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GREEK LOVE, ORIENTALISM AND RACE: INTERSECTIONS IN CLASSICAL RECEPTION

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Classics has been characterised as both a radical and a conservative discipline. Classical reception studies has enjoyed exploring this paradox: antiquity has provided an erotic example for modern homosexual counter-culture as well as a model for running exploitative empires. This article brings these aspects of reception studies together, to examine how the Victorian homosexual reception of the ancient Greeks was framed and worked out in a particular imperial context at the end of the nineteenth century.

Classical antiquity mattered in Victorian Britain. Since the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, intellectuals and writers in Western Europe witnessed the development of a particular historical method that navigated the course between viewing antiquity as analogous and anachronistic to western modernity.[1] The very reproducibility of antiquity in a modern age was at stake: how did Greece and Rome become great? What did historical progress look like? Although the institutionalisation of the discipline of History in the nineteenth century made Greece and Rome historically specific locations, Classical antiquity was also continually evoked as a timeless example. The issue of the historicity of the ancient world was a profound issue for Victorian debates about British imperialism, in particular. The publication of Edward Gibbon's *Decline and fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–89) posed very difficult questions for Victorian Christians invested in the colonising, civilising mission. Gibbon's interrogation of the relationship between (Roman) imperialism and Christianity formed a backdrop for nineteenth-century debates about Britain's place in the world.[2] Scholars have repeatedly turned to Benjamin Jowett, fellow and later Master of Balliol College, and Oxford's Regius Professor of Greek, to examine how Classical culture provided a historical canvas and foundational example for British imperialism.[3] Jowett's concern was to provide an environment to train up young

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1 See DeJean (1997) and Hartog (2003, 2005).

2 On the Victorian reception of Gibbon, see Goldhill (2011). On eighteenth- and nineteenth-century comparisons of modern and ancient imperialisms, see Bradley (2010b), Mantena (2010), Vance (1997) and Vlassopoulos (2010).

3 See Goldhill (2011) 1–2, 6, 8, for thoughtful analysis of the centrality of Jowett in Classical reception studies. See also Dowling (1994).

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men for civil service in the Empire. In the 1850s he helped the Aberdeen administration adjust the methods used for selecting Civil Service staff; and Abbott's and Campbell's posthumous edition of Jowett's letters includes correspondence between Jowett and the India Office, which evidence Jowett's interference in the professional lives of his former students. Jowett himself had two brothers in the Indian army, who served and died there.[4]

The relationship between Classics and British imperialism has informed much recent debate on the history of Classical scholarship. The so-called culture wars of the 1990s, triggered largely by the publication of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*, have ensured that nineteenth-century discourses of race and orientalism should be seen as crucial for any intellectual history of the discipline of Classics. Indeed the institutionalisation of slave labour in Greek (especially Athenian and Spartan) and Roman cultures provided both analogy and anathema for nineteenth-century thinkers and politicians. British anti-slavery debates saw Spartan helotage as a potent example for the modern politics of abolition; and Herodotus' observations of the grandeur of ancient Egypt provided intellectual sustenance for mid-nineteenth-century African-American vindicationism. At the same time, however, American ethnologists used Egyptian hieroglyphs to prove the transhistorical nature of nineteenth-century racial hierarchy, and Aristotle's comments on slavery justified modern regimes of enslavement and indenture both sides of the Atlantic.[5] Victorian racial theory in Britain was deeply marked by an admiration of the physicality of the Greeks, the so-called 'ablest race'.[6] Indeed the racial composition of ancient peoples was at stake, as racists and abolitionists both laid claim to a Classical legacy. The meaning of ancient political structures mattered for modern political subjects.

If imperial and racial politics has been at the heart of Classical reception studies, so has sexual desire. Just as nineteenth-century writers debated the issue of ancient political exemplarity for the Victorian world, the significance of Greek pederasty for modern men was intimately explored: what sort of example did the intimate encounters between elder man and youth make for Victorian boys and gentlemen educated in the homosocial halls of British seats of learning? Several scholars have examined how Greek and Roman desiring subjects offered paradigms for modern erotic encounters.[7] In particular, the writings of Walter Pater, John Addington Symonds, Oscar Wilde, 'Michael Field' and E. M. Forster have been mined for their intricate and subversive celebrations of homoeroticism coded in ancient Greek imagery and linguistics. Ancient Greece provided both a historical locus and an idyllic topos for the voicing of dissident desires and sexualities. Winckelmann's admiration of Greek sculpture provided an important basis for

4 See Vasunia (2005) for a fascinating account of the relationship between a Victorian Classical education and the Indian civil service. Interestingly, Edmund Richardson (2007) has recently shown that Jowett's patronage was not always so advantageous for obtaining an imperial post.

5 On these issues and more, see the essays collected in Hall, Alston and McConnell (2011) and Orrells, Bhambra and Roynon (2011).

6 See Challis (2010).

7 Dellamora (1990); Dowling (1994); Prins (1999); Evangelista (2003, 2006, 2007, 2009); Thain (2007); Blanshard (2010); and Orrells (2011).

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Pater's aestheticism. Symonds in the sixth form found in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* a *liber amoris*. Wilde infamously compared his young love 'Bosie' to Hyacinth in a letter which would be cross-examined in court. The small poetry-book *Long Ago* (1889), by 'Michael Field' (aunt and niece, and lovers, Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper), explored the nature of Sapphic love. And E. M. Forster saw in the manly, hyper-virile Dorians a prototype for *Maurice*'s heroes, Maurice Hall and Alec Scudder.

Although the significance of Classical culture for nineteenth-century imperialism and Victorian sexual identity has indeed been excellently explored, there has been very little effort made by scholars to examine how these aspects of Classical reception interacted. Few have written about intersections between nineteenth-century discourses of empire, race and the oriental, and the Victorian invention of Greek Love.[8] What did it mean for nineteenth-century scholars and writers that the Greeks should be racially ancestral (as 'Indo-European') to themselves, when sexually they were alarmingly different? In what ways did discourses of empire, orientalism and race relate to discussions and understandings of Greek love? This article explores how the politics of race and orientalism and the politics of sexuality (examined so well but hitherto separately in reception studies) might be brought together. More specifically, still, this article looks at the significance of Greek pederasty in the context of the so-called new imperialism of the late nineteenth century, which witnessed the expansion of the British Empire at an unprecedented rate. Overseas possessions and even more importantly, overseas persons, began to dock at British ports as never before. This moment in the history of British imperialism produced seemingly endless debate and commentary. In 1883, John Seeley, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge (and before that, Professor of Latin at UCL), published *The expansion of England*, in which he wrote: 'The prodigious greatness to which it [England] has attained makes the question of its future infinitely important ... because it is evident that the great extension of our state exposes it to new dangers from which in its ancient insular insignificance it was free.'[9] The 1880s and 1890s, especially, saw rapid colonial expansion and quick-fire exchange of territories with other imperial powers. The borders of 'Greater Britain' stretched and changed. Britons travelled to 'new' places and interacted with 'new' peoples, just as new British subjects came to the metropolitan centre in ever increasing numbers. On the one hand, Britons could enjoy the promise of continued imperial enlargement, new 'spheres of influence' and the success of the 'civilising mission', and, yet on the other, these prospects brought with them great fears of collapse, degeneration and reverse colonisation. Some writers and intellectuals explored the place of the Englishman abroad, his voyage out, and the worrying prospect of 'going native', whilst others wrote about the presence of 'natives' in Britain itself, reversing the colonial process. If by the end of the nineteenth century, after the impact of Charles Darwin's evolutionism, one's 'race' was no longer one's

8 See Orrells (2011) for some discussion and exploration of race, and Dellamora (2004) on the relationship between Victorian democracy and Greek love.

9 Seeley (1883) 2.

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unchangeable destiny, then the 'native' could be educated out of his savagery into modernity, but so too could the civilised regress back to their primitive, ancient origins. Fiction depicting the coloniser becoming native and the colonised colonising the coloniser back was consumed by an increasingly interested public in late-Victorian Britain.[10] Kipling's policeman in India, Strickland, in some of the *Plain tales from the hills* stories (1886–7), took the audacious and worrying step of disguising himself among 'the native riff-raff' to 'know as much about the natives as the natives themselves'. On the other hand, John Hardy, the hero of Matthew Phipps Shiel's 1898 adventure novel *The yellow danger*, foils a European invasion of Asian hordes and barbarians. The end of the nineteenth century saw British writers taking stock, looking both back over the imperial-colonial project and forward into possible futures. The coloniser and the colonised were reassuringly different *and* alarmingly close, a little too similar.

The great mid-Victorian imperialist Benjamin Jowett himself, too, would have been highly conscious, by the century's close, of the complex relationship between coloniser and colonised, civilised and savage. Not only did he encourage his students into the Indian Civil Service, but he also fostered the hopes of students like Cornelia Sorabji, an Indian woman who read Law at Somerville College, Oxford. As Antoinette Burton has put it, 'the United Kingdom could be as much of a 'contact zone' as the colonies themselves'.[11] As Burton relates, Sorabji was able to study at Oxford since in 1871 the theological tests for entry had been abolished, thanks in part to Jowett's efforts. In 1892, through the support of Jowett and certain other senior Oxford figures, she was able to take the examinations for the degree of Bachelor of Civil Law (she went on to become India's first female barrister). Being a woman and Indian were considerable hurdles, perhaps lessened by what Burton calls Sorabji's 'almost filial relationship' with Jowett.[12] The opening up of Oxford and Cambridge to colonial and foreign students from 1871 epitomised the complexity of the relationship between the colonial and the British-born subject, since *both* were being trained to manage the Empire. Oxbridge student journalism frequently lamented the 'invasion' of their 'little worlds' by the foreigner (even though Indian students, for instance, never made up more than 3 per cent of the total student population in the nineteenth century[13]). On top of non-Anglican and women students, undergraduates complained repeatedly about the incursion of racial and national others. The pamphlet *Moslem in Cambridge* published in 1871, prophesying of Cambridge in 1890, clearly evinces an anxiety (even if comical) about reverse colonisation. In the article on the first page, Trinity College has been turned into a 'grand Mussulman foundation', 'Red Indians … occupied Downing College', and then there are 'the Aborigines of Queens', 'the Cossacks of Magdalen [*sic*]' and 'the Fire-eaters of Sidney'.[14]

10 See Arata (1990, 1996).

11 Burton (1998), 1.

12 Burton (1998) 143. See also pp. 132 and 134 for more on Jowett's support of Sorabji. See also Vasunia (2005).

13 For statistics of colonial and foreign students, see Deslandes (1998) 59.

14 *Moslem in Cambridge* (1890 [1870]) 1.

