Hollinghurst writes beautifully and there is no reason why, if he wrote about something else, this talented novelist couldn’t write a masterpiece.²

This seemingly endless sequence of ‘*selfish* sex’ continues in Hollinghurst’s second novel, *The Folding Star* (1994), which was short-listed for the Booker Prize and won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, a novel in which Hollinghurst attempts to explore the pangs of unrequited love by constructing ‘a more elaborate and explicit version of Henry James’s story “The Pupil”’³ and by merging language reminiscent of Hopkins’s with a raunchiness worthy of pulp erotica:

At one point in the book, Hollinghurst shows terrific poetic ability by having [Edward] Manners (the protagonist) combine the style of Gerard Manley Hopkins with homoerotic sex-chat. It is entertaining and, quite honestly, ingenious.⁴

¹ Alan Hollinghurst, *The Swimming-Pool Library* (London: Vintage, 1998), p.6. In Hollinghurst’s novels, the protagonists have an uncanny ability to acquire boys of seventeen, which suggests that Hollinghurst (at the time he was writing them) was allowing his protagonists to transgress Britain’s then-current age-of-consent laws (see the note above), though without allowing those transgressions to raise too many eyebrows. It is my hunch that his future protagonists will fetishize and acquire boys of fifteen.

² Sebastian Beaumont, ‘Falling Star’ [Review of Alan Hollinghurst, *The Spell* (1998)], in *Gay Times*, 240 (September 1998), p.80.

³ Tóibín, ‘Comedy’.

⁴ Anonymous, Review of Alan Hollinghurst, *The Folding Star* (1994), *The Michigan Daily Online* (5 February 1996) <<http://www.pub.umich.edu/daily/1996/feb/02-05-96/arts/hollinghurst.html>> [last accessed 23 March 2006].

However, despite his finesse in combining ‘the style of Gerard Manley Hopkins with homoerotic sex-chat’, Hollinghurst’s protagonist nonetheless retains the stock features of ‘a predator turned philosopher’, as the reviewer subsequently complains:

Much of the book deals with the 33-year-old Manners’ desire to sleep with his 17-year-old [Flemish] student, Luc. When Manners seeks to quench his hunger the result is inane: he fantasizes about Luc urinating on him or defecating on him (the list is absurdly long), and when these fantasies are not satisfied, he steals pictures of Luc as well as his soiled underwear and socks (which he proceeds to wear). All this is presented as a sign of Manners’ love. But the fact is, this obsession is for a boy that Manners’ hardly knows. He wishes to tell Luc he loves him before they had even exchanged a few words.¹

It is against the predatory banality of Hollinghurst’s novels — novels representative of ‘acclaimed’ homoerotic and paederastic writing since 1967, writing that usually extends the poisoned chalice of Wilde’s Priapic ‘paedobaptistry’ — that the following will examine the fiction of Guy Davenport, a distinguished alumni professor of English at the University of Kentucky College of Arts and Sciences, whose death on 4 January 2005 has occasioned a number of retrospective evaluations, none more insightful, for my present considerations, than Philip Christman’s claim that ‘[Davenport] also brought his classicist’s acceptance of pedagogical pederasty to the art of fiction — an aspect of his writing that occasions understandable controversy’.² Although Davenport had, by 2004, written forty-seven books of commentary, poetry, translation, and fiction, as well as won a MacArthur ‘Genius’ Fellowship,³ the following will consider only one representative volume of his, *The Jules Verne Steam Balloon*:

¹ *Michigan Daily*.

² Philip Christman, *A Virtual Cantina: A One-Man Aldaily* (9 January 2005) <http://philipchristman.blogspot.com/2005_01_01_philipchristman_archive.html> [last accessed 23 March 2006]. See also Andre Furlani, ‘Guy Davenport’s Pastorals of Childhood Sexuality’, in *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*, ed. by Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), pp.225-44.

³ These details are taken from Wyatt Mason, ‘There Must I Begin to Be: Guy Davenport’s Heretical Fictions’, *Harper’s Magazine*, 308.1847 (April 2004), pp.87-92 (p.87). In this portion of my ‘Conclusion’, I have relied heavily on Mason’s article, the only serious, critical engagement of Davenport that approaches him on his own terms, especially in regard to the erotic elements within his fiction, elements usually considered anathema and attacked as representative of Davenport’s ‘polymathic pederasty’ (p.92). The difficulty that scholarship has in approaching Davenport’s fiction is observable in the following ‘disclaimer’ by Samuel R. Delany: ‘I start by saying I have no notion what Davenport’s sexual persuasion might be. [...] My disclaimer is sincere. I don’t know. [...] Whatever his sexual fixes, [Davenport] nevertheless produces work saturated with pederastic resonances’ — *Shorter Views: Queer Thoughts & the Politics of the Paraliterary* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), p.113.

Nine Stories (1987),¹ a collection of stories that Hopkins, Pater, Johnson, and Dolben would have recognised as a ‘Classical Annex’ attached to their own Uranian positionality, a ‘Classical Annex’ that would have left them to ‘wonder at the daring of poets later born’, poets who have taken the same ‘elevated’ paederastic path, but taken it farther.

As Wyatt Mason relates, ‘the Scandinavian Everyland of Davenport’s imagination’ is a space ‘in which certain received ideas about human interaction and psychological development are revoked, [and] the stories [set there] read as if the Fall never happened and Freud was never there to assemble the pieces of our shame’.² Two of the inhabitants of this Everyland are Kim Eglund and Anders Hammel, twelve and fifteen years old, respectively, boys who resemble ‘pals in a Greek goatherd-and-shepherd poem, *idyllisk*’ (*Balloon*, p.50) — recalling the Alexandrian debate between Comatas and Lacon. As these boys recount their consummation embrace, Davenport constructs a scene reminiscent of Marius the Epicurean reading Apuleius’s *Golden Ass* with Flavian, though Davenport’s barnloft dalliance is far more daring and tactile than Pater’s:

[Kim] had seen me throwing my javelin and jogging and reading under a tree and had come over and said he was Kim, eleven, soon to be twelve. I think he thought I was generous to notice him at all[, said Anders]. Fifteen is pretty scary, Kim said. So after all the things you do to make friends, we found a sunny old barnloft across a field of sunflowers, where we proposed to do some serious jacking off. (*Balloon*, p.93)

I didn’t think, Kim said, you’d even notice that I exist, much less make friends. The barn had a grand smell of oats cows chickenfeed old wood and time. [...] The silence was sweet and the barn snug and private. *O jo!* Anders said, cozy secret bright, stepping from window to window. Our place, all our own. [...] [Kim] scrunched his eyes, feeling naughty and in love. Anders, mouth dry, swallowing hard, shoved down his bathing slip, snapped it inside out, and hung it on a peg. (Pp.51-52)

[Kim said,] I sweetened my gaze at you and wriggled my toes, you said, you little rascal, Keep looking at me like that and my peter will stand bolt upright and whimper, and I kept looking at you like that, and here’s your peter, *herre Jemini!* rose-petal pink, standing bolt upright. So why are you blushing? Robin eggs in gelatin, Kim’s balls to Anders’s feel. [...] Why do you like me? Because, Anders said, there’s a poem by Rimbaud that begins *Aussitôt que l’idée du Déluge se fut rassise, un lièvre s’arrêta dans les sainfoins et les*

¹ Guy Davenport, *The Jules Verne Steam Balloon: Nine Stories* (San Francisco, CA: North Point Press, 1987); abbreviated as *Balloon*. For equally apt displays of paederastic pedagogy and its finer nuances — often involving the same fictional characters as *The Jules Verne Steam Balloon* — see Guy Davenport, *A Table of Green Fields: Ten Stories* (New York: New Directions, 1993) and *The Death of Picasso: New & Selected Writing* (Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2003).

