

— 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

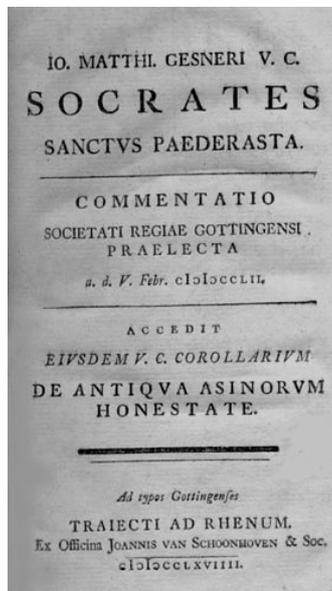
¹ Pollini, pp.23-24.

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 pæderasta

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 Gemeenschädliche 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 'Homeroitic 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 Straton 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

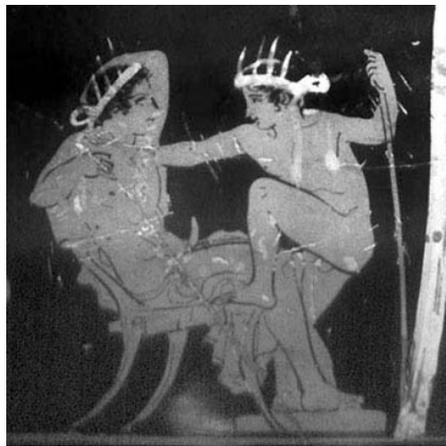
For the present consideration, what is vital is not what Pollini's Greco-Roman symposiast would have said about paederasty and its depictions on the Warren Cup, or what a Renaissance symposiast would have said about paederasty and its Greco-Roman and contemporary depictions, but what Greco-Roman and 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 Coronæ [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*,

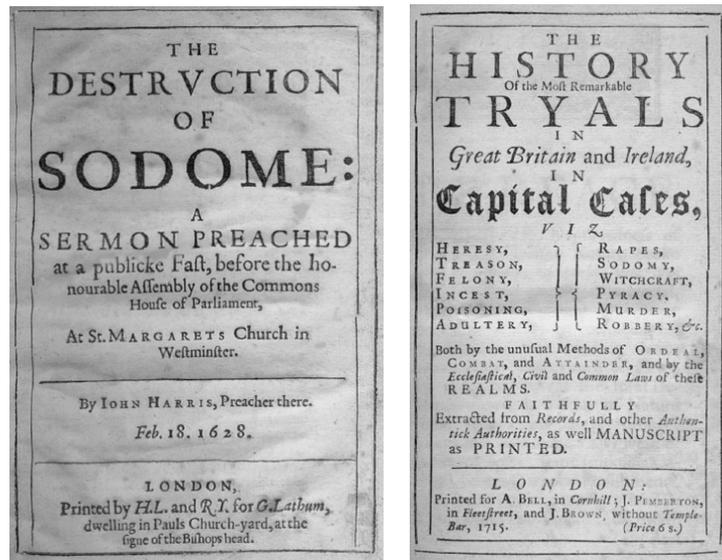
Since these expressions of opprobrium — as Foucault, Sedgwick, and Halperin emphasise¹ — denoted ‘acts’ or ‘perpetrators of acts’, rather than ‘modes of being’ or ‘singular natures’, they said nothing about the individual’s ‘constitution’; they merely decried or chided his commission of acts worthy of 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’.

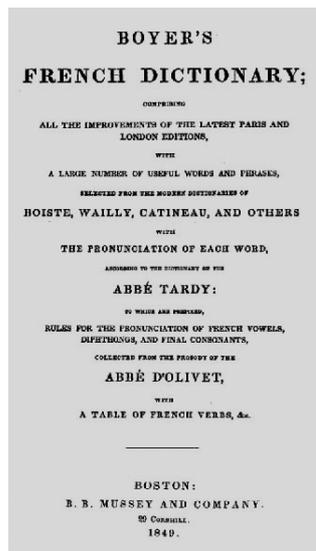
Furthermore, it should be remembered that this volume is only concerned with the paederastic Uranians, a distinct group of Victorian writers, artists, and thinkers, most of whom had some connection to Oxford University, its Greats curriculum, and Walter Pater — in other words, a ‘small band of elite “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

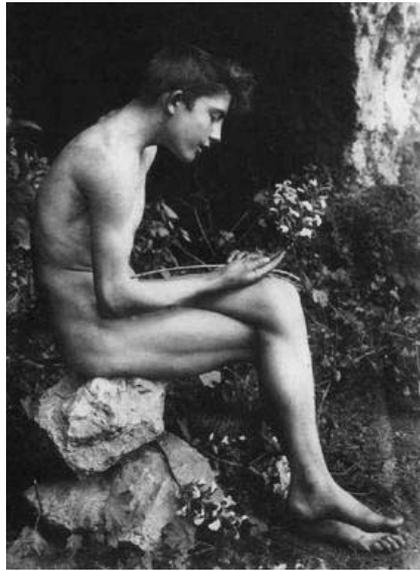
Substantiating or elucidating such second-hand statements is further problematised or even thwarted because the Uranians frequently burned their own correspondence and diaries, or their friends and families did so¹ — or, as in the case of Pater, they covered their tracks by avoiding both. The diary of 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.

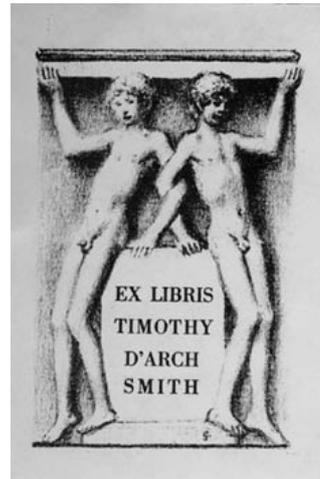
¹ I wish to thank Steve Gertz of William Dailey Rare Books for corresponding with me regarding this particular copy's catalogue description and for providing me with details about its sale. It is my hope that, by reproducing several of its identifiable bookplates, a collector will, sometime in the future,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

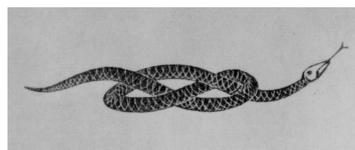
Columbine formed from birds and mask

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 paederastic 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