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Moslem in Cambridge was obviously not correct in its predictions, but it did anticipate much student journalism in the coming decades that asked, for example, 'Shall Cambridge be a Colony of Bombay?'[15]

Just as new lands opened up to the imperial gaze and new persons arrived on British soil, so this new imperial moment presented Britons with a complex array of genders and sexual possibilities. As Ross Forman puts it, 'Empire became a tool in expanding the arena of sexual experience and in familiarising Britons with new sexual subjectivities…'[16] The mobility of Europeans across colonies and beyond produced a vast ethnographic and anthropological literature in the nineteenth century. The sexual proclivities of the 'native' were one topic repeatedly touched upon. As Rudi Bleys has analysed, these reports persistently wondered whether same-sex desire (and other non-heterosexual behaviours) 'pertained to the realm of primitive humanity, or was a product rather of modern western neurosis, a disease of civilization'.[17] This question about sexual evolution provided a framework for sexologists who wrote and later treated homosexuals. Furthermore, there was much discussion in ethnographic reports about how to distinguish between inborn, 'real' same-sex desires and circumstantial, cultural behaviours. To take just one example from many, M. T. H. Perelaer's Dutch account of the Dajaks in Borneo remained undecided as to whether the *bassirs*, effeminate priests, who sometimes married men, were actually sexually attracted to men or merely fulfilling a societal role.[18] Such writings provided a background for the work of sexologists writing about European sexuality, so that it would be impossible to see such sexuality without comparison with an oriental other.

Indeed the issue over inborn or acquired sexuality was central to the analysis of same-sex sexuality in Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia sexualis*. This work was the most influential of the late nineteenth-century catalogues of sexual diseases (first published in 1886, it went through twelve editions by 1903 (Krafft-Ebing died in 1902)). As well as the term *homosexual*, Krafft-Ebing's book was the first to disseminate to a wider audience words like *sadism*, *masochism* and *fetish*. Each new edition expanded upon the previous, creating a confusing document that vacillated on the difference between acquired and inherited vices.[19] 'The majority of homosexuals are the victims of a perverse instinct of abnormal quality', wrote Krafft-Ebing, and so punishing them was pointless.[20] At the same time, however, there were 'cultivated pederasts' who are 'made up of old *roués* that have become supersatiated in normal sexual indulgence, and who find in pederasty a means of exciting sensual pleasure. … This kind of pederasts [*sic*] is the most dangerous, since they *deal mostly with boys* [emphasis original], and ruin them in body

15 This quote is from a pseudonymous article written in Cambridge's *The Granta* in 1901: see Deslandes (1998) 80.

16 Forman (2007) 98. See also Levine (2004) and Hyam (2010) 363–470.

17 Bleys (1996) 155. See also Stoler (1995), Somerville (1998) and Aldrich (2003) on the impact of racialist and colonial discourses on the modern invention of sexuality.

18 See Bleys (1996) 179 on Perelaer.

19 On Krafft-Ebing, see Oosterhuis (2000) and Savoia (2010).

20 Krafft-Ebing (1998) 386.

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and soul'.[21] Relying on legal records, Krafft-Ebing paints a bleak portrait of Parisian pederasts and their cultivation of young boys into prostitution. Applying theories of degeneracy, he argued that a man could regress atavistically back into vicious and criminal behaviour. The section on acquired pederasty opens with a footnote that lists previous writers who argued that criminals (sexual and otherwise) were throwbacks to a savage, brutish past. The footnote continues: 'This vice seems to have come through Crete from Asia to Greece, and, in the times of classical Hellas, to have been widespread. Thence it spread to Rome, where it flourished luxuriantly. In Persia and China (where it is actually tolerated) it is widespread, as it also is in Europe'.[22] Whereas congenital homosexuality has biological origins, acquired pederasty in Europe represents a regression back into the Orient. The prevalence of such behaviour in Western European cities demonstrates the problematic closeness of East and West, civilised and savage. Krafft-Ebing's analysis was simply one of the more widely read accounts from a larger body of work written from the colonies and beyond the frontier.

These writings mirrored the civilising mission taking place *within* the imperial centre. British society of the 1880s was in the throes of what Judith Walkowitz has called a 'moral panic', explored through 'narratives of sexual danger'.[23] The scandal of 1885 was prompted by W. T. Stead's report 'The maiden tribute of modern Babylon' in the *Pall Mall Gazette* about the supply of beautiful young virgins to brothels for the consumption of upper-class men. The huge outcry that Stead provoked led to the raising of the age of consent for females in the Criminal Amendment Act (1885). To this was attached Henry Labouchère's Amendment that criminalised gross indecency between men, qualifying older legislation against sodomy. The National Vigilance Association was also set up in the same year, and campaigned aggressively against erotic and pornographic publications. In 1889 the Cleveland Street scandal erupted when a male brothel was discovered in Fitzrovia, London. Labouchère accused the government of hushing up the scandal because aristocratic patrons were rumoured to be involved. An American newspaper (the *Daily Northwestern*, 26 May 1890) opaquely noted that Queen Victoria's grandson, Prince Victor Albert was 'mixed up'.[24] To many, Britain looked, in 1890, like a 'dark' place. The publication of Stanley's *In darkest Africa* (1890) inspired the title of William Booth's *In darkest England and the way out*, also published that year, in which the metaphor of Africa 'the dark continent' was applied to the slums of British industrial cities. A few years later in 1895, Joseph Salter, the 'missionary' of London's East End, published his memoir, *The East in the West; or work among the Asiatics and Africans in London*, in which he described the 'perfect pest-spots through the commingling of the worst vices of East and West'.[25]

21 Krafft-Ebing (1998) 391–2.

22 Krafft-Ebing (1998) 431, n. 42.

23 Walkowitz (1992).

24 See Hyde (1976).

25 Salter (1895) 17. This was Salter's second memoir; his first, *The Asiatic in England: sketches of sixteen years' work among orientals*, had been published back in 1873. See Lindeborg (1994).

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It is necessary to set out this very specific context in which the first detailed analyses of Greek pederasty appeared in English, analyses that are the subject of this article. If the relationship between civilised and barbarian, between coloniser and colonised, was being questioned and eroded in the 1880s and 1890s, then it is not surprising that modern writers, when considering Britain's place in the Victorian world, should turn back to consider its relationship to Classical antiquity, precisely because Classical antiquity seemed so foundational for the modern West. If the Victorians attempted to locate their intellectual and cultural origins in the ancient world, then how civilised or how savage was that ancient world? It is, then, not surprising that modern writers should have turned to ancient Greek male love and friendship as the litmus test for understanding the relationship between ancient and modern culture (and, by implication, eastern and western worlds). Just as the relationship between Britain and its Empire was at stake, so was the relationship between Britain and antiquity. The expanding new Empire persistently raised questions about the location of the line between Britain and the foreign Other. One significant way to know where that border was was to know where to position ancient Greece, hovering as it did between East and West, the Orient and Europe. Greek pederasty offered writers and intellectuals in the 1880s and 1890s the chance to ask whether Greece was ancestral and exemplary to European masculinity, or an eastern other. Was Greek pederasty a sign of barbaric orientalism or western civilisation – of a brutish primitive antiquity or of modern society? The discussions about the Oriental in new-imperialist Britain set an important context for thinking about the relationship between ancient and modern, for taking stock at the *fin de siècle*, and thinking about Britain's position in the world and *where Britain came from*.

We begin firstly with a voyage of discovery. Richard Burton's 'Terminal essay' is one of the lengthiest examinations of same-sex desire written in the nineteenth century, and was one of the first publications to gain wide public debate on the subject.[26] Burton (1821–91) was a truly remarkable figure: soldier, geographer, explorer, orientalist, linguist and diplomat, his life has spawned nineteen biographies in English alone.[27] His 'Terminal essay' formed the conclusion of the first edition of his *One thousand nights and a night* (1885–8), the first ever complete – unexpurgated – English translation of *The Arabian nights*. In the essay, Burton considers the social history behind *The nights*, including a long account of male sexuality – titled 'Pederasty'. Burton recounts how as a young soldier in the East India Company he was charged by his commander to write a report on the boy brothels in Karachi near where the army was based. Adopting the disguise of a Persian merchant called Mirza Abdullah, he claims to have infiltrated the brothels to uncover all manner of detail. As Burton explains, this opportunity was only the first of many to investigate sexual difference more globally. He then circumnavigates his reader around the 'Sotadic Zone', an area that covers the Mediterranean (Greece, Italy and North Africa),

26 See Reade (1970) 30.

27 The most recent and comprehensive are Kennedy (2005) and Godsall (2008).

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the Middle East, South Asia, the Far East and the Americas, arguing that pederastic desires and behaviours are most prevalent in this region. Burton, as we shall see, makes it clear that he is writing *against* British nineteenth-century historiography that looked back to the Greeks as exemplary for the modern Victorian world. Whereas, for certain Victorian historians, ancient Greek democracy formulated a model for Victorian democratic reform, Burton says nothing of ancient democratic beliefs and practices, and he firmly locates the ancient Greeks as part of a broader non-north-European culture located in the 'Sotadic Zone'. The sexual mores of ancient Greek men position Greece outside northern European societal norms. Burton's Greeks become an orientalised other. What seemed so familiar was actually quite foreign. Burton relocates what appeared to epitomise western culture into the orientalised other. Indeed just to know about pederasty involves a movement from West to East: Burton's knowledge of his subject was only acquired because he had 'gone native' as Mirza Abdullah. Burton's Greeks, then, redrew the cultural map of Victorian philhellenism, questioning East and West, just as Burton himself, a soldier on the frontiers of Britain's Indian empire expanding into the Sindh province, moved from West to East, from Englishman to Persian merchant.

This anxiety about the ancient Greek going native was also expressed in the other early history of same-sex desire, written back in 1873, but printed in ten copies and circulated in 1883, by John Addington Symonds. *A problem in Greek ethics* was the fullest account of Greek sexuality written in English in the nineteenth century, and interestingly, the politics of late-Victorian orientalism was clearly on Symonds's mind. Educated at Balliol College in Classics and therefore taught by Jowett, with whom he developed a long friendship, Symonds obtained a fellowship at Magdalen, only to be forced to resign from his position due to mental and physical health issues brought on by an accusation that he had had an affair with a young college chorister. Wealthy enough to live off a private income, he became a highly successful public intellectual. He wrote biographies of poets (Shelley and Sydney), and by 1881, had published five of the seven volumes of his *Renaissance in Italy* series. They were carefully researched and vividly written, and were hugely enjoyed by the public. As if that were not enough, he brought out two volumes of criticism on ancient Greek poetry, which were very widely read, and published verse of his own.

For an altogether more select audience, at the same time, however, Symonds discussed and wrote upon the subject of ancient erotics. And just as Burton would attempt to place Greece within the context of the eastern other, so Symonds in *Greek ethics* went to great lengths to argue that Greek friendship and love was an egalitarian and manly pursuit, democratic in nature and worthy of emulation for western democrats. As we shall see, for Symonds, the Athenians themselves marvelled at the exemplary friendship of Achilles and Patroclus, which represented a point in Greek history when the Doric Greeks had not yet immigrated into southern Greece and not yet mingled with 'Oriental luxury', becoming sensual and sensuous. Symonds, as we shall examine, was writing at a time when many writers worried about what would happen to northern Europeans who travelled south: the Mediterranean was so seductive it could change you. We then go on to consider Symonds's other work *A problem in modern ethics* (again first published in a tiny edition of

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fifty, in 1891). As we shall see, this was written in response to Burton and others who saw the 'homosexual' as 'other'. Instead, argues Symonds, ancient Greek friendship should act as a model for modern lovers of western democracy, developing the implicit argument in *Greek ethics*. Indeed Symonds was now writing *after* the Labouchère Amendment of 1885 which criminalised gross indecency between men and as such excluded such subjects from full and frank participation in Britain's ever expanding democratic electorate.

