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‘Tempting Suggestible Young Men’: Pater, Pedagogy, Pederasty

This article considers biographical and textual materials relating to the Victorian pederastic pedagogy of Walter Pater, an Oxford don, author, and aesthetic critic. Emphasis is placed on the ways that his novel ‘Marius the Epicurean’ and essay ‘Winckelmann’ serve to elucidate this merging of pederasty and pedagogy, as well as the influence of this merging on his former student and later friend Gerard Manley Hopkins, one of the premier Victorian poets, a poet whose ‘Epithalamion’ provides the fullest Uranian encapsulation of Pater’s elaborate and decadent pedagogy.

I will not sing my little puny songs.
[...]
Therefore in passiveness I will lie still,
And let the multitudinous music of the Greek
Pass into me, till I am musical.
(Digby Mackworth Dolben, ‘After Reading Aeschylus’)¹

Puzzled by the degree of intimacy between ‘a shy, reticent scholar-artist’ and ‘a self-silenced, ascetic priest-poet’, David Anthony Downes speculates: ‘It has been frequently said that Gerard Manley Hopkins and Walter Pater were friends. The statement is a true one, though exactly what it means, perhaps, will never be known’.² Apprehensive that such speculations might lead to elaboration on their erotic sensibilities, Linda Dowling cautions that ‘Given the fragmentary biographical materials we possess about both Hopkins and Pater, any assertion about the “homoerotic” nature of their experience or imagination may seem at best

¹ *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, ed. by Robert Bridges, 1st edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), p.23.

² David Anthony Downes, *Victorian Portraits: Hopkins and Pater* (New York: Bookman, 1965), pp.31; 13.

recklessly premature and at worst damnably presumptuous'.³ However, since in Victorian England 'Homosexual behaviour became subject to increased legal penalties, notably by the Labouchere Amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 which extended the law to cover all male homosexual acts, whether committed in public or private',⁴ expecting 'verifiable data' concerning their unconventional desires (or, in Pater's case, perhaps relationships) is the ultimate scholarly presumption.

By leaving no journal or diary, no authorised (auto)biography, and only a few trite letters, Pater fostered an absolute absence of direct biographical evidence, becoming 'arguably the most private Victorian',⁵ or as Denis Donoghue humorously explains:

Reciting Pater's life, we have to look for him in the cloud of his occasional writings. He is rarely visible anywhere else. There are weeks or even months in which he seems to have taken literally his favorite motif of evanescence and drifted away. We assume that he is still alive, but the evidence for his breathing is meager.⁶

Although, to some extent, manuscripts relevant to such an assessment of Hopkins were purged after his death, now providing what is often only fragmentary evidence, Hopkins did leave behind plentiful and divergent biographical materials in journals, letters, sermons, confession notes, and poems, among other things. Nevertheless, Pater's writings, such as *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* and *Marius the Epicurean*, do opaquely disclose his own life and sensations, even if 'the evidence for his breathing is meager'.

At the time Hopkins began coaching with this obscure Fellow in Classics at Brasenose College, Oxford, this Fellow was busy preparing a series of lectures on the history of philosophy and 'erecting a shell around himself, deliberately isolating himself from old friends'.⁷ As an intuitive undergraduate, Hopkins must have ascertained, to some degree, what lurked behind his academic coach's elaborate privacy, a privacy reminiscent of that which surrounds Pater's protagonist Marius, whose demeanour drives mere acquaintances to inquire: 'Why

³ Linda Dowling, 'Ruskin's Pied Beauty and the Construction of a "Homosexual" Code', *Victorian Newsletter*, 75 (1989), pp.1-8 (p.1).

⁴ David Hilliard, 'Unenglish and Unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality', *Victorian Studies*, 25 (1982), pp.181-210 (pp.182-83).

⁵ Jude V. Nixon, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and His Contemporaries: Liddon, Newman, Darwin, and Pater* (New York: Garland Press, 1994), p.168. Downes recounts: 'as Gosse noted, Pater kept no diary, wrote few letters, preserved no records of his friends and experiences' (see *Portraits*, pp.30-31). In 'The "Outing" of Walter Pater', *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 48.4 (1994), pp.480-506, William F. Shuter notes that 'Until quite recently Pater's sexual history has remained a blank. Pater himself left no record of a sexual relationship of any sort, and Edmund Gosse described him to Benson as "the most secluded of men"' (p.481).

⁶ Denis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Knopf, 1995), p.23.

⁷ Alison G. Sulloway, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p.44.

thus reserved? — they asked, concerning the orderly, self-possessed youth, whose speech and carriage seemed so carefully measured'.⁸ Donoghue explains this reserve as '[Pater] represents, however mildly, the perfection of standing aside',⁹ later stressing how this revealed itself in Pater's response to public and pulpit attacks on his *Renaissance*:

Instead of defending himself, Pater internalized his subversive values and retained them in the form of difference. Provided he did not express them in a public or tendentious form, he was reasonably safe, even though he continued to be associated with irregularity of sentiment and desire. So he retained, as private property, feelings that could not be avowed.¹⁰

Hopkins must have perceived and partially appreciated the reasoning behind Pater's reserve, for he too would cultivate much the same, remaining ever, in diverse ways, Pater's most constant student.

Downes's claim that 'exactly what it means [that Hopkins and Pater were friends], perhaps, will never be known' is bastioned by various biographical lacunae, with scholars not even agreeing on the circumstances under which they first met. In *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life*, Robert Bernard Martin suggests that 'Hopkins had been very much aware of Pater for at least two years, having heard from Samuel Brooke about the essay that he had read to the Old Mortality Society in 1864, advocating beauty as the standard by which to judge morality'.¹¹ Equally credible is Downes's suggestion¹² that Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek — later Master of Balliol and an 'agent of revolutionary change' by infusing Oxford with Platonism and Platonic tutorials (all that 'Jowetry', in Oxford slang)¹³ — introduced Hopkins to Pater, to whom he would later send Hopkins for Greats coaching. Having himself coached Pater between

⁸ Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1885); abbreviated as *Marius*. This particular quotation is from vol. I, p.129.

All quotations from Pater's other works are taken from the following: *Appreciations: With an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1910); abbreviated as *Appreciations*. *Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures*, 4th edn (London: Macmillan, 1910); abbreviated as *Platonism*. *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 4th edn, ed. by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); abbreviated as *Renaissance* 1893.

⁹ Donoghue, p.8. Donoghue further explains that 'Pater's position is consistent with his antinomianism: the artist is neither for nor against the law, he stands aside from it' (p.132). In "'Culture and Corruption": Paterian Self-Development versus Gothic Degeneration in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Papers on Language & Literature*, 39.4 (2003), pp.339-64, Nils Clausson observes that 'the self-development novel does not generically require that its protagonist lead a double life: Pater's heroes — Marius and Gaston — do not. But the homosexual theme of Wilde's novel does require that Dorian live a double life' (p.349).

¹⁰ Donoghue, p.69.

¹¹ Robert Bernard Martin, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life* (New York: Putnam, 1991), p.131. See also Donoghue, pp.29-30.

¹² Downes, *Portraits*, p.22.

¹³ Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.64.

1860 and 1862, Jowett had ‘thought [so] highly of Pater as an undergraduate’¹⁴ that he had been willing to provide him private tuition in Greek without charge.¹⁵ This admiration would dissipate in the coming decade as Jowett became increasingly aware that, for Pater, pedagogic moments abounded with pederastic motive (perhaps even motion). According to Lesley Higgins, ‘Pater persisted in trying to reclaim for the Platonic canon a politics of desire which the more sexually orthodox Jowett — as translator-agent — was trying to silence and erase’, a reclamation Pater achieved through ‘readings [which] recoded the Platonic texts and their cultural complements (sculpture, drama, myth) as the site of, and inspiration for, a valorized homoerotic culture’.¹⁶ As a result, Jowett came to label Pater a ‘demoralizing moralizer’,¹⁷ though this is a label that J. A. Symonds felt equally applicable to Jowett, as Linda Dowling notes:

¹⁴ Downes, *Portraits*, p.22.

¹⁵ Jowett was ‘so struck with his power that he very generously offered to coach him for nothing’ — as related in Edmund Gosse, *Critical Kit-Kats* (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1896), p.248.

¹⁶ Lesley Higgins, ‘Jowett and Pater: Trafficking in Platonic Wares’, *Victorian Studies*, 37.1 (1993), pp.43-72, (p.45). Jowett’s linguistic discretions are explained by Higgins: ‘Jowett was too much of a scholar to omit from the *Phaedrus*, the *Symposium*, or any other text, passages which describe male-male relations. [...] Jowett depended on the superficial gender “neutrality” of English — and innocuous, sentimentalized words such as “lover” and “beloved” — to mute the frank Greek discourse, to empty out all significance of male-male erotic motives, consequences, and activities’ (p.48).

Like Pater, Jowett may have seen no advantage in unifying his public and private selves, opting instead for a division between them, especially in regard to the erotic views of the ancients he studied and of his own. On one hand, Jowett chose to diminish the eroticism of Plato; on the other, he had private friendships with those who attempted to accentuate Greek erotics, most notably Pater and Symonds. In ‘The Romance of Boys Bathing: Poetic Precedents and Respondents to the Paintings of Henry Scott Tuke’, in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, ed. by Richard Dellamora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp.253-77, Julia F. Saville notes that ‘when Symonds died in April 1893, Jowett wrote his epitaph, concluding it with the words “Farewell, my dearest friend. No one in his heart sustained his friends more than you did, nor was more benevolent to the simple and unlearned”’ (pp.261-62). Jowett seems to have been far more accepting of his friends’ (in)discretions than most critics give him credit for, and his breach with Pater (if there was such a breach), probably arose from a perception of Pater’s absolute lack of discretion (or at least self-cover) in his probable relationship with Hardinge. It probably did not arise from a lack of personal feeling or intellectual appreciation for Pater. Pater occasionally jettisons his own friends under similar circumstances.

¹⁷ As quoted in Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.103. For Pater as a sort of Socrates to his circle, consider these comments by Alexander Michaelson [Marc-André Raffalovich], in his ‘Walter Pater: In Memoriam’, *Blackfriars*, 9 (1928), pp.469-70:

There would have been something irresistible about Pater at the height of his power had he cared to exert his personal influence. Those unacquainted with his writings, or prejudiced by Mallock’s *New Republic*, could describe him as ‘a black, white, ingratiatory vampire’. Of course we who knew and loved him saw and understood the feelings of that delightful youth (now a distinguished novelist) when first face to face with that Minotaur. And we were not less aware when we watched with malicious amusement the less delightful and vainer youths who expected to make an impression. What fun it must have been, what fun it was, for aspirants to praise of so rare a quality when they compared notes. Well! it was worth while to have performed in his presence, he would never think the worse of one for

For as Symonds establishes long-term and fully sexual relationships with working-class men outside of England in the 1880s, he begins to regard the nongenital or nonphysical eroticism of the Platonic doctrine of eros with a deepening mistrust. [...] With this realization, Symonds comes to a bitter new assessment of his old teacher Jowett, as though Jowett's Socratic 'corruption' had somehow consisted in tempting suggestible young men down the delusive path to spiritual procreancy rather than fleshly excess.¹⁸ [My only reservation about Dowling's comments above is her use of the broad term 'working-class men outside of England', which seems to suggest that Symonds's attractions were entirely to 'men'. Though they primarily were, in practice, they were not always so, especially when he was dealing with textual fantasy or purchasing visual fantasies from the photographic studio of Wilhelm von Gloeden. Notice that Symonds's beloved Augusto Zanon, a Venetian porter, has the youthful features sought by the pederastic Uranians.]¹⁹

The pederastic potential of such a pedagogy — Pater's extension of the spiritual path of Jowetry to a literal 'tempting [of] suggestible young men' — is revealed through the elusive Pater-Hardinge scandal, though Dowling emphasises that 'Only the most fugitive rumors of this long-suppressed and still shadowy episode have survived until now to suggest that Pater may have enacted as well as inculcated the Socratic eros'.²⁰ Even though the scandalous evidence is supplied second-hand, Dowling, Richard Dellamora, and others have tended to assert that Jowett, motivated in 1874 by various disclosures, moved to permanently counter Pater's attempts at further university advancement. To encapsulate their assertions: 'Though [Pater] was aware that he would be strongly opposed, he knew that he merited the position [of Junior Proctor]. Nonetheless, opposition took an unexpected turn when Benjamin Jowett [...] black-mailed Pater by threatening to disclose some incriminating letters',²¹ letters revealing that Pater had 'become

that. Few men, I suppose, have been kinder and more affectionate to young men *as they were*; it is so much easier to be kind and affectionate to the men we imagine.

¹⁸ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.128; see pp.128-30 for the development of Symonds's argument.

¹⁹ D'Arch Smith primarily agrees with Dowling's claim: 'Symonds cannot be included within the Uranian group proper because of his preference for grown men as a physical ideal and because of his death in 1893, an early and formative year of the movement' (d'Arch Smith, p.12).

²⁰ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.101.

²¹ Richard Dellamora, 'An Essay in Sexual Liberation, Victorian Style: Walter Pater's "Two Early French Stories"', in *Literary Visions of Homosexuality*, ed. by Stuart Kellogg (New York: Haworth, 1983), pp.139-50 (p.148). Gosse explained to Benson the influence of this upon Pater: 'Pater's whole nature changed under the strain, after the dreadful interview with Jowett. He became old, crushed, despairing, and this dreadful weight lasted for years; it was years before he realized that Jowett would not use them' — as quoted in R. M. Seiler, ed., *Walter Pater: A Life Remembered* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1987), p.258.

sexually involved with a Balliol undergraduate',²² a youth named William Money Hardinge, 'a nineteen-year-old student who had a tendency, before faced with consequences, to advertise his homosexuality'.²³ Hardinge's homoeroticism was so 'advertised' that he was nicknamed 'the Balliol Bugger', as Donoghue explains: 'A gifted poet, winner of the Newdigate Prize in 1876, he was mainly known for his sexual activities'.²⁴

A letter from Alfred Milner to Philip Lyttelton Gell (both of whom were close undergraduate friends of Hardinge), dated 1 March 1874, provides details of what nearly became a significant scandal:

The very fact, that Hardinge had not yet irretrievably committed himself with Pater was all the more reason why the evil should be prevented. It seems more strongly absurd to say, that one should not interfere till the mischief was done. And it is vain to pretend that there was not evidence of the strongest character against Hardinge. When a man confesses to lying in another man's arms kissing him & *having been found doing it*, as there is the strongest evidence to prove, or when letters pass between them in wh. they address one another as 'darling' & sign themselves 'yours lovingly', & such a letter *I* have seen, when verses are written from one man to another too vile to blot this paper, what hope can you have, that a criminal act, if not committed already, may not be committed any day?²⁵

²² Martin, p.300. Pater's friend J. A. Symonds (whose acquaintance he had made in 1860) had found himself in much the same situation:

In November 1862 one of Symonds's resentful friends, G. H. Shorting, circulated to six Fellows of Magdalen certain love-poems and passages of love-letters from Symonds. The implication was that Symonds intended corrupting the choristers of Magdalen. An inquiry was held in the college. On December 28 Symonds was acquitted, but the episode put him under such strain that his health deteriorated. He resigned his fellowship at Magdalen and moved to London. (Donoghue, pp.39-40)

²³ Billie Andrew Inman, 'Estrangement and Connection: Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett, and William M. Hardinge', in *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp.1-20 (p.13). See also Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.100-03, 106-09, 114; Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Knopf, 1988), pp.60-61. Although most critics have accepted Inman's interpretation of the evidence presented, Shuter suggests another possible interpretation, in which Pater was merely the verbal plaything of Hardinge, an undergraduate who was attempting to be provocative and scandalous by claiming that he had been having a homoerotic relationship with someone, with the scandalous Pater an obvious choice to fill this suggestive, fantasy role:

I question only that the conclusions have in fact been demonstrated by the evidence and arguments thus far advanced. That we have the evidence to evaluate at all we owe of course to the thorough and indefatigable research of Billie Inman, whose paper may well contain all we are ever likely to learn about this episode in Pater's life. It is a measure of my debt to Inman's work that even when I question her reading of the evidence I do so on the basis of data she has gathered. ('Outing', p.482)

²⁴ Donoghue, pp.58; 59.