² Mason, p.91.

clochettes mouvantes, et dit sa prière à l'arc-en-ciel à travers la toile de l'araignée [As soon as the idea of the Flood had subsided, a hare stopped among the clover patches and the swaying daffodils and said its prayer to the rainbow through the spider's web.] And the dove came back with an olive branch in its foot. (P.53)¹

In the recurring Danish Arcadia of Davenport's fictions — the school NFS Grundtvig² — boys do woo one another with lines from Arthur Rimbaud, for the 'Grundtviggers' have a precocity nurtured by Hugo Tvemunding, who, like William Johnson more than a century before, is an assistant Classics master and a staunch apologist for those 'ancient Greek sentimental loyalties' that began with the Dorians, 'loyalties' that flourished in the Renaissance and in Victorian Oxford, 'loyalties' that continue in the aesthetic works of Davenport and others. More daringly than Johnson as Classicist, Hugo imparts a paederastic 'knowledge' that is concise, accurate, and uncompromising, 'knowledge' adapted to his students' competence.³ Hence, his lessons construct a *Plato and Platonism for Boys*:

Herds of boys, agemates, in Sparta, ate together on the floor of the mess, with their fingers, from the bare boards. They wore as their only clothing winter and summer an old shirt that left their legs bare from crotch to toe, handed down from elder brothers, the nastier snagged daubed patched and too small, the better. They learned together grammar, law, manners, and singing. Each herd had a Boymaster, who taught them to march in time to the flute and lyre. Each boy sooner or later was caught by an older lover, and carried away to the country. The boy's friends came along, too, for the fun of it. This outing lasted through three full moons, and thereafter the two were friends for life. The lover gave the beloved, as was required by Spartan law, a wine cup, shield, sword, soldier's cape, and an ox. With the ox he threw a banquet, and invited all of his herd, together with their lovers, and gave an account, in intimate detail, of how he had been loved for two months. After this, the beloved wore respectable clothes given him by his lover. They went hunting and dancing together, and ran together in races. (*Balloon*, p.90)

¹ The English translation is by Steven Monte, *Invisible Fences: Prose Poetry as a Genre in French and American Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p.93.

² Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872), the most prominent Danish intellectual of the nineteenth century, is labelled 'The Father of Danish Folk Schools' (*folkelig højskole*), a humanist educational system designed to foster the self-actualisation of its students. See Steven M. Borish, *The Land of the Living: The Danish Folk High Schools and Denmark's Non-Violent Path to Modernization* (Nevada City, California: Blue Dolphin, 1991).

³ To demonstrate Hugo's uncompromising forthrightness, consider the following from William Armstrong Percy III, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), p.69: 'Whatever the medium, pederasty, along with its associated features, herds of boys, athletic nudity, and perhaps certain aristocratic political institutions, were imported from Crete to Sparta'.

Through such blatant disclosures — ‘openness, brashness, spirit [...] [the] boundaries of freedom moving outwards’ (p.91) — Hugo manages to transfer much of his own paederastic openness and brashness to his students, who continue to circulate this ‘knowledge’ among themselves as a furtherance of his pedagogical process. Not surprisingly, both inside and outside of lessons, Hugo is a constant curiosity to his students and scouts, who ever discuss his views, posit his bisexuality, and seek to discover his consistency, a consistency difficult to ascertain in a person who embodies those Whitmanesque ‘multitudes’ that Hopkins and Pater made integral:

What if [Hugo] Tvemunding likes boys? He’s always talking about ancient Greek sentimental loyalties, as he calls them, and then there’re his Scouts, but next he’s off on Jesus and Sankt Paul, and he has that dark-haired girl [Mariana Landarbejder] he’s most certainly fucking. So? said Anders, why can’t he like both, love both? (P.84)

Or, as Hugo expresses himself:

I have only my Mariana, that delightful girl, and my classical scholarship, and my Boy Scouts, and my sober round of reading, gymnastics, my thesis for the Theological Faculty at the university, my painting, teaching, learning. I can share what I feel. Not always well, but the possibility is there. I believe what the Boy Scout Manual says: Forget Yourself. The important thing to me is to know, so that I can respond, how others experience being, love, lust, food, a film, a summer afternoon. I try to paint because I want to show others what I think is beautiful. (P.88)

Exactly what Hugo considers ‘beautiful’ is revealed by his choice of artistic models:

Nose like a buck hare, said Hugo. Square toes. Eyes slyly sweet and sweetly sly. Hugo, liking the world, was an accurate draughtsman. Franklin sat on a chair, elf naked. (P.81)

Magnus, one of my Scouts, said Hugo of a boy whose hair, blond as a lamb, curled in swashes and scrolls over his forehead. Pectorals in robust definition, he was otherwise as lean as a whippet. Hi, Mariana said, you’re pretty. Don’t dress on my account. Micro undies are more than I usually see on Grundtviggers. Look, Magnus, Hugo said, [...] you’re blushing already. (P.83)

The last passage — Hugo’s rather spurious explanation to his girlfriend Mariana about the presence of Magnus — is made all the more suggestive by their playful, verbal fencing the next day:

So Magnus and I talked for hours. I called his folks and said it was too late for him to walk home and that I’d put him up for the night. Heard that one, Mariana said. Please, Hugo said. [...] Magnus is a Spartan, and a little confused. (P.84)

In Davenport's fictions, placement is vital, and this verbal fencing is wedged between two paragraphs, the first containing Hugo's statement 'Puberty [...] good old puberty. And, as more than likely, our balls charged with manly juices and our unruly cock made our heart tick *allegro* and hanker to hug somebody and be hugged' (p.83); the second, that discussion 'What if [Hugo] Tvemunding likes boys? [...] Why can't he like both [sexes], love both?' Such placements constitute a suggestive colour-element in Davenport's fictional palette, and serve to delineate the paederastic nuances, as if by a form of Cubism or collage — as one might expect from a writer who was also a painter and an expert on Modernist art.¹

