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Aesthetics of Soft Focus:

Art Photography, Masculinity and the Re-Imagining of Modernity in Late Victorian

Britain, 1885-1914

A Dissertation Presented

by

Scott Christopher Lesko

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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Aesthetics of Soft Focus examines the contested and mutually constituted discourses of

masculinity and national imperial identity through the visual medium of photography in late

Victorian and early Edwardian Britain. It argues that the art photography produced by members

of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring produced essential sites in which to question the

dominant political and cultural paradigms of the era. This dissertation examines four primary

interconnected sites of *performance*: the photographer, the photographic exhibition, the

photographic society and most importantly the photographic image, which together reflected a

broader reconfiguration of British modernity. From George Davison's pinhole landscape

photograph, "*An Old Farmstead*" to Shapoor N. Bhedwar's "*Naver Series*" (1892) "*Fakir*"

(1893) and "*Tyag or the Renunciations Series*" (1896), photography and its images engaged

Victorian audiences in a debate over the nature and dangers of contemporary sexuality, empire

and Britain's global standing. In the spirit of recent historical inquiries into the relationship of "nation" and "empire" and the constitution of the modern British citizen, this dissertation demonstrates how the visual medium of photography held the potential for exploring the complex and ambiguous nature of "Englishness", "masculinity" and "modernity," whether through the form of a rural English landscape or in the 'bodyscape' of the human figure as represented in new art photographic practices of nineteenth century portraiture.

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Introduction

During the last decades of the nineteenth century issues of national and imperial identity emerged as central to constructions of British modernity. Nowhere is this more evident than in the visual culture represented in the British landscape photography and portraiture of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring (1892). In my dissertation, I use the controversy over the aesthetic qualities of George Davison's pinhole landscape photograph, *An Old Farmstead*, taken in West Mersea, Essex on September 7, 1890 as a launching point to explore the aesthetic dynamic that invigorated the internal and external debates on nature of photography. Key to that dynamic was the continual conflict between those who emphasized the science and trade of photography versus those who advocated its aesthetic qualities. The schism between the Photographic Society of Great Britain and the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring was responsible for thrusting photography onto the national stage. This ideological struggle within the photographic community was articulated within the mediums of landscape and portraiture, which in turn mirrored the broader cultural contestations occurring within Great Britain over differential conceptualizations of modernity, the Imperial citizen, and the Imperial subject. The reaction against positivism, embodied in the aesthetic philosophy of the Linked Ring, coalesced in the 1890s and involved "a rediscovery of the non-logical, the mystical, and the inexplicable."[1] According to Mary Warner Marien, "photography was a technology that provoked a rethinking of human kind's relationship to nature. Its instantaneous imaging challenged how people thought about the world. Although the antagonism was played out in aesthetic terms, it was never far

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[1] H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930*, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 35.

from a larger societal resonance."[2] In this context, art photography endorsed the "neo-Kantian concept of disinterested art [that] revealed a way to maintain the artist as cultural hero, while denying the worst of the modern world including standardization, mechanization and cultural democratization."[3]

This dissertation, conceived as an interdisciplinary study, focuses on art photography during the late nineteenth century as a contested site of representation, one in which issues of national and imperial identity were mutually constituted and contested within a cultural framework of class, gender, religion, and race. It argues that the art photography produced by members of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring created essential sites in which to question the dominant political and cultural paradigm of Great Britain. *Aesthetics of Resistance* examines the contested and mutually constituted discourses of masculinity and national imperial identity through the visual medium of photography in late Victorian and early Edwardian Britain. It argues that the art photography produced by members of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring produced essential sites in which to question the dominant political and cultural paradigms of the era. This dissertation examines four primary interconnected sites of *performance*: the photographer, the photographic exhibition, the photographic society, and most importantly the photographic image, which together reflected a broader reconfiguration of British modernity. From George Davison's pinhole landscape photograph, *An Old Farmstead* to Shapoor N. Bhedwar's *Naver Series* (1892), *Fakir* (1893), and *Tyag or the Renunciations Series* (1896), photography and its images engaged Victorian audiences in a debate over the nature and dangers of contemporary sexuality, empire, and Britain's global standing. In the spirit of recent historical

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[2] Mary Warner Marien, *Photography and its Critics: A Cultural History, 1839-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 72.

[3] Ibid., 168.

inquiries into the relationship of "nation" and "empire" and the constitution of the modern British citizen, this dissertation demonstrates how the visual medium of photography held the potential for exploring the complex and ambiguous nature of "Englishness," "masculinity," and "modernity," whether through the form of a rural English landscape or in the "bodyscape" of the human figure as represented in new art photographic practices of nineteenth century portraiture.

Late Victorian photographers became fascinated by the lure of the primitive and rural and it is within British landscape photographs that one becomes aware of a transcultural[4] or hybrid[5] presence of what can be described as non-European primitive masculinity, thought to be lost in England, within the idea and cultural practices of a distinctively created English national culture, with its concern for organicism, community, and historical continuity.[6] Consequently, art photographers such as Peter Henry Emerson, the primary antagonist of Linked Ring members George Davison and Henry Peach Robinson, exhibited photographs of rural life in England. Emerson began working in photography in 1882 and his major published works were photographic, both visual and theoretical. Of these, *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* (1886) and *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art* (1889) are the most significant—the former for its evocative pastoral scenes and its depictions of East Anglian life, which epitomized his strong and poetic work, and the latter for its polemical discourse[7] which countered much

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[4] See Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

[5] See Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[6] For key texts examining English culture and literary images and other incarnations of traditional England see Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), xx, 363; *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 335; and Raymond Williams et al., *The Country and the City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xiv, 258.

[7] Peter Turner, "Emerson, Peter Henry (1856–1936)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed March 16, 2010, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38592. doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/38592.

contemporary thinking. In this context, Emerson's *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* should be considered as a "conservative exempla of the intensifying anti-modernist ruralism promoted by English elites across a broad spectrum."[8]

The semiotic features of landscape photography, and the historical narratives they generate, meld well with Victorian conceptions of an exclusive English national culture and the more formalized imperial conquest, as a civilizing process where "culture" and "civilization" extended into space in a progress that is itself narrated as "natural."[9] Cultural critics such as Charles Kingsley proceeded to relocate the source of primitive vigor within pre-industrial English history. Kingsley exalted the Elizabethan era as the period where a dynamic Anglo-Saxon spirit coalesced within a nationalistic Protestantism. "Having fostered a racialized idea of imperial primitivity, linked to a 'Higher' sense of culture as an intellectual and progressive process becomes so linked to non-European primitivism that the 'Other' resides not only at the periphery but in the homeland itself."[10] The Kingsleyan ideal embraced the Victorian flexible creed of a collective masculine identity of athleticism, strenuousness and energy, Christian Manliness.[11] "The combination of the 'physical' with the spiritual" in its creed expelled all that is effeminate, un-English, and excessively intellectual—the heroic and even brutal qualities needed to build empire. Once secularized, Christian Manliness and Kingsley's sense of Christian

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[8] Marien, *Photography and its Critics*, 163.

[9] For an excellent examination of this concept of a primitive and masculine national-imperial culture that was conceptualized during the mid- to late-nineteenth century by Victorian cultural critics such as Charles Kingsley, Thomas Carlyle, and Rudyard Kipling see, C. J. W.-L. Wee, *Culture, Empire, and the Question of Being Modern* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003).

[10] Wee, *Culture*, 39.

[11] For a greater understanding of "Christian Manliness" see Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Idea of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Donald E. Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

responsibility spread throughout the British education system giving moral sanction for a "responsible" imperialism.

This theoretical development within British landscape photography demonstrates this dialectic perfectly and became a part of British national discourse during the fall of 1890 with the publication of Henry Morton Stanley's (1841-1904) *In Darkest Africa: Or, the Quest, Rescue and Retreat of Emin Pasha, Governor of Equatoria, Volume 1* and William Booth's (1829-1912) *In Darkest England and The Way Out*. Both texts deal with the specter of degeneration in the jungles of Equatorial Africa and the industrial centers of Great Britain respectively. It was these historical developments which opened up cultural spaces for the Linked Ring to re-imagine English culture and subjectivity.

In focusing on the transformation of British landscape photography over the second half of the nineteenth century this study also utilizes the theoretic writings of W. J. T. Mitchell on the connection between landscape paintings and empire. To this end, *Landscape and Power* demonstrates Mitchell's view that "landscape can be conceptualized as a cultural medium and thus has a double role with respect to something like ideology: it naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable, and it also makes that representation operational by interpolating its beholder in some more or less determinate relation to its givenness as sight and site".[12] Now it is important to state that within this framework Mitchell does not view "Imperialism" as a homogenous phenomenon but as a "complex system of cultural, political, and economic expansion and domination that varies with the specificity of places, peoples, and historical moments."[13] It is not a one-way phenomenon but

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[12] W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 2.

[13] Ibid., 3.

a complicated process of exchange, mutual transformation, and ambivalence.[14] Just as the visual medium of landscape represented a cultural space in which to challenge fundamental notions of Englishness, photographic portraiture as envisioned by the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring threatened hegemonic notions of the bourgeois body.

According to Suren Lalvani, photographic portraiture "operated within a certain set of discourses and practices to socially constitute the bourgeois body, providing it meaning within an established hierarchy of values; at the 'anatomo-political' level, in order to surveil, regulate and discipline the movement of deviant bodies across the social; and to identify and represent deviancy itself; and finally, as an 'anatomo-political' level in certain discourses and practices operating within the capitalist mode of production, so that what is most material and most vital in bodies is invested in them."[15] During the nineteenth century, photographic portraiture became imbricated with notions of middle-class economic success, masculinity, and respectability. In this context, Lalvani argues that "photographic representation took as its focus three significant sites within the ideological and social formation of nineteenth-century bourgeois society: the nation-state, the family, and the individual" in a mutually constitutive process of bourgeois hegemony. Nineteenth-century photographic portraiture constituted its bourgeois subjects within what Lalvani argues is a "network of cultural, political, and aesthetic discourses; and the camera operating within a set of technical and political constraints framed and situated the body in terms of these discourses, so as to position it within a set of ideological and social relations."[16] In this

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[14] On imperialism and ambivalence, see Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 155-65.

[15] Suren Lalvani, *Photography, Vision and the Production of Modern Bodies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 41.

[16] Lalvani, *Photography*, 47.

context, both Shapoor N. Bhedwar and Alvin Langdon Coburn disrupted these hegemonic practices through their portrayal of both the Indian and Irish bodies of the Fakir and George Bernard Shaw respectively. Both representations threaten hegemonic processes including notions of Kingsleyan "Christian Manliness," as well as the late Victorian discourse on "physical culture," embodied in the muscular and charismatic Eugene Sandow. By representing an Indian and Irish body within the medium of portraiture, the Linked Ring disrupted the tenuous political and cultural discourses of colonial modernity. According to Nalin Jayasena, "Anti-colonial nationalism undertaken by indigenous men called into question the assumed superiority of the English male—the basis of the civilizing mission of colonialism."[17]

During the late nineteenth century, degeneration theory, which utilized biologically derived models of decline and created correspondences between individual and societal decadence, was given widespread scientific, cultural, and political significance throughout British society. The dominant concept within degeneration theory was the exponential relationship between outward behavior and inner mental states.[18] Ideal models of human behavior were based on middle- and upper-middle-class society and were utilized to determine the level of degeneration in individuals and other races. Advocates of degeneration theory, like Peter Henry Emerson (1856-1936), the primary antagonist of the aesthetic theories of George Davison and the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, argued that deviations from this societal norm, especially examples of insanity and genius, were the result of physiological dysfunction. Artistic expression within the photographic medium was susceptible to a variety of physical and mental disorders through their unique utilization of energy and vision necessary to produce works of art.

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[17] Nalin Jayasena, *Contested Masculinities: Crises in Colonial Male Identity from Joseph Conrad to Satyajit Ray* (London: Routledge, 2007), 14.

[18] Marien, *Photography and its Critics*, 157.

In December 1892, Max Nordau (1849-1923), German physician, co-founder of the World Zionist Organization, and social critic published the most controversial book of the fin-de-siècle period, *Entartung* or *Degeneration*. What makes the text so thought-provoking is its engagement with previous historical discourse on degeneration while simultaneously applying those pseudo-scientific principles to a diverse artistic and cultural movement he categorized as "decadent." Nordau's medical theory of decadence, "stipulated that many modernist styles and innovations were either caused by physiological and neurological disorders or by mild forms of mental illness, caused fin-de-siecle Neo-Romantics, Decadents, and Aesthetes to reevaluate and openly defend their aesthetic theories."[19] According to David Weir, "decadence" refers to "cultural decline, philosophical pessimism, scientific alarmism, physical degeneration and immorality," but Weir mainly argues that "decadence" is transition.[20] The various nineteenth-century movements that proliferate in the period between romanticism and modernism (naturalism, symbolism, Parnassianism, Pre-Raphaelitism, aestheticism, and Impressionism to name just a few) can best be understood if they are all seen as grounded in some concept of "decadence or decadentism."[21]

Throughout the 1890s, degeneration literature permeated British society through the growing concern for poverty, crime, alcoholism, moral perversion, and political violence and is most likely the primary reason why Emerson was so attracted to its models of individual and

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[19] Hans-Peter Söder, "Disease and Health as Contexts of Modernity: Max Nordau as a Critic of Fin-de-Siècle Modernism," *German Studies Review* 14, no. 3 (October 1991): 473-87, accessed October 25, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1430965.

[20] David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), xvi.