²⁵ As quoted in Inman, 'Estrangement', pp.7-8.

[Poignantly, this letter was written two days before Pater's friend Simeon Solomon would be arrested for homoerotic offences in a public urinal in France.]

Complaints about the above fondling and epistolary addresses, complaints directed to Richard Lewis Nettleship, a Fellow of Balliol, eventually reached Jowett, who was then Master of the College. Dowling summarises one version of how these letters reached Jowett, as recorded by Arthur C. Benson, one of Pater's earliest biographers:

One possible reconstruction: [William Hurrell] Mallock took the incriminating letters to Jowett in order to confront and embarrass him with inescapable proof of the literally demoralizing effects of liberal teaching at Oxford, for which Jowett, who had in the past recommended Pater to Balliol pupils as a private coach in philosophy, might be held responsible.²⁶

As a result, Jowett endeavoured to contain the scandal, as well as to prevent its repetition: 'Report of the nature of the letters would have been enough for Jowett; he would have felt justified, even without seeing them, in sending Hardinge down for a few months till the dust settled, and in having a sharp interview with Pater'.²⁷ But, as Donoghue stresses, 'There is no evidence that Jowett used the letters — or even talk of them — to warn Pater against putting himself forward for any university appointments. On the other hand, a word from Jowett would have been enough to set Oxford against Pater, whose reputation was already dubious'.²⁸ Despite the propriety of his public and collegiate personas, Jowett was, it must be remembered, the pre-eminent translator and populariser of Plato of his day, and understood (whether interestedly or not) those pederastic desires which had impregnated ancient Greek life, desires flowing variously through his translations of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* and through the lives his Oxford contemporaries like Pater. For this reason, Jowett may have merely advised Pater to seek Falstaff's 'fable of green fields'²⁹ somewhere at a distance from Oxford

²⁶ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.109. Gosse related to Benson that 'it was W. H. Mallock who took the terrible letters to Jowett, which gave Jowett such power' — as quoted in Seiler, p.258.

²⁷ Donoghue, p.61.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.61-62.

²⁹ For an elucidation of the pederastic suggestiveness of the relationship between John Falstaff and Prince Hal in Shakespeare's *Henriad*, see Heather Findlay, 'Renaissance Pederasty and Pedagogy: The "Case" of Shakespeare's Falstaff', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 3.1 (1989), pp.229-38. It is this connection between Falstaff as a pederastic inspirer and his final dream of a 'fable [or, *table*] of green fields' which makes me question Gerald Monsman's following comment in 'The Platonic Eros of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde: "Love's Reflected Image" in the 1890s', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 45.1 (2002), pp.26-45:

Although Pater's Greek citation is a species of creative misquotation, his 'effluence of beauty' wording appears substantially in this form twice in the *Phaedrus*, initially at 251b as referenced here in *Marius*. Whereas Plato's effluence of beauty depicts Greek love — much to the discomfort of such Victorian editors as W. H. Thompson and Benjamin Jowett — Pater virtually purges the phrase of its original erotic overtones. Surely even the most

undergraduates, particularly those of Jowett's own Balliol, since Pater's attractions had an intellectual and artistic component which was lacking at his own Brasenose College, as Higgins explains: 'Quite frankly, the college was an intellectual backwater. Balliol had Jowett, Lincoln had Mark Pattison, Christ Church had Henry Liddell — and Brasenose had its own beer'.³⁰ In fact, 'Its lone literary distinction was that every Shrove Tuesday a new set of "Ale verses" was recited at the college's pancake supper party'.³¹ If Jowett's request had been merely for Pater to go afield or at least to frolic at Brasenose, Pater seems not to have obliged: 'In his private life Pater was not entirely circumspect. Even after the episode with Hardinge, he continued to cultivate good-looking young men, especially undergraduates of an athletic disposition'.³² However, Pater also had London interests, interests that could provide as much drama, if not as much intellectual stimulation, as Marc-André Raffalovich relates: 'I am pleased to remember that he several times met Harry Eversfield, so successful as the boy in Pinero's play'.³³

Although the Pater-Hardinge scandal occurred in the decade following Hopkins's Greats coaching in 1866, Dellamora suggests that even that was a 'pedagogic moment [which] permitted them to share a sense of masculine desire informing one's perception of organic existence',³⁴ a pedagogic moment in which 'Hopkins probably learned as much from his tutor's asides and from [his] atmosphere of aestheticism as he did from formal instruction'.³⁵ A single sentence remains to sketch this atmosphere pregnant with homoerotic and pederastic potential, Hopkins's journal entry for 17 June 1868: 'To lunch with Pater, then to Mr. Solomon's studio and the Academy' (*Journals*, p.167). A striking change of tone is evident when this journal entry is placed alongside one from two years prior: 'Coaching with W. H. Pater this term. Walked with him on Monday evening last, April 30. Fine evening bitterly cold. "Bleak-faced Neology in cap and gown": no cap and gown but very bleak. Same evening Hexameron met here' (2 May 1866, *Journals*, p.133). The Hexameron, meeting in Hopkins's rooms on the same evening as his walk with Pater, was an essay society of which Hopkins

programmatic reading could not find sexual innuendo in Pater's 'green fields and children's faces'. (p.32)

Despite its innocuous appearance, I would suggest instead that Pater is making a rather prurient pederastic suggestion, a reference to Falstaff's relationship to Prince Hal.

³⁰ Lesley Higgins, 'Essaying "W. H. Pater Esq.": New Perspectives on the Tutor/Student Relationship Between Pater and Hopkins', *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: ELT Press, University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp.77-94 (p.80).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 'Essaying', note 13.

³² Donoghue, p.69. 'His desire for young men was strong, otherwise he would not have taken such risks in consorting with them, but between himself and people of his own generation he generally kept his distance or added to it' (p.54).

³³ As quoted in *ibid.*, p.69.

³⁴ Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p.49.

³⁵ Martin, pp.132-33.

was a founding member, a society partially created to combat a growing agnosticism on campus, an agnosticism symbolised by ‘One Paper which obtained great notoriety at the beginning of this Term was directed against the immortality of the soul. It was written by a junior Fellow of a College’ (Henry Parry Liddon’s letter to the Bishop of Salisbury, 17 March 1864, as quoted in *Journals*, p.353, note). That ‘junior Fellow of a College’ was none other than Pater himself; and the paper, his ‘Fichte’s Ideal Student’, delivered on 20 February 1864 to the Old Mortality Society, a society which Donoghue describes as ‘a web of hypothetically erotic relations which may or may not come to anything but in the meantime desultorily occupy the same space’, and which Dowling describes as ‘the unique moment of Oxford masculine comradeship, a window or halcyon interval of particularly intense male homosociality’.³⁶ Despite his earlier aversion to Pater’s ‘Bleak-faced Neology’, Hopkins seems to have attended at least one meeting of the Old Mortals — on Thursday, 31 May 1866 — probably invited by Pater to hear him deliver a paper, about which Hopkins records: ‘Pater talking two hours against Xtianity’ (*Journals*, p.138)³⁷

But, two years later, Hopkins is nonetheless found accompanying Pater to lunch and to the studio of the notorious Simeon Solomon at 12 Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy Square, London, a studio in which he would have seen a number of paintings and drawings tinged with the pederastic and homoerotic.³⁸ Probably still in the company of Pater and Solomon, Hopkins then went to the Royal Academy, where he lingered before an oil painting by Frederic Leighton (*later* Lord Leighton, 1830-96), *Jonathan’s Token to David*, a painting which he noted in his journal (*Journals*, p.167), a painting which must have appealed strongly to his sensibilities as well as to those of Pater and Solomon. Unfortunately, Hopkins did not live long enough to see Leighton’s development of this theme in *Hit!* (1893),³⁹ of which Joseph A. Kestner writes:

³⁶ Donoghue, p.156; Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.85. See also Gerald Monsman, ‘Old Mortality at Oxford’, *Studies in Philology*, 67 (1970), pp.359-89.

³⁷ In correspondence with me on 20 August 2004, Gerald Monsman, who wrote the authoritative book on the subject, *Oxford University’s Old Mortality Society: A Study in Victorian Romanticism* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1998), responded to my suggestion that Hopkins may have heard Pater at the Old Mortality reading a paper. His response was, ‘Wow! a fascinating possibility that makes more sense than a tutorial or a conversation’.

³⁸ In ‘Canons and Causes’, *The Hudson Review*, 56.1 (2003), pp.168-74, John Loughery notes that ‘Oscar Wilde owned Solomon’s *Love among the Schoolboys* [1866]’ (pp.171-72), a drawing Hopkins might well have seen at Solomon’s studio. In ‘A Man-Made Arcadia Enshrining Male Beauty’, *New York Times* (13 August 2000), ‘Art/Architecture’ section, pp.30-31, Vicki Goldberg notes an often-ignored influence upon Leighton: ‘Von Gloeden’s work was a treasure trove for artists. In his own time, he had an influence on F. Holland Day, Frederic Leighton, Alma Tadema and Maxfield Parish’ (p.31).

³⁹ I am thankful to Roberto C. Ferrari of Florida Atlantic University for securing for me the following details: ‘Simeon Solomon moved to 12 Fitzroy Street in January 1868. I do not have a definite date but know from a letter he wrote to Frederick Leyland that he already lived at this address by the beginning of February 1868’ (e-mail from 26 July 2004). I am grateful to Reena Suleman, Curator of

The pedagogic relationship of the older male to the youth, with potentially strong erotic elements, reappeared in Leighton's *Hit!* of 1893, a canvas of a youth teaching a boy to hold a bow and shoot at a target. [...] The erotic nature of Leighton's canvas is confirmed by preparatory drawings for *Hit!*: in two drawings, the young man is nuzzling the youth; in one drawing the nude boy stands beside the seated youth; in the other he stands between his legs, with the outline of the bow all but disappeared, making the sketch highly erotic in the tradition of the *erastês* and the *erômenos* [the 'inspirer' and the 'hearer' of Greek pederasty]. Attempts to claim that this is father and son, as in the notice from the *Athenæum*, deflect the homoeroticism of the drawings and are refuted by the age of the instructor. The aspect of ephebic training also appears in Leighton's *Jonathan's Token to David*, exhibited in 1868, showing Jonathan accompanied by a young lad as he prepares to shoot the arrow warning his beloved David that Saul intends to have him slain.⁴⁰

Lunching with Pater, visiting Solomon's studio, lingering before Leighton's *Jonathan's Token to David* — such was a typical day for a disciple of Decadence. Since Hopkins kept such a schedule, it is difficult to accept Martin's claim that 'there is no reason to think that Hopkins was in any way involved in the world in which the others moved',⁴¹ a world soon to be shaken by Solomon's arrest and sentence for homosexual offences, for erotic adventures in public urinals. If, at the Royal Academy on that June day in 1868, Hopkins had accompanied Solomon to the urinal, there is no record.⁴² Seriously, the reluctance among scholars such as Martin and Dowling to associate Hopkins directly with the blatant homoeroticism

Collections and Research at Leighton House, for securing for me that Leighton's painting *Hit!* is in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (e-mail from 5 July 2004). See also Leonor and Richard Ormond, *Lord Leighton* (New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art [London], Yale University Press, 1975).0

⁴⁰ Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (New York: Scholar Press, 1995), p.253. In a more generalised way, Kestner suggests:

For British Victorian paintings of the male nude, a nexus of ideas formed around the tradition of the ephebia and of the *erastês/erômenos* relation, the latter marked by an older man and a youth in the canvas, the former by elements such as sequestration, liminality and nudity. [...] The element of ephebic education, with possible strong homoerotic elements, appears in several representations of the male nude by Frederic Leighton. (p.250)

⁴¹ Martin, p.178.

⁴² For a fabulously decadent account of Prince Edward being locked into a bathroom with Solomon's and Pater's friend Oscar Browning, see Theo Aronson, *Prince Eddy and the Homosexual Underworld* (London: Barnes & Noble, 1995), pp.70-73. Donoghue suggests that 'Solomon's prose poem *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (1871) owes a great deal to Pater and to theories of symbolism in Pater's vicinity' (p.38); and there is a copy of Solomon's *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (London: F. S. Ellis, 1871) at the University of Rochester which bears the following inscription to Edward Burne-Jones: 'With Simeon's affectionate regards to Ned. June 25th 1871'. It should be noted that Solomon was, at one time, a close friend of Burne-Jones, who was a close friend of R. W. Dixon, later a close friend of Hopkins.

and pederasty of Pater's circle seems untenable, especially if Hopkins kept the company of the likes of Simeon Solomon. Besides Solomon, Pater's circle included various Oscars, one being Oscar Browning, a Master of Eton dismissed 'for insubordination, according to the official explanation, for pederastic excess, according to the unofficial one' — a pederast who, through 'the influence of personal friends, [...] was able to secure a new post at King's College, Cambridge'.⁴³ Had Hopkins's journal been as detailed as Mark Pattison's of 1878, it might have read something like this:

To Pater's to tea, where Oscar Browning, who 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.⁴⁴

Whatever conclusions are drawn about Hopkins's consorting with Pater and his coterie, the assertion that 'Hopkins still kept doubtful company'⁴⁵ seems rather established, even if one does not go as far as Donoghue: 'Hopkins and Pater were divided on religious belief, but their interest in art, aesthetics, and homoerotic sentiment kept a mild friendship going'.⁴⁶

This reluctance to associate Hopkins with the decadence of Pater's coterie — a coterie which included at various times the Uranian poets Marc-André Raffalovich, Lionel Johnson, John Gray, and Stanislaus Eric, Count Stenbock; the artist Simeon Solomon; the writers J. A. Symonds, Edmund Gosse, and Oscar Wilde⁴⁷; the wealthy connoisseur and Uranian poet Edward Perry Warren; Richard Monckton Milnes, 'who owned what was then perhaps the largest collection of

⁴³ Dowling, 'Ruskin's', p.7. In 'Simeon Solomon and the Biblical Construction of Marginal Identity in Victorian England', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 33.3-4 (1997), pp.97-119, Gayle M. Seymour describes Browning as follows: 'Eton don Oscar Browning (with whom Solomon travelled to Italy in 1869 and 1870 and through whom the artist was able to establish numerous friendships with adolescent boys at Eton)' (p.113). But, Seymour is clearly blurring the point by claiming Solomon had made 'numerous friendships with adolescent boys' — for 'friendship' is rather a (trans)muted way of saying 'pederastic relationship' or at least 'pederastic dalliance'. This more-apt phrasing would partially defeat her next sentence: 'Clearly, Solomon was defining himself as homosexual and presenting himself as such, at least when he was safely in the company of other homosexuals' (p.113). This is not 'clear': what is 'clear' is that Solomon was defining himself as a pederast and presenting himself as such, at least when he was safely in the company of other pederasts — given the evidence of his attraction to Browning's adolescent Eton boys.

⁴⁴ From his diary entry of 5 May 1878; as quoted in *The Letters of Walter Pater*, p.xxxiv.

⁴⁵ Donoghue, p.33.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.34.

⁴⁷ That Symonds's writings were not considered overly 'scandalous' by Hopkins is revealed in the following comment in a letter to his mother: 'I went to call on Mr. Green, fellow of Balliol, professor of Moral Philosophy. His wife, a very kind creature, is sister to John Addington Symonds the critic' (12 February 1879, *Letters* III, p.152). Gosse appears from time to time in Hopkins's letters to Bridges, who was one of his acquaintances — in fact, Gosse was interested in publishing some of Hopkins's poetry, which reveals that Bridges had shown them to him. After Hopkins's death, Bridges warned the Hopkins Family not to allow Gosse to edit Hopkins's poetry or life.

erotic books in Britain⁴⁸; and the publisher of much of the Uranian verse, Charles Kegan Paul — does not obscure what a friendship between Hopkins and Pater, whether mild or intimate, implies. Years later, although certainly aware of the various scandals surrounding Pater through friends like Gosse and through texts like *The New Republic* by W. H. Mallock,⁴⁹ Hopkins's dearest and most protective friend Robert Bridges nevertheless 'reactivated personal ties between Hopkins and Pater',⁵⁰ such that, after his return to Oxford in 1878, Hopkins regularly visited Pater, partly facilitated by the fact that Pater's house on Bradmore Road was only minutes away from St Aloysius's Church where Hopkins was then a curate. To chronicle this suggestive friendship, only a few, pedestrian passages remain, as with Hopkins's casual comment to his mother in February 1879: 'I went yesterday to dine with the Paters' (*Letters* III, p.151). Similarly, Pater's only extant letter to Hopkins is a terse response from 20 May 1879 —

My dear Hopkins,

It will give me great pleasure to accept your kind invitation to dinner on Thursday at 5.30.