Although Hugo's artistry, friendships, allusions, and pedagogy literally trumpet his paederastic desires, Davenport never allows Hugo to be relegated to the margins of Western society, the Vestibule of Hell, or a Comatas coffer. Instead, he depicts Hugo as forever fulfilling Johnson's request to 'lift the lid a moment', to exercise a 'Vocation' not an 'In-Vocation', as Mason relates:

Hugo is a paragon of balance: body and mind, teaching and learning, religion and science, art and philosophy, community service and individual betterment. Naturally, conspicuously, his physical perfection is Ideal. So too his pack of boys: they are, in Fourierist form, all bright, open, curious, and creative. And, without question, interested in exploring their sexuality, from which Davenport certainly does not shy away.²

This refusal to 'shy away' is continually on exhibit in Davenport's fictions, as in a conversation about foreplay in which Kim recounts the experience of 'juice beading out' of Anders's penis, to which Hugo immediately responds with a touch of enlightenment: 'Bulbourethral secretion, Hugo said, to be coolly pedantic' (*Balloon*, p.94). By refusing to 'shy away', Davenport's descriptions are always bountifully tactile, which accords with the Keatsian detail that 'Scoutmaster [Hugo] Tvemunding, who taught Latin, Greek, and gym at NFS Grundtvig and Sunday School at Treenigheden, [was always] talking about everything being touch' (p.113).³ An example of Hugo's blending of pedagogy and touch is illustrated by the following:

¹ For a collection of his artworks, see Erik Anderson Reece, *A Balance of Quinces: The Paintings and Drawings of Guy Davenport* (New York: New Directions, 1996). For examples of his aesthetic criticism, see Guy Davenport, *The Drawings of Paul Cadmus* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989); *The Hunter Gracchus and Other Papers on Literature and Art* (New York: Counterpoint, 1996); *Objects on a Table: Harmonious Disarray in Art and Literature* (New York: Counterpoint, 1998).

² Mason, p.91.

³ 'Guy Davenport reveres Charles Fourier for the same reasons that Andre Breton, the founder of Surrealism, honored him with an ode. All three [...] regenerate forms of prelapsarian innocence and see the world with a childlike sense of the marvellous; they celebrate life in all of its ecstatic physicality' — Patrick Meanor, 'The Fourierist Parables

Lizard, the Greeks called it, Hugo said, flipping Kim's penis with a nonchalant finger. We didn't think, Anders said, you'd come up [to our clubhouse] when we weren't having a formal meeting. But Tom asked me, Hugo said. I've seen everything [that boys 'fooling around' do] anyhow. I wanted, said Tom, to see if you'd come. I don't see anything but some bare boys such as I see thrice weekly with my Scouts, Hugo said. Officially I'm not here. (P.93)



**Fragment of a kylix (drinking cup) depicting
a scene of a man holding a boy's penis**

Greek (attributed to the painter Makron)

Red-Figure terracotta, Late Archaic or Early Classical Period (5th century BCE)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Hugo's statement that 'officially I'm not here' covers a multitude of insinuations and transgressions, and recognises that (mis)constructions would certainly be placed upon his being found alone with these naked (pre)pubescent boys in a clubhouse at NFS Grundtvig after hours, not to mention his comment that the Greek word for *penis* translates into 'lizard', a comment given emphasis by his salacious flipping of the 'lizard' on twelve-year-old Kim. This scene in the clubhouse — a Uranian positionality that is no longer a Comatas coffer — would certainly be (mis)interpreted by most adults on the outside as maladjusted, psychotic, immoral, sinful, unlawful, fringe, objectionable, and/or intrusive. It would also warrant the idealised Hugo, were he in America or Britain, a stint in a prison or psychiatric hospital; or, at the very least, the forfeiture of his teaching

of Guy Davenport', in *Postmodern Approaches to the Short Story*, ed. by Farhat Iftekharudin, et al. (Westport, CT: Praeger/Greenwood, 2003), pp.133-44 (p.143).

position, as Johnson had. However, fortunately for Hugo, this is Davenport's imaginary Denmark, a place where one posits for oneself how 'to be or not to be'.

While the other 'Grundtviggers' ponder and measure Hugo at length, his favourites Kim, Anders, and Franklin 'know' him all too well (perhaps in the fullest biblical sense), with his body and its history more familiar to them than modern Western society would expect or hope:

Hugo's twice as old as me plus a year, Franklin said, and has been fucking since fifteen. His dick's 23 cm. He and my sister Mariana do it every day, because they love each other. (*Balloon*, p.135)

Hugo's [penis] has big veins all over it, and bumpy ridges. Long as my forearm, and the head's as big as my fist. See, he said he got it that big by whacking off when he was a boy. (P.141)

Nevertheless, in the Arcadia that is Davenport's *Jules Verne Steam Balloon*, all charges of 'corrupting the innocent' are rendered mute or moot; and all erotic touches and their accompanying 'knowing', whether bestowed by the boys themselves or by the adult Hugo ('twice as old as me plus a year'), bespeak only the playfulness about which James Kincaid concludes: 'Play, feasting on its own inventiveness, does not lead to anything but its own perpetuation. [...] Play eroticizes the whole world — and keeps it that way'.¹ Moreover, as an exemplar of this 'herd of boys', these 'agemates', twelve-year-old Kim literally basks in this form of love, a love that infuses his world with the aesthetic, erotic playfulness Kincaid describes above:

Then [Kim] stared at the engraving of Holberg to the left of the map and reset the nudge of his penis in his pants. The view through the French windows was a Bonnard. He read all the dull mail on the desk while fitching his crotch with meditative fingerings. At the harpsichord he played a gavotte by Bach, to keep from thinking of Anders just then. Midnote a repeat he froze, swivelled around, and turned a cartwheel. The view through the French windows was Bonnard because of the greens and mauves, the rusty pink of the brick wall. Anders, talking or strolling, liked to roll the ball of his thumb against his dick through his pants, and laugh like a dog about it, no sound, only a happy look and slitty eyes. Kim slid his pants down and off. Whether anybody was home he didn't know. His briefs caught on his shoe and had to be hopped free. He yawned grandly, and stretched. He finished the gavotte at the harpsichord, did another cartwheel, and sauntered upstairs, britchesless. On the bed he allowed himself to think about Anders, happily, wondering if he were wicked, silly, or simply lucky. (*Balloon*, p.55)

¹ James R. Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.197.