[21] Ibid.

cultural progress.[22] Nordau's treatise on "degeneration" should be understood within a broader discourse on the subject dating back to Darwin's theory of generation in *The Origin of Species* (1859) and more recently Edwin Ray Lankester's, *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism* (1880) and H.G. Wells's *Zoological Retrogression* (1891). What was unique about Nordau's contribution to this historical discourse was his scientific, philosophical system which could explain key components of fin-de-siècle culture, including measuring the value of subjective, artistic, and cultural productions by means of "objective scientific or psychological categories."[23] Nordau's theory of degeneracy could explain both physical and psychological illness as well as the broader societal problems such as criminality and other examples of amoral behavior. By adapting Benedict Augustin Morel's degeneration theory,[24] Nordau was able to transfer Morel's psychiatric concepts directly to modern culture, According to Hans-Peter Söder, "Nordau tried to prove that the cultural avant-garde, far from being modern and progressive, was actually atavistic and regressive: Nordau's *Degeneration* signalized the influence of a new and potent factor upon the field of the arts.... Evolutionism had grown up tangent to aesthetic interests and its impact had caught them [the Decadents] unready."[25]

In essence, certain late nineteenth century artists, composers, and writers were redefined by Nordau as "decadent," which categorized their respective works as perverse and corrupt. Söder argues that "Nordau not only associated the Decadents with the insane, but also excluded them from public discourse by branding them as dangerously asocial and even criminally deviant

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[22] Ibid., 157.

[23] Söder, *Disease and Health*, 475.

[24] Cf. Richard Drake, "Decadence, Decadentism and Decadent Romanticism in Italy: Toward a Theory of Decadence," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17 (1982): 78.

[25] Söder, *Disease and Health*, 475.

from middle-class morality."[26] Finally, Nordau's *Degeneration* helped members of the middle-class "come to terms with their fear of anarchism, socialism, deviant sexuality, and low birth rates by explaining that these threats to bourgeois order (evident, according to Nordau, in the works of Wagner, Nietzsche, Ibsen, and Zola) were serious and real."[27] The historical irony concerning Emerson's verbal and written attacks on Davison's subjective Impressionist landscape photograph is that "the degenerationist transmogrified Romantic inspiration, once the voucher of authentic creativity, into the unrelenting condition of mental disease. Therefore, in order to make their diagnoses, the writers of the degeneration literature became inadvertent Romantic individualists, placing extraordinary emphasis on the personal nature of art. For them, art became the infallible mirror of inner mental states."[28]

In 1895, the same year as the English language version of *Degeneration* was available in Great Britain, Nordau's physical and psychological theories had their best known public venue, one that threatened the decadent movement's most colorful advocate, Oscar Wilde, on trial for "acts of gross indecency between men." In this historical context, I argue that the emergence of British Pictorialism, embodied by the art photographers within the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, became intimately embroiled in the cultural discourse of decadence in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. This association placed the aesthetic values of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring (i.e., diffusion of focus, Impressionism, and religious symbolism) in direct opposition to the dominant hegemonic paradigm of British modernity, represented by the Photographic Society of Great Britain, whose aesthetic philosophy embraced scientific and

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 157-58.

technological advancement (i.e., optics, chemistry, and mechanics), which allowed the camera to capture an "objective" representation of reality. Critics of art photography drew upon Nordau's medical theories of degeneracy by categorizing their photographic images as examples of their internal symptoms of immorality, effeminacy and criminality.

Historically, there were several key events, both at the Metropolis and the Periphery, which shaped Victorian political culture in such a way as to create an alternative conception of modernity. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 became a watershed moment in British history not only for its impact on the Victorian psyche concerning the conceptualization of race (i.e., the "noble savage"), but also because of the transformation of Imperial strategy and tactics away from the ideology of informal empire embodied in mercantilism. This transformation of formal control of India by the British East India Company to one where the British Government passed the Government of India Act in 1858 effectively established a Viceroy and a Secretary of State for India with a council of fifteen to advise him. According to C. J. W.-L. Wee, "there is an intersection between the discourse of national culture and the increasing domestic interest in territorial, formal imperialism—itself partly a reaction against the domination of political and economic liberalism[29] that marked a less negatively 'modernist' imperialism—resulting in what he terms a national-imperial discourse on culture."[30]

With this in mind it becomes ironic that it was the Jamaican Rebellion in October 1865, insignificant in size and scope compared to the Indian Rebellion just eight years earlier, that

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[29] Eric Hobsbawm argues for the widespread European withdrawal from classical liberalism at the end of the nineteenth century and that the elites of the new nationalism promoted a convergence of state, nation, and society through "invented" traditions. See Hobsbawm's *Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914*, in E. J. Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Laissez-faire economics was criticized by Thomas Carlyle and Kingsley, and also by Charles Dickens and John Ruskin.

[30] Wee, *Culture*, 4.

would galvanize the radical right in such a way as to claim dominance in British political and cultural thought until the Great War of 1914.[31]

It wasn't the Rebellion, in and of itself, which had such wide ranging implications, but the colonial administration's reaction to these events. The responsibility of the Governor of Jamaica, Edward John Eyre, for the terrible backlash against the Black and Creole population can be seen as an overall change in attitude in the Victorian psyche towards "inferior" or "savage" races that occurred during and after the Indian Rebellion of 1857.[32] The defenders of Edward John Erye included Charles Kingsley, John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, Alfred Tennyson, Charles Dickens, and many leading members of the Anglican Clergy and would constitute the core of radical conservative literary-cultural producers of the nation-imperialist discourse and their unique conception of English identity.

These events, which took place at the periphery of the British Empire, clearly had dramatic effects on Victorian conceptions of race, culture, and national identity. Simultaneously, there were key transformations within the Metropolis itself that also had a significant influence on the development of an alternative modernity, one that directly challenged the dominant British national identity which advocated the middle-class predilection to "industry"—and mercantile values—as the key to Great Britain's survival and growth. By the middle of the nineteenth-century many writers confronted these cultural and societal problems caused by industrialization and urbanization which surfaced in works such as Elisabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854) Benjamin Disraeli's *Two Nations* (1845)

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[31] See Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Colony and Metropole in English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[32] See Catherine Hall, "Imperial Man: Edward Eyre in Australasia and the West Indies, 1833-66," in Bill Schwarz, ed., *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 1996), 130-70.

and Frederick Engel's *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845). Charles Kingsley

questions the validity of individualism and the selfish proponents of liberal economic theory,

which he believed would actually cause the decline of an originally vital Anglo-Saxon race and

culture.[33] Another negative aspect industrial modernity had on British society was the incitement

of class division, which concurrently saw a rise in socialist,[34] anarchist, and working class

political parties culminating in the passing of the Third Reform Act in 1884-1885. This gradual

political process of extending the franchise during the second half of the nineteenth century had

lasting repercussions in British culture and society, especially on how Britons perceived

themselves as a nation and a people. For supporters of a national-imperialist culture, the rise of

working class politics and ascension of middle-class dominance in Victorian and Edwardian

politics was responsible for the national decline of the British Empire.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Victorian conceptions of national and

imperial identity became an unstable political, cultural, and social paradigm due to the

increasingly complex and ambiguous nature of one of its critical components, "masculinity."

Social historian John Tosh contextualizes this gender dissidence through an examination of the

transformation of Victorian notions of subjectivity constituted between the integral sites of the

"domestic sphere," "single-sexed schools," "youth organizations," "work," and "public

associations."[35] In his most recent study, Tosh explores the gendered lives of Victorian males

through conceptions of "manliness" and "masculinity" during the nineteenth century. Victorian

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[33] Wee, *Culture*, 41.

[34] On the topic of British Socialism, see Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism, and the British Left, 1881-1924* (Rochester, NY: Royal Historical Society/Boydell Press, 1998); Keith Laybourn, *Rise of Socialism in Britain, 1881-1951* (Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1997); Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990).

[35] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 2005).

notions of "manliness" were the most clearly articulated indicator of men's gender. Always used in the singular, it "implied that there was a single standard of manhood, which was expressed in certain physical attributes and moral dispositions."[36] It was multifaceted term which coalesced around a man's socio-economic status and religious denomination, all varieties of which claimed exclusive authority. Accordingly, Tosh argues that "manliness was treated essentially as a social attainment in the gift of one's peers, masculinity is an expression of personal authenticity, in which being true to oneself accounts for much more than conforming to the expectations of others."[37]

The various rhetorics of masculinity are all located in the capacity for self-discipline, a charisma that seems to emanate from a strong sense of subjectivity commonly associated with romantic selfhood. This subjectivity is constituted and contested through traditional economic and social norms; hence its recurrent association with mid-Victorian conceptions of social mobility. James Eli Adams argues that "powerful programs of masculine self-fashioning may arouse the pervasive suspicion of hidden designs. That suspicion becomes especially pronounced when regimens of virtuoso masculine discipline assume collective forms, which are frequently denounced as priesthoods or Masonic brotherhoods—social forms always exposed to attack as 'unmanly' because they seem to be hiding something."[38]

In order to comprehend fully the significance of "masculinity" for Britain's sense of its "modern self" it would be negligent to ignore the vast interconnected networks between the

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[36] Ibid., 2.

[37] Ibid.

[38] James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Manhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 14.

Imperial Metropolis, London, and the various colonial outposts, most important for this historical examination, India, in constructing that paradigm. John Tosh proposes that the "imperial project was presented to the public in unequivocally masculine terms, partly with the intention of encouraging young men to pursue their careers overseas as soldiers, administrators, or emigrants at a time when the empire was believed to be under stress."[39] The extent to which this propaganda succeeded was conditioned by how far popular images of the empire resonated with masculine aspirations. This was a critical factor in the 1890s, when the phenomenon of the "new woman" released a great deal of status anxiety on the part of men, particularly in the lower middle and middle classes. Public support for Britain's imperial ambitions often ran counter to the emergence of women's rights, and in many instances appears to have been embraced by men as a means of suppressing gender insecurity.[40]

The primary disruption in Victorian conceptions of hegemonic masculinity at the end of the nineteenth century involved both the articulation of what Britain's termed the "new woman" along with the growing concern for the "effeminate" man. By the 1880s and 1890s, effeminacy had become irrevocably linked with Victorian discourses of degeneracy and deviancy. Alan Sinfield has argued that the conflation between effeminacy and homosexuality was also a reaction to the destabilizing effect that unmanliness posed to normative male identity that was already under scrutiny by Victorian feminists.[41] Nalin Jayasena has argued that the "literature of the fin-de-siecle (and thereafter) is full of examples of the subversive influence of women in the public sphere hitherto dominated by men; the literary culture of this period also reflects the

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[39] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 7.
[40] Ibid.

[41] Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (London: Cassell, 1994).

urgent need to reiterate masculine narratives, such as imperial conquest, that lionize all-male

communities in order to keep effeminacy at bay."[42]

John Tosh views the colonial encounter as being one of the primary constituting forces

behind the construction of English masculinity. As Ashis Nandy has effectively argued,

> The coexistence of multiple models of masculinity begins to wane when members
> of the indigenous intelligentsia internalize the negative valence attached to
> androgyny by colonial discourse. When the indigenous male subscribes to the
> new British notion that effeminacy is a negation of a man's identity, it prompts
> two basic outcomes: on one hand, Indians abandon androgyny and embrace an
> aggressive, militant brand of masculinity to challenge the manly identity assumed
> by Englishmen; on the other hand, Indians reject this colonial revaluation of their
> society and defend the status of androgyny in Hindu Mythology and deploy it as a
> tool in the anti-colonial struggle.[43]

Thus, the colonial stereotype of effeminacy imposed on the indigenous male population

throughout the British Empire invoked a rhetoric that paralleled the crisis in English masculinity

in the British metropolis during the second half of the nineteenth century.[44]

During the late nineteenth century, art photographers became embroiled in the

controversial re-articulation of Victorian notions of the "dandy," a figure whose innate

"effeminacy" became linked to emerging discourses on sexual identity. Thomas Carlyle defined

the dandy as "the grotesque icon of an outworn aristocratic order, a figure of self-absorbed,

parasitic existence" against which Carlyle evokes a heroism founded on superbly selfless

devotion to productive labor—an ideal most famously celebrated as the reign of the "Captains of

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[42] Jayasena, *Contested Masculinities*, 2.

[43] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4.

[44] Jayasena, *Contested Masculinities*, 16.

Industry" in *Past and Present*.[45] Carlyle expands his concept of the dandy by stating that he is "fundamentally a theatrical being, abjectly dependent on the recognition of the audience he professes to disdain."[46] In Charles Baudelaire's work, *The Painter of Modern Life*, the author argues that "dandyism arises in a spirit of 'opposition and revolt' to affirm 'a new kind of aristocracy' anchored in intellectual distinction rather than economic or social status.[47] James Eli Adams argues that the shifting concept of the dandy in many ways was connected with the Victorian preoccupation with defining what encapsulated the true "gentleman." Adams intuitively asks the critical question in this relationship, "If the status of gentleman is not secured by inherited distinctions of family and rank, but is realized instead through behavior, how does one distinguish the 'true' gentleman from the aspirant who is merely 'acting' the part?"[48]

Societal critiques of the questionable masculinity of Victorian art photographers become launching points from which to examine the four historical case studies including George Davison, Alfred Horsley Hinton, Shapoor N. Bhedwar, and Alvin Langdon Coburn. Chapter One, "The 'Effeminate' Photographer: Politics, Gender, and the Question of 'Degeneracy' at the 1890 Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Great Britain" argues that the debate on the aesthetic qualities of George Davison's pinhole landscape photograph, *An Old Farmstead*, became entangled in wider societal discourse on the nature of effeminacy and the Victorian dandy. In this instance it was Davison's own physical body, which was caricatured anonymously in the British photographic press, that exemplified the space where the process of contestation

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[45] Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 21.

[46] Ibid., 22.

[47] Ibid., 23.

[48] Ibid., 53.

and constitution of his masculine identity took place. The nature of Davison's masculinity was also debated openly in photographic press in the gendered language utilized by his primary detractor, Peter Henry Emerson. *An Old Farmstead*, Davison's revolutionary pinhole landscape, became a cultural space where anxieties over issues of national identity and empire emerged. Through his use of "diffusion of focus" Davison critiqued the primitive, masculinist national-imperial culture advocated by Charles Kingsley. According to C. J. W.-L. Wee, "national-imperial discourse, with its atavistic reversion to the past, its valorization of the agrarian values many imperialists were fond of, and its concomitant positing of the imperial frontier as a site for the rebuilding of English character, complicated the relationship of past to present, of the modern to the primitive, and of home to frontier."[49] Public discourse on the true nature of English character manifested during Henry Morton Stanley's book tour promoting *In Darkest Africa: Or the Quest, Rescue and Retreat of Emin Pasha, Governor of Equatoria, Volume 1*.[50] In the fall of 1890 the British public became aware of the barbarous treatment of the African natives by Stanley during the Emin Pasha Relief expedition.