Very sincerely yours,

W. H. Pater (*Facsimiles* II, p.176)

— though its salutation, as Higgins stresses, 'was one which Pater reserved for close friends only'.⁵¹ That these 'close friends' met extensively between 1878 and 1879 is substantiated by a letter from Hopkins to his friend A. W. M. Baillie: 'By the by when I was at Oxford Pater was one of the men I saw most of' (22 May 1880, *Letters* III, p.246). These casual claims become insightful only when one considers the number of scandals, contained or publicised, that were then besieging Pater and his circle: Pater's utterly decried *Renaissance* editions of 1873 and 1877; Pater's discovered intimacy with Hardinge in 1874; Solomon's arrest and conviction on sodomy charges in 1873, and again in 1874 (for the latter, receiving a sentence of three months in prison); W. H. Mallock's *New Republic: Culture, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country House* published in *Belgravia* from June till December 1875 (and in book form in 1877), portraying Pater as the pederastic 'Mr. Rose' flitting about 'Leslie', a thinly disguised Hardinge⁵²; Oscar

⁴⁸ Seymour, p.113. Besides his courtship of Florence Nightingale, Richard Monckton Milnes, First Baron Houghton, is probably most remembered for his library, which included the most extensive collection of the Marquis de Sade (and a bookmark made of human skin).

⁴⁹ The pederastic nuances surrounding Pater seem to have been evident to his Oxford contemporaries. In 1880, at Oxford, C. E. Hutchinson wrote and distributed a pamphlet that connected Pater and Mallock's *New Republic*, a pamphlet titled *Boy-Worship* (see Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.111-14).

⁵⁰ 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, 1993), pp.167-82 (p.173).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.175.

⁵² See Billie Andrew Inman, *Walter Pater's Reading: A Bibliography of His Library Borrowings and Literary*

Browning's removal from Eton under suspicion of pederasty in 1875 (which, unlike William Johnson's earlier dismissal from Eton and Solomon's arrest, had been mentioned, though vaguely, in the press and in the House of Commons). Even if there is no extant evidence that Hopkins knew the specifics of any of these scandals, he would certainly have recognised the dangerous Decadent residue clinging to Pater because of them, for there was much that Hopkins did know.

Concerning the first scandal, Hopkins undoubtedly knew of the public and pulpit reactions to both editions of *The Renaissance*:

Widely denounced as a sinister invitation to hedonism, *The Renaissance* elicited a rhetoric of outrage that conjoined all the norms of English life in their common vulnerability to Pater's subversive creed. Thus W. T. Courthope spoke for many in 1876 when he denounced Pater's volume as a betrayal not only of English society, but of English masculinity: 'In common, we believe, with most Englishmen, we repudiate the effeminate desires which Mr. Pater, the mouthpiece of our artistic "culture", would encourage in society'. The suspicions insinuated by the label 'effeminate' of course became increasingly damaging during the century as this quality became more narrowly and explicitly associated with homosexual behavior.⁵³

Concerning the second scandal, R. L. Nettleship and Benjamin Jowett, both of whom were involved in the containment and handling of the Pater-Hardinge 'affair', had strong academic and personal ties to Hopkins, whom they had known since his undergraduate days and for whom they would later supply the two academic references which would secure his appointment to a Classics professorship in Dublin in 1884. Anticipating his possible renewal of friendship with Pater, they might well have advised or hinted that Hopkins would do well to avoid such company and its possible taint, especially as a Roman Catholic curate in an overly Anglican Oxford, an Oxford which would look upon a Jesuit with suspicion anyway. Concerning the third scandal, Hopkins might well have known from Pater or someone else about Solomon's conviction: since Hopkins had met Solomon at least twice in 1868, the second time clearly in the company of Pater, one of Solomon's closest friends, one might expect Hopkins to inquire about this convicted sodomite, however naively. Concerning the fourth scandal, Mallock's portrayal of Pater as 'Mr. Rose' in the *New Republic*, Hopkins definitely knew of that, for he wrote jokingly to his mother on 12 February 1879: 'Sir Gore (ghastly as this is, what else can you say? — his name in a book of Mallock's would become Sir Bloodclot Reekswell)' (*Letters* III, p.153). Concerning the fifth scandal, Hopkins may not have known of Browning's dismissal from Eton under

References, 1857-1873 (New York: Garland, 1981), pp.30-35 and 232-37. For Raffalovich's elucidation of Hardinge as 'Leslie', as well as Pater's disappointing encounter with Hardinge later in life, see Donoghue, p.61.

⁵³ James Eli Adams, 'Gentleman, Dandy, Priest: Manliness and Social Authority in Pater's Aestheticism', *ELH*, 59 (1992), pp.441-66 (p.441).

suspicion of pederasty, but Mark Pattison's diary entry concerning that hand-holding tea at Pater's in 1878, with the 'paw dandling' Browning in attendance, suggests that Hopkins might well have been introduced to Browning after being stationed in Oxford later that year. Whatever one decides about Hopkins's inclusion amidst this scandalous Paterian world, Donoghue's phrasing seems as true for the Jesuit Hopkins of the late 1870s as for the pre-Jesuit Hopkins of the late 1860s: 'Hopkins still kept doubtful company'.

Although 'After November, 1879, Hopkins made two further visits to Oxford: a brief appearance at St. Aloysius's on 11 September 1883, and a somewhat longer stay in May 1886' — Higgins does not believe that Hopkins had an opportunity to visit Pater again, since Pater had 'resigned his Brasenose tutorship in 1883 in order to concentrate on writing *Marius the Epicurean*'.⁵⁴ Regardless of whether they again met, Pater's influence on Hopkins continued, even if only textually, for 'Walter Pater's presence in Gerard Manley Hopkins's life and work was much more than an undergraduate phenomenon'.⁵⁵ Concerning Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* and *Imaginary Portraits*, published in 1885 and 1887 respectively, Downes suggests that 'Given Hopkins' enormous interest in letters, it is unthinkable that he did not know them',⁵⁶ though no extant evidence supports that he did. Even if one embraces the requirement for 'the verifiable' and brushes aside Hopkins's awareness of Pater's mature scholarship and fiction, Hopkins must have been, even as an undergraduate, inordinately versed in Pater's elaborate *Weltanschauung*, his 'Bleak-faced Neology'. In fact, Pater's collection of tenets was so consistent that he was able to underscore in the third edition of his *Renaissance* (1888) and afterwards: 'I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by [this book's "Conclusion"]' (*Renaissance* 1893, p.186, Pater's footnote).⁵⁷ The last words of that 'Conclusion' encapsulate a *Weltanschauung* that must have proven inordinately influential to the young, Oxonian Hopkins and the later poet:

[W]e are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve.
[...] we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least

⁵⁴ Higgins, 'Piecemeal', p.180.

⁵⁵ Higgins, 'Essaying', p.77.

⁵⁶ Downes, *Portraits*, p.46.

⁵⁷ About the footnote added to *The Renaissance*, William Shuter writes: 'Pater has not changed his mind; he has only explained it more fully' — 'Pater, Wilde, Douglas and the Impact of "Greats"', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 3 (2003), pp.250-78 (p.266). This desire to 'explain it more fully' is also evident in the writings of others in or around Pater's circle:

Pater published *Marius the Epicurean*, his Bildungsroman, in 1885, when he was in his 46th year; Wilde wrote *De Profundis* in 1897, when he was in his 43rd year; Douglas wrote his *Autobiography* in 1927, when he was 57. While all three writers reflect on the earlier views they have abandoned or modified, they differ in the stress they place on the continuity between their earlier and later selves. Insofar, however, as this continuity is stressed, it is represented in language we recognize as belonging to the discourse of Greats. (pp.265-66)

among ‘the children of this world’, in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion — that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake. (*Renaissance* 1893, p.190)

Hopkins’s absorption of this *Weltanschauung*, as well as its phrasing, is evident almost immediately: ‘Within two months of meeting his new instructor, “as Pater says” had become a popular qualifying statement’ for Hopkins.⁵⁸ This is most clearly displayed in six aesthetically-tinged, philosophical essays written under Pater’s tutelage, essays which constitute *Notebook D.III* of the Hopkins manuscript collection at Campion Hall, Oxford — ‘Essays / for W. H. Pater Esq. / Gerard M. Hopkins’. These essays engage, adjust, and adopt various Paterian notions, the foremost of these being the necessity for moments lived ‘simply for those moments’ sake’. That particular Paterian notion, however qualified in accordance with Christian teaching, would constitute a lasting influence or ‘underthought’ upon Hopkins, whose responses to it bespeak more than just the intellectual sparing between a don and an undergraduate:

The ‘underthoughts’ which link Hopkins’s canon to Pater’s are verbal witnesses to a very rare phenomenon: a friendship, an understanding and rapport based upon personal and intellectual ties lessened by time but never severed. As *Marius the Epicurean* explains, ‘the saint, and the Cyrenaic lover of beauty, it may be thought, would at least understand each other better than either would understand the mere man of the world. Carry their respective positions a point further, shift the terms a little, and they might actually touch’.⁵⁹

Moments lived ‘simply for those moments’ sake’ — as early as his ‘Diaphaneité’ essay, presented appropriately at the Old Mortality Society in July 1864 (and believed to be an embellishment of the no-longer-extant ‘Fichte’s Ideal Student’), that dictum infuses Pater’s writings with a caution against squandering opportunities, Pater insisting that ‘To most of us only one chance is given in the life of the spirit and the intellect, and circumstances prevent our dexterously

⁵⁸ Higgins, ‘Essaying’, p.80.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.94.

seizing that one chance' ('Diaphaneitè', p.252).⁶⁰ Much later, in *Marius the Epicurean*, Pater's protagonist will illustrate such 'dexterous seizing' by sacrificing himself for a beloved 'friend':

At last, the great act, the critical moment, comes, easily, almost unconsciously. [...] In one quarter of an hour, under a sudden, uncontrollable impulse, hardly weighing what he did, almost as a matter of course and as lightly as one hires a bed for one's night's rest on a journey, Marius had taken upon himself all the heavy risk of the position in which Cornelius had then been — the long and wearisome delays of judgment, which were possible; the danger and wretchedness of a long journey in this manner; possibly the danger of death. He had delivered his brother, after the manner he had sometimes vaguely anticipated as a kind of distinction in his destiny; though indeed always with wistful calculation as to what it might cost him: and in the first moment after the thing was actually done, he felt only satisfaction at his courage, at the discovery of his possession of 'nerve'. (II, pp.207-08)

This Paterian notion of moments lived 'simply for those moments' sake' is recast over time as 'martyrdom for friendship's sake', a martyrdom which becomes the principal ennobling act of Pater's *Weltanschauung*, an act depicted in his second edition of *The Renaissance* (1877) through the tale *Amis and Amile*, a thirteenth-century French romance, the addition of which allows Pater to connect 'medieval, Christian culture with the tradition of homosexual friendship in Greek culture'.⁶¹ According to Pater, *Amis and Amile* had 'a friendship pure and generous, pushed to a sort of passionate exaltation, and more than faithful unto death. Such comradeship, though instances of it are to be found everywhere, is still especially a classical motive' ('French', *Renaissance* 1893, p.7). Pater depicts this 'classical motive' — expressed in *Amis and Amile* as an exultant and passionate friendship 'more than faithful unto death' — most fully in *Marius the Epicurean*, a novel which not only portrays the sensations of a protagonist from Classical Rome, but also the sensations of Pater's immediate contemporaries, whom he frequently addresses in authorial asides: 'Let the reader pardon me if here and there I seem to be passing from Marius to his modern representatives — from Rome, to Paris or London' (*Marius*, II, p.19).⁶² For Pater, the benefit derived from this constant shift in time and location is that these moments lived 'simply for those moments' sake',

⁶⁰ 'Diaphaneitè', in *Miscellaneous Studies*, pp.247-54. In his diary, Samuel Brooke — a Corpus Christi undergraduate; a close friend of Hopkins; a former, disgruntled member of the Old Mortality Society; and the main formulator of the Hexameron Society to counterbalance the Old Mortals — wrote that Pater's lecture was 'one of the most thoroughly infidel productions' he had ever heard, and denounced him to other Oxonians, especially H. P. Liddon. The portions of Brooke's diary which deal with this episode are published in Robert Seiler, ed., *Walter Pater: A Life Remembered* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1987), pp.11-13.

⁶¹ Dellamora, 'French', p.143.

⁶² Donoghue writes: '*Marius the Epicurean* is more a spiritual romance than a novel' (p.188).

whether ancient or modern, constitute a 'cultural continuum', particularly when endowed with 'classical motive', which is in direct contradiction to Michel Foucault's claims (as well as those of most Social Constructionists) that such a continuum is inherently anachronistic, whether in word or notion. By choosing Imperial Rome as his setting, Pater is also contradicting a widely held Victorian belief, here phrased by J. A. Symonds, that this 'classical motive', expressed through pederasty, did not have the same meaning or meaningfulness for the ancient Romans that it had had for the earlier Greeks:

Greece merged in Rome; but, though the Romans aped the arts and manners of the Greeks, they never truly caught the Hellenic spirit. Even Virgil only trod the court of the Gentiles of Greek culture. It was not, therefore, possible that any social custom so peculiar as pederastia should flourish on Latin soil. Instead of Cleomenes and Epameinondas, we find at Rome Nero the bride of Sporus and Commodus the public prostitute. Alcibiades is replaced by the Mark Antony of Cicero's *Philippic*. Corydon, with artificial notes, takes up the song of Ageanax. The melodies of Meleager are drowned in the harsh discords of Martial. Instead of love, lust was the deity of the boy-lover on the shores of Tiber.⁶³

It is to those shores of the Tiber that Pater turns in order to trace a continuum from Greece to Rome, from Rome to Paris to London, drawing his reader's attention, sole-thoughted, to one boy there, a boy who serves as his means for depicting 'Greece merged in Rome' as well as 'the Hellenic spirit' — Marius the Epicurean.

As a wealthy orphan, Marius soon finds himself at a Platonic academy under the private coaching of Flavian, three years his senior, in whom Marius immediately perceives 'something [...] a shade disdainful, as he stood isolated from the rest for a moment', something which sets Flavian apart from his companions, establishing him as 'Prince of the school' and allowing him 'an easy dominion over the old Greek master by the fascination of his parts, and over his fellow-scholars by the figure he bore' (*Marius*, I, p.54).⁶⁴ Predictably, '[o]ver Marius too his dominion was entire', enhanced because Flavian has been 'appointed to help the younger boy in his studies' (I, p.55). From the moment of their introduction, Flavian begins to dominate Marius through prurient glances, through visual insinuations which take a keen hold upon Marius and assure him of their impending 'friendship': 'a pleasantness [...] for [himself, as] the new-comer, in the sombre blue eyes which seemed somehow to be taking a keener hold upon things around than is usual with boys. Marius knew that those proud eyes made kindly note of him for a moment, and felt something like friendship at first sight'

⁶³ John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion* (London: [n.p.], [1901]), p.72.

⁶⁴ In 'Simeon Solomon: Artist and Myth', in *Solomon, a Family of Painters: Abraham Solomon (1823-1862), Rebecca Solomon (1832-1886), Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)* (London: Inner London Education Authority, 1985), pp.24-27, Lionel Lambourne suggests that Solomon was Pater's model for Flavian in *Marius the Epicurean*.