Tracing one's intellectual, cultural and political genealogy back to ancient Greece meant making a tricky journey of self-discovery from the West to a place perilously close to the Orient. This reflected a more general anxiety about the journey of the expanding British Empire itself, as it incorporated more and more of that which was foreign into its frontiers. This incorporation elicited profound concern, as we have seen, about the presence of the colonial subject at the heart of the metropolitan centre. As well as being explored through anthropological and historical analyses, this anxiety was also depicted in the fiction of the period, one of the most famous examples being Oscar Wilde's *The picture of Dorian Gray*. By the characters in the novel, Dorian is initially viewed as a model of late-Victorian masculinity, educated at Eton and Oxford, a young man who looks like the Greek ideal. But just as Burton and Symonds were interested in, and concerned about, the oriental influences on ancient Greek masculinity, so Dorian Gray's Hellenic exterior conceals a dark, savage side, as he explores his illicit desires in London's East End, populated by colonial immigrants from the edge of empire. Although the homoerotic undertones of the name 'Dorian' have already been explored by many, fewer have considered the significance of Dorian's beautiful Greekness in the context of London's multicultural East End. We will conclude by examining how Wilde's fiction itself had great significance on the reception of the aesthetic movement in both a racially segregated America as well as in the multi-ethnic late-Victorian metropolis of London, as seen in a short story by John Gray (the beautiful young writer reputed to be the man behind Dorian). In this story, a Fijian colonial subject, educated to become a doctor by missionaries, discusses nude male Greek sculpture with English theology students in the British Museum. Just as the modern Hellene Dorian Gray degenerates into illicit, orientalised lust in London's East End, so Gray's Fijian doctor's pleasure in a statue of Apollo provokes the reader to question whether admiration of the Greek male form civilises the British subject or not. All the texts considered in this article were published between 1883 and 1893. The problem of Greek male desire was an issue to which intellectuals and writers returned again and again, in the context of Britain's 'new Empire' and expanding democracy at the end of the nineteenth century. The history of the significance of imperialism for nineteenth-century Classical scholarship, and the Victorian invention of Greek love, have indeed been privileged sites in Classical reception studies. What has not been considered in any detail, however, is the new-imperial context for the emergence of this concentrated effort to understand the significance of Greek male desire and beauty for the modern British subject. It is this issue that this article addresses.

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Burton's 'execrabilis familia pathicorum'

After being expelled from Trinity College, Oxford, for going to see a steeplechase race, Richard Burton joined the East India Company army. As a child, he had already proved himself a talented linguist, and whilst in India he became a proficient speaker of several Asian languages. Burton was marginalised by the other soldiers, who felt that he took too keen an interest in the people they were meant to be ruling. Recognised for his eager erudition, however, he was appointed to survey the Sindh province, which had recently been subjugated by the British forces. At this time, he began to travel in disguise, adopting the alias of Mirza Abdullah, apparently fooling local people and fellow soldiers. Amongst other duties, he participated in an undercover investigation into the boy brothels of Karachi, apparently not far from the British encampment. Although the report now no longer exists (as we will see, Burton's reportage implicated himself awkwardly in relation to the subject matter), it was his first foray into sexual ethnography and anthropology. Burton became famous for his audacious journeys to Mecca and Medina disguised as a Persian pilgrim. He was one of the leading explorers of his generation until a public spat with his fellow-explorer John Speke about the source of the Nile. The controversy ended his career of exploration and he spent the rest of his life in obscure, but comfortable, consular service. The safety of such a position induced a heavy liking for alcohol. At the same time, however, Burton produced a large number of ethnographic publications, and brought out seminal translations of erotic classics such as *The kama sutra of Vatsyayana*.

Written in 1886, the 'Terminal essay' that concluded *The Arabic nights* is a dense, scholarly, albeit eccentrically written, investigation. It discusses the cultural origins of *The nights* (Burton argues for Persia); the date of composition (by Burton's reckoning, no later than 'A.D. 1400', arguing from 'a study of the vie intime'[28] of Islamic culture, that is, the fact that syphilis, coffee and tobacco are barely if at all mentioned in *The nights*); the authors (about which next to nothing can definitively be known); the history of their reception and translation into European languages (French, German, Spanish and Italian); a classification of the types of tales contained in *The nights* (the 'beast-fable'; the 'fairy tale'; and the 'historical stories of great men'); the language and style of the stories; the social context of *The nights*; and finally, an erudite discussion of prose-rhyme and prosody. It is in his examination of *The nights*' social contexts that we find discussed 'the pornology of the great Saga-book'.[29] This was Burton's idiosyncratic way of introducing the subject of sex.

He enters into this section entitled 'Pederasty', by contrasting the objectivism of his inquiry with the 'Cant [*sic*]' of 'the late Mr. Grote', who 'had reason to lament that when describing such institutions as the far-famed ἱερός λόχος of Thebes, the Sacred Band annihilated at Chaeroneia [*sic*], he was compelled to a reticence which permitted him to touch on the surface of the subject'.[30] George Grote (1794–1871) was, of course, the

28 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 85.

29 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 173.

30 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, pp. 204–5.

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author of the voluminous *History of Greece* (1846–56), which aimed at historical objectivity whilst at the same time seeing Athenian democratic culture as a meaningful exemplar for Victorian democratic politics.[31] Although Grote's work emphasised a relativist, utilitarian ethos, radically encouraging his readers to look beyond Christian eyes at antiquity, Burton suggests that Greek pederasty was the limit case for such historicism. And Burton's contention is telling: whereas for Grote's historicism, Athenian democracy positions ancient Greece as the ancestor of modern British politics, for Burton's anthropology, Classical Greece was located within the 'Sotadic Zone', making it the oriental other to modern British culture. Grote's historical narrative that links ancient and modern politics is countered by Burton's anthropology which emphasises the difference between ancient Greece and modern Britain.[32] As Burton explains, the 'Sotadic Zone' comprises

> meridional France, the Iberian Peninsula, Italy and Greece, with the coast-regions of Africa from Marocco [*sic*] to Egypt. Running eastward the Sotadic Zone narrows, embracing Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Chaldaea, Afganistan, Sind, the Punjab and Kashmir. In Indo-China, the belt begins to broaden, enfolding China, Japan and Turkistan. It then embraces the South Sea islands and the New World where, at the time of its discovery, Sotadic love was, with some exceptions, an established racial institution.[33]

Burton's argument was that pederasty mainly occurred and was even culturally acceptable within these geographical parameters. This was, however, *Sotadic* love, not Socratic. Nor Platonic. Burton named the phenomenon after the third-century BCE poet Sotades. Not only had he been a writer of obscene, pederastic verse, but he was a Greek poet who was productive in ancient Alexandria. Burton's Greece is in Egypt, not the progenitor of Europe. The Greeks are not cordoned off from the Near East and North Africa. Ancient Greece is best understood within a geographical region, not as a historical ancestor. Burton does not see Greek culture as originary and foundational. Rather 'the ancient Greeks … invented nothing but were great improvers of what other races invented'.[34] His emphasis is on 'the proximity of Persia and the close intercourse with the

31 On Grote, see Turner (1981) 213–63, and Grote's historicism, see Goldhill (2011) 173–4, 176; Demetriou (1999); Calder and Trzaskoma (1996).

32 Burton's criticism of Grote was, nevertheless, somewhat unfair. When describing the 'Battle of Chaeroneia', Grote *never* laments about the necessity to be reticent about the Sacred Band. Rather his analysis of Greece, in the 'crisis of her liberty', 'in defence of Grecian independence', had no interest in explaining how pederastic bonds might have participated in the defence of Greek democratic structures and politics (see Grote (1869) vol. 11, pp. 303–5. The accent on 'liberty' and 'independence' very obviously nods to modern Greece's independence from the Ottomans, and so the association of pederastic love with Greek independence would have seemed anathema to Grote, writing at a time when Turkish culture was associated with illicit, same-sex desires, as Burton himself will explore, as we shall soon see.

33 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, pp. 206–7.

34 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, pp. 210–11.

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Greco-Romans'.[35] Whereas Herodotus thought that the Persians 'learned from the Hellenes ... a passion for boys', following Plutarch (*On the malice of Herodotus* 13), Burton argues 'with much more probability that the Persians used eunuch boys ... long before they had seen the Grecian main'.[36]

Burton's rationale for explaining the prevalence of pederastic activities and desires in the Sotadic Zone is, however, complicated. He underlines that pederasty is to be considered within a 'geographical and climatic, not racial' framework.[37] At the same time, however, Burton also suggests a 'physical cause', though it 'must be owned purely conjectural':

> within the Sotadic Zone there is a blending of the masculine and feminine temperament, a crasis which elsewhere occurs only sporadically. Hence the male *féminisme* whereby the man becomes patiens as well as agens, and the woman a tribade, a votary of mascula Sappho, Queen of Frictrices or Rubbers.[38]

Burton posits the existence of a particular sort of physical body that exists within the Sotadic Zone. It is Greek and Latin terminology ('patiens', 'agens', 'tribade', 'Frictrices') that exemplifies these bodies and their behaviours for the rest of the Zone. Burton relies on the work of Paolo Mantegazza (1831–1910), an Italian neurologist and anthropologist. He was known for his (scientific) experimentation with cocaine and founded the first museum of anthropology and ethnology in Italy. In one of his books, *Gli amori degli uomini* (which appeared around the time Burton was writing his essay), he argued that same-sex desires arose from an anomalous nervous constitution between the rectum and the genitals. Although Burton calls the theory 'superficial' (p. 209, as Mantegazza does not explain the reason for that physical constitution), he nevertheless subscribes to a theory of 'mixed physical temperament':

> Something of the kind is necessary to explain the fact of this pathological love extending over the greater portion of the habitable world, without any apparent connection of race or media, from the polished Greek to the cannibal Tupi of Brazil.[39]

Despite his insistence on a physical cause, Burton's ethnography of the Sotadic Zone reveals contradictions and inconsistencies. Although pederasty was not to be defined racially, he calls the Turks 'a race of born pederasts'.[40] And then, he offers a quasi-sociological analysis: 'Le Vice of course prevails more in the cities and towns of Asiatic

35 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 191.
36 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 211.
37 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 207.
38 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 208.
39 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 210.
40 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 232.

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Turkey than in the villages'.[41] At other times, he offers a diffusionist theory: 'Roman civilisation carried pederasty also to Northern Africa, where it took firm root, while the negro and negroid races to the South ignore the erotic perversion, except where imported by foreigners into such kingdoms as Bornu and Haussa'.[42] And after having circumnavigated the Sotadic Zone, Burton turns to 'our modern capitals, London, Berlin and Paris' where 'the Vice seems subject to periodical outbreaks'. To add further confusion, then, Burton now characterises pederasty as an illness like cholera or influenza. Just as Krafft-Ebing's medical study of same-sex sexuality suggested that it was both congenital and so potentially universal, *and* a cultural practice that had come from the east, so Burton's ethnography localises it within a specific zone, but then goes on to find it everywhere else.