Chapter Two, "The Brotherhood of the Linked Ring: Mysticism, Male Sociability, and the Re-Imagining of British Modernity" considers the "black-balling" incident of Alfred Horsley Hinton during the Royal Photographic Society Exhibition of 1894. As one of the founding members of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring and the editor-in-chief of the Amateur Photographer, Alfred Horsley Hinton had a unique platform from which to advocate pictorial photography to the masses. It was because of Hinton's powerful position within the photographic community that any blemish on his personal character would be incredibly detrimental to art

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[49] Wee, *Culture*, xii.

[50] Henry Morton Stanley, *In Darkest Africa: Or, the Quest, Rescue and Retreat of Emin Pasha, Governor of Equatoria, Volume 1* (Santa Barbara, CA: The Narrative Press, 2001).

photography as a whole and this is why the black-balling incident would call into question

Hinton's status as a Victorian gentleman. The black-balling incident paralleled the trial of Oscar

Wilde in timing and, perhaps, in tone; certainly it must have raised the question of effeminacy

throughout the photographic community. Although there was never any implication of sexual

deviancy implied in the black-balling of A. Horsley Hinton, it does demonstrate the social and

cultural authority these private institutions had on an individual's public character.

Chapter 2 further considers the formation of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, which

embraced a "mystical" philosophy of photography placing itself firmly in the cultural fulcrum of

the Decadent movement as well as that of London's occult and mystical circles in their overall

rejection of scientific positivism. I argue that by avoiding the previous generation's connotation

of "Victorian Spiritualism"[51] with "emotionalism" or "feminine power" art photography held the

potential for an alternative masculine identity in direct opposition to a more dominant

masculinity of "Muscular Christianity."[52] It was in this cultural milieu that art photography, as

articulated by the Linked Ring, represented an "active" masculinity.

In comparison with Davison and Hinton, Shapoor N. Bhedwar is representative of how

conceptualizations of race affected the overall dynamic of contesting the nature of the so called

"effeminate" art photographer. Chapter Three, "Through Parsee Eyes: Gender, the Indian Body

and the Contestation of Colonial Modernity within the Art Photography of Shapoor N. Bhedwar,

1890-1900" argues that Bhedwar's Parsis heritage of hyper-masculine identity complicated

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[51] For an introduction to issues of Gender and Spiritualism, see Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

[52] See Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Donald E. Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); John J. Macaloon, ed., *Muscular Christianity and the Colonial and Post-Colonial World* (London: Routledge, 2007).

detractors' attempts to label him as effeminate. According to T. M. Luhrmann, the Parsis can be seen to have "chosen freely their adoption of British style, education and political orientation. They can be seen to have accepted the colonial ideology of progress and superiority, of Westernization as a means to advancement and of the British as an agent of positive change."[53]

Chapter Three also considers the controversy over Shapoor N. Bhedwar's provocative series of photographs collectively known as *Tyag, or The Renunciation*[54] during the annual Photographic Salon of 1896. This chapter's primary focus is the examination of the connection between Bhedwar's art aesthetic and contemporary debates about the growth of national consciousness by indigenous Indians both in the Imperial Metropolis and throughout British India during the 1890s. The photographs themselves represent what Edward Said termed "sites of resistance," spaces and practices through which this artist challenged the morality and virtue of the British imperial project.[55] Aesthetically, I argue that Bhedwar's *Tyag or Renunciation Series* symbolically represented the emergence of an indigenous Hinduism, one which simultaneously embraced a re-configured masculine Indian body with an increasingly radical political world view of *swaraj*, and therefore represented a growing existential threat to colonial modernity.

Just as Bhedwar's pseudonym in the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, "Gul-o-Bulbul," introduced, through poetic language, the hidden, alternative sexual and masculine identities that

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[53] T. M. Luhrmann, "The Good Parsi: The Postcolonial 'Feminization' of a Colonial Elite," *Man*, New Series 29, no. 2 (Jun., 1994): 334.

[54] The series included eight photographs, *Weary sits the Yogi-Rai*, *Abigail—The Surprise*, *All intent the Palm he reads*, *The Mystic Sign*, *The Soul's Awakening*, *The World Renounced*, *The Parting* and *On the Temple Steps*, all of which were discussed in the photographic periodical press.

[55] Edward Said, *Yeats and Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 69-94.

existed in late Victorian England, it was Alvin Langdon Coburn who embraced the caricature of the Victorian dandy as his public persona during the Photographic Salon of 1906. Chapter Four, "Edwardian Superman: *Le Penseur*, George Bernard Shaw, and the Question of the Masculine Gaze in the Art Photography of Alvin Langdon Coburn, 1900-1914," argues that the performative nature of Coburn's critique of masculine norms emerged through his adopting a Victorian mode of dress for the opening of the Photographic Salon of 1906. The *Standard* and *Sphere* both commented on his "flat-brimmed Quartier Latin tall hat" that of a true "bohemian" in the vein of James Abbot McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). By 1906, the single bohemian and dandy similarly attracted suspicion of sexual deviance, especially after the Wilde trials of 1894-1895. Ellen Moers argues that the dandy became increasingly associated with the aesthetic fringe rather than the ruling aristocracy in the 1890s.[56] This personal performance of the reconstituted Edwardian dandy by Alvin Langdon Coburn reaffirmed the argument of Alan Sinfield and Ed Cohen. Both have argued that the new man of the late nineteenth century represented a complex synthesis, one whose identity was revalued when the effeminate male and the homosexual male came to occupy the same space. The dissidence caused by the revaluation of effeminacy and homosexuality became the primary diagnosis for art photographers in late Victorian and early Edwardian Britain.

This chapter uses the nude image of George Bernard Shaw as *Le Penseur* as a launching point to investigate Alvin Langdon Coburn's broader critique of Edwardian masculinity, physical culture, racial degeneration, and homosexuality in the context of two of his major photographic projects, *London Portfolio* (1909) and *Men of Mark: Pioneers of Modernism* (1913), both of which consisted of photographs taken and exhibited from 1904 to 1907. Sean Brady has argued

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[56] Ellen Moers, *The Dandy: Brummel to Beerbohm* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 314.

that in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain, the existence or extent of sex between men was, with rare exceptions, denied or ignored by the legislature, the national newspapers, and the medical profession and it is in this context I argue that Coburn's *Le Penseur*, *Men of Mark*, and the *London Portfolio* represented unique cultural spaces in which societal anxieties surrounding the nature of masculinity and homosexuality could be argued and contested against the backdrop of established social and gender order in Edwardian Britain. This chapter argues that this complex process permeated Coburn's artistic aesthetic within the photographic medium of portraiture and landscape. Coburn's *Men of Mark* consisted of portraits of the early twentieth century's most notable writers, artists, and philosophers including Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937), Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946), Arthur Symons (1865-1945), and most importantly George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950). All five men were sexually ambivalent figures whose own sexuality reflected the complex spectrum of homosocial relationships in Edwardian Britain. Coburn's *London Portfolio*, on the other hand, illustrated a thoughtful, moody and atmospheric landscape of the Imperial Metropolis. Unlike earlier Victorian depictions of London, which exposed urban decay and human degradation caused by industrialization, Coburn's London represented a more ethereal, sensual experience permeated with Masonic and religious symbolism. Most importantly, I argue that Coburn's *London Portfolio*, when experienced with Arthur Symon's original text, allowed for a homosexual subjectivity, one which visualized within London's public spaces the potential for random sexual encounters.

Art photography in the late Victorian and early Edwardian period, as imagined in the landscape and portrait photographs exhibited by members of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, represented the potential for alternative modernities. This potentiality depended on the

subjective gaze of a British audience influenced as it was by the massive societal transformations occurring at the end of the nineteenth century. The main critique of "modern" life revolved around the "tensions and fissures surrounding the transition between industrial capitalism and finance capitalism, with all the consequences of this transition; mass urbanization, the socio-economic shift from the industrial cities of the north to places in the south like London, fear of degeneration, the political, class, and gender antagonisms created by the newly enfranchised male population, the emergence of new gender and sexual identities, the fear that the ascendance of scientific understanding somehow diminished religious and spiritual understanding of the self in this modern context, the possibilities of emigration to the colonies, the emergence of a new way of thinking and experiencing time, and a new national-imperial culture that was shaped by events on the continent of Africa beginning in the 1880s."[57] According to Saree Makdisi, "This process of transition can be seen as a struggle between what appears as a totalitarian system and range of sometimes localized (and sometimes not) sites and zones and cultures of resistance, beginning though not ending in the early and late romantic periods."[58] *Aesthetic of Soft Focus* broadly analyzes the links between culture, modernity, nationalism, colonial masculinity, sexuality, and notions of degeneration as they critique and destabilize the ideological, political, and social sites of nineteenth-century bourgeois society as well as the radical right conceptualizations of identity encapsulated in a "national-imperialist" vision with a special desire for re-creating an "organic" homeland.

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[57] See Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[58] Ibid., 14.

Chapter 1

The "Effeminate" Photographer: Politics, Gender, and the Question of "Degeneracy" at the 1890 Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Great Britain

During the annual exhibition held from September 29 through November 13, 1890 by the Photographic Society of Great Britain, noted British photographer George Davison entered a pinhole image of an old farmstead in West Mersea, Essex. Originally taken during a weekend excursion to Dedham with the Camera Club on September 7, 1890, this ominous, soft focus vision of an ordinary onion field in rural England not only won a distinguished medal award but also startled the late-Victorian art world. The October 3, 1890 edition of The *Photographic News* went so far as to announce the emergence of a "new school" of art photography, one that challenged pre-existing notions of aesthetics and objectivity. It is difficult to comprehend how a single landscape photograph could cause such a controversy in its presentation that it dominated the photographic discourse in all the major photographic journals throughout the following year. Eventually the debate culminated in what Peter Henry Emerson lamented as "The Death of Naturalistic Photography."

During the height of the controversy the *Photographic News*, in the December 26, 1890 issue, published an editorial entitled *The Year 1890*, in which the author not only questions the idea that a "new school" of art is emerging but also defines those advocates of said art with subtle sarcasm as men who "begin to learn photography after buying a two-guinea set…then…let the hair grow long, dress in a velveteen coat and slouch hat, take pictures out of focus and within two months…go about among one's friends as a member of a new school of

photographic art, ready to do battle to the death for the new standard."[59] This caricature of an

anonymous art photographer with his long hair, velveteen coat, and slouch hat represented the

quintessentially urban figures of the bohemian or dandy, the newly conceptualized urban

working-class types of late Victorian Britain. Both the Victorian bohemian and the dandy lived

outside middle-class domestic arenas (i.e., unmarried men living in small flats and studios

throughout urban London). In this context, both categories were imbued with an "outsider" status

by the dominant middle-class conceptualization of domesticity. By 1895 and the completion of

the Oscar Wilde indecency trials, these same figures became increasingly associated with the

aesthetic fringe[60] symbolizing potential sexually deviant behaviors.[61] This begs the question as to

why *The Photographic News* diverged from the aesthetic qualities of Davison's image to a

debate about the aesthetics of masculinity of the art photographer and his followers.

    This chapter endeavors to answer these intriguing questions by analyzing the controversy

at the Photographic Society of Great Britain Exhibition of 1890 over George Davison's (1855-

1930) *An Old Farmstead* as well as his developing photographic art aesthetic of Impressionism,

which embraced elements of his political philosophy of Fabian Socialism. Nigel Blake and

Francis Frascina have argued that impressionist painters should be viewed as "avant-gardists,"

which they define as those "who [work] on representations of contemporary society by means of

a critical engagement with the codes, conventions and the political assumptions of the

ideologically dominant class."[62] In this respect Davison's Impressionistic aesthetic, through the

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[59] The Photographic News, December 26, 1890, *The Year 1890*, PAGE.

[60] See Moers, *The Dandy*, 314.

[61] For this cultural and societal transformation, see Matt Cooks, *London and The Culture of Homosexuality 1885-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 31-32, 58.

[62] Francis Frascina, Nigel Blake, Briony Fer, Tamar Garb, and Charles Harrison, *Modernity and Modernism French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 127.

use of "diffusion of focus," questions hegemonic notions of British modernity by allowing a

political subjectivity to emerge in the form of Fabian conceptualizations of "land ownership."

Consequently, this chapter examines the connection between Davison's art aesthetic and

contemporary debates about effeminacy, masculinity, race, degeneration, and national and

imperial identity in the late Victorian period. My discussion thereby illuminates how George

Davison's *An Old Farmstead* marked a critical moment in the historical discourse on the nature

of masculinity and race contested and constituted in the physical body of the art photographer.

Concurrently, I examine the semiotic nature of *An Old Farmstead* in its relationship to

discourses on national and imperial identity. W. J. T. Mitchell has asserted that the

> semiotic features of landscape, and the historical narratives they generate, are
> tailor-made for the discourse of imperialism, which conceives itself precisely (and
> simultaneously) as an expansion of landscape understood as an inevitable,
> progressive development in history, and expansion of "culture" and "civilization"
> into a "natural" space in a progress that is itself narrated as "natural." Empires
> move outward in space as a way of moving forward in time; the "prospect" that
> opens up is not just a spatial scene but a projected future of "development" and
> exploitation. And this movement is not confined to the external, foreign fields
> toward which empire directs itself; it is typically accompanied by a renewed
> interest in the re-presentation of the home landscape, the "nature" of the imperial
> center.[63]

If this assertion is accurate then I argue that *An Old Farmstead* represented what Saree Makidisi

defined as a "site or zone" in which anti-modern others simultaneously contested and constituted

British notions of national and imperial belonging.[64]

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[63] W. J. T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 17.

[64] Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism*, 14.