Beyond its prurient suggestiveness (complete with the Hopkinsian detail of doffing one's clothes before remembering one's still-tied shoes), the above reveals an Everyland untainted by Christian shame, with prepubescent Kim cast in a Uranian fantasy role and Davenport's reader cast as a paederastic Porphyro, provided a voyeuristic proximity to this naked boy without that distance being defeated, at least artistically. Beyond its dynamic of voyeurism/exhibitionism, this image of Kim, an uninhibited prepubescent flaunting about in a gilded setting, also bespeaks a degree of depth and a score of Paterian virtues — 'impressions, [...] pleasant memories, and subsequent hopes [...] a really Epicurean economy' (Pater, Review of *Dorian Gray*, p.60). As Mason relates:

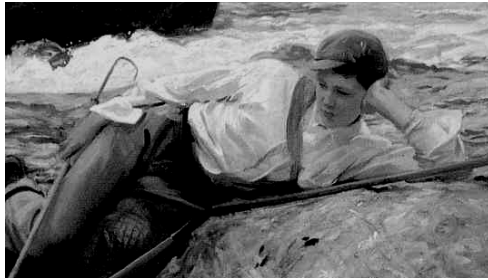
Davenport's [Edenic] Garden, abandoned but pristine, is a world of potential waiting to be seized. Unaware of what befell the prior tenants, innocents fill the house, and each other, with endless stores of goodness. [...] That Davenport's [...] boys might forge joyful bonds in nature should be an acceptable alternative to [William] Golding's version, in which children left to their own devices hack one another apart. Alas, few critics have seen it that way. When a seventy-five-year-old man writes about little boys falling in love, describes them admiring each other's dicks, rubbing noses, blowing kisses to each other, it seems his work can't escape the most literal interpretations.¹

¹ Mason, p.92. Had it been cast as academic, rather than fictive, Davenport's paederastic Utopia — particularly as actualised by Hugo — would likely have received a far more hostile reception, a reception that can be anticipated in lieu of the following snippets of Americana: On 19 September 2005, the conservative website WorldNetDaily.com ran an article titled 'New Book Promotes Sex with Children: Ph.D. "Expert" Claims Pederasty Good for "Nurturing", "Mentoring" Young Boys' <http://worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=46394> [last accessed 18 June 2006], an article that elicited wide-spread condemnation of an as-yet-unreleased book, despite the fact that none of those condemning it could have read the chapter about which they were protesting. Under mounting pressure from the general public, The Haworth Press, an academic publisher, cancelled the controversial book before publication. After further consideration, The Haworth Press posted the following note on their official website:

The Haworth Press, Inc., will be proceeding with publication of a re-edited version of *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West*. This version will not include Dr. Bruce Rind's chapter titled 'Pederasty: An Integration of Cross-Cultural, Cross-Species, and Empirical Data'. It is the intention of the Press to publish a future volume (title and publication date to be announced) which will examine the controversial issues surrounding research on adult-adolescent sexuality in a fully-framed context from as many perspectives as possible, including Dr. Rind's and those of his critics. <<http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sku=5694>> [last accessed 18 June 2006]

Earlier, Dr Rind had garnered national condemnation for publishing, with his co-authors Philip Tromovitch and Robert Bauserman, 'A Meta-Analytic Examination of Assumed Properties of Child Sexual Abuse Using College Samples', *Psychological Bulletin*, 124.1 (1998), pp.22-53. Although the *Psychological Bulletin* is a peer-reviewed journal of the

Sometimes whole chapters are nothing more than these boys flaunting about *en plein air*, as with chapter eighty-four, which merely reads: 'Forest light on bare butts. Kim smelled of mint between the toes' (*Balloon*, p.90). Although a miniature, this chapter is Uranian prose at its most palpable, a Keatsian 'this living hand, now warm and capable / Of earnest grasping'.¹



On His Holidays (detail)

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)

Oil on canvas, 1901-02

Lady Lever Art Gallery

Port Sunlight, near Liverpool, UK

Almost universally unappreciated, the depth and corresponding Paterian virtues that Davenport delineates in his own characters are absent in Hollinghurst's 'predator turned philosopher', despite that predator's linguistic finesse in combining 'the style of Gerard Manley Hopkins with homoerotic sex-chat'. By analogy, Hollinghurst's protagonists resemble the Porphyro that Jack Stillinger unmasks in John Keats's 'The Eve of St Agnes'; and Davenport's, the Porphyro that Earl Wasserman finds: the first are vampiric seducers; the second, Provençal courtiers.² Notice that the Paterian virtues of Davenport's puerile protagonists and their 'boymaster' Hugo include servitude and possessiveness, courtly qualities that Wilde, with his lust for beautiful 'objects' he could handle

American Psychological Association, in this case politics took precedence over scientific research, with the United States Congress attempting to nullify the co-authors' findings by legislative vote. On 12 July 1999, the House of Representatives passed a resolution — a resolution subsequently passed unanimously in the Senate — condemning this study and declaring that child-adult sexual contact could be nothing save 'abusive and destructive'. However, a later re-evaluation of the article by the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Committee of Scientific Freedom and Responsibility concluded that there was 'no clear evidence of improper application of methodology or other questionable practices on the part of the article's authors'.

¹ John Keats, '[This Living Hand, Now Warm and Capable]', lines 1-2, in Elizabeth Cook, ed., *John Keats* (Oxford Authors series) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.331.

² This is a reference to the still-potent, antipodal perspectives on John Keats's poem. See Earl R. Wasserman, 'The Eve of St. Agnes', in *The Finer Tone: Keats's Major Poems* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), pp.97-138; Jack Stillinger, 'The Hoodwinking of Madeline: Skepticism in "The Eve of St. Agnes"', in *The Hoodwinking of Madeline' and Other Essays on Keats's Poems* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), pp.67-93; Jack Stillinger, *Reading 'The Eve of St. Agnes': The Multiples of Complex Literary Transaction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

and later discard — ‘I used to be utterly reckless of young lives: I used to take up a boy, love him “passionately”, and then grow bored with him, and often take no notice of him’¹ — could neither conceive nor compass:

Anders squatted to undo Kim’s shoes and pants. You undress him? Lemuel said. Neat. *Hejsa!* the kid has no more pubic hair than an infant. I do too, Kim said, some. He comes, Anders said, and I love him. (*Balloon*, p.93)

Timidly [Kim] hugged back, and then hugged warmly, with a kiss for her nose. [Meg] returned the kiss on his navel, and gave him up to Anders’s claiming arms. (P.72)

These images become even courtlier when brought into proximity with the confession of Hollinghurst’s protagonist that ‘I felt a delicious surplus of lust and satisfaction at the idea of fucking [this Arab boy] while another boy waited for me at home’. In Hollinghurst’s hands, Kim, Anders, and Franklin would be worthy of a predatory ‘fuck’: in Davenport’s, they would be worthy of the renunciation that T. H. White embraced — ‘the practical facts of life are an impenetrable barrier [...] [that] offers the fox to my bosom, and I must let it gnaw’² — or, given the removal of that barrier in an Arcadian Denmark, all the Hopkinsian ‘froliclavish’ that love and freedom can bestow on the path to self-actualisation.