This contradiction would have spoken clearly to Burton's reader in the 1880s and 1890s, concerned and interested as he was in the relationship between the West and the Orient. It is pederastic desire, in Burton's account, that puts this issue into painful focus. Indeed this very issue is apparent at the beginning of Burton's account, when he relates how in 1845, Charles Napier, his commander in India, appointed Burton to write a report on the brothels of Karachi, which 'supported no less than three lupanars or bordels, in which not women but boys and eunuchs, the former demanding nearly a double price, lay for hire'.[43] 'Habited as a merchant, Mirza Abdullah' (as we've already mentioned), Burton spent 'many an evening in the townlet', where he 'visited all the porneia and obtained the fullest details which were duly despatched to Government House'. The authorities, however, got wind of the report and dismissed him from his service. Burton suggests that there were some dodgy dealings behind this dismissal.[44] Even though he goes straight on to argue that pederasty is localised to the Sotadic Zone, his reader, at the same time, is, however, left wondering about this Englishman who impersonates the natives, obtaining 'the fullest details' from these brothels. It is this image that the reader holds in their head, as they read Burton's journey around the Sotadic Zone. On the one hand, we are peering into the Oriental Other, and yet, we can only see this Other if we 'go native'. What actually went on in those brothels? What did Burton do to obtain his knowledge about sexual desire?

Burton had himself already warned his reader that *The nights* 'arouse strange longing and indescribable desires; their marvellous imaginativeness produces an insensible brightening of mind and an increase of fancy-power, making one dream that behind them lies the new and unseen, the strange and unexpected – in fact, all the glamour of the unknown'.[45] Reading Burton's *Nights* – entering oriental culture – will alter you – *The nights* will change the desires of you, the reader. It was precisely this issue that worried many reviewers of Burton's

41 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 232.

42 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 222. See also Bleys (1996) 216–219, on Burton's confusing account.

43 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 205.

44 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 206.

45 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 111.

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publication, which attracted the attention of the leading journals and papers of the day, despite its carefully limited circulation. The reviewer in the *Echo* complained that Burton 'has produced a morally filthy book. What might have been acceptable to Asiatic populations ages ago is absolutely unfit for Christian populations of the nineteenth century'.[46] The importation and translation of 'Asiatic' literature into a Christian modernity is seen as abhorrent. A pseudonymous reviewer, 'Sigma', in Stead's moralistic *Pall Mall Gazette* worried that it might fall into the hands of an 'unripe youth, [or an] unsuspecting maiden'.[47] Burton's text worryingly brought the imperial frontier into the hearths of British homes.

These worries were not unfounded. Although Burton seeks to locate Greece as other to British civilisation, his translation of *The nights* was to hold up a mirror to his readers, exposing the 'perfect hypocrisy' of British society.[48] Taking up the opening of 'Pederasty', at its close, he laments about the 'cant and hypocrisy' of the British '*censor morum*', who 'reads Aristophanes and Plato, Horace and Virgil, perhaps even Martial and Petronius ... "veiled in the decent obscurity of a learned language"'.[49] Late Victorian readers might have recognised Burton's quotation as coming from Archibald Alison's *Modern history of Europe from the French Revolution to the fall of Napoleon* (1833–42), a very widely read work, appearing in numerous editions into the later nineteenth century, translated into several languages including Arabic and Hindi. The quotation originally appears in a section that compares the French monarchy's morals to the profligacy of the Roman emperors and the orgies of ancient Babylon. It is precisely this sort of behaviour, Alison argued, that triggered the French Revolution and that nation's subsequent troubles. Such sexual mores should play no part in British politics. For Burton, on the other hand, the history of western culture that educates our 'boys' and 'youths' is 'soaked and saturated' with 'allusions to human ordure and the pudenda; to carnal copulation and impudent whoredom, to adultery and fornication, to onanism, sodomy and bestiality'.[50] If ancient Greece and Rome are to be located in the Orient, and if modern Britain traces its cultural and intellectual origins back to Greece and Rome, then perhaps the difference between Britain and the Orient is thinner than once thought. Just as Burton himself adopted the dress of a Persian merchant, so he encourages his late-Victorian readers, steeped in the Greek and Latin classics, to wonder whether Britain was any different from the East.

Symonds's difficult Dorians

John Addington Symonds was one of the few public voices that praised Burton's *Nights*. Although not yet personally acquainted, Symonds lauded Burton's scholarship and 'rare

46 *Echo* (12 October 1885), quoted in Kennedy (2000) 326.

47 Quoted in Kennedy (2000) 326.

48 Burton (1885–8) vol. 1, p. xvii.

49 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 254.

50 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 254.

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insight into oriental modes of thoughts and feeling'. He reiterated Burton's point about 'our middle-class *censores morum* [who] strain at the gnat of a privately circulated translation of an Arabic classic, while they daily swallow the camel of higher education based upon minute study of Greek and Latin literature'. British imperialists reading the Classics in the desert, jokes Symonds.[51] Symonds subsequently corresponded with Burton on the subject, who admired Symonds's *A problem in Greek ethics* (which had already been published in a tiny, anonymous edition of 10 copies in 1883, thereby garnering virtually no public attention). In the Huntington Library's copy of *The nights* (signed 'Isabel Burton's copy', Burton's wife), we can read annotations in Burton's own hand planning a new edition in 1890. These notes say that his work should be 'read in conjunction' with Symonds's *Greek ethics*. Let us, then, follow Burton's suggestion and turn to Symonds's essay. We will see, however, that their accounts of Greek pederasty differ markedly on the issue of Greece's relationship to the East.

In trying to explain why male love was apparently so accepted in ancient Greek society, Symonds relies on nineteenth-century historiographical theory about the Dorian incursion from the north into the Mediterranean south. German histories of antiquity made use of an ancient myth about a Dorian invasion into the Peloponnese. Although the historicity of this settlement has never been proven, some nineteenth-century ancient historians thought they could detect a kernel of truth in the myth, and used it to argue for an Aryan presence within, and force behind, ancient Greek culture, thereby seeing modern north European culture as the heir of the ancient Greek. Karl Otfried Müller, the professor of philology at Göttingen, made much of this narrative in his *Die Dorier*, which was subsequently translated (with Müller's assistance) into English in 1830 and then in a second edition in 1839.[52] Müller was a villain in Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*, which sought to trace out how nineteenth-century classicists gradually excised ancient Greece from its relationships with Egypt and the Near East, in order to graft Greece into a racially inflected grand narrative for the history of Europe. Bernal's work has elicited much debate about whether one can label Müller and other classicists as 'racist' from a late twentieth-century perspective.[53] Suzanne Marchand offers soberer analysis when she writes that it was a 'fateful combination of cultural nationalism, philological scepticism, institutionalized philhellenism, and the beginnings of racialist thought' that provided the context for Müller's scholarship.[54]

Müller's works were read by undergraduate students at Oxford. Along with other German scholars, Müller offered an example for historical scholarship.[55] Indeed he was particularly

51 Symonds's review was called '"The Arabian nights' entertainments"', published in *Academy* no. 700 (2 October 1885), p. 223.

52 See Müller (1839).

53 See, Bernal (1987), Blok (1996), the essays in Calder and Schlesier (1998) and Berlinerblau (1999) for further discussion.

54 Marchand (1996) 44. See also Olender (1992, 2009).

55 For example, Walter Pater's lectures collected in *Plato and Platonism* (first published in 1893) direct students to Müller's *Die Dorier*. On the significance of German scholarship for Oxford students, see also Dowling (1994) 69–70.

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daring since he did not refuse to discuss Spartan pederasty. But despite his commitment to historical objectivity, an important tool in the burgeoning discipline of History in the nineteenth-century European university, many of Müller's readers found his Doric Spartans too perfect and glorified. When he discusses pederasty, he emphasises the purity of the relationship, omitting any sexual suggestion:

> At Sparta the party loving was called εἰσπνήλας, and his affection was termed a *breathing in*, or *inspiring* (εἰσπνεῖν); which expresses the pure and mental connexion between two persons, and corresponds with the name of the other, viz. ἀΐτας, i.e., *listener* or *hearer*.[56]

Despite critiques of Müller's work for its obvious over-admiration of Spartan culture, Müller remained an important text in the second half of the nineteenth century, and so it is not surprising to find Symonds in writing in *Greek ethics*: 'What I have to say, in the first instance on this matter is derived almost entirely from C. O. Müller's *Dorians*.'[57] Here is Symonds's account for the existence of same-sex love and friendship in ancient Greek society:

> Instead of a πόλις, with its manifold complexities of social life, they [the Dorians] were reduced to the narrow limits and social conditions of a roving horde. Without sufficiency of women, without the sanctities of established domestic life, inspired by the memory of Achilles, and venerating their ancestor Herakles, the Dorian warriors had special opportunity for elevating comradeship to the rank of an enthusiasm… [W]hen the Dorians had settled down upon their conquered territories, and when the passions which had shown their more heroic aspect during a period of warfare came, in a period of idleness, to call for methods of restraint, then the discrimination between honourable and base forms of love, to which Plato pointed as a feature of the Dorian institutions, took place. It is also more than probable that in Crete, where these institutions were the most precisely regulated, the Dorian immigrants came into contact with Phoenician vices, the repression of which required the adoption of a strict code. In this way, παιδεραστία, considered as a mixed custom, party martial, partly luxurious, recognised by public opinion and controlled by law, obtained among the Dorian Tribes, and spread from them through the states of Hellas.[58]

Symonds adopts Müller's narrative, in order to show, however, how Classical Greek society did *not* practise a sex-less *paiderastia*. Müller himself noted that outside Sparta

56 Müller (1839) vol. 2, p. 302. On Müller's account of Greek pederasty, see Orrells (2011). For a more recent, scholarly account of Spartan education, see Kennell (1995).

57 [Symonds] (1883) 19.

58 [Symonds] (1883) 23–5.

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relations between men were not so pure and chaste. Whereas Müller does not seem to approve of such relations, Symonds is himself more interested to understand the origins of Athens's 'mixed pederasty', as he calls it, intellectual *and* sensual.[59] For Symonds, it is the northern Dorian encounter with the 'Phoenician vices' in Crete that formed the basis for Greek *paiderastia* which spread 'through the states of Hellas'. Symonds's story reflects Victorian orientalist concerns which imagined the corruption of the northern European traveller going south – the worrying prospect of 'going native'. Robert Aldrich (1993) has discussed in great detail nineteenth-century anxieties and fantasies about travelling south and being seduced by Mediterranean sexual cultures. Richard Burton's own 'Terminal essay' examined (in his own inimitable style) how 'for many years, also, England sent her pederasts to Italy, and especially to Naples whence originated the term 'Il vizio Inglese' [the English vice]'.[60] He observed how 'the [French] conquest of Algiers had evil results ... [T]he result of the African wars was an éffrayable [*sic*] débordement pédérastique [horrifying flood of pederasty]' into France itself.[61] The military man in both modern and ancient times was at risk when he went south.

Greek culture, then, was one that stood between East and West. But Symonds should not be seen as anticipating Burton's claim that Greece should be seen within an oriental context. According to Symonds, fifth-century Greek culture looked back in admiration at this earlier historic period, when Doric male love had not yet been debased by 'sensuality and sanctified impurity'.[62] 'The love of Achilles for Patroclus', writes Symonds, 'added, in a later [classical] age of Greek history, an almost religious sanction to the martial form of παιδεραστία.'[63] There was something very special about Doric love. Symonds goes on:

> it would be natural at this point to introduce some account of παιδεραστία as it exists in various savage tribes, if their customs could be seen to illustrate the Doric phase of Greek love. This, however, is not the case. Study of Mr. Hebert Spencer's Tables and of Bastian's *Der Mensch in der Geschichte* (vol. iii. pp. 304–323), together with facts collected by travellers among the North American Indians, and the mass of curious information supplied by Rosenbaum in his *Geschichte der Lustseuche im Alterthume*, makes clear to my mind that the unisexual [homosexual] vices of barbarians follow, not the type of Greek παιδεραστία, but that of the Scythian disease of effeminacy, described by Herodotus and Hippocrates as something essentially foreign and non-Hellenic. In all these cases whether we regard the Scythian ἀνανδριεῖς [effeminates], the North American Bardashes, the Tsecats of Madagascar, the Cordaches of the Canadian Indians, and similar classes among Californian Indians, natives of Venezuela, and so forth – the characteristic point is

59 On Symonds's conceptualisation, see Blanshard (2000) and Orrells (2011).

60 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 248.