(I, p.54). This ‘friendship at first sight’ soon broadens beyond the tutorial, until Marius ‘became virtually [Flavian’s] servant in many things’, experiencing a fascination that ‘had been a sentimental one, depending on the concession to himself of an intimacy, a certain tolerance of his company, [that Flavian] granted to no other’ (I, p.55). Marius is taught ‘many things’ through ‘an intimacy granted to no other’ — the deliberate vagueness of such descriptions lending a prurient suggestiveness to Pater’s text, a prurient suggestiveness which is intensified by this pedagogical ‘friendship’ being labelled ‘that old feverish attachment to Flavian, which had made him, at times, like an uneasy slave’ (I, p.231). However ‘uneasy’, Marius nonetheless yields himself to that ‘feverish attachment to Flavian’ — in much the same way that Flavian ‘had certainly yielded himself, though still with untouched health in a world where manhood comes early, to the seductions of a luxurious town’ (I, p.57). By ‘yielding himself’ and his developing ‘manhood’ to the ‘seductions of a luxurious town’, a younger Flavian had gained erotic experiences which later transformed him into a sort of ‘Prince’ with ‘dominion over’ others, mere ‘servants’, ‘uneasy slaves’ overwhelmed by his ‘proud eyes’ — or, as with Marius, ‘granted’ friendship and perhaps erotic instruction. Not surprisingly, Marius becomes fluent concerning Flavian’s lascivious sexual encounters, causing him to wonder

sometimes, in [Flavian’s] freer revelation of himself in conversation, at the extent of his early corruption. How often, afterwards, did evil things present themselves associated malignly with the memory of that beautiful head, and with a kind of borrowed charm and sanction in the natural grace of that! To Marius at a later time, [Flavian] counted for, as it were, an epitome of the whole pagan world itself, in the depth of his corruption under that perfection of form. (I, p.57)

Lost early, Flavian’s sexual innocence was replaced by a ‘depth of corruption’, a corruption which intrigues his contemporaries, as does his ‘perfection of form’: ‘His voice, his glance, were like the breaking in of the solid world upon one, amid the flimsy fictions of a dream. A shadow, handling all things as shadows, had felt a sudden real and poignant heat in them’ (I, p.57). Given the ‘poignant heat’ of the above, it is poignant to remember exactly who is feeling that ‘heat’: ‘the old Greek master [heated] by the fascination of [Flavian’s] parts’ and ‘his fellow-scholars [heated] by the figure [Flavian] bore’. In essence, the school’s ‘old Greek master’ is heated by Flavian’s ‘parts’ (even if only as a fascination at the erotic possibilities that those ‘parts’ could provide); the school’s students are heated by Flavian’s ‘figure’, a more holistic admiration that covers a multitude of latent desires.

Lest readers of *Marius the Epicurean* downplay Flavian’s corrupting influence, Pater further insinuates that

Meantime, under his guidance, Marius was learning quickly and abundantly, because with a good-will. There was that in the actual effectiveness of his figure which stimulated the younger lad to make the

most of opportunity; and he had experience already that education added largely to one's capacity for enjoyment. (1885, I, p.58)

Having reached a potent 'manhood', Flavian employs 'the actual effectiveness of his figure' to 'stimulate the younger lad', a lad who accepts this instruction with 'good-will', having learned 'to make the most of opportunity', especially an opportunity which 'added largely to [his] capacity for enjoyment'. Textually, Pater has constructed here a moment of pederastic pedagogy and practice — Flavian 'stimulat[ing] the younger lad' both sexually and intellectually, becoming the 'inspirer' to Marius 'the hearer'. Flavian chooses to augment his erotic tutelage of Marius, his 'hearer', with a book by Lucius Apuleius, 'the golden book', a book which 'awakened the poetic or romantic capacity, as perhaps some other book might have done, but also gave it actually, as another might not have done, a strongly sensuous direction' (I, p.58). In a narratorial aside, Pater widens the scope of this textual stimulation, raising to a universal level this interaction between Marius, Flavian, and Apuleius's book: 'If our modern education, in its better efforts, really conveys to any of us that kind of idealising power, it does so [...] oftenest by truant reading; and so it happened also, long ago, with Marius and his friend Flavian' (I, p.58). While these truants are exploring Apuleius's verses together, Marius begins to consider Flavian to be the embodiment of his own 'Cyrenaic philosophy, presented thus for the first time, in an image or person, with much beauty and attractiveness' (I, p.230), the embodiment of a philosophy which inspires its adherents with a 'Cyrenaic eagerness, just then, to taste and see and touch' (I, p.199).⁶⁵ To see and touch (and blushing, taste) what, if not Flavian's 'beauty and attractiveness'? That is a lingering question made all the more salacious by the playful syntax of the former quotation in its entirety:

[Marius's] Cyrenaic philosophy, presented thus for the first time, in an image or person, with much beauty and attractiveness, and touched also, in this way, with a pathetic sense of personal sorrow — a concrete image, the abstract equivalent of which he discovered afterwards, when that agitating personal influence had settled down for him, clearly enough, into a theory of practice. (pp.230-31)

Alas, overcome by fever, 'Flavian lay at the open window of his lodging, with a burning pain in the head, fancying no covering light and thin enough to be applied to his body' (I, p.113). This fever allows Pater to take advantage of the situation, to situate a nude Flavian at a voyeuristic vantage-point. Lying naked at the open window and attended by Marius, Flavian would, 'at intervals, return to work at his verses, with a great eagerness to complete and transcribe the poem', a poem which was 'in truth a kind of nuptial hymn' (I, pp.113-14), a serious

⁶⁵ Donoghue glosses Pater's Cyrenaicism as 'the assertion that the best way to live is to crowd as many pulsations as possible into one's inevitably brief life, and that the best way to do this is by cultivating art for art's sake' (p.57).

epithalamion lightened by passages like the following: “*Amor* has put his weapons by and will keep holiday. He has been bidden to go unclad, that none may be wounded by his bow and arrows. But take care! In truth he is none the less armed than usual, though he be all unclad” (I, p.114).⁶⁶ This is a curious passage indeed, for Flavian’s Cupid — unclad like himself, stripped of all weaponry except for his phallus, a phallus fully able to spoil and despoil — is merely a refashioning of Apuleius’s amorous Cupid, who, only while sleeping naked like Flavian, resembles little that ‘winged, bold boy, of evil ways, who wanders armed by night through men’s houses, spoiling their marriages’ (I, p.66). Nevertheless, this ‘inborn wantonness’ (I, p.67) accompanies Cupid’s potent beauty even in repose, a beauty which Pater textually caresses by describing the shoulders of this ‘winged god’, then the way his plumage moves across them, then how ‘smooth he was’:

Cupid himself, reclined there, in his own proper loveliness! [...] [with] the locks of that golden head, pleasant with the unction of the gods, shed down in graceful entanglement behind and before, about the ruddy cheeks and white throat. The pinions of the winged god, yet fresh with the dew, are spotless upon his shoulders; the delicate plumage wavering over them as they lie at rest. Smooth he was.

(I, pp.77-78).

As a result, this ‘petulant, boyish Cupid of Apuleius’ serves ‘to combine many lines of meditation, already familiar to Marius, into the ideal of a perfect imaginative love, centered upon a type of beauty entirely flawless and clean — an ideal which never wholly faded out of his thoughts’ (I, p.94). That Marius chooses to unify symbolically Flavian — his ‘epitome of the whole pagan world’ and ‘his Cyrenaic philosophy [...] in an image or person’ (I, pp.57; 230) — with the Cupid of Apuleius is not surprising, especially since Flavian’s appearance ‘was like a carved figure in motion [...] but with that indescribable gleam upon it which the words of Homer actually suggested, as perceptible on the visible forms of the gods’ (I, pp.54-55). However, though resembling a god, Flavian was not one, and consequently lay dying ‘with his sharply contracted hand in that of Marius, to his almost surprised happiness, winning him now to an absolutely self-forgetful devotion’ (I, p.118), a devotion consummated through a rather-nuptial embrace — as Flavian, barely conscious, lay with Marius amid the scattered fragments of his own epithalamion, the *Pervigilium Veneris*⁶⁷: ‘in the darkness Marius lay down

⁶⁶ For an anecdote about Solomon (who may have served as the model for Pater’s Flavian) coming to a costume party as Cupid, see James M. Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York: Viking, 1999), pp.179-81.

⁶⁷ The *Pervigilium Veneris* (or ‘Vigil of Venus’) is a Latin poem of ninety-three verses, probably written in the second or third century CE, and celebrates the annual rejuvenation of Nature through the goddess Venus. Of Pater’s attribution of this poem to Flavian, a poem that Pater has here translated, Donoghue suggests that it is ‘a freedom Pater takes because no other poet is known to have written it’ (p.193). He also suggests that ‘Pater’s affection for Late Latin, his special feeling for

beside him, faintly shivering now in the sudden cold, to lend him his own warmth, undeterred by the fear of contagion which had kept other people from passing near the house' (I, p.119). Even after Flavian's death, Marius clings, in memory, to his body, the body of a 'friend' whom he could clearly have addressed as his 'belovèd':

It was to the sentiment of the body and the affections which it defined — the body, of whose colour and force that wandering Platonic soul was but so frail a residue or abstract — that he clung. The various pathetic traits of the beloved, suffering, perished body of Flavian, so deeply pondered, had made him a materialist, and with something of the humour of a devotee. (I, p.127)

Solemn years pass before Marius develops another relationship, this time with a young Praetorian guard named Cornelius, a 'very honourable-looking youth, in the rich habit of a military knight', whose voice was so entrancing that Marius 'seemed to hear that voice again in his dreams, uttering his own name' (I, p.167). As they depart together for Rome, these two travellers, who have only just met, begin a conversation that 'left [them] with sufficient interest in each other to insure an easy companionship for the remainder of their journey. In time to come, Marius was to depend very much on *the preferences*, the personal judgments, of the comrade who now laid his hand so brotherly on his shoulder' (I, p.168, emphasis added). These 'preferences' (a word which, even for the Victorians, possessed homoerotic and pederastic connotations) determined the intention behind that hand laid 'brotherly' upon Marius's shoulder, the hand of an Imperial guard who 'seemed to carry about with him, in that real world of comely usages and privileges to which he belonged, the atmosphere of some still more jealous and exclusive circle' (I, p.170). While Flavian had surrounded himself with flamboyance, with the admiring gazes of all his fellows, and with an exhibitionist's death at a casement in the nude, Cornelius instead fostered an atmosphere both discrete and graceful, an atmosphere about which he manoeuvres with the ease of an initiate, undoubtedly a physical initiate, for 'the discretion of Cornelius, his energetic clearness and purity, were a charm, rather physical than moral [...] with its warning and exigent restraints' (I, p.231). Cornelius's 'discretion', with its 'warning and exigent restraints', displays itself as a physical 'charm', a charm that protectively shadows his intimacy with Marius like 'the atmosphere of some still more jealous and exclusive circle', a circle perhaps analogous to our modern 'homosexual code' which often gains discretion through ambiguity, an ambiguity about which Pater was himself well versed.⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, one of Pater's most

writings of the Silver Age — one of the marks of a sensibility hesitating upon the decadence it prefigures' (p.226).

⁶⁸ Thomas Hardy, not one of Pater's intimate circle, could only relate the following impression after meeting Pater in 1886, that Pater seemed to be 'carrying weighty ideas without spilling them' — as quoted in *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Michael Millgate (Athens: University of

flagrantly ambiguous passages follows a criticism of the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE) for despising the charms of the human body (the emphasis is added):

And here again, in opposition to an inhumanity like *this*, presenting *itself* to that young reader as nothing less than a kind of sin against nature, the person of Cornelius sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body; at first, as but one of the consequences of his material or sensualistic philosophy. To Cornelius, the body of man was unmistakably, as a later seer terms it, the one temple in the world ('we touch Heaven when we lay our hand upon a human body'), and the proper object of a sort of worship, or sacred service, in which the very finest gold might have its seemliness and due symbolic use. (II, pp.59-60)

A standard reading might suggest that both 'this' and 'itself' refer to 'the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius', translatable into the following:

In opposition to an inhumanity like that presented by the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, a philosophy which Marius believed to be nothing less than a kind of 'sin against nature' because it despised the body, the person of Cornelius sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body.

Since the antecedent of 'itself' is syntactically ambiguous, another reading is possible, an erotic reading in which the antecedent is not the 'philosophy of Marcus Aurelius' or 'this', but instead 'the person of Cornelius', translatable into:

In opposition to an inhumanity like that presented by the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, which despised the body, the person of Cornelius, presenting itself as nothing less than a kind of 'sin against nature', sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body.

The second alternative — describing the physical interaction between Marius and Cornelius as a 'sin against nature', a conventional Victorian synonym for homoeroticism and pederasty — allows Pater to establish an opposition between the Stoic asceticism of Marcus Aurelius and the Epicurean eroticism of Marius (and Cornelius). This subversive reading is substantiated by Cornelius's rather prurient insistence that 'the body of man was [...] the one temple in the world', that 'we touch Heaven when we lay our hands upon a human body'.

Cornelius, 'the comrade who [had] laid his hand so brotherly on [Marius's] shoulder', had inaugurated an intimacy which was not fully appreciated by Marius until their stay at White-nights, Marius's own childhood home: 'It was just then that Marius felt, as he had never done before, the value to himself, the overpowering charm, of his friendship. "More than brother!" — he felt — "like a

Georgia Press, 1985), p.187. Donoghue makes clear that this 'discretion' involved a conscious split into a private self and a constructed, public self: 'In the middle world one may choose to live by nearly any values, so long as one doesn't overtly challenge the dominant forces of law and government. Or one can divide one's life into two parts, public and private, and live differently in each' (p.317).

son also!” contrasting the fatigue of soul which made himself practically an older man, with the other’s irrepressible youth’ (II, p.204). Amid the tranquillity of their stay at White-nights and their journey back to Rome, Marius begins to appreciate the pederastic overtones inherent in his relationship with the ‘irrepressibly young’ Cornelius, overtones accentuated as they wander ‘hither and thither, leisurely, among the country-places thereabout, [...] [coming] one evening to a little town [...] which had even then its church and legend — the legend and holy relics of the martyr Hyacinthus, a young Roman soldier, whose blood had stained the soil of this place in the days of the emperor Trajan’ (II, p.205). For Pater, the choice of the name ‘Hyacinthus’ for this martyr — a Roman soldier as young and as Christian as Cornelius — serves as a Classical allusion to the pederastic beloved of Apollo, a boy killed by Zephyr, a lesser deity angered that the boy’s ardour rested with another. Similarly, a jealous and self-deified Trajan martyred this young Roman Hyacinthus because of the youth’s love for Christ, a devotion that Trajan could also not accept gracefully. Unrelated to the martyrdom of St Hyacinth nearly ten centuries later, this martyrdom, as a fictional detail created by Pater, suggests that an analogy is being drawn between Marius’s relationship to Cornelius and Apollo’s relationship to Hyacinth. Unlike his earlier relationship with Flavian — an interaction with Cyrenaic philosophy and its ‘eagerness [...] to taste and see and touch’ (I, p.199) — Marius’s relationship with Cornelius is an interaction with the perfect and eternal love of ‘comrades’ expressed by the likes of Apollo and Hyacinth, the core love of Pater’s *Weltanschauung* elucidated in his *Plato and Platonism*:

Brothers, comrades, who could not live without each other, they were the most fitting patrons of a place in which friendship, comradeship, like theirs, came to so much. Lovers of youth they remained, those enstarred types of it, arrested thus at that moment of miraculous good fortune as a consecration of the clean, youthful friendship, ‘passing even the love of woman’ [...] A part of their duty and discipline, it was also their great solace and encouragement. The beloved and the lover, side by side through their long days of eager labour, and above all on the battlefield. (p.231)

Beyond such mortal friendships, ‘the beloved and the lover side by side’ which between Marius and Flavian elaborates into a kind of touch and between Marius and Cornelius into a kind of art, Marius also interacts with aesthetic and philosophical masterpieces, an interaction which elaborates into a kind of ‘abstract friendship’: ‘With this mystic companion he had gone a step onward, out of the merely objective pagan world. Here was already a master in that craft of self-direction, which was then coming to play so large a part in the human mind, at the prompting of the Christian church’ (*Marius*, II, pp.56-57).⁶⁹ Although ‘Yearning

⁶⁹ What must be kept in mind is that Marius’s preferred proximity to Christianity arises *only* because he finds no other alternative from which to choose: ‘To understand the influence over him of what

[...] for audible or visible companionship' (II, p.95), Marius finds instead companionship both inaudible and invisible, arising, not from intimacy with highly impassioned 'friends' like Flavian or beloved 'comrades' like Cornelius, but from aesthetic and philosophical masterpieces, masterpieces which allow for an intimate familiarity with eminent minds, living or dead:

On this day, certainly, no mysterious light, no irresistibly leading hand from afar reached him; only, the peculiarly tranquillising influence with which it had begun increased steadily upon him. [...] Companionship, indeed, familiarity with souls noble and gifted, or at least sweet to him, had been, through this and that long space of it, the chief delight of the journey: and was it only the general sense and residue of that familiarity, diffused through his memories, which, in a while, suggested the question whether there had not been — besides Flavian, besides Cornelius even, and through the solitude which in spite of ardent friendship he had perhaps loved best of all things — a companion, a perpetual companion, ever at his side throughout; doubling his pleasure in the roses by the way, recipient of his depression or peevishness, above all, as of old, of his grateful recognition of the fact that he himself was there at all? (II, pp.70-72)

As this familiarity intensifies, Marius no longer questions the tentative existence of his 'abstract friend', for 'That divine companion figured no longer as only an occasional wayfarer beside him, but as the unfailing "assistant", without whose inspiration and concurrence he could not breathe or see, instrumenting his bodily senses, rounding and supporting his imperfect thoughts' (II, p.75). Further, 'that sense of companionship, of a person beside him, evoked the faculty of conscience' (II, p.76), a conscience which Marius recognises among the early acolytes of Christianity: 'Surely, in this strange new society he had known for the first time to-day — in this holy family, like a fenced garden — was the fulfilment of all the judgments and preferences of that half-known [abstract] friend, which of late years had been so often his protection in the perplexities of his life' (II, p.110).⁷⁰ The

follows you must remember that it was an experience which came in the midst of a deep sense of vacuity in things. The fairest products of the earth seemed to be dropping to pieces, as if in men's very hands, around him; and still, how real was their sorrow, and his!' (II, pp.130-31).