The national and imperial political landscape of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain was dominated by two historical figures: William Booth (1829-1912) and Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904). William Booth argued that the destitute, downtrodden, and unemployed masses in London and Great Britain were suffering from a state of human degeneration not dissimilar from the state of the indigenous populations in Equatorial Africa. Historically, the East End of London in the late nineteenth century has been described as "a dark continent," a great dark region of poverty, misery, squalor, and immorality, in such works as George Sims's *How the Poor Live* (1883) and Andrew Mearns's *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: An Inquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor* (1883). In this context, there was a convergence between London's East End and Central Africa; both represented sites that could potentially corrupt hegemonic norms of Victorian masculinity thoroughly. Booth argued that through Christian social activism embodied in the Salvation Army (1865) societal ills such as alcoholism, poverty, and homelessness could be effectively addressed through the creation of regenerative spaces in the industrial cities, rural farmland, and in the colonial periphery. Henry Morton Stanley, the Welsh explorer of Central Africa and the man who embodied the pinnacle of masculinity for his Victorian audience, became inflamed in the controversy over the nature of his leadership during the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition (1886-1889). As revealed through Stanley's earlier work, *Through the Dark Continent, Volumes 1 and 2* (1878), his private persona was one of violence and rage, which was demonstrated by his treatment of both the Congolese natives and his own entourage in the form of floggings, killings, and slavery. This scandal, with its implications of "primitivism," questioned the heart and soul of the British imperial project, the civilizing mission.

In conclusion, George Davison's landscape photograph marked both a visual departure from contemporary landscape imagery and a radical re-thinking of contemporary notions of self and national and imperial belonging in a moment when anthropological discourse, refracted through William Booth's *Darkest England* and Henry Morton Stanley's narrative of *Darkest Africa*, had seized the public imagination. W. J. T. Mitchell has argued that landscape is a cultural practice that naturalizes and symbolizes constellations of social and political power. I argue instead that George Davison's landscape photograph uses traditional English landscape imagery to critique the most cherished principles of the established social and gender order in late Victorian England, and its hegemonic paradigms of British modernity.

National and Imperial Discourse in the Late Victorian Period

During the mid-nineteenth century there emerged a new cultural interest in the "primitive" and the "rural" as potential elements of regeneration for urban industrialized citizenry of Great Britain. According to C. J. W.-L. Wee, this "complex interaction between English national culture and a nationalistic imperial discourse interested in territorial expansion was shaped by the literal and abstract body project of a masculinized, 'imperial primitivity' attributed to native subjects encountered at the imperial periphery and thought to be lost in England."[65] The primary advocates of this newly conceptualized masculine national and imperial discourse rejected the primary tenets of the Enlightenment, including the ideas of "reason," "rationality," and "progress" along with British political and economic policies of "informal" empire, which embodied the principles of mercantile values (i.e., "free-trade"). Wee argues that "notions of the manly, virile, imperial Englishman, and England as vigorous, organic society

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[65] Wee, *Culture*, xi.

thus arose in the negotiation with, rather than negation of, the positive views and experiences of 'primitive' territories as an attempt to resist the apparently totalizing progress of Enlightenment 'reason,' even while being implicated in it."[66]

This complex process of negotiation between the Imperial Metropolis and the periphery represented England as modern, industrialized, metropolitan, and progressively rational and the imperial periphery as primitive, rural or frontier-like, and irrational. Wee suggests that valorizing the agrarian values many imperialists were fond of, and the concomitant positing of the imperial frontier as a site for rebuilding English Character, ultimately disrupted the relationship of past to present, of modern to primitive, and of home to frontier.[67] Historically it was literary figures such as Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) and Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) who supported organic culture with its construction and inclusion of what retrospectively can be called the common theme of a "primitive" masculinity. Both Victorian writers also re-imagined England as a land of rugged warriors living amid an agrarian society, supported by the general community and removed from any urban setting. This process or re-imagining England may be seen as an emerging counter-modernity to the hegemonic narrative of Industrial modernization.

By seeking the primitive, "national-imperial" discourse engaged in the radical reassessment of a national culture, English national culture evolved during the establishment of English language and literature as a discipline in English universities and schools. In fact it is critical to remember that the introduction of English as a discipline comes into its own during the imperial phase of English life, developing first as a subject in the Indian School curriculum through the 1835 English Education Act of Governor-General William Bentinck as an attempt to

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[66] Ibid., xii.

[67] Ibid.

strengthen English cultural hegemony for the purpose of exercising imperial control. Therefore the complex process of constituting and contesting notions of "Englishness" precedes the late-Victorian New Imperialism.[68] Finally, popular notions of an anti-modern England with its narrative of England as a green and pleasant land were not ideas to which national imperialists had sole proprietary rights: by the Edwardian period they had been transformed into the collective national identity of its citizens. Wee argues that "custom, tradition and character are protean concepts quite as powerful in the way they shape notions of culture and the national self within as without the imperial homeland; and they take on a strange life of their own in none other than the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution."[69]

By the 1850s, the writings of Charles Kingsley had ushered in an alternative norm of Victorian manhood, one that embraced the flexible creed of collective masculine identity which he called "Christian Manliness," a strenuous discipline that harkened back to aristocratic norms of manhood. According to Wee, Christian Manliness was "the combination of the 'physical' with the 'spiritual' [and] its creed expelled all that is effeminate, un-English, and excessively intellectual—the heroic and even brutal qualities needed to build empire."[70] In order to achieve and maintain Britain's preeminence on the global stage it was necessary to harness a more "primitive masculinity," one that embraced a counter-modernity of rural, rugged warriors living in an agrarian society. In an increasingly dangerous world, Kingsley's primitive masculinity validated the use of violence in maintaining Britain's control over its ever expanding colonies. This fact aggravated societal tensions surrounding the use of violence and the humane methods

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[68] Ibid., 7.

[69] Ibid., 21.

[70] Ibid., 8.

of British expansion symbolized by the memory of David Livingstone and his appeal for

Christianity and commerce.[71] The antagonism of these two positions was made very clear in a

number of public controversies, notably the sharply divided reactions to Henry Morton Stanley's

violent methods of African exploration.[72] Kingsley saw in this civilization, based on

"enlightenment" values, a Victorian Man who was not only restless, unhealthy, and weak, but

one who actively sought change in the national public structure. In this context, I argue the series

of landscape photographs, including *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* (1886), *Idylls of

the Norfolk Broads* (1887), *The Complete Angler* (1888), and *Pictures from East Anglian Life*

(1890) by Peter Henry Emerson (1856-1936) represented a Kingsleyan aesthetic, one that

illustrated the dynamic between the rural and the primitive.

P. H. Emerson, photographer and writer, was born on May 3, 1856 in Casa Grande, La

Palma, Cuba, the first of three children of Henry Ezekiel Emerson and his wife Jane. Both

parents were of English extraction and he was related to the famous American writer Ralph

Waldo Emerson. After a short time at King's College, London in 1874, he opted for a career in

medicine and studied at Clare College, Cambridge (1874–1879), where his athletic skills in

football and rowing were allied to his interests in science.[73]In his main theoretic treatise,

Naturalistic Photography, Emerson argued that photography should be regarded as a medium in

its own right and as such could be used for artistic expression. Secondly, Emerson articulated the

idea that both Realism, "the sharp photograph wherein sentiment, illusion and decoration are

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[71] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 201.

[72] See Stanley, *In Darkest Africa, Volumes 1 and 2* for a complete description of the Expedition, as well as *Imperial Footprints: Henry Morton Stanley's African Journeys* by James L. Newman (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006)) for British responses to the controversies over Stanley's behavior during the Expedition.

[73] J. Havard Thomas, "Peter Henry Emerson (1856-1936)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ps2.villanova.edu/view/article/38592.

disregarded; merely a register of bald facts mathematically true" and Naturalism, "the more or

less correct reflection of nature, wherein truth of sentiment, illusion of truth (so far as possible)

and decoration are of first importance," were the sole provinces of photography.[74] Emerson

advocated four primary tenets within his personal aesthetic, including truth to nature, spontaneity

of approach, careful selection of camera position, and viewpoint concluding with pure

photographic qualities throughout the picture. Emerson had found himself in opposition to the

other artistic giant within the photographic community, Henry Peach Robinson, when it came to

the concept of truth to nature. For Emerson, Robinson's definition of "truth to nature" contained

both real and artificial elements within its composition and therefore was antithetical.

Accordingly, for the true photographer, taking a photograph must be an unconscious endeavor

without the application of standardized rules or without retouching in all its forms because "it

destroys texture and tone and therefore the truth of the picture."[75] Emerson's naturalistic

aesthetic advocated that truth is objective, not subjective, and it was the art photographer's

special character and vision which allowed him to repudiate radical subjectivity and works of

imagination.[76] In his construction of his "naturalistic" aesthetic, Emerson also embraced a

complex and paradoxical mosaic of scientific theories, including physiology, positivism,

evolution, psychology, and degeneration, not art theory. This allowed for a synthesis between the

lens of a camera and the retina in the human eye, thereby solidifying the central tenet of

photographic discourse in the late nineteenth century, that the photographic image captures an

objective, knowable reality. Emerson reasoned, "art was as caught up as biology in the scientific

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[74] Both terms are defined in a paper read at the Society of Arts, London, March 26, 1889.

[75] Margaret Harker, *The Linked Ring: The Secession Movement in Photography in Britain, 1892-1910* (London: Heinemann, 1979), 29-30.

[76] Marien, *Photography and its Critics*, 146.

revolution, and photography could situate itself at the cutting edge of human knowledge."[77]

However, he ultimately concluded that "the human eye does not see nature exactly as she is, but sees instead a number of signs which represent nature, signs which the eye grows accustomed to and which from habit we call nature herself."[78] Emerson's utilization of scientific knowledge and physiology was superficial, fragmented, and contradictory, demonstrating his unwavering trust in the latest scientifically derived notions, as well as his reluctance to interrelate his concepts into a coherent aesthetic theory.[79]

In this description of Emerson's artistic aesthetic, Marien neglects to examine the potentiality of Kingsleyan primitivism and the exaltation of rural England as interconnected sites of regeneration. A careful analysis of several images from Emerson's *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* (1886) and *Pictures from East Anglian Life* (1890) reveals this potential nicely. In plate seven[80] of *East Anglian Life* there are three masculine figures, farmers most likely, about to engage in the process of harvesting the fields. Their clothes and farming instruments as well as their placement in the foreground suggest a quiet dignity of the rural farming communities of East Anglia. I also argue that these figures embody the Kingsleyan concept of rural primitivism, which is absent in the urban bourgeois citizens of Britain. In plate twenty-one[81] of *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, there is a solitary figure in a row boat, transporting some type

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[77] Ibid., 147.

[78] Ibid., 150.

[79] Ibid.

[80] See Plate 21 from *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, 1886, by Peter Henry Emerson and Thomas Frederick Goodall, Platinum print, 5 7/16 x 10 15/16 in., EX.2007.2.65, The Royal Photographic Society Collection at the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, Bradford, England.

[81] See Plate 7 from *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, 1890, by Peter Henry Emerson, Photogravure, 9 1/4 x 9 5/8 in., EX.2007.2.78, The Royal Photographic Society Collection at the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, Bradford, England.

of foodstuff across a body of water. These photographic images of rural people engaged in

physical labor were a common theme in Emerson's photographic work. His use of differential

focusing is a vital component of his aesthetic philosophy. Differential focusing is defined as

focusing such that the "principal object of a photographic image must be sharp, or nearly sharp,

and the rest of the image out of focus in varying degrees."[82] H. P. Robinson rightly points out the

physiological inaccuracy within Emerson's Naturalistic School that the human eye was a fixed

instrument, it could see only part of a scene in focus at once, and it could at the same time see the

rest of the scene out of focus.[83] This fact notwithstanding, differential focusing is critical in

comprehending the aesthetic philosophies of both George Davison and Peter Henry Emerson.

Rather than allow a subjective gaze by utilizing Davison's diffusion of focus, Emerson

consciously directs the viewer's gaze to the primary site of focus, which is predominantly the

residents of rural England.

Styles of Victorian Masculinity in the Late Nineteenth Century

During the first half of the nineteenth century discourses on Victorian patriarchy

questioned the masculinity of intellectual labor. In this context, James Eli Adams argued that

"male Victorian writers represent intellectual vocations as affirmations of masculine identity.

Middle-class male authors—such as Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Alfred, Lord Tennyson

(1809-1892), Thomas Arnold (1795-1842), John Henry Newman (1801-1890), Charles Dickens

(1812-1870), Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), Walter Pater (1839-1894) and Oscar Wilde (1854-

1900)—depict their own intellectual labors in markedly varied rhetorics, but those rhetorics are

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[82] For a full description of diffusion of focus and differential focus, see H. P. Robinson, "The Present State of the Focus Question," *The Amateur Photographer*, October 10, 1890, 258.

[83] See Robinson, "The Present State of the Focus Question," 258.

persistently related in their appeal to a small number of models of masculine identity: the gentleman, the prophet, the dandy, the priest, and the soldier."[84] All five theoretical categories represent an ascetic regime, an elaborately articulated program of self-discipline. Adams argues that it was this "self-discipline as a distinctly masculine attribute which regulated more than erotic desire; they are many-faceted constructions of identity and social authority that inevitably situate the private self in relation to an imagined audience."[85] Rather than focusing on discourses of sexuality, Adams prefers to investigate the "complexities and internal tension of gender— gender understood as a system of social authority frequently articulated across apparent divides of normative and transgressive sexualities."[86] Nineteenth century discourses of gender included the authority to designate a man or an idea "effeminant," a term which had no connotations of deviant sexuality. The articulation of "effeminacy" preceded late nineteenth century taxonomies of Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) and Max Nordau's (1849-1923) *Degeneration* (1892), as well as medico-legal discourses conceptualized after the 1850s.[87] In this context, the energetic self-discipline that distinguished manly "character" offered not only economic utility but also a claim to new forms of status and privilege within an increasingly secular and industrialized society. At the same time, however, reconfigurations of masculinity frequently compensated for the loss of traditional, more assured forms of masculine identity and authority; they endeavored to restore the prerogatives of a "manhood"—as distinct from mere "maleness"—that had been severely eroded by the pressures of modernity.[88]

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[84] Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 2.

[85] Ibid., 2.

[86] Ibid., 4.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., 5.