Unlike Hollinghurst’s protagonists, Davenport’s are enveloped in an atmosphere of love and devotion that literary critics, almost without exception, have found, at best, disconcerting, far more disconcerting than the blatant banality that eventually won Hollinghurst the Booker Prize³:

That so many of Davenport’s readers and critics have seen naked boys and thought smut, have seen love and decided it ‘unsettling’, is an expression of the problem Davenport wants to get past, not sexually but intellectually. For what these stories do — if we can escape what Davenport has called ‘our end-of-the-century comstockery and liberal puritanism’ — is encourage us to question what kind of world we have built for ourselves. [...] Davenport’s Fourierist fictions are figurative expressions of a desire for release from the narrowly defined jails — verbal, philosophical, practical — that our beliefs can erect.⁴

This imaginary Denmark is merely a ‘backdrop for Davenport’s reimagining of Western civilization along Fourierist lines. [Charles] Fourier found the bourgeois

¹ Letter to Reginald Turner, 21 June 1897, in Rupert Hart-Davis, ed., *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1962), p.616.

² Sylvia Townsend Warner, *T. H. White: A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), pp.277-78.

³ His novel *The Line of Beauty* (2004) won the 2004 Man Booker Prize for Fiction.

⁴ Mason, p.92.

family unit suffocating and murderous; Davenport seeks to reinvent it'.¹ One of the ways that Davenport depicts this 'reinvention' is through the liberal values of Kim's father, the Headmaster of NFS Grundtvig, a Latinist who facilitates an intergenerational discourse with his son based on a mutual understanding of the flesh and its attendant desires, as when Kim is discovered caressing himself sensually in his presence: 'Papa looked funny over the top of his glasses and then up to heaven, and then paid me a wink. O boy' (*Balloon*, p.60). It is within the context of that wink that Davenport's reader is prompted to consider the following exchange between father and son, an exchange that blends the father's Latinist values with the more Grecian values of his younger colleague Hugo, a blend of 'the Danish and the Greek':

Kim in stubby blue pants all but occulted by a jersey with the collar flicked up cockily in back, fists at thighs, head down. [...] [His father said,] You're as brown as an Etruscan and as fetching as Ganymedes. Who's that? Charming chap your age in Greek legend filched by Zeus to do God knows what with.
(P.56)

As with Forster's 'Classical Annex', Davenport's fictions (although written decades later) exhibit the humour and Edwardian tact that characterise most 'literary' Uranian writing from the turn of the century until 1967; for, according to Mason, 'nowhere in any of Davenport's stories are his children [actually] witnessed having sex. Thus the notion that this could be pornography, or pederasty, is difficult to support'.² Despite its attempt to assuage critical disapproval, Mason's generalisation is inaccurate. Even in the darkness of Forster's Edwardian tale, the boy and the animated Roman statue are 'witnessed having sex' — visually by the resulting sculpture 'The Wrestling Lesson', audibly by

a familiar, an adorable sound: a giggle. Denis was laughing at something. [...] 'Aren't you awful?' and there was the sound of a kiss. Gladiatorial feints, post-classical suction [...] [and] the giggling started again and soared up into hysterics against a ground-bass of grunts.

Similarly, Davenport's characters are also 'witnessed having sex', though in prose handled with the same deftness as Forster's. Mason's generalisation cannot possibly account for the following scene (which constitutes all of chapter thirty-

¹ Mason, p.91. François Marie Charles Fourier (1772-1837), the French social philosopher, hoped to reorganise society into a Utopia where individuals could follow their natural inclinations, believing that, by allowing people to channel their natural passions properly, rather than forcing them to strain within the 'jesses' and 'mind-forg'd manacles' supplied by existing 'civilisation', mankind would achieve social harmony and enlightenment. For the significance of Fourier to Davenport, see Bruce Bawer, 'The Stories of Guy Davenport: Fiction à la Fourier', *The New Criterion*, 3.4 (1984), pp.8-14.

² Mason, p.92.

three of *The Jules Verne Steam Balloon*), a scene in which Hugo, Mariana, and her young brother Franklin ('half as old as Hugo, after subtracting a year') are indeed 'witnessed having sex', *in medias res*, in a mixture curious to untangle:

I like my sandbar, Franklin said, like my river. Also Hugo's house all one room and a big window in the roof. Sand on your dick and balls, Mariana said, brushing. And, said Franklin, you and Hugo have come three times and I've only come once. *Hejsa!* that feels yummy. This isn't icky? Hope not, Hugo answered for her. But, said Franklin, his eyes squeezing closed, acute pleasure making his fingers spread and his mouth a muzzle, when she lollies your dick you're kissing her between the legs, and then you fuck. *Oh jo*, Hugo said, sweet and slow. Hunch in, and you'll get a flutter of tongue-tip on the backdrag. Warm and wet, Franklin said, and good. Me next, Hugo said. Mariana shooed him away, smoothing hands up Franklin's thighs to his collarbones. Faunulus on the mossbank, Pastorella on her knees. The blithering phone. *Hallo, jo*. Not really: an afternoon with friends. Love to, but can't. Later, then, or another time. Bore's delight, the telephone. Going to come, Franklin said. Coming! he sang. Figmilk, said Mariana, a nice skeet and a fribble. What a blush! Hugo hefted him out of the chair and crushed him in a hug. Bet you, he said, you can't come again, two handrunning, and then we'll all be even, and start over. (P.65)¹

Even when the eroticism is less ejaculatory than the above, Davenport's reader is brought tantalisingly close to that inevitable 'figmilk', though the sexual act that produces it usually takes place offstage or is handled symbolically, often with a botanist's touch. Notice the brilliant transition between the two sections of chapter twenty, a description of a pubescent *ménage à trois*, two boys and a girl, a description that blends into a florid 'longspur lupine':

I liked kissing all day yesterday. Poor Nello's left out. Don't anybody kiss me, Nello said. As [Nello and Gerrit] stood kissing, Petra pushed down Gerrit's briefs, and, squatting, took them off, batting Gerrit's hands away from trying to pull them up again. No clothes we agreed, she said. I'm mortified, said Gerrit.

Lupinus Calcaratus

Erect, high, silky pubescent throughout, leafy. Leaflets 7 to 10, linear lanceolate, acute, mucronate: stipules ovate, acuminate, persistent: flowers in rather close and short raceme, bracts subulate, deciduous, calyx deeply spurred at base, minutely bracteolate, the upper lip short, double-toothed, white, the lower larger, entire, acute: banner and wings somewhat pubescent externally, the keel ciliate: pods hairy, with four seeds. Flowers white, the spur exceeding the pedicels. (*Balloon*, p.12)

¹ For several incestuous moments between Mariana and her younger brother Franklin, see *Balloon*, pp.72; 77-78. For erotic insinuation involving Franklin spending the night alone with Hugo — 'Moreover, he and Hugo were going to sleep together, like buddies, no pyjamas' — see pp.95-96. (This last detail echoes the criminal charges in the recent Michael Jackson trial, suggesting how this Davenport 'sleep-over' would be perceived by the American legal system and current American public opinion.)