⁷⁰ This interest in certain aspects of early Christianity has a biographical referent for Pater: 'Knowing that the peace of heart he once knew was ultimately a religious state, Pater began in 1878 attending the very Catholic liturgical services at St. Alban's, Holborn, and St. Austin's in the New Kent Road. These highly ritualistic services, reviving the spirit of early Christianity, began to bring some rest to his disquietude and also rendered special satisfactions to his aesthetic nature' (Downes, *Portraits*, pp.59-60). Hilliard explains the added incentive behind Pater's visits, at least to one of these churches: 'Among those who regularly visited St. Austin's and enjoyed its colourful ritual (without believing yet in Christianity) was Walter Pater, aesthete and historian of the Renaissance. His intimate friend was Richard Charles Jackson (Brother à Becket), a lay brother and so-called professor of Church History at the priory. At Pater's request Jackson wrote a poem for his birthday:

. . . Your darling soul I say is enflamed with love for me;
Your very eyes do move I cry with sympathy:
Your darling feet and hands are blessings ruled by love,

sense 'of a living person at his side' (II, p.212) — the sense which his 'abstract friend' seems to provide — serves to tranquillise and to inspire Marius, augmenting his sensations and thoughts, such that even his feverish flailings on his deathbed are transformed into a sensual massage, as he is prepared by a group of Christians for his nuptial consummation with Death, figured as Christ:

The people around his bed were praying fervently — *Abi! Abi! anima Christiana!* In the moments of his extreme helplessness their mystic bread had been placed, had descended like a snow-flake from the sky, between his lips. Soothing fingers had applied to hands and feet, to all those old passage-ways of the senses, through which the world had come and gone from him, now so dark and obstructed, a medicinale oil. It was the same people, who, in the grey, austere evening of that day, took up his remains, and buried them secretly, with their accustomed prayers; but with joy also, holding his death, according to their generous view in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom; and martyrdom, as the church had always said, a kind of sacrament with plenary grace. (II, p.218)

Contrary to his previous fears that 'from the drops of his blood there would spring no miraculous, poetic flowers' (II, p.209), Marius's 'martyrdom' springs forth as beautifully as the flowers commemorating Apollo's beloved Hyacinth, for his 'martyrdom' has resulted from the actualisation of the Paterian ideal of 'dexterously seizing' the profound moment, from a willingness to sacrifice himself by taking the place of his beloved Flavian, who was then under arrest, suspected of being a criminal, a Christian:

At last, the great act, the critical moment, comes, easily, almost unconsciously. [...] In one quarter of an hour, under a sudden, uncontrollable impulse, hardly weighing what he did, almost as a matter of course and as lightly as one hires a bed for one's night's rest on a journey, Marius had taken upon himself all the heavy risk of the position in which Cornelius had then been — the long and wearisome delays of judgment, which were possible; the danger and wretchedness of a long journey in this manner; possibly the danger of death. He had delivered his brother, after the manner he had sometimes vaguely anticipated as a kind of distinction in his destiny. (II, pp.207-08)

By chronicling this imaginary 'martyrdom for friendship's sake' and by casting it as the principal ennobling act of a life well lived, Pater has indeed voiced 'an eloquent utterance', an utterance validating homoerotic and pederastic passions, whether experienced in art or in life, validating a 'cultural continuum', particularly when that continuum is endowed with 'classical motive': 'Had there been one to listen just then, there would have come, from the very depth of his desolation, an

As forth was sent from out the Ark a turtle dove!' (p.193)

eloquent utterance at last, on the irony of men's fates, on the singular accidents of life and death' (II, p.209).

Against this 'eloquent utterance' that ends Pater's novel, Higgins's claim that 'like many Victorians [...] the one aspect of his "being" that [Pater] would and could not explore was his sexual identity, specifically his homoerotic sensibility'⁷¹ seems untenable. When Pater suggests that 'Of other people we cannot *really* know even the feelings', each having 'a personality *really* unique' (*Marius* I, p.139, emphasis added), he means only, contrary to Higgins's claim, that *absolute* empathy is elusive. Nevertheless, aesthetic creation does allow a powerful intellect to 'project in an external form that which is most inward in passion or sentiment' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.168), does allow others to perceive the world as he does: 'Then, if we suppose [someone to be] an artist, he says to the reader, — I want you to see precisely what I see' ('Style', *Appreciations*, p.31). In the creation of literature, this capacity for inspiring others with one's 'own strength and noble taste in things' (*Platonism*, p.232) allows for the expression of the most inward of passions and sentiments, which is especially attractive for a homoerotic or pederastic writer whose being is particularly inward, as was the case for both Pater and Hopkins. Recognising that methods of concealment, as well as revelation, are inherent to literary expression, such individuals acquire a scrupulosity in regard to words and phrasing, something Marius praises in Flavian:

For words, after all, words manipulated with all his delicate force, were to be the apparatus of a war for himself. To be forcibly impressed, in the first place; and in the second, to find means of making visible to others that which was vividly apparent, delightful, of lively interest to himself, to the exclusion of all that was but middling, tame, or but half-true even to him — this scrupulousness of literary art actually awoke in Flavian, for the first time, *a sort of chivalrous conscience*. (I, p.98, emphasis added)

Far more than an idyllic notion, this 'chivalrous conscience' becomes, for Flavian, a principle, the forcible apprehension of which made him jealous and fastidious in the selection of his intellectual food; often listless while others read or gazed diligently; never pretending to be moved out of mere complaisance to other people's emotions: it served to foster in him a very scrupulous literary sincerity with himself. (I, p.104)

Because of his 'scrupulous literary sincerity', Flavian only finds palatable those qualities essential for greatness in literary masterpieces, qualities which Pater describes: 'It is on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it' ('Style', *Appreciations*, p.38). This greatness allows a master of letters to display 'the unique word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, essay, or song, absolutely proper to the single mental presentation or vision within' (p.29) — in other words, an 'absolutely sincere apprehension of what is most real to him'

⁷¹ Higgins, 'Piecemeal', p.177.

(p.36). By continued, scrupulous interaction with such literary masterpieces, a reader like Flavian, with a copy of Apuleius in hand, encounters the interior life of others: 'Not less surely does it reach a genuine pathos; for the habit of noting and distinguishing one's own most intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds' ('Postscript', *Appreciations*, p.254).

Promising a power of 'entering [...] into the intimate recesses of other minds', Pater's subjective approach to art became particularly attractive in the 1880s to 'a new generation of literary men [who] began accepting homosexual sentiment as "part of the whole range of feeling which waited to be explored", some claim[ing] that homosexuality was often linked to the "artistic temperament"'.⁷² This 'small band of elite "Oxonian souls"'⁷³ embraced Pater's Decadent vision, a vision proclaiming that 'All art has a sensuous element, colour, form, sound' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.167), a sensuous element which Pater made a habit of teasing from masterpieces of canonical culture, casting over the Victorian appreciation of artwork a homoerotic and pederastic light which is most noticeable in his treatment of Leonardo da Vinci (1450-1519), about whom he writes: 'though [Leonardo] handles sacred subjects continually, he is the most profane of painters' (*Renaissance* 1893, pp.93-94). As Dellamora observes, 'Walter Pater promoted within the emergent academic field of literary criticism an oppositional mode of reading motivated by an affirmation of sexual and emotional ties between men'.⁷⁴ Although this new generation of literary men under Pater's influence began employing their 'artistic temperaments' to craft profane, cloistral atmospheres conducive for the display of their own 'homosexual sentiment', Pater extended his sensuous vision beyond his Oxonian contemporaries, suggesting that 'not only scholars, but all disinterested lovers of books, will always look to [literature], as to all other fine art, for a refuge, a sort of cloistral refuge, from a certain vulgarity in the actual world' ('Style', *Appreciations*, pp.17-18). Hence, Pater reveals a 'cultural continuum', a 'classical motive' which flows, despite the obstacles of 'a certain vulgarity in the actual world', from the shores of the Tiber to the shores of the Thames, from the Greco-Romans to those of today.

Because 'he was still, and must always be, of the poetic temper' (*Marius*, I, p.154), Pater's Marius needed such a cloistral refuge against the vulgarity of the outside world, a world unappreciative of 'Revelation, vision, the uncovering of a vision, the *seeing* of a perfect humanity, in a perfect world' (II, p.212). Although 'His own temper, his early theoretic scheme of things, would have pushed him on to movement and adventure', Marius's temper actually pushed him inwards, a 'movement of observation only, or even of pure meditation' (II, p.203), a

⁷² Hilliard, p.197.

⁷³ As quoted in Clay Daniel, 'The Religion of Culture: Arnold's Priest and Pater's Mystic', *Victorian Newsletter*, 72 (1987), pp.9-11 (p.11).

⁷⁴ Richard Dellamora, *Apocalyptic Overtures: Sexual Politics and the Sense of an Ending* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), p.67.

movement described in Pater's *Renaissance* as 'observation [...] dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind' ('Conclusion', 1893, p.187), a meditative chamber suitable for intimate interaction with existing forms of culture, forms which Pater describes as 'the brightest enthusiasms the world has to show' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.183), enthusiasms which allow the intellect 'to feel itself alive' (p.183). Because he had lived his childhood in a 'coy, retired place' where nothing happened 'without its full accompaniment of thought or reverie' (I, p.20), for Marius 'the whole of life seemed full of sacred presences' (p.24). His familiarity with these 'presences' became as much 'a manner of life' (p.148) as it would for the young Leonardo, about whom Pater observes: 'He learned [at Florence] the art of going deep, of tracking the sources of expression to their subtlest retreats, the power of an intimate presence in the things he handled' (*Renaissance* 1893, p.81). Dwelling within the 'subtlest retreats', as Leonardo later would, Marius's 'manner of life' allowed him to 'become aware of the possibility of a large dissidence between an inward and somewhat exclusive world of his own vivid apprehensions, and the unimproved, unheightened reality of the world of those about him' (I, p.134), a world which considered his Cyrenaic idealism as only an elevated form of Hedonism. The Roman world was unable to recognise that the 'criterion of values' for Marius's Cyrenaic philosophy was 'Not pleasure, but fullness of life, and "insight"' (I, p.152), in much the same way that the Victorian world was unable to recognise this for Pater's Cyrenaic philosophy — even members of his own coterie like Oscar Wilde. The Victorian world (Wilde excluded, of course) was aghast that this Cyrenaic philosophy had inspired Marius with an 'eagerness, just then, to taste and see and touch' (I, p.190), an eagerness unlike that 'immobility' which Marius characterised as 'a sort of ideal in the Roman religion' and culture (II, p.176), a characterisation which, by his continual authorial asides, Pater manages to extend to his own contemporaries as well. The Cyrenaic eagerness which Pater advocates motivated Marius to dive into 'that full stream of refined sensation' (II, p.34), to live forever in that

school of Cyrene, in that comparatively fresh Greek world, [where] we may think we see that philosophy where it is least *blasé*, as we say; in its most pleasant, its blithest, and yet perhaps its wisest form, youthfully bright in the youth of European thought. But it grows young again for a while in almost every youthful soul. We hear it spoken of sometimes, as the appropriate utterance of jaded men; but in them it can hardly be sincere, or, by the nature of the case, an enthusiasm. [...] The Cyrenaic doctrine, then, realised as a motive of earnestness or enthusiasm, is not so properly the utterance of the 'jaded Epicurean', as of the strong young man in all the freshness of his thought and feeling, fascinated by the notion of at least lifting his life to the level of some bold, adventurous theory; while, in the first genial heat of existence, physical objects, also fair and strong, beat potently upon his unwearied and widely opened senses. He discovers a

great new poem every spring, with a hundred thoughts and feelings never expressed, or at least never expressed so well, before. (II, pp.20-21)

This Cyrenaic eagerness, expressed by the utterances of a 'strong young man in all the freshness of his thought and feeling', is what attracted Pater erotically and intellectually, is what inspired him to seek pederastic 'hearers' from among Balliol undergraduates like Hardinge or from among London actors like Eversfield. Pater's desire for contact with such 'unwearied and widely opened senses' is what made him willing to risk scandal and possible arrest, or perhaps Marius's 'martyrdom' for love's sake — though hoping that a protective discretion like Cornelius's would provide for him a cloistral refuge from the vulgar, their gossip, and their draconian laws.

As 'the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world' ('Conclusion', *Renaissance* 1893, pp.187-88), Marius's refined Cyrenaic doctrine surrounded him with just such a cloistral refuge, despite its attendant loneliness — that is, until he realised that his own aesthetic sensibility allowed for the expression of his most inward impressions, something which Pater describes in his *Renaissance*:

The basis of all artistic genius lies in the power of conceiving humanity in a new and striking way, of putting a happy world of its own creation in place of the meaner world of our common days, generating around itself an atmosphere with a novel power of refraction, selecting, transforming, recombining the images it transmits, according to the choice of the imaginative intellect. ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, pp.170)

Acquiring this sensibility, a sensibility that perceives humanity in 'a new and striking way', a sensibility that allows one 'To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, [and] to maintain this ecstasy', suggests Pater, 'is success in life' ('Conclusion', *Renaissance* 1893, p.189). This success bestows a 'colourless, unclassified purity of life, with its blending and interpenetration of intellectual, spiritual, and physical elements, still folded together, pregnant with the possibilities of a whole world closed within it' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.174), an imaginative world impregnated by a Paterian sensibility, as is illustrated by Flavian as he shares his copy of Apuleius with Marius:

The two lads were lounging together over a book, half-buried in a heap of dry corn, in an old granary — the quiet corner to which they had climbed out of the way of their noisier companions on one of their blandest holiday afternoons. They looked round; the western sun smote through the broad chinks of the shutters. How like a picture it all was! and it was precisely the place described in what they were reading, with just that added poetic touch in the book which made it delightful and select, and, in the actual place, the ray of sunlight, transforming the rough grain among the cool brown shadows into heaps of gold. (I, p.59)

Such may have been the glories of an adolescence lived in Imperial Rome — but what of the glories of an adolescence lived in Victorian London? Anticipating this

question, Pater responds with a challenge, claiming that ‘Life in modern London even, in the heavy glow of summer, is stuff sufficient for the fresh imagination of a youth to build its “palace of art” of’ (*Marius* II, p.22), a palace where humanity and its mores are ‘freshly’ expressed, whether in London or in Rome. Embracing Pater’s mature dictum that ‘what is needed in the world, over against that [bland existence which others lead], is a certain general, permanent force of compassion — humanity’s standing self-pity’ (*Marius* II, p.180), Marius sought for a ‘Humanity, a universal order, the great polity, its aristocracy of elect spirits, the mastery of their example over their successors’, for a ‘fresh’ humanity and mores that are ‘more than an intellectual abstraction’ (II, p.17). Only in the early Christian conception of a ‘supreme city, [an] invisible society, whose conscience had become explicit in its inner circle of inspired souls’ (II, p.16), did Marius find this ‘humanity’. In this ‘fresh’ faith’s ‘humanity, or even in its humanism, in its generous hopefulness for man, its common sense, and alacrity of cheerful service, its sympathy with all creatures, its appreciation of beauty and daylight’ (II, p.118), Marius found material for building his own ‘palace of art’, inspired by ‘a kindling flame at work in [early Christianity and its rites], which seemed to make everything else Marius had ever known look comparatively vulgar and mean’ (II, p.133).