61 Burton (1885–8) vol. 10, p. 251.

62 [Symonds] (1883) 26.

63 [Symonds] (1883) 4.

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> that effeminate males renounce their sex, assume female clothes, and live either in promiscuous concubinage with the men of the tribe or else in marriage with chosen persons. This abandonment of the masculine attributes and habits, this assumption of feminine duties and costume, would have been abhorrent to the Doric custom … For similar reasons, what we know about the prevalence of sodomy among the primitive peoples of Mexico, Peru and Yucatan, and almost all half-savage nations throws little light upon the subject of the present inquiry. Nor do we gain anything of importance from the semi-religious practices of Japanese Bonzes or Egyptian priests…. [N]owhere do we find an analogue to their [the Dorians'] peculiar institutions.[64]

Unlike Burton, who in 1885 would write that the Sotadic Zone witnessed 'a blending of the masculine and feminine temperaments', in 1883, Symonds had already countered this argument to suggest that the Doric phase of Greek love be explicitly *not* compared to other forms of 'unisexual vice'. Whereas Burton makes Greece an example of oriental culture, Symonds *exempts* Doric Greek love from any relation with oriental and other global same-sex practices. 'Dorian comradeship … remained on both sides masculine, tolerating no sort of softness.'[65] Nineteenth-century ethnography and anthropology repeatedly depicted same-sex relations in the colonies and beyond as a relationship comprising a masculine active partner with a feminised or effeminate passive partner.[66] Doric love, on the other hand, was a love between two virile equals, and so exceptional and unique. Symonds implicitly posits the existence of a manly love that might be exemplary for the imperialist, colonising modern Briton, a love that does not distinguish between male friendship and pathological vice. Symonds relied upon well-known nineteenth-century scholarship to support his thesis. 'Mr Herbert Spencer's Tables' refers to the multi-volume *Descriptive sociology; or groups of sociological facts*, a project overseen by the well-known Victorian intellectual Herbert Spencer. From 1873 until his death in 1903, he ran a scheme that aimed to collect all known facts, without judgement, about the world's societies for the use of sociological research. The volumes of the *Descriptive sociology* comprise tables of such information. In volume three, 'Types of lowest races', for instance, there were successive tables on seventeen different societies. As Turner and Maryanski explain, 'By reading across each table, one can see the structural affinities within a society. By reading down a column for all or some portion of the seventeen societies … one can compare societies for that trait'.[67] Although the aim was an objective description of global societies, 'these descriptions draw upon accounts of travelers, traders, colonial administrators, and ministers, and other nonprofessionals, most of whom were convinced of their own superiority and who tended to look at the

64 [Symonds] (1883) 26–7.

65 [Symonds] (1883) 26–7.

66 See Bleys (1996) 165, 179–80.

67 Turner and Maryanski (1988) 27.

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physical and behavioural patterns of non-Western people through very biased eyeglasses'.[68] Despite the professed objectivity of the *Descriptive sociology*, it actually reflected a very Victorian worldview, organising the globe's peoples into strict racial categories. It supported Symonds's thesis about the essential difference between bonds between men in Dorian society and asymmetrical, pederastic partnerships that paired masculine and feminised men in other parts of the globe.

In the passage quoted, Symonds also refers to Adolph Bastian (1826–1874), a famous German ethnologist, who had obtained a medical degree from Prague and became a ship's doctor, travelling the world on an eight-year voyage. In 1859 he returned to the German Confederation where he published *Der Mensch in der Geschichte* (1860), a three-volume, very widely read account of his travels. The pages cited by Symonds include details about pederastic vice and effeminacy in Dahomey, West Africa. Bastian was particularly keen to produce ethnographic records of non-European societies, which were disappearing due to imperial contact and colonial engagement. Bastian's emphasis on the cultural differences between Europe and beyond would have supported Symonds's thesis.[69] Julius Rosenbaum (1807–1874), the other author that Symonds mentions, was a medical doctor and medical historian in Halle. His *Geschichte der Lustseuche im Alterthume* (or *A history of the plague of lust in antiquity*, 1839) was a history of venereal disease and sexual abnormalities and anomalies in antiquity. Along with Herodotus, it was from here that Symonds found evidence about 'the Scythian disease of effeminacy' (as Symonds puts it in the quotation above). Rosenbaum's book was a veritable catalogue of ancient sexual enterprises and escapades. It gave detailed accounts of phallic worship and Venus cults, information about ancient brothels and prostitution and pederasty in candid detail. It contributed to a literary culture in the early decades of the nineteenth century that endlessly marvelled at the erotic objects that had been dug up at Pompeii and Herculaneum half a century before. Even though Rosenbaum's book appeared well before the late nineteenth-century sexological catalogues, his work nevertheless offered a framework for the study of sexual perversion at the end of the nineteenth century, through its examination of ancient medical treatment of venereal disease. The first edition was read enough to warrant a second edition in 1845. But it was its use for the sex doctors of the *fin de siècle* that ensured the third edition came out some forty years later in 1882, reaching a seventh edition by 1904.[70]

It was in this specifically late nineteenth-century ethnographical context, then, that Symonds formed his account of Greek love. Spencer's *Descriptive sociology* tables, Bastian and the new edition of Rosenbaum would have led Symonds to further publications on the non-Hellenic peoples he refers to in his catalogue of effeminacy. And there were plenty for Symonds to consult.[71] After 1885, however, the urgency to theorise Greek love

68 Turner and Maryanski (1988) 24.

69 See Bastian (1860), and on Bastian, see the essays in Fischer, Bolz and Kamel (2007).

70 See Rosenbaum (1839).

71 For instance, on North Americans, see Bancroft (1875–6) and Martin [1851–7]; on California, see Duflot de Mofras (1844); on Mexico, see [Paux] (1771), and on Mexico and Yucatan, see Bancroft (1875–6) and Kingsborough

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becomes even more pressing for Symonds with the Labouchère Amendment which criminalised gross indecency between men. Furthermore, the publication of Richard Burton's 'Terminal essay', which orientalised Greek pederasty, in contrast to Symonds's thesis which had been disseminated in a mere ten copies, required analysis. And so *A problem in modern ethics* appeared in 1891. It was still brought out in a tiny edition (50 copies), but it was the first study of contemporary homosexuality, and its legal and medical status. 'Homosexuality' is indeed just the right word to use, since it first appeared in print in *Modern ethics*. The essay offers a highly detailed map of theories of same-sex desire that were circulating at the end of the nineteenth century – criminological, medical, anthropological and literary responses. Explicitly, Symonds is concerned with extricating the homosexual from analyses that depict him as a criminal, insane, degenerate or foreign other.[72] In *Greek ethics* Symonds postulated a northern origin for Greek love, thereby embedding Greece in a European narrative, and cordoning it off from orientalist associations *pace* Burton. Symonds implicitly argued for the depathologisation of same-sex desires by reference to his manly Dorians. This aim to make Doric Greek love exemplary for modern Victorian men becomes stronger and more explicit in *Modern ethics*.

Symonds begins his critique with an account of Félix Carlier's book (1887), which depicts the 'tribe of people' (as Symonds puts it[73]) that he had to deal with as chief of the *Service des moeurs*, the vice squad, during the 1860s in Paris.[74] Symonds is also particularly worried by the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso's much discussed theory that the criminal mind represents an 'atavistic reversion to the state of nature and savagery'.[75] Although Symonds allows that 'criminal atavism might be defined as the sporadic reversion to savagery in certain individuals', he cannot agree with Lombroso's comparison of 'the male savages' of New Caledonia and ancient Mexico, who had sex with one another, with pederasty in 'Hellas and Rome'. Symonds reiterates the differences between Doric love and effeminate, brutish lust.[76] When he comes to Richard Burton's *Arabian nights*, which 'made a considerable stir upon its first appearance', he criticises his friend who 'takes for granted that 'Pederasty', as he calls it, is everywhere and always what the vulgar think it'.[77] Obviously, for Symonds, same-sex passion is not 'everywhere and always … vulgar'. At the same time, however, Symonds also does not see the Sotadic Zone as a sustainable thesis precisely because same-sex desires and activities can be found elsewhere: Symonds

(1830–48); on Peru, see López (1871). All these references were readily available and known to the Victorian intellectual: indeed they are cited in Burton's essay, who nevertheless uses them to assert the similarity between Greek and other sexual cultures, as we have seen.

72 Symonds's acute knowledge of the difficult legal situation in Britain is expressed at Symonds (1896) 155.

73 Symonds (1896) 21. (For the purposes of this essay, I am quoting from the second printing of Symonds's 1891 essay, brought out in 1896).

74 On Carlier, see Peniston (2004).

75 Symonds (1896) 61.

76 Symonds (1896) 62. On Lombroso, see Pick (1989).

77 Symonds (1896) 78.

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remarks that 'in the metropolis of England, London, inverted sexuality runs riot', as if against legal prohibition.[78]

On the one hand, then, Symonds does not want the homosexual compared to the savage, just as he had wanted to differentiate Doric love from 'savage tribes' (in *Greek ethics*, quoted above). On the other, however, he does not support Burton's thesis. Vice appears in the imperial metropolis *and* the so-called Sotadic Zone (as Burton himself let slip). Furthermore, Symonds goes on to say that Doric love *can* too be found elsewhere, especially with 'the fighting peoples of the world, Kelts in ancient society, Normans, Turks, Afghans, Albanians, Tartars'. Whereas in *Greek ethics*, Symonds distinguished the Doric Greek from the Orient, now in *Modern ethics* he sees virile male love which 'popular prejudice [views] as an effeminate vice' across Europe *and* the Orient.[79] Symonds is now working hard to show that Doric love need not be consigned to the ancient past, but could be a model for modern male comradeship and love.