This process of legitimation of masculinity by the middle classes increasingly self-identified with the category of the gentleman—"a norm that was the subject of protracted contention throughout Victorian culture, because the concept served so effectively to regulate social mobility and its attendant privileges."[89] The gentleman was thereby rendered compatible with a masculinity understood as a strenuous psychic regime, which could be affirmed and embodied as a charismatic self-mastery.[90]

By the early Victorian period, discourses of political economy and self-discipline were increasingly claimed as the special province and distinguishing attribute of middle-class men, as both manhood and masculine labor were constructed in increasingly agonistic forms.[91] In Victorian tributes to self-discipline, men take over the work of both accumulation and self-regulation. Because self-discipline perplexes the binaries of active and passive, of self-assertion and self-denial, tributes to it frequently confound traditional assignments of gender. This is particularly marked in appeals to the religious paradigm of Victorian self-regulation.[92] Over the course of the century, however, commentators increasingly distinguished between a masculine self-discipline, which they represented as an ongoing regime of aggressive self-mastery, and a feminine self-denial, which they represented as a spontaneous and essentially static surrender of the will to external authority.[93]

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[89] Ibid., 6.

[90] Ibid., 7.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 8.

[93] Ibid., 9.

According to Adams, "regimens of manhood embody an active self-mastery rather than a mere capitulation to circumstance, they reproduce within masculinity a paradox central to what Weber calls inner-worldly asceticism."[94] This internal paradox is reconstituted in numerous secular forms within the classical sociological tradition—perhaps most interestingly in Hegel's construction of the master-slave paradox, which has a profound bearing on the anxious self-fashioning of Victorian masculinities. Encapsulated in the authority of Evangelical faith and romantic subjectivity, early and mid-Victorian norms of manhood construct an ideal of essential selfhood that repudiates self-consciousness as a mark of theatricality. Within the cultural construct of the dandy, for example, a theatricality readily accommodated in earlier constructions of aristocratic manhood is disavowed as the sign of a socially mediate identity, which betrays both religious integrity and the social autonomy fundamental to manhood. But a manhood that ostensibly transcends self-interest and the gratifications of social regard must nonetheless be proved in the theater of the world. Adams argues that "like the Hegelian master, the Victorian Gentleman—in common with the Carlylean hero, the Tractarian priest, and the Tennysonian poet—invariably depends on forms of recognition that he professes to disdain, and he is thus implicated in the logic of the dandy."[95]

The centrality of theatricality in all masculine self-fashioning, which inevitably makes appeal to an audience, real or imagined, is the primary reason why Adams chooses to utilize "styles" of masculinity in order to emphasize the interrelatedness of literary and social logics in the construction of masculine identity. Adams conceptualizes masculinity as a rhetorical transaction: one acknowledges not only the embeddedness of gender in discursive structures, but

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[94] Ibid., 10.

[95] Ibid., 10.

also the very personal urgencies informing the human engagements that shape gendered identity.[96]

Emerson's use of certain gendered language would have resonated with a Victorian public aware of the ever increasing tension over processes of masculine self-fashioning. Emerson argued that, "his vanity flattered by a couple of portraits published in the photographic press—he begins to think himself someone, and poses in public as an authority"[97] Implied in this statement is the accusation that Davison lacked self-discipline by openly embracing theatricality—the mediated, dandyistic identity. Emerson's own middle-class profession as a doctor legitimated his own masculinity by identifying it with that of the gentleman.[98] In this context, I argue that the public discourse over the aesthetic qualities of *An Old Farmstead* transformed into open negotiation of masculine self-fashioning between the Victorian conceptualizations of the Gentleman and the Dandy.

Colonial Masculinity and the Question of Henry Morton Stanley

According to John Tosh, Empire was a man's business in two senses: "its acquisition and control depended disproportionately on the energy and ruthlessness of men; and its place in the popular imagination was mediated through literary and visual images which consistently emphasized positive male attributes."[99] During the late nineteenth century it was the Victorian explorer, the one who embodied the personal traits of practicality, resourcefulness, and self-

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[96] Ibid., 11.

[97] Letters to the Editor: "Mr. Davison's Misrepresentations (February 14, 1891)," *The Amateur Photographer*, February 20, 1891, 127-28.

[98] Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 6.

[99] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 193.

reliance, who was responsible for maintaining the British imperial project. This relationship of gender and imperialism can be articulated in two ways:

> Firstly, a heightened awareness of opportunities and threats overseas induced a harsher definition of masculinity at home; if the empire was in danger, men must be produced who were tough, realistic, un-squeamish and stoical. A sense of crisis overseas prompted efforts to increase the appeal of imperial careers in the eyes of the young, especially by recasting the approved attributes of manliness. Secondly, by locating the primary sense of crisis, not in the empire, but in the pattern of gender relations within Britain itself. According to this perspective, enthusiasm for the empire at the end of the century was a symptom of masculine insecurity within Britain. Anxieties which had their root at home could be displaced onto the empire as a site of unqualified masculinity, and both career choices and ideological loyalties were influenced as a result.[100]

John Tosh argues instead that both of these dynamics were working in tandem during the late Victorian period—"that pessimistic appraisals of masculinity and of the empire played off each other in mutually reinforcing ways which powerfully conditioned the popular response to empire."[101] This dynamic of masculine constitution was further complicated by the nature of homosocial intimacy experienced throughout empire.

Robert Aldrich examines the connections between male homosexuality and European imperialism through the lives and careers of selected figures, primarily in the British and French empires in the hundred years after the mid-nineteenth century. By looking at homosexual aspects of imperial and colonial history, and at imperial and colonial aspects of the history of homosexuality, it suggests that sexual ambivalence and the desire of certain men for emotional and physical union with male partners produced a direct and identifiable influence on their public

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., 194.

lives, whether in political actions, philosophical beliefs, or artistic and literary creations. Aldrich

also illustrates the variety of homosexual relationships in colonial contexts, from literary

appreciations of male bodies in the context of Greek Mythological imagery to hedonistic

representations of pornography, from stories of love to cases of rape, from long-lasting and

heart-felt romances to promiscuity and prostitution.[102]

The colonies represented essential sites in which multiple potentialities of

homoeroticism, homosociality, and homosexuality could be experienced along with a variety of

perspectives and experiences by which men expressed attraction to other men or male youths.

The nature and scope of these relationships between Europeans and colonial "others" varied in

scope from casual sexual experiences to long-term romantic relationships. Others enjoyed the

homosociality of predominantly male expeditions, military barracks, trading outposts, and

missionary stations. Aldrich argues that the gendered nature of expansion, in which men

monopolized many imperial activities, and where manly virtues were championed, created

situations congenial to intimate male bonding. This, coupled with a fundament demographic

imbalance in the sex ratio between European men and women and the limited range of sexual

partners in some outposts, encouraged situational homosexuality. The world outside Europe also

provided ample material for portrayal of exotic men in literature and art.[103]

Critical to Aldrich's nuanced analysis is his clarification that homosexual proclivities do

not necessarily imply sexual intercourse with another male. There were numerous obstacles

inhibiting physical expression of male sexual desire, including psychological repression,

religious views or beliefs, fear of disease, lack of reciprocated affections or opportunities,

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[102] Robert Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (London: Routledge, 2003), 2.

[103] Ibid., 3.

pressures from the police, religious officials, and medical authorities (and punishments from the police, religious officials, and medical authorities for contravening accepted mores), and distance from or absence of a beloved. In the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods, when many Europeans considered sexual continence a virtue, lack of physical relations should not be surprising. However sexual continence coexisted along a homosocial spectrum of male relationships which included homosexuality, intimate friendship, male bounding, and paternalistic or avuncular sentiments, were extremely porous, and mate-ship could and did veer off into sexual intimacy.[104]

By the late Victorian period, it was commonly assumed amongst the wider European population that homosexuality as well as numerous other acts of sexual deviancy permeated the non-European world. Aldrich argues that in the constant renegotiation between perception and reality imperial possessions represented a potential site for homosexuality to emerge. Homosexual men fleeing legal persecution in Britain and Europe were welcomed in the colonies as long as their sexual discretion remained intact. According to Aldrich, itinerancy has remained a prime trait of modern homosexuals, migrating from countryside to city, leaving the provinces for fin-de-siècle Paris or Weimar Berlin, journeying to Capri, Taormina, and other mythic Mediterranean sites. Colonies provided further destinations, at a time when imperial propagandists, popular writers, and newly established travel agencies promoted overseas journeys, while the colonial administration, the military, and private businesses offered jobs to those willing to take their chances abroad.[105]

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[104] Ibid.

[105] See James Buzard, *European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

In the context of this study it is critical to examine Aldrich's claims that Henry Morton Stanley sublimated his homosexual emotional desires in the only novel he wrote, an exotic homosexual romance. As has been stated repeatedly throughout this dissertation, no explorer was so famous in the late nineteenth century as Stanley, the man who "found" Dr. David Livingstone, helped carve out an empire for the King Leopold II, won a knighthood from Queen Victoria, and served in parliament; his accounts of expeditions became instant best-sellers, and for thirty years he was a worldwide celebrity.[106] Stanley charted his exploration in diaries and journals, and wrote highly descriptive books—*How I Found Livingstone*, *Through the Dark Continent*, and *In Darkest Africa*—which brought home the "darkest continent" for an eager Victorian audience.[107]

One book that British historians fail to account for is the novel, *My Kalulu: Prince, King and Slave*, sub-titled *A Story of Central Africa*, published in 1873. Stanley wrote it after his return from finding Livingstone, partly during a lecture tour in the United States, where he was accompanied by a young African whose name, Kalulu, Stanley gave to his novel.[108] Stanley's homoerotic narrative begins with introducing Selim, a 15 year old Zanzibari "Arab," "whose appearance at once challenged attention from his frank, ingenious, honest face, his clear complexion, his beautiful eyes, and the promise which his well-formed graceful figure gave of a perfect manhood in the future."[109] Stanley's descriptions of male characters linger on their physical beauty, though he carefully points out that both Selim and Kalulu are handsomer than

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[106] Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, 36.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

many Arabs and Africans.[110] Such literary descriptions embody typical Victorian conceptions of race; however Stanley endows his heroic characters with strength of both body and character.[111]

According to Aldrich, "reference to public school mate-ship and its subliminal sexual tension is blatant, and the allusion to classical couples taken as models of homosexual partnerships is even more patent. My Kalulu, an edifying tale for Victorian boys, may be read as an idealized homosexual love story in an exotic setting, filled with recognizable classical and biblical allusions, and complete with a 'they lived happily ever after' conclusion."[112] Perhaps it represented the ideal romance that Stanley never found in his own life. Unfortunately, this hypothesis does not reflect the extensive archival material from Stanley's own writings, which gives little hint of the romantic and sexualized nature of the novel. Though transformed in the novel, Kalulu and Selim were real figures from Stanley's African trips. Selim was one of Stanley's bearers or interpreters, a sturdy-looking fellow he recruited in Zanzibar. Stanley identified Kalulu in the preface to his novel as the boy who accompanied him from Central Africa to England, adding that some features in his fictional character derived from a chieftain whose exploits were related by a guide. The fictional Kalulu is significantly older than the real one, a strapping adolescent, almost an adult.[113]

For Frank McLynn, "Stanley never lost his shame at being an illegitimate child and this led to his later notorious difficulty in coming to terms with sexuality. It is probable that he was sexually assaulted, or raped, by the headmaster in the workhouse where he spent part of his

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[110] Ibid. 39.
[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid., 41.
[113] Ibid.

childhood [St. Asaph's]."[114] This sexual ambivalence was demonstrated by the fact that Stanley never got on with women, and even disliked them.[115] The experience at the workhouse may also have made Stanley view homosexual physical relations with horror, but did not daunt his enthusiasm for young companions.[116] In this context, McLynn argues that Stanley's relationships with adolescent boys do not conclusively prove that Stanley was homosexually inclined.

He was uncomfortable with matters sexual, never wrote about sex, and seems to have felt horror at physical relations. Stanley had three broken engagements to women, in situations (McLynn argues) where he would not go through with the marriages. He finally wed only late in life and never fathered children. Unpleasant experiences at St. Asaph's and witnessing a companion's rape in Turkey, as well as the strict Protestant sermons he heard as a youth, also made him uneasy with sexual contact between men.[117]Stanley's sexual ambivalence throughout his years of African exploration further complicates British notions of masculinity. Although Stanley was in a companionate marriage, he continued to foster intimate non-sexual relationships with younger males, both European and indigenous. This coupled with his consistent violent behavior during his numerous African expeditions threatened the very notion of Britain's civilizing mission.

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[114] Fred McLynn, *Stanley: The Making of an African Explorer* (Lanham, MD: Cooper Square Press, 2001), 205.

[115] Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, 44.

[116] Ibid., 45.

[117] Ibid..

George Davison's Introduction to the Photographic Art World 1886-1890

George Davison (1855–1930), born in Kirkley, Suffolk, on September 19, 1855, was recognized at an early age as a gifted student at the secondary school of St. John's, Lowestoft. Thereafter he continued his studies at evening classes, passing the second-division civil service examination for boy clerk before the age of twenty. In 1874, Davison worked at the Exchequer and Audit Office in Somerset House, living in north London. By 1883, he was married to Susannah Louis Potter at Finsbury Chapel in the City of London on June 2, 1883. In 1884, a son, Ronald, was born and in 1889 a daughter, Ruby. Davison had taken up photography around 1885, becoming the honorary secretary of the Camera Club in 1886, an elite photographic institution located in London. In subsequent years he was elected to the executive council of the Photographic Society of Great Britain in 1886 and received a testimonial in 1887 for the quality of his work.[118] He had been constantly experimenting with chemical and optical methods to produce the softening of detail in the photograph, which he saw as the means of creating the desired impressionistic effect. In the Photographic Society of Great Britain's 1888 exhibition he exhibited a picture taken with a pinhole instead of a lens.