Marius’s refinement (not change of perspective) was due, in great part, to the maturing of ideas that he had embraced under Flavian’s influence, ideas that were further developed and adjusted through contact with Cornelius and the humanity of Cornelius’s church: this is an apt expression of the refinement within Pater’s own perspectives and perceptions, as is made clear in that footnote he later added to the then-infamous ‘Conclusion’ to his *Renaissance*. This refinement can be illustrated by comparing a précis of *The Renaissance* with a précis of *Marius* (I have attempted to keep these as close as possible to how I think Pater would himself have written them, by donning his baroque style):

Expanding his time and vitality, first by refining his sympathy with the old masters — especially Renaissance artists who derived their sweetness from the Classical world and their curious strength from the Medieval, a combination of the sacred and the profane — then by exploring the finer gradations of the modern arts of music, poetry, and painting — an aesthetic critic exposes his sensual organs to the strange pagan beauties of art and mood and personality which are never flaccid, even in Christian culture, beauties which penetrate and stimulate and attune his otherwise brief and trivial life, filling it with as many brilliant sins and exquisite amusements as possible, impregnating him with culture and solace and grace, leaving behind only a relish, a longing for these experiences to happen again. (*Renaissance*, my précis)

In Christianity’s humanist ideal of a youth who, although parting with everything for his cause, still announces his success, as if foreseeing his own worship amid the vulgar pagan world — Marius had found an

imaginative stimulus, a possible consciousness, a chivalry analogous to his own ample vision of that perpetual companion who diffused through his memory of strange souls, transforming his vague hopes into effective desires, doubling his pleasures, bringing him gratitude for all aspects of his life, anticipating one great act, one critical moment, which, though it comes easily, changes himself and his life forever. (*Marius*, my précis)

Notice how the first involves a form self-refinement through contact with the choicest of aesthetic works, stimulating and attuning one's brief life in order to create a form of exquisite self-culture; the second, a renunciation of everything, even one's brief life, if that is what is required, to achieve an ideal, an ideal bastioned by a 'sort of chivalrous conscience'. This refinement of perspective — the distinct difference between the Pater of *The Renaissance* and the Pater of *Marius the Epicurean* — is something that even Pater's coterie seems not to have grasped. This Paterian concept of a youth 'parting with everything for his cause' was certainly beyond Wilde's comprehension and worthy of his humoured disdain. In *The Critic as Artist*, Wilde expresses through Gilbert that 'Self-denial is simply a method by which man arrests his progress, and self-sacrifice a survival of the mutilation of the savage, part of that old worship of pain which is so terrible a factor in the history of the world'.⁷⁵ While the Pater of *The Renaissance* might well have seconded Wilde's claim, the Pater of *Marius the Epicurean* had come to appreciate both 'self-denial' and 'self-sacrifice', had come to realise that the ultimate refinement of self-culture was knowing how to assist the wider culture, how to facilitate the homoerotic and pederastic 'continuum' — even if that assistance required remaining silent and standing aside, a form of Paterian 'martyrdom' ever accompanied by Marius's fear that 'from the drops of his blood there would spring no miraculous, poetic flowers' (II, p.209).

Given the advantages of having acquired an aesthetic education, complete with 'all the finer sorts of literature' (*Marius* I, p.148), complete with an appreciation of the vulgarity and meanness of conventional humanity, Pater, like his persona Marius, felt morally compelled to enlighten others, to assist the wider culture, even though he recognised that this assistance might only be appreciated by a very limited Uranian audience. Pater was fully aware that his Cyrenaic doctrine 'with its worship of beauty — of the body — of physical beauty' would only 'perform its legitimate moral function, as a "counsel of perfection", for the few' (II, p.32), a moral function which Pater extends to religious counsel, for 'Religious progress, like all purely spiritual progress, is confined to a few' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.161). In Leonardo, Pater found an exemplum of this aesthetic and spiritual counsel, for Leonardo 'seemed to his contemporaries to be the possessor of some unsanctified and secret wisdom'

⁷⁵ Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.1108-55 (p.1122).

(*Renaissance* 1893, p.78), a wisdom that transformed his studio into a form of Platonic academy, especially for

Andrea Salaino, beloved of Leonardo for his curled and waving hair [...] and afterwards his favourite pupil and servant. Of all the interests in living men and women which may have filled his life at Milan, this attachment alone is recorded. And in return Salaino identified himself so entirely with Leonardo, that the picture of *St. Anne*, in the Louvre, has been attributed to him. It illustrates Leonardo's usual choice of pupils [...] men with just enough genius to be capable of initiation into his secret, for the sake of which they were ready to efface their own individuality. [...] Out of the secret places of a unique temperament he brought strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown. (pp.91-92)

As with Leonardo, Marius 'lived so intently in the world, yet with an air so disengaged, [that it] gave him a peculiar expression of intellectual confidence, as of one who had indeed been initiated into a great secret. [...] The veil, which was to be lifted up for him, lay over the works of old mastery in art' (*Marius*, I, pp.157-58). This intellectual confidence, a confidence that enabled Marius to unexpurgate the subtleties of ancient art, had been gained through

refining all the instruments of inward and outward intuition, of developing all their capacities, of testing and exercising oneself in them, till one's whole nature should become a complex medium of reception, towards the vision — the beautiful vision, if one really cared to make it such — of our actual experience in the world. Not the conveyance of an abstract body of truths or principles, would be the aim of the right education of oneself, or of another, but the conveyance of an art — an art in some degree peculiar and special to each individual. (I, pp.143-44)

At a Classical academy, an academy resembling, at least in pederastic import, the studio of Leonardo — 'This school, one of many imitations of Plato's Academy in the old Athenian garden, lay in a quiet suburb of Pisa, and had its grove of cypresses, its porticoes, a house for the master, its chapel and images' (I, p.50) — Marius had gained that idiosyncratic, academic education which Pater, in his collection of lectures *Plato and Platonism*, claims as 'a highly conscious reassertion of one of the two constituent elements in the Hellenic genius, of the spirit of the highlands namely in which the early Dorian forefathers of the Lacedæmonians *had secreted their peculiar disposition*, in contrast with the mobile, the marine and fluid temper of the littoral Ionian people' (pp.200-01, emphasis added). Pater's word 'secreted' is a portmanteau of erotic suggestion, especially if 'disposition' is interpreted erotically: the Dorian 'disposition' is *secret—ed*, conveyed in secret from 'inspirer' to 'hearer', and the Dorian 'disposition' is *secrete—d*, conveyed as a fluid (semen) from 'inspirer' to 'hearer'. But, as J. A. Symonds explains in his *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, this erotic relationship conveyed more than erotic pleasure, more than a 'disposition' fostered by ejaculations secreted in secret:

The lover taught, the hearer learned; and so from man to man was handed down the tradition of heroism, the peculiar tone and temper of the state to which, in particular among the Greeks, the Dorians clung with obstinate pertinacity. Xenophon distinctly states that love was maintained among the Spartans with a view to education; and when we consider the customs of the state, by which boys were separated early from their homes and the influences of the family were almost wholly wanting, it is not difficult to understand the importance of the paiderastic institution. The Lacedæmonian lover might represent his friend in the Assembly. He was answerable for his good conduct, and stood before him as a pattern of manliness, courage, and prudence. Of the nature of his teaching we may form some notion from the precepts addressed by the Megarian Theognis to the youth Kurnus. In battle the lovers fought side by side.⁷⁶

‘Praised for its sanity by Benjamin Jowett and the other Oxford dons’,⁷⁷ Pater’s *Plato and Platonism* asserts that ‘the institutions of Sparta [which Symonds describes above] bore directly upon those of Victorian England’⁷⁸ — or more aptly, ‘bore directly into’ the educational institutions of Victorian England, especially when educators such as William Johnson (*later* Cory) and Oscar Browning began ‘secreting their peculiar disposition’ into the orifices, carnal or cerebral, of many a submissive Etonian. Surprisingly, few of Pater’s contemporaries, including Jowett, seem to have recognised or particularly considered the book’s subtle veneration of Dorian (or, early Spartan) pederastic practices:

These bodies [of the young male Spartans], moreover, are shaped by a discipline in which normative Victorian masculinity is perpetually violated: this emphatically conservative and masculine society articulates its social authority through the anathematized practice of pederasty. Yet Pater’s sympathy to this transgressive discipline was not idiosyncratic: in contemporary reviews, [...] Pater’s account of Sparta was ‘universally admired’.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Symonds, *Greek Ethics* [1901], p.13.

⁷⁷ Robert and Janice A. Keefe, *Walter Pater and the Gods of Disorder* (Athens: Ohio State University Press, 1988), p.16.

⁷⁸ Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s’, p.3. The full quote reads: ‘It is clear, for example, that Pater himself believed that the institutions of Sparta bore directly upon those of Victorian England: the parallels he draws between the education of Spartan youth and the public schools and universities of England are too insistent for us to think otherwise’.

⁷⁹ James Eli Adams, ‘Gentleman, Dandy, Priest: Manliness and Social Authority in Pater’s Aestheticism’, *ELH*, 59 (1992), pp.441-66 (p.461). This Doric pederasty was first dealt with in detail by Karl Otfried Müller in his *Die Dorer: Geschichten hellnischer Stämme und Städte*, translated into English by Henry Tufnell and George Cornewall Lewis, *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, 2 vols, 2nd edn (London: [n.p.], 1839), a volume which considers Greek pederasty to have been essential within Greek culture. Dowling writes: ‘Whatever we decide, it is clear that Müller’s *Dorians* was a favorite book with Pater’ (‘Ruskin’s’, p.3). For ‘Dorianism’ as a concept for Pater and his contemporaries, see Dellamora, *Apocalyptic*, chpt. 2.

In both Spartan discipline and Platonic dialogues, such pederastic practices engendered a receptive temperament or ‘disposition’ in the young, a temperament of ‘strict indifference’ that Pater believed essential for encountering, whether in literature or in life, the brilliance of an individual like Plato:

The business of the young scholar therefore, in reading Plato, is not to take his side in a controversy, to adopt or refute Plato’s opinions, to modify, or make apology for, what may seem erratic or impossible in him; still less, to furnish himself with arguments on behalf of some theory or conviction of his own. His duty is rather to follow intelligently, but with strict indifference, the mental process there, as he might witness a game of skill; better still, as in reading *Hamlet* or *The Divine Comedy*, so in reading *The Republic*, to watch, for its dramatic interest, the spectacle of a powerful, of a sovereign intellect, translating itself, amid a complex group of conditions which can never in the nature of things occur again, at once pliant and resistant to them, into a great literary monument. (*Platonism*, pp.10-11)⁸⁰

Pruriently, Pater suggests that the brilliance of Plato’s dialogues arises from the same sensuous faculty that made him a superior lover: ‘Just there, then, is the secret of Plato’s intimate concern with, his power over, the sensible world, the apprehensions of the sensuous faculty: he is a lover, a great lover, somewhat after the manner of Dante’ (p.135).⁸¹

Although sharing many of Pater’s acquaintances and desires, as well as writing his only approved biography — well, approved as far as Pater’s fastidious and protective sisters Hester and Clara were concerned — Arthur C. Benson nonetheless recognised the moral problems arising from the unification of Plato’s pedagogy and Dante’s idealised love found in the passage above, compelling Benson to question: ‘Isn’t it really rather dangerous to let boys read Plato, if one is desirous that they should accept conventional moralities?’⁸² Symonds also pondered this question, as Dowling relates:

No wonder Symonds in concluding *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891), the last of the homosexualist apologias he was to have printed during his lifetime, should suggest that those who insist on punishing homosexuals at law would do better instead to ‘turn their attention to the higher education’ being carried on in English public schools and universities. For it was just

⁸⁰ In ‘Pater as Don’, *Prose Studies*, 11 (1988), pp.41-60, Shuter writes: ‘In the study of Plato [for Pater] no examinable skill is so essential as a receptive disposition, for Plato’s philosophy “does not provide a proposition, nor a system of propositions, but forms a temper”’ (p.53).

⁸¹ Dowling writes: ‘Pater [...] seems to have been persuaded that an education conducted along the old lines of Greek paiderastia [...] would genuinely fulfil the liberal ideal of education’ (*Hellenism*, p.102).

⁸² David Newsome, *On the Edge of Paradise: A. C. Benson: The Diarist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.194. About Benson’s comments on Pater, Shuter writes: ‘[Pater’s homoerotic temperament] was therefore always something of an open secret [...] By way of confirmation Benson merely points to the body of Pater’s work, which, he supposes, speaks for itself’ (‘Outing’, p.480).

there that the ‘best minds of our youth are ... exposed to the influences of a paederastic literature at the same time that they acquire the knowledge and experience of unnatural practices’.⁸³

However, one must bear in mind that Benson’s question about the dangers arising from boys-reading-Plato concerns ‘conventional moralities’ only, for Benson would not have been personally scandalised by the pederastic pedagogy that Pater sanctions: ‘While not truly Uranian, Benson nevertheless hovered dangerously near Uranian sympathies’.⁸⁴ In fact, Benson later provided a biographical introduction and notes for the 1905 edition of *Ionica*, a ‘classic paean to romantic paiderastia’,⁸⁵ a collection of poems by William Johnson (*later* Cory), one of the founding and most influential of the Uranians (or, as Timothy d’Arch Smith labels him, one of the most influential ‘Uranian Precursors’). Johnson was ‘a vigorous intellect, classicist, and master at Eton’, and had ‘a romantic belief in Platonic paiderastia’,⁸⁶ the very pederasty which Symonds considers above and which was expounded to Symonds in a letter from Johnson. As with Pater’s friend Oscar Browning a few years later, a scandal drew Johnson (who had formerly been one of Browning’s own teachers there) away from his beloved Eton: ‘Johnson was to leave Eton abruptly in 1872 after what appears to have been a parent’s complaint about his overly intimate relationship with a pupil’.⁸⁷ As the provider of an introduction and notes for Johnson’s *Ionica* and as the writer of Pater’s biography, Benson was one of those best qualified to answer his own rhetorical question, ‘Isn’t it really rather dangerous to let boys read Plato, if one is desirous that they should accept conventional moralities?’

While visiting Oxford in search of biographical material about the elusive Pater, Benson gained a definitive answer to his own question, finding that Pater had always been the wanton ‘corrupter of youths’ that Pattison had observed in 1878 at a hand-holding tea at the Paters, a ‘corrupter’ who had just returned from ‘upstairs’ with two ‘feminine’ boys in tow. In *On the Edge of Paradise: A. C. Benson: The Diarist*, David Newsome observes:

If the writing of *Walter Pater* took under three months, at least the research behind it had proved ticklish and delicate, as [Edmund] Gosse had warned [Arthur Benson] it would. There were ‘dark areas’ in Pater’s life. Benjamin Jowett had gained possession of certain compromising letters which he had threatened Pater he would publish should he ever think of standing for university office. Arthur’s reaction was instinctively to defend Pater’s male friendships as never being anything but ‘frigidly Platonic’.