This move away from Doric exceptionalism occurs in the section of *Modern ethics* where Karl Heinrich Ulrichs's theory of the 'Urning' is discussed, a theory neglected by Burton, as Symonds notes. Ulrichs argued that homosexuality occurred naturally, an argument Symonds found useful for moving beyond Burton's orientalism in 1891 when legislation and medical discourse severely restricted homosexual rights. Ulrichs (1825–1895) was a remarkable figure. He was a civil servant in Hanover and later journalist in Frankfurt, who published a series of pamphlets between 1862 and 1879 on same-sex desire. These were initially written under a pseudonym, but *Memnon*, the 1868 pamphlet, in which his theories took definitive shape, was released under his real name. Just a year before, he had addressed the Deutsche Juristentag (the Congress of German Jurists) in Munich and candidly argued for the decriminalisation of sexual activities between men. He was, however, shouted down and not permitted to finish the speech. Then in 1871 with the unification of Germany, German states with more liberal laws found their penal codes overridden by implementation of Prussian legislation, including paragraph 175 of the Imperial Penal Code which made sex between men a criminal offence throughout all of Germany. Often characterised from a late twentieth-century perspective as a pioneer of the gay emancipation movement, Ulrichs was in the nineteenth century a well-known figure in sexological and legal circles.[80] Arguing for a completely biological aetiology for same-sex desire, Ulrichs believed that a man sexually attracted to another male was an *anima muliebris in corpore virili inclusa* ('a feminine soul contained in a masculine body'), extrapolating from nineteenth-century embryology. Such a person he named an 'Urning', recalling Aristophanes' fable in Plato's *Symposium*, where love between males is related to Uranus. 'Dioning' was the name given to a man who was attracted to women (again recalling Aristophanes who related such desire to Dione). Ulrichs's thesis was complicated by the fact that there were several different types of Urning, as Symonds's

78 Symonds (1896) 102.

79 Symonds (1896) 109.

80 On Ulrichs, see Kennedy (2002), Setz (2000, 2004) and Matzner (2010).

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summary explored.[81] Some Urnings were 'Mannlinge', that is, masculine men who were attracted to passive effeminate males, whereas others were 'Weiblinge', that is, feminine, passive men drawn to active, virile lovers.[82] As Sebastian Matzner explains, Ulrichs ended up preserving 'the heterosexist male-female binarism', ensuring that 'the male cannot and must not desire another male'.[83]

Although he admires Ulrichs's conviction that Urnings were 'abnormal, but natural beings'[84], Symonds found him too 'enthusiastic for his physiological theory'.[85] That is, Ulrichs's thesis offers no counterargument to the objector who believes that the 'Urning must be punished' even if he is a product of nature.[86] For Symonds, Ulrichs's theory offers the objector nothing to believe in the inherent worth of the existence of such people. Moreover, Ulrichs's theory simply did not live up to Doric Greek love which 'remained on both sides masculine, tolerating no sort of softness', as Symonds had written in *Greek ethics*. And so it is at this point that we arrive at the final theory of male desire considered by Symonds in *Modern ethics*. And it is here that Symonds turns back to his beloved Dorians, as it is the American poet Walt Whitman who 'has expressed so strong a conviction that "manly attachment", "athletic love", "the high towering love of comrades", is a main factor in human life, a virtue upon which society will have to rest'.[87] Symonds continues: 'The language of "Calamus" [by Whitman] ... recalls to our mind the early Greek enthusiasm – that fellowship in arms which flourished among Dorian tribes, and made a chivalry for prehistoric Hellas'.[88] Yet again, then, Doric love comes out on top – it is a love between two men, who are completely men - not a structurally ambiguous version of masculinity as theorised by Ulrichs.[89] It is at this point in *Modern ethics* that Doric love looks *explicitly* like an exemplary passion, an example for the modern. It is here, then, that the political dimensions of Symonds's discussion fully emerge: Whitman 'expects Democracy, the new social and political medium, the new religious ideal of mankind, to develop and extend "that fervid comradeship", and by its means to counterbalance and to spiritualise what is vulgar and materialistic in the modern world'.[90] In *Greek ethics*, Symonds got caught up in differentiating Doric love from the effeminacy of 'savage tribes'. *Modern ethics*, however, vacillates over the uniqueness of Doric love precisely because Symonds wants in the end to argue for its exemplary status

81 See Symonds (1896) 88–89.

82 On top of this, there were 'Zwischen-Urnings', who were adult men who liked adolescents; 'Virilisierte Urnings', who repressed their urges and took partnerships with women; and there were 'Uranodionings', who were attracted to both males and females.

83 Matzner (2010) 82.

84 Symonds (1896) 86.

85 Symonds (1896) 99.

86 Symonds (1896) 114.

87 Symonds (1896) 115.

88 Symonds (1896) 116–17. See also page 118.

89 'Neuropathical Urnings are not hinted at in any passage of his [Whitman's] works' (Symonds (1896) 116).

90 Symonds (1896) 123.

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for his modern, democratic age. When Symonds was writing *Greek ethics* in 1873 and had it published in 1883, he was more concerned with distinguishing Doric love. In 1891, however, Symonds was writing after the 1884 Representation of the People Act (known more commonly as the Third Reform Act), which considerably expanded the size of electorate, and after Labouchère's 1885 Amendment on gross indecency which imperilled homosexuals' rights in this political context (imprisonment would not permit the capacity to vote in an election). George Grote chose to pass over the love that bound the Sacred Band of Thebes in his analysis of their defence of Greek liberty at Chaeronea. Grote was of course writing not long after Greek independence from the Ottomans. Burton would criticise Grote's reticence, but would then go on to compare Greek pederasty to that of the Orient, including the Turks. In 1891, Symonds argues *pace* Grote *and* Burton that Doric male love is a bond that supports democratic values and structures for the West, as the American writer Whitman supposedly makes clear.

Symonds himself knew, however, that his thesis about the democratic nature of Doric love was tricky. Back in *Greek ethics*, his Dorians did not live in a polis.[91] Symonds was acutely aware of his Dorians' (non-)relationship to politics. In his 1883 edition, he wrote that 'morality … certainly did not enter into the account' of these 'marauders' who paid no 'heed to the proprieties of civic life'.[92] Symonds's Dorians were originally a manly, nomadic horde who had no respect for law-abiding communities. However, when Symonds came to revise *Greek ethics* for its inclusion in Havelock Ellis's *Sexual inversion* in 1897, by which time *Modern ethics* had of course already appeared, Symonds removed the description just quoted, and toned down his portrait of the violent Dorians.[93] If in *Greek ethics* the Dorians had no interest in 'morality', now in *Modern ethics*, they offer an example 'whereby abnormal instincts may be moralised and raised to higher value'.[94]

To make matters worse, Symonds relates how he wrote to Whitman and received a response 'dated Camden, New Jersey, U.S.A., August 19, 1890' in which the poet denies Symonds's 'morbid inferences' as 'damnable'.[95] Although Symonds tries to read Whitman in spite of Whitman, the despondency in Symonds's prose is ultimately clear: 'The world cannot be invited to entertain' Doric Greek love.[96] Symonds's *Greek ethics* implicitly positioned the Dorians within a western, north European locus, in order to suggest that Greek love might have something to say to the modern Victorian age. In *Modern ethics*, he makes an explicit argument about the exemplarity of the chivalrous Dorians. Richard Burton had located the Greeks within the Sotadic Zone, ostensibly orientalising the

91 Symonds (1883) 23: 'Instead of a πόλις, with its manifold complexities of social life, they were reduced to the narrow limits and the simple conditions of a roving horde.' See quotation in this article, at p. 209.

92 Symonds (1883: 24).

93 Compare Symonds (1883) 24, with Ellis and Symonds (1897) 184. The British Library copy of Symonds (1883) is Symonds's own copy annotated in his hand. The lines quoted by me here have been crossed out by Symonds. We will turn to Symonds's collaboration with Ellis later.

94 Symonds (1896) 119.

95 Symonds (1896) 119.

96 Symonds (1896) 125.

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Greeks, whilst at the same time suggesting that modern male Victorian readers enjoyed the pleasures veiled under the obscurities of Greek texts, thereby questioning the relationship between Victorian British men and eastern Orientals. On the other hand, whereas Symonds argues that Greek love originated in a European location, and that that love might offer an example of democracy to 1890s Britain, he ultimately emphasises the sheer gulf between ancient Dorian and modern Victorian. As Burton and Symonds make clear, Greek pederasty and Greek love posed profound and difficult questions about oriental desires and democratic politics in late-Victorian, imperialist Britain. To add to all of this, a few weeks before Symonds received his letter from Walt Whitman denying the possibility of revivifying Doric Greek love in 1890, a very different Dorian had stepped into the London spotlight: Oscar Wilde's *The picture of Dorian Gray*, which first appeared in the July issue of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*.

Dorian Gray: 'citizen of the world'

One thing Symonds could agree with Burton on was the hypocrisy of late-Victorian society. We saw Symonds complain in his review of Burton about 'our middle-class *censores morum*'. In the final section of *Greek ethics*, Symonds asked, 'Is Greek literature fit to remain the groundwork of the highest education in a modern commonwealth?' Symonds worried about the Victorian double standard that taught its schoolboys to admire Greek male friendship, but demonised modern homoerotic passion. For Burton, reading Greek actually orientalises the Englishman, and for Symonds, the nineteenth-century education system produced the pederasts and sodomites that it despised. Oscar Wilde's novel responds to this issue about the relationship between Classical antiquity and the modern Briton: does a Classical education make or unmake the British? Wilde describes the beautiful paleness of Dorian's skin in contrast to his rose-red lips in terms that he would later address to Alfred Douglas. He paints a picture of a beautiful Hellene, the veritable descendent of antiquity, who degenerates into evil. Just as Symonds's Dorians travelled from the North into the Oriental South, so Wilde's novel begins in London's West End and slides into its East.[97] Indeed Dorian looks like the late-Victorian, imperialist man, being 'the true realisation of a type of which they [young men] had often dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, a type that was to combine something of the real culture of the scholar with all the grace and distinction and perfect manner of *a citizen of the world*' (emphasis added).[98] At the same time, this cosmopolitanism leads Gray into eccentric directions as he becomes an expert in Roman Catholicism, mysticism, Darwinism, perfumes from the East, music from Tunisia back to Schubert, Chopin and Beethoven, musical instruments from South America, jewels, embroideries and tapestries, and

97 On the name 'Dorian', and its homoerotic connotations for late-Victorian readers, see Cartledge (2001) and Bristow (2005) 370–1.

98 Wilde (2005) 277–8.

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ecclesiastical garments.[99] This intellectual journey showed Dorian, the so-called 'citizen of the world', a 'savage and animal' interior to cultured man:

> The worship of the senses has often, and with, much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that *they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organised forms of existence*. But it appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and they had remained *savage and animal* merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality.[100]

Dorian's 'worship of the senses' makes him conscious of what he shares 'with the less highly organised forms of existence' – that he is both savage and civilised. Indeed by the end of the novel, for Gray, an opium addict, beauty has become ugliness: 'Ugliness was the one reality. The coarse brawl, the loathsome den, the crude violence of disordered life, the very vileness of thief and outcast, were more vivid, in their intense actuality of impression, than all the gracious shapes of Art, the dreamy shadows of Song.'[101] There are, then, two Dorian Grays, the beautiful one, who resides in London's West End and Nottinghamshire, and the other, who frequents the dens of the Whitechapel in the East End, peopled by 'Malays', a 'half-caste, in a ragged turban and a shabby Ulster', 'the twisted limbs, the gaping mouths, the staring lustreless eyes'.[102] Just as late-Victorian London is more than just itself, other to itself, so Gray is more than one.

Dorian Gray embodies Wilde's own thoughts about aesthetic form. In 'The decay of lying' (one of the dialogues in *Intentions* published in 1891), which lambasted the dreary realism of the contemporary novel, Wilde's characters explored the possibility of synthesising western and 'oriental' artistic ideals:

> The whole history of these [decorative] arts in Europe is the record of the struggle between Orientalism, with its frank rejection of imitation, its love of artistic convention, its dislike of the actual representation of any object in Nature, and our own imitative spirit. Wherever the former has been paramount … we have had beautiful and imaginative work … But wherever we have returned to Life and Nature, our work has always become vulgar, common and uninteresting.[103]

99 See ch. 11.

100 Wilde (2005) 278 (emphasis added).

101 Wilde (2005) 325. Dorian's 'worship of the senses' is, of course, an ironic citation of the phrase used repeatedly in Pater's *Renaissance*, a book designed to *cultivate* young men, not make them regress back to savagery.