> From time to time such pictures have been produced as curiosities, but it is only of late that the suggestion has been made that such a method is practically available. The picture in question was taken on a fairly bright day with an exposure of a quarter of an hour, the size of the hole being a fiftieth of an inch. It is about ten inches by eight in size, and the plate was placed at about twelve inches distance from the hole. An ordinary exposure with a lens might have been about two seconds, so that with the small amount of light admitted [extra] exposure is required.[119]

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[118] Colin Osman, "Davison, George (1855–1930)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58917.

[119] "Photographic Exhibition of Great Britain Notice," *British Journal of Photography*, October 5, 1888, PAGE.

This exhibition of a pinhole landscape in 1888 is interesting on several levels. Most importantly, the photographic community's general reaction to the pinhole landscape photograph was one of curious novelty. It caused no great disruption or controversy as *The Old Farmstead* did two years later. This implies that it wasn't so much the way the photograph was taken but the historical context that elicited such a response.

The turning point in Davison's professional life came in 1889 when George Eastman appointed him a director of the British branch of the Eastman Photographic Materials Company. In 1897 he became a full-time assistant manager, in 1899 he was appointed deputy managing director, and then the following year took over as managing director. The initial salary of £1000 was modest, but Davison took full advantage of share options, becoming the second largest shareholder in Kodak (as the company became) after Eastman himself. By the time Eastman asked him to resign in 1912 due to his advocacy of anarchist communism, Davison was a millionaire, and he used his wealth to promote his socialist political agenda.[120]

"Educate, Agitate, Organize": George Davison and the Politics of Aesthetics

During the final years of Davison's time as a clerk in the Exchequer and Audit Office in Somerset House (1874-1889) he was exposed to the ideas of the Fellowship of the New Life (1883-1898) which advocated clean simplified living and whose main influences were Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). The Fellowship of the New Life was also concerned with the spiritual, ethical, and social reform of British society and it was this secondary priority which led to the formation of the political splinter group the Fabian Society (1884). The Fabian Society advocated political and social reform through Socialist

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[120] Osman, "Davison, George (1855–1930)."

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policies and consisted of mostly civil servants or clerks in private employ. The methods of

agitations congenial to them were compatible with their occupations. According to Edward R.

Pease, the *Fabian Tract No. 2: A Manifesto*, published in 1884, describes the essential political

tenets of the group:

I. That a life interest in the Land and Capital of the nation is the birthright of every individual born within its confines and that access to this birthright should not depend upon the will of any private person other than the person seeking it.
II. That the most striking result of our present system of farming out the national Land and Capital to private persons has been the division of Society into hostile classes, with large appetites and no dinners at one extreme and large dinners and no appetites at the other.
III. That the practice of entrusting the Land of the nation to private persons in the hope that they will make the best of it has been discredited by the consistency with which they have made the worst of it; and that Nationalization of the Land in some form is a public duty.
IV. That the pretensions of Capitalism to encourage invention and to distribute in benefits in the fairest way attainable, have been discredited by the experience of the nineteenth century.
V. That men no longer need special political privileges to protect them against Women, and that the sexes should henceforth enjoy equal political rights.[121]

This political philosophy strikes at the heart of bourgeois modernity with its declaration that the

nature of capitalism is to create hostile classes and that it ultimately fails to distribute wealth in

an equitable manner. Its advocacy for the nationalization of all land in Great Britain as well as

the equality of the sexes would have proven the most revolutionary against the middle-class

ideology of private property and domesticity. In 1885 George Bernard Shaw voiced his strong

objection to the peasant agriculture of his native land, and he submitted to the Society a

characteristic leaflet addressed to provident landlords and capitalists, a suggestion and a

warning.[122] It says, "having in view the advance of Socialism and the threatened subversion of

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[121] Edward R. Pease, *History of the Fabian Society: The Origins of English Socialism* (New York: Red and Black, 1916), 28.

[122] Ibid., 33.

the powers hitherto exercised by private proprietors of the national land and capital ventures plainly to warn all such proprietors that the establishment of Socialism in England means nothing less thatn the compulsion of all members of the upper class, without regard to sex or condition, to work for their own living."[123] The tract, which is a very brief one, goes on to recommend the proprietary classes to "support all undertakings having for their object the parceling out of waste or inferior lands amongst the laboring class" for sundry plausible reasons.[124] George Bernard Shaw was also responsible for creating the political slogan, "educate, agitate, organize" and through this mantra a "tremendous smash-up of existing society," to be succeeded by complete Socialism.[125] In all this revolutionary language one must remain cognizant of the fact that Fabians themselves understood that actual political revolution was unlikely to take place in Great Britain. This reality guided the Fabian Society to form the Independent Labour Party in order to advocate for socialist policies within the existing parliamentary system and to distance the group from the more violent and radical anarchists and Marxists. It is interesting to see George Davison's developing political philosophy after his initiation into socialist politics in the late Victorian period. Davison's strong social conscience developed into a passionate enthusiasm for the anarchist movement. His political activities came to the attention of his former employers in 1912. The American managing director of Kodak Limited, W. S. Gifford, wrote on May 9, 1912 to George Eastman that he had read a copy of a magazine published by George Davison called *The Anarchist* (which became defunct within a year) in Glasgow, Scotland dedicated to

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[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., 34.

educating the public about anarchist doctrines.[126] George Davison responded to this initial

correspondence with this insightful reply,

> I am "interested in *The Anarchist*, as in everything which is concerned with the philosophy of 'anarchism,' or, rather, anarchistic communism." Everyman of ordinary intelligence who closely studies the conditions of society & the various social theories…must be "interested" in it. You yourself would be…I am "interested" similarly in the genuine original Christian philosophy which is three parts anarchistic communism & in your own Ralph Waldo Emerson's work…it is only the general stupid confusion & ignorance that makes it necessary for me to add that I would object to acts of personal violence to secure any end. That is no essential part of any anarchism…Intellectual bombs are good enough for any movement.[127]

By the end of the Edwardian period, George Davison had truly incorporated the Shavian slogan

of "educate, agitate, organize" into his personal world view. He espoused the early teachings of

the Fellowship of the New Life in his reference to Ralph Waldo Emerson and his initial

advocacy of Fabian Socialism had grown to include the more radical anarchist communist

ideology, which advocated for the complete abolition of the state, markets, money, private

property, and capitalism in favor of common ownership of the means of production and direct

democracy. Davison also aided several socialist projects, including the "study centre at the White

House, Ammanford, south Wales; the Central Labour College in London, a breakaway from

Ruskin College, Oxford; and the famed Chopwell Communist Club in co. Durham (which was

Labour rather than Marxist). He allegedly handed out leaflets at the meetings of George

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[126] Brian Coe, "George Davison: Impressionist and Anarchist," in Weaver, *British Photography in the Nineteenth Century*, 237.

[127] Ibid.

Ballard's Workers' Freedom Group, and at one such assembly met the great revolutionary Peter Kropotkin."[128]

Controversy at the Photographic Society of Great Britain's Exhibition of 1890

According to the *Photographic News*, the first notice of the Exhibition discusses how No. 55, *An Old Farmstead*, by Mr. George Davison, demonstrated the merits of the "New School" with its award of a medal. It stated, "there is distinct evidence of a new school of art photography in the present Exhibition, and yet it is not new save in this respect, that the peculiarities in which the late Mrs. Cameron won fame in portraits have been transferred to landscape, plus far greater manipulatory and technical skill."[129] The main judges of the Exhibition were Captain Abney, Valentine Blanchard, William England, Joseph Gale, Henry Moore, and H. P. Robinson, all photographers with long and distinguished reputations within the greater photographic community. It describes the effect of this picture as being "exceedingly pleasing to the eye, and if it be that the quality of a photograph is that it should look as unlike a photograph as possible, then Mr. Davison has succeeded admirably."[130] The composition of *An Old Farmstead* is described as "well balanced, the light and shade are arranged on what are recognized to be art principles; but the defect—if it be a defect—is that it does not suggest nature."[131]

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[128] Osman, "Davison, George (1855–1930)."

[129] "*Wide-Angle*, The Photographic Society's Exhibition," *The Photographic News*, October 3, 1890, 759.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid.

Figure 1: "An Old Farmstead" or "The Onion Field"

Source: Thirty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Great Britain, Catalogue No. (55), An Old Farmstead, re-titled, The Onion Field, 1890 by George Davison (1854-1930) Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

What made Davison's photograph so unusual was not only the method in which it was created, through a pinhole device (no lens) which produced the diffusion of focus effect, but also the way it was displayed within the exhibit. In the article, *Frames and Mounts at Pall Mall*, the writer clearly notes the unique way in which the photograph is exhibited.

> Taking the prize medal exhibits in catalogue order, the first is "An Old Farmstead" (55) by George Davison This has no mount at all in the ordinary acceptance of the word, but has, instead, a broad receding flat under the glass, so that the picture is perhaps half an inch behind the latter. The flat and glass are enclosed in a plain but bold gilt moulding of considerable width; the tone of the print is warm, its light and shade subdued and massive, and details merely suggested.[132]

The significance of not utilizing a frame transcends the roughly forty years of exhibition protocol and etiquette,[133] metaphorically questioning the very purpose of physical borders, disciplining nature, whether that be the self-discipline of the Victorian "dandy" or the territorial mastery of the British Empire. Both sites are constantly undergoing a process of configuration and reconfiguration. C. J. W.-L. Wee argues that "there is a fluidity to the boundaries marking 'home' from 'imperial outpost'."[134] In this context I would argue that this fluidity disrupted the semiotic narrative within landscape imagery by threatening both bourgeois capitalist modernity and Kingsleyan "national-imperial" discourse. Davison's landscape engages with several key concepts within Fabian Socialist political theory, namely the principle of sexual equality, which disrupts Victorian notions of domesticity, along with the policy of land nationalization, thereby disrupting the most sacred principle of capitalist modernity, private property rights, and finally

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[132] "Frames and Mounts at Pall Mall," *The Amateur Photographer*, October 3, 1890, 235.

[133] Protocols for exhibiting photographs date back to the Great Exhibition of 1851.

[134] Wee, *Culture*, 4.

the principle of social equality, which disrupts socio-economic hierarchies within Victorian

Britain. As an out of focus image of rural England, Davison's landscape disrupts the primary

tenets of Kingsleyan discourse, mainly the regenerative nature of the countryside. According to

Russ Young, Davison's main attraction to pinhole photography was that it, "sprang naturally

from his Fabian/Anarchist politics—the pinhole is the photographic equivalent of anarchist

philosophy—no manufacturer, little cost, all control in the hands of the user."[135] As an example

of diffusion of focus, which creates a softness of tone or a blurring of the photographic image,

An Old Farmstead evoked societal anxieties concerning the subjective nature of "seeing" or

"interpreting" the landscape photograph. The *Photographic News* reviewer commented on

personal trepidation over determining what was "the mass of growth in the foreground"

concluding that "probably onions run to seed would be the nearest approach to what Mr. Davison

has given us in his picture: but it may not matter. The new school possibly goes in for

suggestiveness, and if the field of stalks with the knobs at the ends suggests the onion plant, then

the object of the picture is answered."[136] This official interpretation would eventually manifest

itself in a name change from *An Old Farmstead* to *The Onion Field*. Historically, it is unclear if

the name change occurred through its creator, George Davison, or through the photographic

periodical press; the evidence suggests the later. However, by October 1891, reviewers

commenting on the absence of George Davison from the Photographic Society of Great Britain's

Exhibition referenced his previous success exhibiting *The Onion Field*. I would argue that this

demonstrates what Lynn Meskell defined as the "archaeology of power," "to name, classify, and

domesticate doubles as the means to obliterate, silence and negate other histories and ways of

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[135] Russ Young, "Historical Pinhole," in *Studies in Photography 2005*, ed. EDITOR (LOCATION: PUBLISHER, YEAR), 42.

[136] "*Wide-Angle*," 759.

dwelling in the same space."[137] This transformation from "old farmstead" to "onion field" represented an attempt to disrupt Davison's critique of the Victorian social and gender order.

According to Brian Coe, former curator of the Kodak Museum, the origin of the pinhole landscape known as *An Old Farmstead* or *The Onion Field*, a photogravure print 8" x 6", was photographed during a Camera Club outing to Gomshall, Surrey, on May 4, 1889. In the June 1889 volume of the *Journal of the Camera Club*, it states, "Here Mr. H. P. Robinson, who had come to spend a quiet country day socially with the party, enjoyed the morning in charge of part of the apparatus of the Honorary Secretary, who was pinholing about in the most devoted manner."[138] During the 1889 Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Great Britain, Davison entered twelve photographs; four of them were landscapes created through the use of a pinhole. According to Brian Coe, that May 1889 Pinhole was exhibited in the 1890 Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Great Britain. Interestingly, during my initial examination of the Camera Club's outings between May 1889 and September 1890 I discovered a clue to the photograph's true provenance. According to the August 1890 volume of the *Journal of the Camera Club*, it was during an excursion to Dedham (September 5-7) that the famous pinhole landscape was taken.

> On the Saturday evening, the whole party left the Marlborough Head, where Mr. and Mrs. Springall had done everything in their power to make the party comfortable, and proceeded, some to the Cups Hotel, Colchester, and some direct to the White Hart, Mersea, a drive of ten miles from Colchester. Here all expressed themselves pleased, both with the picturesque character of West Mersea and the famous oysters and ducklings supplied by Mr. Whiffin of the White Hart. The scenery of the island (the place where the plot of Mr. Baring

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[137] See Lynn Meskell, "Archaeology Matters," in Lynn Meskell, ed., *Archaeology Under Fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1998), 2.

[138] J. S. Grimshaw, "Excursion to Gomshall," *Journal of the Camera Club* III no. 33 (June 1889): 137.

Gould's Mehalah is laid) is illustrated in the exhibits of the honorary secretary in the present Pall Mall Exhibition.[139]

In collaboration with Welsh photographer David Gepp,[140] I came to the conclusion that Brian Coe's assumption concerning the original date of May 4, 1889 and location of Gomshall, Surrey for the taking of the landscape photograph *An Old Farmstead* was incorrect. The correct provenance of *An Old Farmstead* of September 7, 1890 at West Mersea Essex is more than just a footnote in photographic history. Indeed it is central to the overall tenet of this thesis that the fall of 1890 represented a cultural nexus in which national and imperial identity and its primary constituting essence, masculinity, coalesced around interpretations of both the character of George Davison and the true nature of his unusual pinhole landscape of rural England.