⁸³ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.129.

⁸⁴ D’Arch Smith, p.7.

⁸⁵ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.114. William Johnson (*later* Cory), *Ionica* [Part I and II]. By William Cory. With Biographical Introduction and Notes by Arthur C. Benson (London: Allen & Unwin, [1905]).

⁸⁶ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.86.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.87, note. For Kincaid’s discussion of both Johnson and Browning, see *Child-Loving*, pp.232-34. D’Arch Smith notes that Oscar Browning had been one of Cory’s pupils at Eton (p.6).

After he had visited Oxford and talked with Herbert Warren at Magdalen about the Aesthetic Movement generally, he was less happy. 'It will want great care', he wrote. This was 'rather a dark place, I'm afraid. But if we give boys Greek books to read and hold up the Greek spirit and the Greek life as a model, it is very difficult to slice out one portion, which was a perfectly normal part of Greek life, and to say that it is abominable etc. etc. A strongly sensuous nature — such as Pater and Symonds — with a strong instinct for beauty, and brought up at an English public school, will almost certainly go wrong, in thought if not in act. But Warren revealed to me a depth of corruption in Symonds of which I had not dreamed'.⁸⁸

Warren's assessment seemed tenable to Benson, especially since Pater fashioned himself a receptive student of Plato, a pederastic lover whose philosophical strength came from a 'strongly sensuous nature' which, as with Marius, rested in the education of the eyes, for the artist, as well as the philosopher, implores his students: 'I want you to see precisely what I see' ('Style', *Appreciations*, p.31). Marius felt that

a diligent promotion of the capacity of the eye, inasmuch as in the eye would lie for him the determining influence of life: — he was of the number of those who, in the words of a poet who came long after, must be 'made perfect by the love of visible beauty'. It was a discourse conceived from the point of view of a theory which Marius afterwards found in Plato's *Phaedrus*, [...] which supposes men's spirits to be susceptible to certain influences, diffused, like streams or currents, by fair things or persons visibly present — green fields and children's faces, for instance — into the air around them; and which, with certain natures, are like potent material essences, conforming the seer to themselves as by some cunning physical necessity. (*Marius*, I, pp.37-38)

This Platonic disposition, a disposition which Pater and his Marius both believed to be characteristically present in children, became an ideal for Marius, who hoped to maintain 'the unclouded and receptive soul quitting the world finally, with the same fresh wonder with which it had entered it still unimpaired' (II, p.214), for this disposition is not limited by chronological age — 'Winckelmann looked at life with a fresh, childlike eye'⁸⁹ — or, as Pater phrases this himself in relation to Winckelmann's admiration for all things Greek: 'Greek sensuousness [...] is shameless and childlike' (*Renaissance* 1893, p.177). Robert Currie suggests that Pater adopted/adapted this view from Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), which caused Pater to believe that, 'In the nineteenth century, only the child, or the naive genius, might enjoy the immediacy of Greek life',⁹⁰ an 'immediacy' that could only

⁸⁸ Newsome, p.192.

⁸⁹ Richard Dellamora, 'The Androgynous Body in Pater's "Winckelmann"', *Browning Institute Studies*, 11 (1983), pp.51-68 (p.64). See also Donoghue, p.183.

⁹⁰ Robert Currie, 'Pater's Rational Cosmos', *Philological Quarterly*, 59 (1980), pp.95-104 (p.101).

be maintained in adulthood through continual interaction with the young, an interaction about which Marius elaborates in his diary: 'I notice often the true character of the fondness of the roughest working-people for their young children. [...] What is of finer soul, or of finer stuff, in things, and *demands delicate touching* — the delicacy of the little child represents to [the roughest worker] that, initiates him into that' (II, pp.178-79, emphasis added). If even the most illiterate, vulgar, and rough worker is somewhat initiated into this 'finer soul' through physical contact with his own children, how much more for someone with refined sensibilities like Marius, someone who, because he is fully initiated into the pleasures and philosophies of the 'immediacy of Greek life', feels compelled to perform the 'legitimate moral function' of Cyrenaic philosophy, the 'counsel of perfection, for the few' (II, p.32), in this case a few young boys of receptive temperament who can become his inspired 'hearers'. Consequently, Marius sought out a 'finer soul', a receptive youth whose physical description seems to 'demand delicate touching':

Marius became fluent concerning the promise of one young student [...] and soon afterwards the lad was seen coming along briskly — a lad with gait and figure well enough expressive of the sane mind in the healthy body, though a little slim and worn of feature, and with a pair of eyes expressly designed, it might seem, for fine glancing at the stars. At the sight of Marius he paused suddenly, and with a modest blush on recognising his companion, who straightway took with the youth, *so prettily enthusiastic*, the freedom of an old friend. (II, pp.144-45, emphasis added)

While the Sophistic tutelage of Marcus Cornelius Fronto (100-170 CE), 'a favourite "director" of noble youth'⁹¹ and a contemporary of Marius, bestowed on his 'hearers' like Marcus Aurelius a complex code of conduct, 'an intimate practical knowledge of manners, physiognomies, smiles, disguises, flatteries, and courtly tricks of every kind — a whole accomplished rhetoric of daily life' (I, pp.220; 219), the Socratic tutelage of Marius did not advocate interaction with or even manipulation of an existent, canonical culture, especially a religiously intolerant culture like Classical Rome, or a homophobic culture like Victorian London. Instead, Marius advocated interaction with a submerged and subversive culture, a secret society of 'enthusiasts' impassioned by a pederastic and homoerotic sensibility, a secret society of 'enthusiasts' which Pater made the very cornerstone of his own attempts to assist the wider culture, despite the assurance that only a few would understand:

Invariably the binding secret remains obscure: it seems to designate a particular state of mind or mode of existence rather than a body of discursive lore, and hence is not to be revealed, only experienced. In this sense, a form of secret society is implicitly constituted by virtually all of

⁹¹ Marcus Aurelius was eighteen at the time Fronto began to address him as 'Beloved Boy'.

Pater's accounts of the reception and transmission of artworks or cultural traditions — as, for example, 'the Hellenic tradition' constructed in 'Winckelmann'. Many critics have commented on the pronounced homoerotic character of these communities of 'enthusiasts', as Pater refers to Winckelmann; certainly the 'secret' into which Leonardo initiates young men seems as much sexual as artistic. [...] and Pater's rhetoric clearly suggests a calculated affiliation of his aestheticism with homoerotic subcultures that still remain shadowy in recent social and literary histories of Victorian England.⁹²

Beyond accentuating similarities between Marius's receptive temperament and Christianity's early secrecy, one passage I would like to consider also provides an example of Pater's 'calculated affiliation' with that shadowy, secret society implicitly constituted in his texts, a society of 'enthusiasts' appreciative of his pederastic and homoerotic subtleties, subtleties like those even concealed behind his description of a Christian sanctuary, of all things. Pater's informed reader would have recognised in the following a metaphorical insight into Marius's instruction of that 'young student', a boy described as 'so prettily enthusiastic': 'Faithful to the spirit of his early Epicurean philosophy and the impulse to surrender himself, in perfectly liberal inquiry about it, to anything that, as a matter of fact, attracted or impressed him strongly, Marius informed himself with much pains concerning the church in Cecilia's house' (II, p.123). That sentence seems tame enough, tame enough till brought into proximity with the object of Marius's erotic desires. If Marius had an 'impulse to surrender himself to *anything* that attracted or impressed him strongly', such that he 'informed himself' about it (as he did concerning the church in Cecilia's house), then what of his impulse to become 'fluent concerning the promise of one young student'? Can Marius's 'impulse' be anything other than a salacious desire to 'surrender himself' to that youthful companion, a boy 'so prettily enthusiastic', a boy who had 'attracted or impressed him [as] strongly' as the church in Cecilia's house, where 'There reigned throughout, an order and purity, an orderly disposition, as if by way of making ready for some gracious spousals. The place itself was like a bride adorned for her husband' (II, p.101)? Seen in this light, the boy 'so prettily enthusiastic', in whom Marius was also attracted, becomes a pederastic 'bride adorned for [his] husband', becomes the 'hearer' adorned for nuptials with Marius the 'inspirer'. Described as 'a half-opened book to be read by the duly initiated mind' (II, p.136), the religious rites held in Cecilia's house are also reminiscent of Marius's attendance at the bedside of his beloved Flavian, whose copy of Apuleius lay half-opened nearby, whose last moments were spent crafting the *Pervigilium Veneris* as a form of epithalamion, a traditional hymn sung as a couple is ushered towards a chamber made ready for the consummation of their 'gracious spousals', spousals like those

⁹² Adams, p.454.

of Cupid's marriage in Apuleius's verses, a marriage woven together with the image of Jupiter being attended by the Olympian version of Marius's beloved boy, the most potent of pederastic icons, Ganymede:

And thereupon [Jupiter] bade Mercury produce Psyche in heaven; and holding out to her his ambrosial cup, 'Take it', he said, 'and live for ever: nor shall Cupid ever depart from thee'. And the gods sat down together to the marriage-feast. On the first couch lay the bridegroom, and Psyche in his bosom. *His rustic serving-boy bare* the wine to Jupiter; and Bacchus to the rest. (I, p.92, emphasis added)

A pederastic education capable of cultivating a rustic Trojan shepherd into the servant and beloved of Jupiter, a 'rustic serving-boy bare' of clothing, a 'rustic serving-boy [who] bare the wine to Jupiter' (Pater playfully omitting the pronoun to allow for pederastic 'underthought') — such an education is most clearly elucidated by Pater in his essay on the archaeologist and art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, an essay which Dellamora suggests is so 'deeply felt' because of 'the depth of affinity between these two men', for 'both [Pater and Winckelmann] shared an erotic temperament and wrote especially for young men'.⁹³ Winckelmann was the author of such works as *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture (Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in Malerei und Bildhauerkunst, 1755)*, *The History of Ancient Art (Geschichte der Kunst des Alterhums, 1764)*, and *Unpublished Ancient Monuments, Explained and Illustrated (Monumenti antichi inediti, spiegati ed illustrati, 1767)*; as well as the Papal Antiquary and tutor of young European aristocrats — and, in Pater's essay on him, Pater freely explores 'the homoerotic tradition of Western culture at a point of origin in Plato's dialogues' and, even further, (re)considers a historical personage who, more openly than himself, 'pursued romantic attachments with young men'.⁹⁴

Appointed as the tutor to Friedrich Wilhelm Peter Lamprecht (1728-1797), son of the chief magistrate of Hadmersleben, in Sachsen Anhalt, Germany,⁹⁵ Winckelmann soon exceeded his tutorial role, his illicit 'friendship' with the

⁹³ Dellamora, 'Androgynous', p.51.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.52; 53.

⁹⁵ Denis M. Sweet, 'The Personal, the Political, and the Aesthetic: Johann Joachim Winckelmann's German Enlightenment Life', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 16 (1988), pp.147-62 (p.151). See also Whitney Davis, 'Winckelmann Divided: Mourning the Death of Art History', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 27.1-2 (1994), pp.141-59. In 'The Discreet Charm of the Belvedere: Submerged Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century Writing on Art', *German Life and Letters*, 52.2 (1999), pp.123-35, Jeff Morrison notes that 'These men would then be brought to Italy after a period of preparatory study for individual tutoring. At its simplest we could have here a pragmatic, eighteenth-century adaptation of the Socratic method. But it is surely more than this. We have a striking coincidence of sexual agenda and pedagogic method, a coincidence so strong that the two become inseparable' ('Discreet', p.128)

younger Lamprecht evolving into ‘The great love of Winckelmann’s life’.⁹⁶ This situation became ‘a composition in pedagogy and passion’, such that ‘When Winckelmann left the Lamprecht family house in the spring of 1743 to take up a position as assistant headmaster in a school in Seehausen, the young Lamprecht followed, taking up residence in Winckelmann’s room and continuing with his lessons’ for the next five years, lessons flushed with a ‘desire that blends eros, pedagogy and aesthetics’.⁹⁷ Twenty years passed before Winckelmann encountered the ‘one more Lamprecht in his life’, a young baron of Livonia, Friedrich Reinhold von Berg (1736-1809), with whom, some scholars assert, he shared ‘a specific instance of homoerotic practice’.⁹⁸ Winckelmann later instructed other aristocrats, ‘young princes from Germany’ — his instruction ‘marked by the same elan and pedagogic purpose as his friendships with Lamprecht and Berg’ and his most noteworthy student of this period being ‘Leopold III Friedrich Franz [1740-1817], the ruling prince of Anhalt-Dessau who was twenty-five when he sought out Winckelmann in Rome’.⁹⁹ In these descriptions, Winckelmann is noticeably defined as a homoerotic and pederastic ‘inspirer’, an ‘inspirer’ equal to Jove or Socrates or Leonardo or Marius, though an ‘inspirer’ who would, unfortunately, be murdered before he had an opportunity to meet his principal ‘hearer’, the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), who remained a lifelong admirer: ‘Pater imagines what would have happened if Winckelmann and Goethe had met. It is a homosexual fantasy’.¹⁰⁰

If, as Kevin Parker suggests, ‘Winckelmann’s relation to the Greeks is rather explicitly erotic’ and ‘informed by a certain very stylized homoerotics’,¹⁰¹ then Pater’s relation to Winckelmann is much more so, for his essay about this archaeologist and art critic literally undulates with stylised homoeroticism — though ‘Greek enthusiasm’ or ‘pederasty’ suits far better Winckelmann’s style and the style of Pater’s responsive essay — a blend of Platonism, pederasty, and aesthetic instruction cultivated to inspire young ‘aristocrats’ (extremely young in comparison to Winckelmann) — as is elucidated by the following description of Winckelmann’s approach to the youthful figure in antique art:

Again, Greek sculpture deals almost exclusively with youth, where the moulding of the bodily organs is still as if suspended between growth and completion, indicated but not emphasised; where the transition from curve to curve is so delicate and elusive, that Winckelmann compares it to a quiet sea, which, although we understand it to be in motion, we nevertheless

⁹⁶ Kevin Parker, ‘Winckelmann, Historical Difference, and the Problem of the Boy’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 25 (1992), pp.523-44 (p.532).

⁹⁷ Sweet, pp.152-53.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.153-54.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.155.

¹⁰⁰ Donoghue, p.157.