102 Wilde (2005) 326, 327.

103 Oscar Wilde (2007b) 86.

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The picture of Dorian Gray elegantly reflected Wilde's aesthetic creed: it both exquisitely paints a portrait of a beautiful Greek boy, 'the face of Antinoüs', 'Narcissus',[104] Gray himself, *and* of course constantly reminds us that we will never see an 'actual representation' of the picture of Dorian Gray since we are reading a novel. The novel's language offers description of the minutest detail and yet by calling his novel *The picture of Dorian Gray* Wilde reminds his readers of the blind-spot at the centre of the novel, a painting which even most of the novel's world will never see. Dorian encapsulates this synthesised aesthetic: on his mother's side aristocratic and his father's side of unknown ancestry, both West End and East End, English and oriental(ised), beautiful and ugly, both dedicated to everything the 'visible world' has to offer, and invisible, beyond visual representation, a famous painting that has never been viewed.

This aesthetic call for synthesis between East and West, and Wilde's portrait of late-Victorian London, reflected the new-imperialist concerns of the 1890s. The novel was also influenced by Matthew Arnold's *Culture and anarchy*, which first appeared in 1869. Arnold's book represented one of the most important and widely read attempts to reify English culture. Written in the face of what Arnold perceived to be dangerously pluralising tendencies which were pulling England apart, Arnold sought to bridge those divides and bring England back to itself. He identified two fundamental strands of English identity, Hebraism and Hellenism. These terms take on different nuances throughout Arnold's book, but Jane Garnett usefully summarises: 'Hebraism incorporated the tendency to sacrifice all other sides of our nature to the religious side … whereas Hellenism suggested the application of the clear light of the critical and expansive intellect'.[105] All the schisms that Arnold perceived in British life were secondary to this fundamental binary. All those dialectical relationships that defined British culture in the middle of the nineteenth century – Saxon and Celt, England and Europe, Anglican and Nonconformist, Protestant and Catholic, upper, middle and lower classes, Nation and Empire - could be subsumed, Arnold contended, under the overarching opposition Hebrew and Hellene.

This binary was far from accidental and insignificant. Indeed it reflected a long history in European thinking that specifically polarised Greek (Aryan) and Judaic (Semitic) cultures. It was the German Jewish, later Catholic, writer, Heinrich Heine, who provided Arnold with these terms. Lionel Gossman has pointed out that Arnold's use of the Hebrew/Hellene opposition makes use of the anti-Semitism present in previous German constructions of the binary: German philhellenism was so often accompanied by marked anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic sentiment.[106] Arnold was writing not long after the political emancipation of Jews in England in 1858, and Benjamin Disraeli (born Jewish) would be serving his first tenure as Prime Minster. Interestingly, Arnold's text wavers between suggesting Hebrew and Hellene are cultural characteristics and racial types. Quite how metaphorical or literal Arnold meant to be has provoked much debate. His hope for a harmonious synthesis in

104 See Wilde (2005) 176, 257.

105 Garnett (2009) xiv.

106 See Gossman (1994), Young (1995) 62 and Leonard (2012).

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English culture between the two sides suggests that the English might be able to mingle their Aryan and Semitic cultural heritages. And yet a racial frame of reference bubbles to the surface of Arnold's writing:

> Science has now made visible to everybody the great and pregnant elements of difference which lie in race, and in how a manner they make the genius and history of an Indo-European people vary from those of a Semitic people. Hellenism is of Indo-European growth, Hebraism is of Semitic growth; and we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism.[107]

Although, then, Arnold strove to characterise English and British society in cultural terms, these very terms were racial in origin, a basis from which Arnold never quite managed to depart. As Robert Young has summarised,

> So *Culture and anarchy*, the highly influential, virtual founding document of English culture, locates the culture's energy and history as a product of racial difference. It thus neatly relocates and displaces the class conflict that is so clearly apparent in the turbulent social scenarios that it describes. The struggles between what for Arnold are in effect four classes (the aristocracy, the gentrified middle class, the radical dissenting middle class and the working class) are subsumed into the struggles of racial history.[108]

Wilde's engagement with Arnold was clear already in his essay 'The critic as artist', originally published in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1890 and later included in *Intentions* (1891). As Stefano Evangelista puts it, Wilde 'fundamentally inherits Arnold's ideal of culture, repeating his calls for the reform of English middle-class attitudes towards the arts and intellectual knowledge. Behind the superficial hedonism that pervades the essays [in *Intentions*], Wilde comes out as a supporter of Arnold's belief that culture leads to the improvement of society and that the intellectual has a duty to be publicly involved in this cultural battle'.[109] Combining *Culture and Anarchy* with Walter Pater's aestheticist philosophy, Wilde's aesthetic critic in his dialogue becomes the harbinger of a new age: 'we shall be able to realize, not merely our own lives, but the collective life of the race, and so to make ourselves absolutely modern, in the true meaning of the word modernity'.[110] This accent on race reappears a little later in the essay: aesthetic criticism will 'annihilate race-prejudices, by insisting upon the unity of the human mind in the variety of its forms…

107 Arnold (2009) 104–5.

108 Young (1995) 60. See also Leonard's (2012) brilliant reading of Arnold.

109 Evangelista (2009) 145.

110 Wilde (2007a) 176.

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[and] bind Europe together in bonds far closer than those that can be forged by shopman or sentimentalist. It will give us the peace that springs from understanding'.[111]

In *Dorian Gray*, however, 'race-prejudices' are very much part of the picture, as Wilde paints a world in which the Hebrew and Hellene meet, a world which becomes a nightmarish inversion of Matthew Arnold's ideal synthesis. Wilde responds to the racial discourses implicit in Arnold's polarity. The application of the Hebraic/Hellenic binary is most clear in the novel when Dorian Gray frequents Mr Isaacs's theatre and falls in love with Sibyl Vane. The plotline, which Wilde added into the novel when it was first published in book form, is played out as a petty Victorian melodrama. Gray himself thinks that Sibyl is 'absurdly melodramatic'.[112] The narrative utilises literary stereotypes of English heroes and Jewish villains, well known by the end of the nineteenth century.[113] Dorian Gray, the beautiful Greek, known as 'Prince Charming' (he never reveals his name) is contrasted with Mr Isaacs, 'a hideous Jew', who 'had greasy ringlets, and an enormous diamond glazed in the centre of a soiled shirt'.[114] As Dorian acts out his hackneyed play to his friend Lord Henry, he exclaims: 'we must get her out of the Jew's hands. She is bound to him for three years'.[115] As the novel progresses, however, the polarity between handsome Greek and 'hideous' Jew collapses as Gray becomes associated more and more with this adjective: he has a 'hideous hunger for opium'; 'with hideous iteration' he anticipates arriving in the East End; the 'half-caste' in the opium den grins at him 'with a hideous greeting'; there he also hears 'a hideous laugh' from 'the painted lips of the woman who had taken his money'. It is this woman who says to Gray, 'Prince Charming is what you like to be called, ain't it?' This name rouses a 'drowsy sailor' who turns out to be James Vane, Sibyl's vengeful brother. Gray tricks Vane into believing he is not the man who caused Sibyl's suicide, and shows Vane 'the hideous error', a face that has not aged a day. That the opium den 'looked as if it had been *a third-rate dancing hall*' with '*greasy* reflectors of ribbed tin' backing 'shrill flaring gas-jets … making quivering discs of light', associates the scene further with the 'greasy' Mr Isaacs's theatre.[116]

My point is not to suggest that Dorian Gray actually is or becomes Jewish. Rather Wilde makes creative use of the Arnoldian opposition between Greek and Jew to show the doubled and divided nature of the Classically educated Englishman Dorian Gray. Taking Arnold's opposition, Wilde paints a nightmarish scenario, a London where Hebrew and Hellene intermingle all too frequently, to the horror of the late-Victorian imagination. Indeed the 1880s saw a marked increase in anti-Semitism in response to Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe. 'The Jew' in this period and place became a contradictory figure: as well

111 Wilde (2007a) 203.

112 Wilde (2005) 244.

113 See Cheyette (1993); Cheyette and Valman (2004); and Davison (2004).

114 Wilde (2005) 211.

115 Wilde (2005) 216.

116 Wilde (2005) 325–31. On the colonialist context for Wilde's novel, in general, see Marez (1997).

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as representing a percentage of impoverished settlers arriving in London from the 1880s onwards, Britain already possessed well-established, but small, 'assimilated' Anglo-Jewish communities. And since the 1867 discovery of diamonds by Europeans in South Africa, Jews became closely associated with the imperialist trade in African diamonds. A little later, at the very beginning of the twentieth century, the British government proposed the 'Uganda plan,' stemming from real concerns for persecuted Jews in Eastern Europe, which examined the possibility of setting up an African Zion. As Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman put it:

> More strikingly than ever,'the Jew' was overdetermined: infinitely wealthy and yet abjectly poor; refusing to assimilate and yet assuming a false English identity; cosmopolitan and tribal; 'alien' and yet almost overly familiar; ideal colonizer and undesirable immigrant; white but not quite.[117]

Although eastern European Jews were not colonial subjects, the huge concerns about their presence on British soil pointedly reflected late-Victorian fears about reverse colonisation. The very slipperiness of Wilde's Mr Isaacs is reflected in his 'greasy ringlets', both an ugly outsider and participant in the imperialist-capitalist enterprise, 'an enormous diamond glazed in the centre of a soiled shirt', this Jew-ellery mirroring Dorian Gray's own obsessive collecting of jewels.[118] Furthermore, Gray's going native in the orientalised East End, which sees him collide into James Vane, makes Gray look very much like a vampiric Wandering Jew, who has made a pact with the devil, postponing indefinitely ageing and death. Wilde's interest in Charles Maturin's 1820 novel *Melmoth the wanderer*, based on this conceit, is well attested.[119] Wilde himself was related by marriage to Maturin, and Wilde renamed himself 'Sebastian Melmoth' after leaving prison when he lived in exile. The association between vampirism and Jewishness was made even more obvious in the novel *Dracula*. Bram Stoker (a friend of Wilde's) clearly plays upon contemporary fears about Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe.[120] The association between academic aesthete and depraved, Gothic horror was also made clear in an 1887 burlesque called *Frankenstein; or, The vampire's victim*, put on at the Gaiety Theatre in the Strand, in which the well-known comic actor Fred Leslie played the Creature, dressed in many scenes flamboyantly with a sunflower in his buttonhole, along with a Wildean-looking hat.[121] The undead Dorian, whose ambiguous, transgressive sexuality preys upon both men and women, reflects contemporary stereotypes about effete, womanising and narcissistic Jews; anticipates the Transylvanian Count; and reflects Karl Heinrich Ulrichs's 1885 story 'Manor,' set in the Faroe Islands where a dead sailor returns as a vampire to

117 Bar-Yosef and Valman (2009a) 3.

118 On this pun in British writing and culture, see Munich (2009) 27–44.

119 See Bristow (2005) 365. On *Melmoth the wanderer*, Davison (2004) 114–19.

120 See Malchow (1996) 124–66 and Davison (2004) 120–57.

121 See Malchow (1996) 146–7.

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suck the blood of his male beloved.[122] The 'Wandering Jew'-type who refuses to grow old and die is a sharp inversion to the glorious timelessness of ancient Greece … not quite gods in exile.[123]