Julia Margaret Cameron and the Gendered Politics of "Soft Focus"

In the initial notice to the Photographic Society of Great Britain's Exhibition of 1890, the reviewer consciously linked Davison's *An Old Farmstead* to "the peculiarities in which the late Mrs. Cameron won fame in portraits [which] have been transferred to landscape [with] far greater manipulatory and technical skill."[141] Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) was a British photographer known for her portraiture work with notable Victorians such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Charles Darwin, Robert Browning, John Everett Millais, William Michael Rossetti, and Edward Burne-Jones, to name just a few, as well as providing the photographs for

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[139] "Excursion to Dedham," *Journal of the Camera Club* IV, no 48 (August 1890): 184-85.

[140] David Gepp was born in Belfast but has lived in Mid Wales since 1974. His work is held in private collections and has been purchased for the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the National Library of Wales, and the BT Irish New Media Collection, accessed December 2006, http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/mid/sites/arts/pages/davidgepp.shtml?1.

[141] "*Wide-Angle*," 759.

Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.[142] This link was expanded upon during the aesthetic debates

between Peter Henry Emerson and Henry Peach Robinson over the diffusion of focus vs.

differential focus controversy. P. H. Emerson attempted to link Davison's artistic choice of

diffusion of focus to Julia Margaret Cameron's style of portraiture in 1865. He continued by

reiterating H. P. Robinson's opposition to Cameron "calling her work 'smudges' and laying

down his doctrine that definition was the function of photography."[143] Robinson openly granted

Emerson this point in his editorial rebuttal although he qualified it by stating, "she did not do this

by intention, initialing it was her misunderstanding of the optical qualities of certain lenses." He

then humbly encouraged Mrs. Cameron on the correct selection of lenses and she was "delighted

with the improvement." Emerson's primary purpose in associating Cameron's and Davison's

aesthetic similarities was to question his masculinity, thereby effeminizing his character.

According to Lindsay Smith, "when read contextually, Cameron's decision not to approximate a

focused image, together with her questioning of focus as photographic law, constitutes a critique

of the ideology of perceptual mastery as that which is continually affirmed in the notion of a

stable relationship of subject to visual field along the lines of a geometrical grid. Contextually

Cameron's photographs have to be read as problematizing photographic discourse by employing

it to challenge one of the most dominant paradigms in Western modes of visual representation,

geometric perspective."[144] Cameron's contestation of focus clearly contains wider historical and

cultural ramifications. In other words, Cameron threatens more than merely an aesthetic

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[142] See Victoria Olsen, *From Life: Julia Margaret Cameron & Victorian Photography* (London: Aurum Press, 2003).

[143] P. H. Emerson, "The Present State of the Focus Question," *The Camera: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine for Those who Practice Photography* V, no. 55 (December 1, 1890): 146.

[144] Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth Century Photography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 26.

principle. She represents the possibility of demobilizing the whole mechanism of fetishism in the field of vision, and all that demobilization clearly implies for the Victorian patriarchal sanctity of home and hearth.[145]

Smith argues that if we contextualize the Latin meaning of "focus" which is "hearth" it creates the potential for the disruption of separate spheres of ideology of nineteenth-century culture, together with its profound resonances for visual and gender politics. Therefore, in examining nineteenth century photography one must consider that Victorian women occupied positions as the official protectors of the hearth, the critical site in which conceptualizations of masculinity are constituted. Smith argues that "Cameron's work embodies a particular spatial intervention in the representation of the domestic. Her use of hearth as a point of political redefinition (in its broadest sense as a locus of her interest in those women and children close at hand who regularly served as her models), demonstrates its centrality to various discourse of the period."[146] By refusing to focus her images, Smith argues that Cameron undermined the sovereignty of the domestic sphere as an essential site of Victorian culture based upon a privileging of public (male civic subject position) over private (domestic female space).[147]

George Davison vs. Peter Henry Emerson: Questioning British Masculinity

Although Emerson was the predominant and most influential advocate for Naturalistic photography, by 1890, George Davison had begun to eclipse Emerson in stature within the photographic community to the point where the controversy caused by Davison's

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[145] Ibid., 78; footnote page 34.

[146] Ibid., 37.

[147] Ibid.

"impressionistic" pinhole landscape exhibited during the Photographic Exhibition not only challenged Emerson's "truth to nature" but would also create a personal and professional schism between the two men. Initially, Emerson stated, "But I am sure Mr. Robinson's intention to play off Mr. Davison against me will fail—he tried it last year. Mr. Davison is more modest, and knows to whom credit is due more than Mr. Robinson thinks."[148] This statement reveals a sliver of insight into Emerson's true feelings concerning his relationship with Davison. Although the two men emerged almost simultaneously within the photographic community in 1886 their socio-economic differences, Davison was a civil servant and Emerson was a Doctor, clearly, in the mind of Emerson, constructed a relationship in which Davison was an "associate" within the greater community of photographers as well as an advocate for "Naturalistic Photography."[149]

By the spring of 1891, the debate had degenerated into direct personal attacks on Davison's "character" by P. H. Emerson. The *Amateur Photographer*, in the February 20, 1891 issue, stated "it was to be expected that Dr. Emerson would reply to Mr. Davison. He has done so, and we publish his letter, minus a few paragraphs which are either irrelevant or of an unnecessarily personal nature. This being done, it is our intention to allow no further correspondence upon a subject which has no interest to students in photography and which has assumed the form of a bitter personal quarrel."[150] One can only imagine the breadth and dimensions of Emerson's scathing attack on his former protégé, but there was one primary theme which permeated what was printed in that *Amateur Photographer* article, the fact that George Davison's occupation as a clerk, defined his "character" in profound ways.

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[148] Emerson, "The Present State of the Focus Question," 147.

[149] Ibid.

[150] *The Amateur Photographer*, February 20, 1891, 126.

Sir,--There is an old adage that weak men hate none so much as those who have done them favors or taught them how to shoot. The Truth of this adage is pleasingly exemplified by Mr. Davison's "reply." Mr. Davison, an *audit clerk*," has found time after or between office hours to perform good *secretarial work* for an amateur photographic club to write "drivel" (his own word) peppered with a grain or two of other people's property, and to take, at most, four photographs having any claim to artistic merit. In each of these the "clouding" is false, but what of that to a man who talks of values. Having done these great deeds and had his vanity flattered by a couple of portraits published in the photographic press— he begins to think himself someone, and poses in public as an authority. He has, now that his *master-myself*—has seen fit to abjure certain philosophical doctrines, been ungrateful enough to try and belittle me…For art one must give his skin, and *learn to labour and wait*. But the public must be set right or the petty vapourings and "*clerkly personalities*" may mislead.[151]

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, "British women had unparalleled access to social and economic opportunities which had previously been limited by the "masculine" nature of both sites. In fact, the "Woman Question" dominated middle and working class men's fear over the apparent tenuous nature of their own "masculinity" with the growing encroachment of women, specifically in the work place."[152] John Tosh argues that office work was a traditional route into the middle class for the upwardly-mobile working-class man, but in the late nineteenth century large corporations and some sections of the Civil Service began to recruit female typists and telegraphists as a cheaper and more "docile" workforce. Many male clerks opposed this trend not only because they feared redundancy or wage reduction, but also because the gender status of their occupation was at stake. According to Sonya O. Rose, working-class respectability "was a complex value system, held by a wide range of people from varying occupational groups, that had its roots in artisans' and skilled workers' notions of independence, the same working-class

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[151] "Mr. Davison's Misrepresentations (February 14, 1891)," 127-28.

[152] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 204.

sources that originated the ideology of breadwinning for men and domesticity for women."[153]

Emerson's use of certain gendered language such as "audit clerk" and "clerkly" were meant to

disrupt Davison's own masculine self-fashioning. However, by 1889 Davison had left that

position at the Exchequer and Audit Office in Somerset House and became director of the British

branch of the Eastman Photographic Materials Company.[154] This demonstration of socio-

economic mobility disrupted notions of effeminacy and probably exacerbated Emerson's already

furious tone because Davison's increased masculine authority encroached on the title of

gentleman, a role which like the dandy, also accommodated a degree of theatricality. Emerson, a

doctor by profession, clearly sees himself as a "gentleman." The extent of this is evident in his

statement, "he has now that his *master-myself*—has seen fit to abjure certain philosophical

doctrines, been ungrateful enough to try and belittle me." If one was to grasp the mantle of

Victorian gentlemanliness, self-discipline or self-mastery were vital components. Late nineteenth

century conceptions of masculinity can only be comprehended in the wider societal debate over

the nature of national and imperial self-belonging identified in the interconnected narratives of

Booth's Darkest England and Stanley's Darkest Africa.

Booth's Darkest England

       William Booth (1829-1912), the founder of the Salvation Army, concurred with

Kingsley's attitudes towards the urban working class poor describing in striking detail the misery

of the city inhabitants and outlining his methods of achieving spiritual salvation through social

service. According to Booth,

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[153] Sonya O. Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 149.

[154] Osman, "Davison, George (1855–1930)."

the denizens in Darkest England; for whom I appeal, are (1) those who, having no capital or income of their own, would in a month be dead from sheer starvation were they exclusively dependent upon the money earned by their own work; and (2) those who by their utmost exertions are unable to attain the regulation allowance of food which the law prescribes as indispensable even for the worst criminals in our gaols".[155]

As altruistic as this statement appears Booth also blames the poor themselves for falling into a state of "working-class primitivism," arguing that "much of the misery of those whose lot we are considering arises from their own habits; drunkenness and all manner of un-cleanliness, moral and physical."[156] Booth's plans for uplifting the downtrodden within English cities can be interpreted as blurring the boundary between the "working class primitivism" of the urban poor and "African Savagery" demonstrated by British explorers. William Booth was writing *Darkest England* before the scandal broke over what proved to be Stanley's last expedition. If we examine Booth's strategic initiatives for regeneration of the urban destitute it included a complex process of establishing three successive interconnected networks of colonies, the city, the farm and the over seas. The city colony consisted of establishing a "Receiving House" for the destitute in every great center of population in Great Britain. Booth proposed to establish in connection with every Food and Shelter Depot a Workshop or Labor Yard, in which any person who came destitute and starving would be supplied with sufficient work to enable him to earn the four pence needed for his bed and board.[157] Finally, Booth proposed the creation of a "Household Salvage Brigade," a civil force of organized collectors, who would patrol the whole town as regularly as the policeman, who would have their appointed beats, and each of whom would be

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[155] William Booth, *In Darkest England And The Way Out* (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 16.

[156] Ibid., 12.

[157] Ibid., 95.

trusted with task of collecting the waste of the houses in their circuit.[158] For those individuals

who did not fit into this initial network due to overcrowding Booth argued that "Farm Colony"

would be created for those potential laborers to live in. Known as the "Pioneer Brigade," the

carefully selected and competent out-of-works in the City Colony would be sent down to lay out

the estate and prepare it for those who would come after.[159] Finally, if the newly created Farm

Colonies proved inadequate then the "Over Seas Colony" would be a viable solution. According

to Booth, the constant traveling of the Colonists backwards and forwards to England makes it

absurd to speak of the Colonies as if they were a foreign land. They are simply pieces of Britain

distributed about the world, enabling the Britisher to have access to the richer parts of the

Earth.[160] Interestingly, Booth advocates the continent of Africa as being the most advantageous

because of the availability of land, healthy climate, and labor in great demand.[161] Both the "Farm

Colony" and the "Over Seas Colony" represent Kingsleyan spaces in which the degeneration

caused by filth, disease, and urban poverty in the industrial cities in Britain can be fundamentally

reversed in a process that will reinvigorate the Englishmen's true nature.

Henry Morton Stanley's Darkest Africa

Henry Morton Stanley, a Welsh journalist and explorer, most famously known for his

search for noted missionary David Livingstone, represented the polar opposite: a man who

exuded a primitive masculinity necessary to project British power on a global scale, despite or

perhaps because of the atrocities it simultaneously inflicted on indigenous populations in the

Congo region of central Africa. The public discourse concerning perceived "savageness" or

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[158] Ibid., 104.

[159] Ibid., 115.

[160] Ibid., 128.

[161] Ibid., 130.

"uncivilized behavior" by H. M. Stanley and his associates, such as James S. Jameson, heir to an Irish whiskey manufacturer, who allegedly purchased an eleven year old girl in order to witness her demise by indigenous cannibals, was spearheaded by the Aborigines Protection Society during the fall of 1890 and spring of 1891 and represented societal concerns over the degeneration of what Catherine Hall would term, the "imperial man" into callous violence, brutality and human degradation.

On Saturday May 3, 1890, at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, the Emin Relief Committee, "Welcomed Mr. Stanley" back to Great Britain. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales readily consented to preside on the occasion, "See the Conquering Hero Comes" was played on the organ, and most British dignitaries and guests eagerly awaited Mr. Stanley's account of his Adventures in "Darkest Africa." Stanley describes his experiences in Africa as "a fiery furnace, a crucible, and a question chamber, which have tried each of them to the very depths of their natures, and they have borne every trial to which they have been subjected with more than Spartan—with old English—fortitude, before mawkishness and mock-sentiment had rendered men maudlin."[162] On May 14, 1890, the Corporation of London honored Mr. Stanley and his officers at the Guildhall on their return from Africa. Stanley articulates the role of the British in Africa during the late Victorian period as follows: "their purpose is to create roads into the fastnesses of cruelty and ignorance, to extinguish the devastating slave trade to arrest the Arab kidnapper and man-destroyer by making his trade an impossibility and his profession wholly unnecessary."[163]

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[162] "Mr. Stanley," *The Times*, May 3, 1890, 15.

[163] "Mr. Stanley in the City," *The Times*, May 14, 1890, 11.