Through a score of such Modernist and Post-Modernist techniques, Davenport's prose manages to fulfil what-cannot-be-fulfilled amid denials, scrupulosities, and beliefs; amid ethical, legal, and religious restrictions; amid the concern of Western society (in general) and Anglo-American society (in particular) to limit physical intimation and actualisation of homoerotic and paederastic desires. The result is a textual, paederastic Utopia.



Lupinus arbustus (Laxiflorus), subspecies Calcaratus

'In his own fiction', Mason writes, 'Davenport has succeeded in [...] finding new ways to dramatize one, suggestive question: "What if we were free?"'¹ This is the principal question that the Uranian positionality has attempted to answer for itself since 1858 — whether the confining, honey-nurtured space was Johnson's Comatas chest, Dolben's treasure-house, Pater's vestibule, Hopkins's epithalamic coffer and winter world, Forster's Classical Annex, or Davenport's NFS Grundtvig clubhouse. Like the Victorian and Edwardian Uranians, the late Guy Davenport was primarily concerned with 'how the sensitive individual who creates art survives in a society that is frequently inhospitable to such sensitivity',² especially that paederastic sensitivity that, since the ascendancy of Christianity, has constituted a unique positionality, a little tended aspect of the human condition, an unploughed-yet-fertile field for scholarly investigation.³ This is the continuum that this volume has attempted to

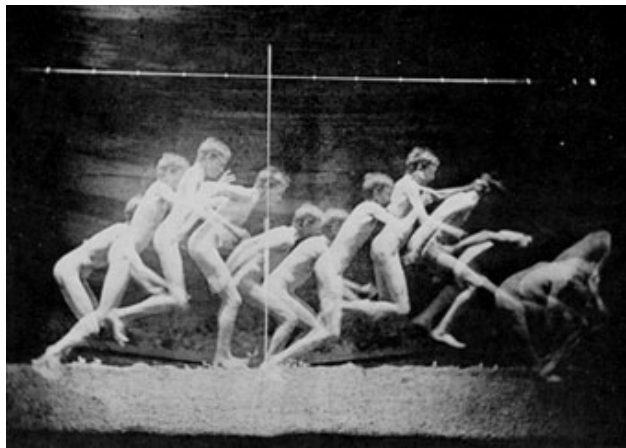
¹ Mason, p.92.

² Ibid., p.88. This recalls Pater's short story 'Emerald Uthwart'.

³ The Uranian positionality presently flourishes in the works of modern Japanese cartoonists, particularly in *Shonen-ai* (or 'Boy-Love') *Manga*. These cartoons often draw on the historic tradition of samurai warriors and their paederastic relationships with their pageboys. This flourishing in contemporary Japan — mostly through popular 'Uranian' writing like comic books — extends to an interest in the Victorian and Edwardian

engage through a ‘Uranian approach’, a continuum that, given Davenport’s fiction, one must conclude shows neither signs of discontinuing nor of answering its own most puzzling of questions, ‘What if we were free?’

This question may have a multitude of answers, many of which are morally reprehensible; however, the ‘elevated’ Uranians, whether Victorian or contemporary, provide very different answers to that question than do the ‘carnal’ Uranians, a point that is crucial to consider in any judicious approach to their writings and artworks. The twenty-first century may indeed see the birth of another who, honey-fed on Davenport’s Utopian fantasies, will restring Johnson’s lute with gold, will further the Uranian continuum, will answer that question of ‘freedom’ so central to Uranian thought — another who will warrant, for good or ill, the title *Sanctus pæderasta*, or *The Holy Paederast*.



Double Jump

Thomas Cowperthwait Eakins (1844-1916)
Motion photograph, 1885
Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Uranians. In the letter that appears as ‘Appendix Two’, d’Arch Smith relates: ‘I shall also mention your work to a Japanese Uranian collector who teaches at university’. For an elucidation of *nanshoku* (‘the way of paederasty’) during the Pax Tokugawa (1603-1868), see Gary P. Leupp, *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). In a review of this volume in *Contemporary Sociology*, 26.1 (1997), pp.73-74, Stephen O. Murray writes:

[Leupp’s book] documents constructions of male homosexuality that are quite different from the contemporary egalitarian ‘gay’ one [...] While showing beyond any reasonable doubt that male homosexuality may be structured in ways other than it currently is, it also proves that there were conceptions (models even) of desires, roles, and of a ‘way’ of being before forensic-psychiatric discourse of late-nineteenth-century Europe supposedly created the first consciousness of a kind defined by same-sex eros. (P.74)



Academic Study of Adolescent Boy, Seen from Behind
Emile-Jean-Horace Vernet (1789-1863)
Oil on canvas, ca. 1807-08
Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey, USA

— Appendix One —

‘Memoranda from Mr. P—’
The Pearl: A Journal of Facetiæ and Voluptuous Reading
17 (November 1880), 598-601

Mr. Reddie used to call me Petro, as a short familiar name; but whilst he lodged with me at my house, Brecknock Crescent, Camden Town (N.B. — This is where I first was introduced to Mr. Reddie), I was continually afraid he would bring himself or both of us into serious trouble.

Once, I remember, we went to Margate for a few weeks at the seaside, and the landlady of the house where we stopped had a very good-looking son, a youth not over fifteen, if quite so old. Mr. Reddie was in love at once, but how to win the boy over was the difficulty.

‘Petro’, he would say, ‘I must fuck that boy or go out of my mind from frigging myself as I lie in bed and think of him. How can we manage it, old boy?’

I recommended patience, and an opportunity would be sure to turn up.

‘Treat him well, and let’s take him out for a bathe or a walk with us whenever he will go’, I said.

My advice was taken. Young Frank was soon quite at home in our rooms and evidently pleased at being made such a favourite by the lodgers, who were always treating him to cakes, wine or fruit.

We took several promenades with him as companion, and in a few days he also regularly accompanied us and shared the same machine with us when we bathed.

How we joked him about his little doodle, asked him if it would stand stiff and about boys playing with each other’s cocks at school. This was of course done very carefully and gradually, and we began to think him discreet enough as he had often assured us that he told no tales out of school, when we gave him shillings or half-crowns.

[At this point in the story, after playing voyeur through a peephole whilst the landlady, Mrs. Glover, masturbates, the narrator ‘Petro’ enters her room and her vagina unannounced. After initially protesting, the landlady gives in to this near-rape scenario. They then begin to sleep with each other every night, the narrator noting that this ‘liaison quite blinded her to our intentions regarding Master Frank’.]