John Gray: A mixture of white and black

Although the reviews of *Dorian Gray* passed judgement on the sexual suggestiveness of the story, at the same time, readers were also just as disturbed by the protagonist's racial degeneracy, and wondered what this meant.[124] As one critic derisorily noted in the *Daily Chronicle*, 'Man is half angel and half ape, and Mr Wilde's book has no real use if it be not to inculcate the "moral" that when you feel yourself becoming too angelic you cannot do better than rush out and make a beast of yourself.'[125] The racialisation of the Wildean aesthete was not uncommon practice in the press both in Britain and the United States. Cartoonists, enjoying the late-Victorian dandy's open display of artificiality, took pleasure in drawing Wilde as a primitive ape in contrast to his witty, metropolitan performances, as the 1882 satire in *Harper's Weekly* shows.[126]

Such images are a visual pun on the 'aping' of an identity performed by Wilde and other aesthete dandies. And yet these cartoons suggested that behind Wilde's performances there is nothing more than a primitive ape, underlining and questioning at the same time the literalness of race. In 1882, whilst on tour in America, Wilde's unusual behaviour alerted such attention. The *Washington Post* included a cartoon of a monkey from Borneo holding a piece of fruit above a picture of Wilde holding a flower, with the caption 'How far is it from this to this?' punning on Wilde's name.[127] Another American illustrator, Charles Kendrick, in a picture called 'A symphony in colour,' depicts Wilde waltzing around in front of enthralled black housemaids, one of whom is holding a sunflower, linking Wilde to contemporary American stereotypes of racial inferiority and feckless effeminacy and performance.[128] Wilde's Irishness certainly contributed to contemporary reactions to his performances and writings.[129] At times on his tour, Wilde seemed to align himself with American racism, yet at other times he challenged it: as Nicolas Mirzoeff observes, 'Wilde had employed an African American valet called W. M. Traquair, whom he made perform

122 See Dyer (1988) 47 and Gilman (1991) 125–7. For an interesting discussion on Jewishness and homosexuality in literature, see also Sedgwick (1990) 75–85.

123 The image of the vampire can also be found in Symonds's *Modern ethics* when he describes how 'comradely' (i.e. 'Dorian') sexual inverts often fall 'into the hands of some pretty fellow', who turns out to be an ugly blackmailer and 'the more he [the invert] pays, the greedier becomes the vampire who sucks his life-blood, until at last there lies nothing else before him except total financial ruin or disgrace' (Symonds (1928) 151–2).

124 On contemporary reviewers seeing the novel as suitable for 'perverted telegraph boys' and *Dorian Gray*'s references to the 1889 Cleveland Street Scandal, see Cook (2004) 103, and Hyde (1976).

125 Quotation in Gates (1988) 124.

126 See Mirzoeff (2006) 55.

127 See Mirzoeff (2006) 52.

128 See Bristow (2004) 15.

129 See Doody (2004) 246–66.

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as a minstrel for his visitors, even though he also unsuccessfully challenged segregation on the Pullman cars in Georgia'.[130] Wilde's difficulties in understanding his own ethnic identity in nineteenth-century America are reflected in a broader, political context, where Irish Americans struggled to be seen as white.[131] In his 1889 essay 'Ireland and the Irish during the latter half of the eighteenth century', Wilde explicitly comments on his feeling of homelessness, of living beyond national borders: 'What captivity was to the Jews, exile has been to the Irish.'[132] Despite the perception of increasing Jewish immigration into 1880s London, Wilde turns back to ancient Jews to make a complex identification between them and the late-Victorian Irish.

One of Wilde's followers was John Gray, whose 1893 short story 'The Advantages of Civilization' shows how racialised depictions of 1890s aestheticism had become. Gray himself was a self-educated working-class man who had grown up in London's East End, and had been apprenticed to a metal-turner as a teenager. He managed to transform himself into an aesthetic poet, having learnt French, German and Latin at evening classes and having passed the Civil Service exams, becoming a librarian in the Foreign Office.[133] Indeed Gray sought to erase his past to such an extent that Arthur Symons called him an 'apparition'.[134] If the 'Dorian' of *Dorian Gray* refers back to the ancient Greeks, then many have suggested, since 1890 in fact, that 'Gray' is linked to John Gray himself.[135] Just as 'Dorian Gray' degenerated back down to the depths of John's East End, so John sought to move from the East to the West in an attempt to become 'Dorian'.

That John's move from East to West felt like moving from the edge of the Empire is reflected in a short story he wrote called 'The advantages of civilization', about Dr Zaccheus Bishop, a celebrated Fijian doctor, who was educated at great expense by the 'New Methodist Missionary Society' – to such an extent that he outstrips his colonial masters. The tale explicitly responds to contemporary concerns about reverse colonisation, as the Empire expanded so the differences between the coloniser and colonised shrunk. In the story, Dr Bishop takes a group of theology students on a tour of the British Museum. To the discomfort of their English theology teacher, Bishop candidly asks them if they had 'heard of the Faustinas', alluding to the infamous wife of Marcus Aurelius, as well as pointing out the busts of the far from exemplary emperors Caracalla, Hadrian and his boy-lover Antinous, and finally, Caligula. At the end, he takes the students to see the 'Apollo Citharaedus' (Apollo was, of course, by the end of the nineteenth century a subtle nod to ancient homoerotic interests). The dark-skinned antiquarian, Dr Bishop, fulsomely admires the sculpture: 'A late Greek thing ... *as you*

130 Mirzoeff (2006) 56. A novel about William Traquair has recently appeared: Edwards (2003).

131 See Ignatiev (1995).

132 Wilde (1935) 530.

133 See McCormack (1991) 10–52, and (2000) 5–106.

134 Quoted in McCormack (1991) 5.

135 Although it cannot of course be proven that Wilde based his character on (aspects of) John, John did nevertheless sign himself 'Dorian' at least once in a letter to Wilde: see McCormack (1991) 49. See also pp. 82–8, 98–102.

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see' (emphases original). In turn, the theology teacher, Mr Smith (a typically English name), 'gathered a very decided impression from the statue, but it was not of an archaeological character'.[136] Gray very obviously re-plays the Wildean paradox of getting his reader to see and yet not see a beautiful Greek male body, and yet here the ecphrasis does not come from the mouth of a British scholar, but a Fijian aesthete, whose buttonhole holds three orchids, a suspiciously shaped flower that alluded to contemporary dandyism and sexual dissidence.[137] Gray's story playfully responds to the contemporary racial stereotyping of Wilde and his aesthetic apostles and decadent disciples. The tale questions the purpose of the late-Victorian colonial mission: does an education in the classics really civilise the colonised, or does it grant permission for the admiration of 'primitive,' backward, altogether uncivilised nudity? Does Dr Bishop's enjoyment of Apollo show that an education in the classics can produce men more English than the English? Or is the story suggesting that a Classical education is actually just a 'primitive' barbarism hidden under a veneer of cultural sheen? The politics of the message behind Gray's story is difficult to read: was he imagining himself as a racial other from the East End, who felt utterly misplaced in Wilde's society, or was Wilde himself the butt of the joke? Whatever was to be read into Gray's tale, by the 1890s, Classical education was fast becoming an odd and marginalised business.

Conclusion

Just as Britain was intensely debating its relationship with its newly expanded Empire, so British intellectuals turned back to think about what being British meant, what Britain's heritage was. Locating that heritage in Classical antiquity, a move made by so many Victorian educationalists and intellectuals, was a complex strategy. Ancient Greece slipped between exemplary ancestor for Great Britain, irrecoverable, impossible to imitate, and an oriental, even savage, culture. And it was precisely Greek male sexuality that brought this complex reception into urgent focus in the 1880s and 1890s: on the one hand, Greek pederasty was the term for an idealised, pedagogic relationship between man and youth, and read by young men at Oxford and Cambridge. And on the other, it named the primitive, degenerate nature of Greek society, which boys and young men were disturbingly liable to imitate in the Victorian present. Greek pederasty signified the absolute, historical difference *and* the disquieting similarity between Classical antiquity and modern Britain. All the texts we have considered here were either circulated or published between 1883 and 1893. It was the parameters of British imperial culture that offered a crucial (hitherto unexplored) frame for the Victorian exploration and invention of Greek love in the writings of Symonds, Burton, Wilde and Wilde's apostles, such as Gray. If turning back to Greece to find a model for Victorian masculinity was complicated

136 Gray (1893) 55.

137 On the wearing of orchids as a covert sign of sexual attraction between men, see Bartlett (1993) 46.

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in these years, it became very tricky after Wilde delivered his apologia from the dock in 1895 on the love that dare not speak its name. His paean about the 'great affection of an elder for a younger man' itemised the love 'between David and Jonathan', Plato and the affection found in 'the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare'.[138] Nevertheless, the texts we have been reading, especially Symonds's, were reprinted in small editions. When *Modern ethics* appeared again in 1896, readers could still read about the 'pathos and clinging intensity' of Whitman's poetry which 'may have been suggested by the legends of David and Jonathan, Achilles and Patroclus, Oretes [sic] and Pylades'.[139]

In 1897, Symonds collaborated with Henry Havelock Ellis, the psychologist and sexologist, to produce *Sexual inversion* (which was published first in Germany in 1896). Even though Ellis permitted Symonds to include *Greek ethics* as an appendix in the book, the two men disagreed about the significance of Greek pederasty for modern homosexuality. In one letter to Ellis (7 July 1892), Symonds says that 'no survey of Sexual Inversion is worth anything without an impartial consideration of its place in Greek life'.[140] Ellis was concerned, however, about Symonds's belief that 'sexual anomaly (as in Greece) is often a matter of preference rather than fixed physiological or morbid diathesis'.[141] Ellis was keen to show that homosexuality was always congenital. If it had anything to do with moral and political aspirations (as we saw with Symonds's Dorians), then it challenged Ellis's thesis that sexuality was beyond volition and therefore impossible to punish by law. Symonds's Dorians simply didn't address the legal situation in which late-Victorian homosexuals found themselves.[142]

Ancient Greece, nevertheless, remained an alluring place that could not be ignored. Edward Carpenter, the homosexual political activist, took up Burton's and Ulrichs's ideas about a third, intermediate sex who possessed a particular sort of physical constitution. His ideas were partly formulated through his avid reading of Hindu mysticism, and yet at the same time, he took on Symonds's paean to the manly, egalitarian lovers who, in Carpenter's scheme, would become the flag-bearers of his democratic vision. In 1901, Oscar Wilde's death triggered numerous publications, up to the First World War, trying to understand his sexuality and his relationship with 'Bosie'. In 1914, E. M. Forster's Maurice worried that he might be another 'Oscar'. Our story could go on... There is only space in this article to examine the late-Victorian discourse on Greek love. It paves the way for further investigation into how modern homosexual intellectual engagement with the Greek example was framed and worked out in the imperial context at the turn of the century. This article offers a way to bring together different strands of Classical reception.

138 Hyde (1973) 201.

139 Symonds (1896) 121.

140 Quoted in Crozier (2008) 40.

141 Symonds quoted in Crozier (2008) 43.

142 See also Koestenbaum (1989).

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