¹⁰¹ Parker, pp.528; 532.

regard as an image of repose; where, therefore, the exact degree of development is so hard to apprehend. (*Renaissance* 1893, p.174)

Yet, Winckelmann's 'temperament' did apprehend those physical subtleties, for he had developed, according to Pater, bold 'new senses' which endowed him with a pederastic acumen in regard to juvenile beauty, a Grecian subject hitherto taboo in Western culture, at least after the ascension of Christianity:

And that world in which others had moved with so much embarrassment, seems to call out in Winckelmann new senses fitted to deal with it. He is in touch with it; it penetrates him, and becomes part of his temperament. He remodels his writings with constant renewal of insight; he catches the thread of a whole sequence of laws in some hollowing of the hand, or dividing of the hair; he seems to realise that fancy of the reminiscence of a forgotten knowledge hidden for a time in the mind itself. (1893, pp.154-55)

Pater suggests that 'This key to the understanding of the Greek spirit, Winckelmann possessed in his own nature' (1893, p.175), possessed as a serenity of temperament which influenced his 'handling of the sensuous side of Greek art', a serenity recognisable in his 'absence of any sense of want, or corruption, or shame' (p.176). The method of Winckelmann's 'handling of the sensuous side' is given a rather phallic thrust, rhetorically, when Pater claims that 'Penetrating into the antique world by his passion, his temperament, [Winckelmann] enunciated no formal principles, always hard and one-sided' (p.176). With such descriptions, as pederastic and as homoerotic as those of his biographical subject, Pater asserts that 'Nothing was to enter into [Winckelmann's] life unpenetrated by its central enthusiasm' (p.144), an enthusiasm which even in 'The protracted longing of his youth is not a vague, romantic longing', for Winckelmann 'knows what he longs for, what he wills. Within its severe limits his enthusiasm burns like lava' (p.148), an enthusiasm and 'affinity with Hellenism [...] not merely intellectual' (p.152), an enthusiasm arising from 'his romantic, fervent friendships with young men':

This enthusiasm, dependent as it is to a great degree on bodily temperament, has a power of reinforcing the purer emotions of the intellect with an almost physical excitement. That this affinity with Hellenism was not merely intellectual, that the subtler threads of temperament were inwoven in it, is proved by his romantic, fervent friendships with young men. He *has known*, he says, many young men more beautiful than Guido [Reni]'s archangel. These friendships, bringing him *into contact* with the pride of human form, and staining the thoughts with its bloom, perfected his reconciliation to the spirit of Greek sculpture. (p.152, emphasis added)

Brought 'into contact' with 'the pride of human form', Winckelmann had indeed 'known many young men more beautiful than Guido's archangel', had 'known' them in the intimate ways that the men of Sodom had, for Pater is employing here the language of Genesis 19.5 — 'And [the men of Sodom] called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them

out unto us, that we may know them' (KJV); '[...] Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them' (NIV). By implication, Pater suggests that 'we see [in these "romantic, fervent friendships"] the native tendency of Winckelmann to escape from abstract theory to intuition, to the exercise of sight and touch' (1893, p.147). Pater assumes that Winckelmann, inspired by the beauty of these young German aristocrats, performed with them pedagogical 'exercises of sight and touch', an assumption supported by that anecdote from the memoirs of Jacques Casanova which recounts how, walking 'unannounced into Winckelmann's rooms in Rome one day', Casanova interrupted just such a pedagogical 'exercise of sight and touch'. After Winckelmann 'had straightened his trousers and the young man he had been surprised with had beat a hasty retreat',¹⁰² Winckelmann justified his activities to Casanova as follows:

You know I am not only not a pederast, but for all of my life I have said it is inconceivable that such a taste can have so seduced the human race. If I say this after what you have just witnessed, you will think me a hypocrite. But this is the way it is: During my long studies I have come to admire and then to adore the ancients who, as you know, were almost all buggerers without concealing it, and many of them immortalized the handsome objects of their tenderness in their poems, not to speak of superb monuments. They went so far as to bring up their taste as evidence of the purity of their morals. [...] With the clear realization of such truths, I cast a glance at myself and felt disdain, a kind of reproach for not at all resembling my heroes. I found myself, at least as far as my love life was concerned, as unworthy of esteem, and not being able to overcome this conceit by cold theory, I decided to illumine myself through practice, hoping that by analysing the matter my mind would acquire the light necessary for distinguishing between true and false. Thus determined, it has been three or four years that I have been working at this business, choosing the cutest Smerdiases of Rome, but it has done no good. When I get down to it, *non arrivo*. I see in my confusion that a woman is preferable in any case, but outside of not caring about this I fear a bad reputation, for what would one say here in Rome, particularly where I am well known, if one could say that I had a mistress?¹⁰³

Although awkwardly compromised, although recasting his interrupted 'tutorial' as an attempt 'to illumine' himself through pederastic practise, Winckelmann nonetheless admitted candidly to Casanova that his own Classicism was an attempt to reconstruct the pederastic culture that had flourished among the ancients, 'almost

¹⁰² Sweet, p.149.

¹⁰³ As quoted in *ibid.*, pp.149-50. Morrison suggests that 'Perhaps some dark intuition of this took Winckelmann south to Italy — and so nearer to Greece, where homosexuality, scholarship and art had historically proven a productive combination' (p.126). See also Robert Aldrich, *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy* (London: Routledge, 1993); Joseph A. Boone, 'Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism', *PMLA*, 110.1 (1995), pp.89-107.

all [of whom were] buggerers without concealing it', a Hellenic culture that often lingers as pitiable fragments buried beneath the earth or the consciousness of man, as Pater explains:

This testimony to the authority of the Hellenic tradition, its fitness to satisfy some vital requirement of the intellect, which Winckelmann contributes as a solitary man of genius, is offered also by the general history of the mind. The spiritual forces of the past, which have prompted and informed the culture of a succeeding age, live, indeed, within that culture, but with an absorbed, underground life. *The Hellenic element alone has not been so absorbed, or content with this underground life*; from time to time it has started to the surface; culture has been drawn back to its sources to be clarified and corrected. Hellenism is not merely an absorbed element in our intellectual life; it is a conscious tradition in it. (*Renaissance* 1893, p.158, emphasis added)

Neither absorbed nor content with its underground life, the 'Hellenic element' had also 'started to the surface' within Victorian culture, a seedling nurtured by Pater and his coterie. Nevertheless, as Wilde would later illustrate textually and literally, 'Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril', a peril which extended beyond those who tilled the Uranian soil to those who gathered what Hopkins (in that fragmentary poem composed upon Pater's dinner acceptance) calls the 'brightest blooms', blooms with the 'sweetest nectar'. The blooms that sprang from Pater's cultivation of that 'Hellenic element' were only appreciated and discretely sanctioned by those who had, like Winckelmann, the 'key to the understanding of the Greek spirit' in their own 'natures' — those who, like Hopkins and Wilde, were admirers of the Classics studied in *Literae Humaniores*, a bountiful bouquet of Greco-Roman pederastic nuance. After gathering a score of pederastic blooms from the dialogues of Plato, the apprenticeships of Leonardo, and the criticisms of Winckelmann, Pater crafted a pedagogical laurel which would wreath the scholarly and sexual temperaments of many an Oxonian like Hopkins.

Despite the fact that, when Pater's essay on Winckelmann appeared in the *Westminster Review* in January 1867, it did so anonymously, Hopkins is likely to have known much of its substance, even if not assured of Pater's authorship (and given that Hopkins knew the essay at all). Pater's essay on Winckelmann was published six months before Hopkins graduated from Oxford, while he was busy preparing with Pater for his finals in Greats, a period during which, Nixon asserts, 'Pater would have shared much of his scholarship with Hopkins'.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps after a rhetorical question like 'And what does the spirit need in the face of modern life?' a question with its attendant answer of 'The sense of freedom' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.184) — Pater had vaguely insinuated to

¹⁰⁴ Nixon, p.168.

Hopkins 'the theme of sexual freedom latent in Winckelmann's notion of Greek nakedness'.¹⁰⁵ Much later, as a mature poet and professor, Hopkins must have ruminated over the discussions he had had with Pater, discussions impregnated by a Winckelmannesque appreciation for Hellenic pederasty, a pedagogical tradition that occasionally surfaces, surfaces to bloom the likes of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion', a poem fulfilling Pater's insistence that the artistic goal is 'To create — to live, perhaps, a little beyond the allotted span, in some fragment even, of perfect expression [...] something to hold by and rest on, amid the *perpetual flux*' (*Marius*, I, p.155), something stable amid the Heraclitean changes in life and culture that Hopkins considers 'That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection'. Beyond its intrinsic poetical value, Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' — for Nixon, an expression of the 'Paterian notions of the wholeness of male sexuality'¹⁰⁶ — seriously challenges Norman White's dismissal of the poem as an improvisational fragment, as a collection of 'landscape descriptions [which] have no force of plot behind them'.¹⁰⁷ As a poetical masterpiece, Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' seems to warrant what Marius refers to as 'an ampler vision, which should take up into itself and explain this world's delightful shows, as the scattered fragments of a poetry, till then but half-understood, might be taken up into the text of a lost epic, recovered at last' (II, p.214). This would certainly fulfil part of the title of Michael Lynch's article about the poet's homoeroticism — 'Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves'¹⁰⁸.

Exhibiting the same literary scrupulosity which, in Flavian, Pater describes as 'a sort of chivalrous conscience', Hopkins, in his 'Epithalamion', 'manipulated [words] with all his delicate force, [...] making visible to others that which was vividly apparent, delightful, of lively interest to himself' (*Marius*, I, p.98) — which was a woodland where bathing boys abound and where prurient strangers can advance until, inspired by the erotic sight of boyhood nakedness, they undress and bathe alone in a vacillating stream, a stream aflow with masturbatory connotations. This 'branchy bunchy bushybowered wood', this Arcadian woodland within which Hopkins has chosen to conceal his most delicately homoerotic and pederastic expressions is, like the church in Cecilia's house, 'a bride adorned for her husband' (II, p.101), an appropriate place indeed for a nuptial epithalamion. Contrary to White's insistence that these 'landscape descriptions have no force of plot behind them', the 'Epithalamion', as well as its landscape, is planted with 'temperament' rather than plotted with action, a 'receptive temperament' which Pater had instilled in students like Hopkins, imploring these 'hearers' 'to watch, for its dramatic interest, the spectacle [...] of a sovereign intellect, translating itself, amid a

¹⁰⁵ Henry Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature from Winckelmann to the Death of Goethe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), p.21.

¹⁰⁶ Nixon, p.194.

¹⁰⁷ Norman White, 'Hopkins' Epithalamion', *Hopkins Quarterly*, 3-4 (1977-78), pp.141-59 (p.157).

¹⁰⁸ See Michael Lynch, 'Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves', *Hopkins Quarterly*, 6 (1979), pp.107-17.

complex group of conditions which can never in the nature of things occur again' (*Platonism*, p.11). Essentially, the 'Epithalamion' allows Hopkins to translate his own 'sovereign intellect', allows him to display 'the power of entering [...] into the intimate recesses of other minds' ('Postscript', *Appreciations*, p.254), in this case his own. These 'secret places of a unique temperament' ('Leonardo', *Renaissance* 1893, p.92), for Hopkins as well as for Pater, 'seem to designate a particular state of mind or mode of existence rather than a body of discursive lore, and hence is not to be revealed, only experienced',¹⁰⁹ experienced as an education of the senses, an education which, for Hopkins — as much as for Plato, Marius, Leonardo, Winckelmann, and Pater — 'blends eros, pedagogy and aesthetics'.¹¹⁰ For Pater, this involves the acquisition of 'appreciation', of 'style', of the skill to influence others in turn:

Greatness of literary art depends on a rich and expressive style which places it architecturally within the great structure of human life, using fine, scholarly speech to express an inner vision which informs and controls, has compass and variety, is allied to great ends, has depths of revolt and largeness of hope — the writer giving each unique phrase, sentence, structural member, and the entire composition a similar unity with its subject and with itself, providing a cloistral refuge from the vulgarity of the actual world, getting his readers to see precisely what he sees, to enter into the intimate recesses of his own mind and sentiments. (*Appreciations*, my précis, donning Pater's style)

After addressing his reader as his 'hearer' — the beloved of traditional pederastic pedagogy — Hopkins invites his reader to participate aesthetically in the creation of a mutual fantasy, to experience the transformation of a voyeuristic stranger from 'listless' to 'froliclavish'. This is the skill of 'influence' about which Pater speaks. 'The basis of all artistic genius', writes Pater, 'lies in the power of conceiving humanity in a new and striking way, of putting a happy world of its own creation in place of the meaner world of our common days' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.170), a world created through an 'interpenetration of intellectual, spiritual, and physical elements' (p.174), a world abounding with a 'Cyrenaic eagerness [...] to taste and see and touch' (*Marius*, I, p.199), an eagerness to dive into what Marius calls, 'that full stream of refined sensation' (II, p.34). For Hopkins, this 'full stream of refined sensation' spills forth from youthful bodies, bodies of 'limber liquid youth' which yield 'tender as a pushed peach' ('Bugler's First Communion', lines 22-23), bodies which 'Winckelmann compares [...] to a quiet sea, which, although we understand it to be in motion, we

¹⁰⁹ Adams, p.454.

¹¹⁰ Sweet, p.153. But, it also had religion thrown into the mix, which would have made it far more congenial for Hopkins: 'The interdependence of the rhetorics of aesthetics, religion and of homosexuality in the case of Winckelmann should, then, be clear' (Morrison, 'Discreet', p.132).

nevertheless regard as an image of repose' (*Renaissance* 1893, p.174). In contrast to Winckelmann's youthful bodies in repose, Hopkins's are 'fretted' by a masturbatory fever which drives them to hurl themselves into a river 'boisterously beautiful', a fever which also drives the prurient imagination of a 'listless stranger beckoned by their noise', who gazes unseen until

This garland of their gambol flashes in his breast
Into such a sudden zest
Of summertime joys
That he hies to a pool neighbouring.

This 'pool neighbouring' is a place of seclusion where this stranger, perhaps ashamed to swim with the randy boys, can appease his own sensual urges, a place described as 'sweetest, freshest, shadowiest; / Fairyland'. Impassioned far by their voluptuous accents, Hopkins's 'listless' stranger undresses and bathes alone, allowing the water, described as a 'heavenfallen freshness', to 'break across his limbs / Long', an act which changes his state from 'listless' to 'froliclavish' as he embraces and is embraced by a watery hand of God. Through this baptismal conversion, Hopkins illustrates Pater's division of humanity: 'Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among "the children of this world", in art and song' ('Conclusion', *Renaissance* 1893, p.190). Hopkins's epithalamic stranger exchanges his 'listlessness' for 'high passions' ('higher' certainly than the passions of the bathing boys); and Hopkins's 'hearer' and narrator together construct a pederastic and homoerotic epithalamion, a poetic unification of Greco-Roman 'art and song'. But, few artists, Pater observes, capture this 'quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love' (p.190), all of which accompany Hopkins's aesthetic creation in the 'Epithalamion'. Beyond the naked swimmers and their voyeur bathed in 'high passions', both the narrator and his 'hearer', the artistic participants of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion', receive a greater measure of insight, experience that 'quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love' — especially given the elegiac quality of the poem as it relates to Digby Dolben. As for Marius, for Hopkins 'the whole of life seemed full of sacred presences' (I, p.24), presences that bestowed not only passion (however 'high'), but also serenity, 'the absence of any sense of want, or corruption, or shame' ('Winckelmann', *Renaissance* 1893, p.176).

If, as Pater insists, the greatness of literary art depends on 'the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it' ('Style', *Appreciations*, p.38), then, contrary to White's dismissal of Hopkins's poem as 'second-hand impressions pasted together',¹¹¹ the 'Epithalamion' is indeed a masterpiece, displaying all the qualities Pater deemed essential in art; for Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' serves as an imaginative lesson in Keatsian beauty and serenity; as a protest against conventional morality and its conception of the body;

¹¹¹ White, 'Epithalamion', p.159.

as a lyrical blending of Classical, Romantic, Christian, and Victorian themes; as a celebratory elegy on the death of his own beloved Dolben; as an affirmation of sexual freedom and mortality; as a pederastic creed as controversial as anything written in the decades following by the other English Uranians. Missing the plot, the temperament, and the mastery of Hopkins's 'Epithalamion' — as has been the case for modern literary criticism — stems, almost entirely, from a refusal to recognise Hopkins as Pater's Decadent pupil, a pupil fully versed in the pederastic culture which flourished among the ancients ('almost all buggerers without concealing it') as well as among his own contemporaries, a pupil who had developed that homoerotic and pederastic 'temperament' which Pater describes as 'a sort of chivalrous conscience', and the Uranians, as the 'New Chivalry'. White's mistake stems from his belief that 'The person who most influenced Gerard Hopkins's writings was John Ruskin'.¹¹² Hopkins often was, it must be admitted, excessively Ruskinian in his love of Aristotelian particulars and their arrangements; but, it was at the foot of Pater, with his love of Platonic pedagogy and pederasty, that Hopkins would ever remain. While 'Pater imagines what would have happened if Winckelmann and Goethe had met [...] a homosexual fantasy',¹¹³ I can imagine what would have happened if Pater and Hopkins had not: the result would have been an utterly different Hopkins, a Hopkins far less Decadent and Uranian, a Hopkins far less suggestive and grand.

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Resumé:

Článek hodnotí biografické a textové materiály z oblasti viktoriánské pederastické pedagogiky Waltera Patera, profesora Oxforské university, spisovatele a kritika estetiky. Důraz je kladen zejména na metodu, kterou používá v románu “Marius the Epicurean” pro výklad splynutí pederastie a pedagogiky a vliv takového splynutí na svého studenta a pozdějšího přítele Geralda Manley Hopkinse, jednoho z předních viktoriánských básníků, jehož “Epithalamion” poskytuje nejjobsažnější výklad Paterovy propracované a dekadentní pedagogiky.