We soon proceeded to all sorts of indecencies with the youth. Mr. Reddie and myself would compare the immense difference in size of our pricks before him in the bathing-machine (Reddie’s was a very small one, not five inches). We asked him to feel and judge for himself. The very touch of his delicate soft youthful hand made the seed shoot from me, which you may be sure immensely surprise[d *sic*] the lad, and made him blush scarlet, so that we were afraid of having gone too far.

Another morning Mr. Reddie gamahuched him till he spent in his mouth and seemed to enjoy the sucking, after which we handled each other’s pricks and he amused himself with them, until we emitted our juice, mine spurting all over his belly as he stood in front of me. Then we went into the sea to refresh ourselves and afterwards made him a

present of half a sovereign, which his innocent mother, I believe, thought was only a delicate way of pleasing herself.

A day or two after this, Mr. Reddie pretended to be obliged to return to town for two or three days and we easily persuaded Mrs. Glover to allow Frank to go with us, and I promised to show him all the sights, while Mr. Reddie was attending to his business; this she also took as another kindness to herself and we started on our journey.

We took apartments in town at the house of a Mrs. Anderson (an old friend of Mr. Reddie's where he was always safe to do as he pleased). They consisted of a sitting-room and bedroom adjoining, the latter with two beds in it so that Frank had to sleep with either one of us.

Then we showed him a fine collection of coloured [photographic] plates of boys and girls, boys with boys or men, etc., some of the latter plainly showing they had got their cocks in their partners' bottoms.

'You'll let him do it to you, Petro, won't you?' appealed Mr. Reddie as he whispered in ecstasy: 'I shall soon be landed now!'

There was no object[ion, *sic*] on my part; his little cock couldn't hurt me. Besides, I had a great fancy for it at the moment, and told him he must put his arms around my waist and handle my cock and make it come.

Frank was quite pleased to try. His youthful affair was quite stiff and hard at the idea of having a man.

We threw off everything and I knelt down on all fours on the hearth-rug. Then, Mr. Reddie guided Frank's prick to my arse-hole and he soon wriggled it in whilst his hand clasped and friggd my big cock in front. It was so extraordinarily exciting to my ideas that I spent at once, and clasped one of my hands round each of his wrists to make him frig quicker; also to secure him in case he flinched from Reddie's assault.

My friend had already got a finger well greased with cold cream up Frank's fundament which the boy seemed to enjoy rather than not, as I might judge by the increasing activity of his little prick in my arse.

'Now, Frank', said Mr. Reddie, 'you will let me try to have you, won't you, you dear boy? It won't hurt'.

I had previously taken a looking-glass from the dressing-table and placed it on the floor, so I could see every motion of both of my companions. With one hand Reggie was caressing the cock and balls of the boy, as he fucked my bottom, whilst his right hand presents his prick to the tight little pink arse-hole which kept bobbling towards him.

Frank whined a little at the attack; but Reddie being small, as I have said, had no difficulty in effectually getting into him. How his face flushed and his eyes sparkled with delight as he almost screamed out: 'I'm in, oh, delicious! I'm landed at last, Petro, my dear fellow! I'm coming — I can't stop!'

This made me come again and I also felt Frank spend at the same moment. We kept our places and had another splendid bottom-fuck before separating.

My prick was too big to get into either of my companions; but I loved to have the boy fuck me, and frig me whilst Reddie had him.

The very thought of that adventure makes my old pego stand at any moment.

— Appendix Two —

London

Street

14 October 2001

Dear Mr Kaylor:

Thank you very much for your letter and for your fascinating article on Hopkins. I think you have treated the Uranian motif most carefully and I am in thorough agreement with your footnote 18. The gay scholars have completely ignored the facts and turned the ~~the~~ writings to their advantage.

'Uranian' is now synonymous with 'gay' which, ~~xx~~ to avoid just such a conflation, is the reason I (historically incorrectly) labelled them 'Uranian.' Never mind. The other myth that has got about is that 'earnest' was a code-word for 'gay' when all I said was that Wilde and Nicholson used the same pun on a name. Ah, these academics (yourself excluded and Jim Kincaid who talks admirable sense).

Now then: alas, I sold my Uranian collection years ago (funny Bertha should have turned up in L.A.). I know of two or three private collections but I don't know whether they would allow - or would have the facility - for copying. I'm going to talk to a friend in America about the university libraries over there although I know that when I was writing Earnest I was amazed at how pitiful the U.S. holdings were. Surely Bodley will allow you to copy books as opposed to MSS? I know B.L. is getting very difficult about book-copying. Anyhow I shall write again when I've found out more and I shall also mention your work to a Japanese Uranian collector who teaches at university and might be able to arrange copying facilities there. I wanted, though, to write and acknowledge your letter and to let you know I am giving it some thought.

There are of course a few reprinted texts: Sterbock is just about to appear (4 collected poems) and there was a silly series put out by Gay men's Press

of Nicholson, Bradford and such; and a bookseller, Noel Lloyd, did a selection of poems from The Spirit Lamp and a couple of other pamphlets. But nobody's done a big fat decent anthology or, so far as I know, caught up with any authors I might have missed. But you must not be discouraged because I'm sure that you will make an excellent job of whatever Uranian angle you end up by tackling.

It's fair to say, of course, that at the time they were writing (I think I made the point in Earnest) there was no distinction made between the homo. and the uranian (except of course, like Rolfe to Fox in the Venice Letters ~~to~~ to express surprise that such a stimulus could be found gratifying) and in psychological medicine all inverts were lumped together (unless the age group fell drastically). Today as you say there ~~is~~ ^{are} only expressions of horror. Almost as bad as smoking, another American-born hysteria.

I'm just back from Hereford, very very near St Winefride's well. My lady-friend who was driving (I can't drive) didn't have the time to take me over. I'd love to have seen Corvo's banners which are still extant. He must have been a bit of a pest. I often think how lucky I am neither he nor William Beckford (we need a decent life of him as well) are still alive and on the telephone, Rolfe on the scrounge and Beckford grumbling about the condition of the books I've just sold him.

I'll be in touch again.

Sincerely

Tinsley JA — u

— Appendix Three —

Old Bailey Proceedings, 5 December 1718
John Bowes and Hugh Ryly (t17181205-24)

John Bowes, and Hugh Ryly, of St. Pauls Covent Garden, were indicted for that they not having God before their-Eyes, did the former commit that horrible and detestable Sin called Buggery, and did against nature carnally know Hugh Ryly, the 27th of November last, and the latter suffer the same to be committed on him. The Evidence for the King was Gerard Fitzgerald, who deposed that having been in company with one William Burridge, and going late home between 1 and 2 o Clock in the Morning, being in Covent Garden, William Burridge said to him do you see the sport going on, shewing him as they thought (being at a distance) a Man kissing a Woman against the Church Rails, upon which he said let's go see what for a Madam he has got there, but being answer'd no, since we make no sport dont let's spoil any, they staid a little while till they thought they had done, then making up to them found the two Persons Mr. Riley undermost and Mr. Bowes upon him, Mr. Bowes Breeches being down about his Heeles, but Mr. Riley being nimbler had made a shift to shuffle his Breeches up by that time they got to them; that Rallying them for so vile a practice Mr. Bowes reply'd Sirrah what's that to you, cant I make use of my own Body? I have done nothing but what I will do again, that Riley hearing him call Fitzgerald, spoke to him in Irish, thinking him an Irishman by his name, but he did not understand him, not being so. That Riley persuading them not to expose them offer'd to give them a Note of 10 l. to forbear, and said that Bowes should make it up Twenty; that he being unexperienc'd, and not thinking of delivering them up at the Round-House, did go with them to a Womans House near Charing-Cross, whom Mr. Bowes knew, where he asking the Woman if she knew him, she reply'd yes, and had for these Twenty Years, upon which he requir'd her to trust him half a Crowns worth of Drink to make him and the other Person drink, but she refusing to do it, two Pots were call'd for, which the Prisoners neither of them having money they were forc'd to pay for it themselves, that from thence they went to Mr. Vickers a Constable at the Angel and Crown in Hedge-Lane, where there was some offers to make it up, and the other Person Burridge, inclining to it, he did hearken to their Proposals, but being dubious in his mind did not, and that there being an offer of 10 l. Riley call'd for Pen Ink and Paper, and began to draw a Note, but in about half an Hours time they were carried away, Mr. Bowes to the Gate-House, he telling the Constable he was a Housekeeper, and Ryley to the Round-House, and the next Morning before a Justice, who not caring to Act in the Case without assistance of some of his Brother Justices order'd them to be kept till the Morrow, when several Justices meeting at a Vestry they were committed; that William Burridge was with him at Hicks's Hall in order to find the Bill against them, and since had not appear'd he supposing him to have been brib'd to absent himself. A Surgeon depos'd that he being sent by the Justice to examine Mr. Ryleys Posteriers, did so, and found the Spincter Muscle more Lax and Dilated than usual in a Person of his Age, which in Young Persons is generally more close and contracted, but how it might come, he would not take upon him to determine. Mr. Bowes in his defence deny'd they were in Covert-Garden at all, he said that an acquaintance of his having newly set up a Tavern in

the Strand, he went thither to drink a Pint or two of Wine with a Friend, and staid there till almost 2 o Clock, this was confirm'd by the Drawer, who added he saw no immodesty acted by them there, and as he and Mr. Ryley, were coming home going toward Charing-Cross, two Men came up to them and charged them with being Sodomites, and called them abundance of names, and follow'd them to one Mrs. Jacksons Cellar at Charing-Cross, that indeed he had no Money about him having spent it, but that he was formerly a Woollen-Draper in Pall-Mall but had left it off, and now liv'd in Salisbury Street in the Strand. He called a Kinswoman who deposed that she heard the Prosecutors demand 3 Guineas in Money and a Note to make it up 15 l. But call'd none to his Reputation. Fitzgarald did not deny but Burridge did say to him, they offer 10 l. let us insist upon 15 l. but he did not directly agree, being suspicious of the Justice and safety of doing it. Hugh Ryley pleaded in his defence that he was going home to his Lodging about 11 o Clock and met Mr. Bowes coming out of the Tavern in the Strand, who call'd him Mr. Nugent, that he reply'd his name was not Nugent, to which Mr. Bowes, made answer that let his name be what it would he would give him a Quart of Wine, that he did go in with him, and they staid there till 1 or 2 o Clock, and as they were going along the Prosecutor and Burridge came to them, and said they were Buggerers, and were responsible Men, and they would have Money of us, and Collaring of us carried us away. He called an Evidence who deposed that when they were at the Constables House at the Angle and Crown in Hedge-Lane, he hearkened at the Window, and heard them talking of a Note, and heard Fitzgarald telling one of them he had not spell'd his name right, and there was a talk of drawing the Note favourable. He call'd some Persons that had lain with him, and deposed they never had known him attempt any thing that was immodest, and that he had been Servant to Collonel Paget, and was a Person of good character and fair and honest in his dealings. He added that as to what the Surgeon had said he had been under an indisposition and taken Physick, which might cause that Laxness in his Body the Surgeon had spoken of; and added that he himself desir'd a Surgeon might search him, and called the Justice to prove it, which he did. Upon hearing the whole matter the Jury acquitted them.

— Appendix Four —

Epithalamion

Hark, hearer, hear what I do; lend a thought now, make believe
We are leaf-whelmed somewhere with the hood
Of some branchy bunchy bushybowered wood,
Southern dean or Lancashire clough or Devon cleave,
That leans along the loins of hills, where a candycoloured, where a gluegold-brown
Marbled river, boisterously beautiful, between
Roots and rocks is danced and dandled, all in froth and waterblowballs, down.
We are there, when we hear a shout
That the hanging honeysuck, the dogeared hazels in the cover
Makes dither, makes hover
And the riot of a rout
Of, it must be, boys from the town
Bathing: it is summer's sovereign good.

By there comes a listless stranger: beckoned by the noise
He drops towards the river: unseen
Sees the bevy of them, how the boys
With dare and with downdolfinry and bellbright bodies huddling out,
Are earthworld, airworld, waterworld thorough hurled, all by turn and turn about.

This garland of their gambol flashes in his breast
Into such a sudden zest
Of summertime joys
That he hies to a pool neighbouring; sees it is the best
There; sweetest, freshest, shadowiest;
Fairyland; silk-beech, scrolled ash, packed sycamore, wild wychelm, hornbeam
fretty overstood
By. Rafts and rafts of flake-leaves light, dealt so, painted on the air,
Hang as still as hawk or hawkmoth, as the stars or as the angels there,
Like the thing that never knew the earth, never off roots
Rose. Here he feasts: lovely all is! N6 more: off with — down he dings
His bleachèd both and woolwoven wear:
Careless these in coloured wisp
All lie tumbled-to; then with loop-locks
Forward falling, forehead frowning, lips crisp
Over fingerteasing task, his twiny boots
Fast he opens, last he off wrings
Till walk the world he can with bare his feet
And come where lies a coffer, burly all of blocks
Built of chancequarrièd, selfquainèd hoar-huskèd rocks

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[While preparing this volume, I presented drafts of various sections at scholarly meetings in the Czech Republic, as well as in a few 'in house', Czech university publications. The published versions of those are listed below:]

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