Stanley's career as an African explorer had made the journalist a cultural icon after the

publication of *Darkest Africa: Or the Quest, Rescue, and Retreat of Emin Pasha, Governor of*

Equatoria on June 28, 1890. The book review in *The Times* described the indigenous Africans

this way: "this horrible wilderness is inhabited by three classes of human beings; first, by the

cannibal tribes, who live in villages established here and there in clearings and upon the river

banks, and who, though they occasionally showed dangerous fight, generally fled from their

settlements on the approach of the expedition, taking it for one of the marauding raids of the

Manyuema."[164] Unfortunately, Stanley did have his detractors who focused on the "uncivilized"

behavior of himself and his compatriots during the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition. During a

meeting of the Aborigines Protection Society on December 12, 1890, the discussion focused on

the "atrocities" committed by English explorers in the Congo region of Africa. Sir Joseph Pease,

MP moved the first resolution of the meeting by articulating his indignation over the alleged

cruelties practiced on African natives by members of the Relief Expedition, and urged Her

Majesty's Government to take immediate action to prevent the occurrence of similar offences in

the future.[165] Sir Joseph Pease reasoned that if these atrocities had occurred under Stanley's

expedition then future expeditions to promote commerce and missionary work would be greatly

affected. Most important in Pease's condemnation of Stanley was his assertion that it was

primarily a military expedition when he stated that,

> Stanley did not speak of sending forward so many men, but "so many rifles"; of
> the men who were with Barttelot he spoke as "the rear-guard." The first bargain
> Stanley made was with Tippo Tib, the most notorious slave-trader in Africa, to
> find him 600 porters, in addition to the 600 Zanzibaris. These porters were
> nothing but slaves. And how was Tippo Tib to be paid? By powder, in order that

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[164] "Mr. Stanley's Book," *The Times*, June 28, 1890, 7.

[165] "The Aborigines' Protection Society and the Congo Atrocities," *The Times*, December 12, 1890, 7.

he might carry on his expedition against the Africans, which had ruined our trade and every other trade. The expedition was not overloaded with provisions, but they carried heavy ammunition, Maxim guns, and ammunition for the 400 rifles of which Stanley spoke.[166]

Stanley's militaristic nature was only exacerbated by his participation in the slave trade as well as supporting the most notorious Arab slave-trader in Central Africa, Tippo Tib. His treatment of indigenous women and children as well as the European members of the expedition was the most damning evidence of all. According to Major Barttelot, Stanley disciplined his men by flogging while the native villages were attacked and burned and women and children were taken and kept, in order to be exchanged for provisions. The totality of the evidence presented to the Aboriginal Protection Society had "horrified them and raised a desire that our Government and the Governments of every civilized power should do all they could to prevent their subjects going into these out-of-the-way parts of the earth under any pretext whatever and violating the rights of those natives, who, but for these expeditions, would have been living and enjoying that life which was a blessing to us all."[167] Several lawyers within the society, especially a Mr. Frederic Harrison Esq., argued that the because Stanley's expedition participated in slave-trading and slave-raiding, they had exposed themselves to charges of homicide or bodily injury according to English law as well as the Slave Trading Act (5 Geo. IV., c. 113). These arguments, however substantial, did not lead to unanimity of thought. A Mr. H. S. Wellcome defended Stanley, arguing that "the employment of slaves in Zanzibar was a recognized custom, and flogging had been carried on by all explorers of recent years. He asked the meeting to point out to any explorer who had not used flogging (A Voice—'Livingstone'). He thought they would find

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[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

Livingstone flogged."[168] A Mr. Le Chapion, sarcastically commented that "lying was as the breath of the nostrils of these people (audience utters No, No). This evidence was to be looked at with the utmost caution."[169]

Difference of opinions aside, collectively the Aborigines Protection Society wanted to raise public awareness so that in any future expedition to the African continent they might prevent such atrocities as had been reported during the Emin Pasha Expedition. All were aware of the increasing effort by Europeans to open up central Africa for economic development, which could create potentially disastrous conditions for Africa's indigenous population. Unlike the official trials of Governor Eyre in 1866-1867, Stanley suffered no legal retribution for his behavior during his African expedition. However within a decade, Edmund Dene Morel, a British journalist and employee of a Liverpool shipping line, along with Sir Roger Casement, a British diplomat and supporter of the Congo Reform Association, exposed the human atrocities perpetrated against the indigenous inhabitants of the Congo Free State by agents of King Leopold II of Belgium.[170] This controversy surrounding the main issue of "primitivism" was problematic for most middle-class Victorian observers. During the early nineteenth century, the middle-class had defined primitivism at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy with a dual character. According to G. W. Stocking, there was "a 'rural primitivism' of the pre-industrial world, marginalized in England and still flourishing on the Celtic fringe; on the other, there was the urban primitivism of pre-industrial London, metastasizing in every industrial town and

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[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid.

[170] See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998).

city."[171] Friedrich Engels, the German social scientist and political theorist, utilized "racial"

analogies when describing the working classes in such terms as "a race apart—physically

degenerate, robbed of all humanity, reduced morally and intellectually to near bestial

condition."[172] For many cultural critics, examples of the "Victorian Philosopher" demonstrating

"savageness" in nineteenth century Britain during a period of progress and prosperity were very

disturbing. Internal examples of "primitivism" and "savageness" were the most troubling of all

due to the paradoxical and often contradictory nature of British behavior at home and abroad.

According to Stocking, the dichotomy of human nature is as follows: "At one extreme, the

primitive, uncivilized man—still a step below Tylor's failed philosopher savage—responding

directly and immediately to the stimuli of external environment and internal nature. At the other

extreme, the middle-class Victorian philosopher of civilization, who—by giving systematic

theoretical articulation to one of the central presuppositions of the ideology of his class—

formulated an evolutionary proposition even more fundamental than 'the survival of the fittest':

that the repression of immediate impulsive responses was the essential mechanism of

evolutionary progress in both the intellectual and the moral sphere."[173]Henry Morgan Stanley,

Victorian Britain's premier explorer since the mid-nineteenth century, encapsulated the problem

of "race," "homosociality," and "primitivism" in regards to Britain's projection of civilized

authority throughout the empire. Stanley, a paragon of Victorian Middle-Class respectability,

complicated this dichotomy within socio-cultural discourse.

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[171] George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 213.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Ibid.

Conclusion

After numerous criticisms against Davison and any who dared support his aesthetic of "diffusion of focus," Emerson relented in true "Emersonian" fashion by writing the "Epitaph" for his "Naturalistic Photography," stating,

> In Memory of Naturalistic Photography, which ran a short but active life, upset many conventions, helped to further monochrome photography to the utmost of its limited art boundaries, stirred men to think and act for themselves, produced many frigs and bubble reputations, exposed the ignorance of the multitude, brought out the low morality of certain persons in the photographic world, broke down the prejudice of the outside public against photography's very slender art claims, encouraged many amateurs to babble and make the words "art", "truth", and "nature" stink in the nostrils of serious artists, ending by giving a few a brutal sort of apprehension of art, and dying when its allotted task was done with a gibe on its lips, for the "amateur", the "plagiarist", the "prating true-to-nature man", the "Impressionist", the "naturalist", the "idealist", and the humbug.[174]

This vitriolic diatribe in many respects represents a much larger cultural shift in late Victorian Britain. As a modern art form, the idea of photography became imbricated with notions of science, objectivity, realism, and modernity. However, during the late nineteenth century, a period often referred to as "neo-Romantic," Victorian culture articulated a new way of imagining the relation of subject to object and the location of truth. Davison's radical presentation of a pinhole image of an ominous, out of focus vision of an ordinary onion field in rural England in many ways represents a fundamental rejection of any rules and regulations that could "contain" subjective artistic potential within the photographic medium. According to Saree Makdisi, "this process of transition can be seen as a struggle between what appears as a totalitarian system and range of sometimes localized (and sometimes not) sites and zones and cultures of resistance,

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[174] P. H. Emerson, "Dr. Emerson's Renunciation of Naturalistic Photography," *The Photographic News*, January 23, 1891, 63.

beginning though not ending in the early and late romantic periods."[175] It was in this atmosphere

that the Victorian "gaze" recognized within *An Old Farmstead* a society in transition. As one of

P. H. Emerson's primary tenets of Naturalistic Photography states, "remember that your

photograph is as true an index of your mind as if you had written out a confession of faith on

paper."[176] This implies that George Davison's *An Old Farmstead* represented a window into his

personal worldview, including his own subjective perceptions on the current state of Britain and

the Empire as well as those aspects of "masculinity" necessary for its very survival. For those art

and photographic critics the aesthetic nature of Davison's landscape photograph indicated a

complete rejection of traditional landscape imagery, whether it was the Romantic landscapes of

J. M. W. Turner or the photographic landscapes captured by his rival P. H. Emerson. The very

nature of his critics' anxieties about the implications of his photograph is revealed by their

rejecting its name in favor of what they choose to focus on, hence their renaming it *An Onion

Field*. In this context, George Davison's landscape photograph can now be seen as a unique

"space," where the construction/contestation of representations of masculinity and national

imperial identity coexist. More broadly, photography as a visual medium is transformed into an

essential site in which issues of subjectivity, gender, and British modernity take place.

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[175] Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism*, 14.

[176] Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 119.

Chapter 2

The Brotherhood of the Linked Ring: Mysticism, Male Sociability, and the Re-Imagining of British Modernity

On May 9, 1892 at the Restaurant d'Italie in Soho, five influential British Art Photographers, H. P. Robinson, Lyonel Clark, George Davison, Henry Hay Cameron, and Alfred Maskell, met to discuss the formation of a secret association with "mysticism and symbolism implied." After proposing various names—The Gimmal Ring, The Parabola—they finally agreed on "The Linked Ring." Traditionally, photographic societies of the nineteenth century, such as the Photographic Society of Great Britain, were paragons of British modernity in their dedication to the scientific and technological aspects of photography as a visual medium. This leads to the perplexing question of why, at this historical moment when Great Britain was one of the dominant "modern" nation-states and imperial powers, did the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring embrace a "mystical" philosophy of photography?

This chapter endeavors to answer this intriguing question by analyzing the critical events that led to formation of the Linked Ring, including the mass resignations from the Photographic Society of Great Britain, the creation of an alternative space of exhibiting photographs called the "Salon," the Ring's institutional structure and aesthetics, as well as the critical backlash throughout the photographic periodical press against art photography and photographers. As a historical production that stimulated forms of identification, exclusion, and belonging that have refused to fade, modernity's most resonant phenomenological result may have been the conviction of historical difference that the "nation-state form" and imperialism foster and sustain. Hence, "by stressing the complexity, heterogeneity and hybridity of modernity at the

moments of its various historical articulations…modernity refers to the cultural practices and representations that produced certain kinds of subjects and objects of knowledge, upheld widely shared notions of space and time or facilitated the formation of cultural identities that resulted in contradictions as well as coherences."[177]

This chapter argues that the complex and fluid nature of modernity was being constructed and contested at the end of the nineteenth century within the visual medium of photography. Specifically, art photographers rejected the primary vision of photography formulated during the Great Exhibition of 1851, which imbricated itself within broader notions of nation-state and empire at mid-century, as the paragon of scientific and technological advancement. Early discourse surrounding the creation and development of photography conceived of the lens as an artificial human retina, thereby merging camera and human vision. This process ignored the practical and biological inconsistencies that resulted from the effort to formulate a conscious representation of the world that embraced the principles of permanence, stability, and control. In essence, the photograph, according to Mary Warner Marien, became a physical site that demonstrated objective reality, a new space that captured a past that was both immediate and knowable.[178] Through a combination of individual "intuition" and an "impressionistic aesthetic" the art photographer was capable of evoking suggestive, atmospheric qualities instead of mere mimetic representation. Photographers' engagement with the impressionist movement clearly aligned art photography in the late nineteenth century re-emergence of a complex synthesis of Romantic or Gothic Aesthetic.

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[177] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), 31.

[178] Marien, *Photography and its Critics*, 6.

Neo-Romanticism gave photography a theoretical foundation to reject Eighteenth-Century Neo-Classical aesthetic theory, which claimed that the purpose of art was to imitate nature—not ordinary, irregular nature, but an idealized and perfect nature. The Romantic aesthetic argued, in contrast, that human imagination is potentially divine, capable of creating a unique world.[179] Romantic art in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries re-imagined the natural world not simply as background, but as a central character. According to Stephen C. Behrendt, "romantic art often suggests that nature is both consoling and restorative: seen and enjoyed correctly, nature provides the catalyst for altering the individual consciousness, most often for the better…thus Romanic visual art often depicts people—especially ordinary people—enjoying pleasant, salutary activities within natural settings, which suggests to viewer how they might improve their own situations at minimal expense (financial or psychological) through the medium of nature."[180]

Most important in this dynamic is the fact that one of Romanticism's central tenets is individuality. Human beings should embrace their personal subjectivity, including their emotional interpretations of the natural world, and utilize intuition over reason and empirical knowledge. The combination of all of these aspects was artistically expressed in the landscapes and seascapes of prominent British artists like John Constable and J. M. W. Turner. Within this Romantic aesthetic, art photographers also embraced the primary tenets of the Gothic Revival. The intellectual discourse surrounding the meanings of "Gothic" historically include the origins of "Englishness." According to Nicola Trott, "since they put an end to Roman domination, they also came to be thought of as free, and the sources of England's democratic laws and

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[179] Anne K. Mellor, "Feminism," in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 190.

[180] Stephen C. Behrendt, "The Visual Arts and Music," in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, 62-63.

institutions… as a result, the word 'Gothic' came to have favorable, nationalist connotations of patriotism, liberty and constitutional monarchy," rather than those of the backward and barbaric, as it had had for much of the eighteenth century.[181] Gothic sensibility and aesthetics elicited the pleasure of imaginary terror and the supernatural in the human consciousness. Architecturally, the Gothic Revival also oversaw a process of converting ecclesiastical and medieval Gothic structures to domestic and gentlemanly uses, thereby allowing for a counter-modernity to emerge.[182] According to Emma Clery, "the ascendance of the supernatural is a function not of metaphysics but of 'spectacle' of urban consumer culture; and that the literature of terror arose in the late eighteenth century as a symptom of and reflection of the modern."[183] Influenced by these perspectives, the Linked Ring rejected the scientific and technological aspects of photography to focus on the project of re-imagining Great Britain.

In doing so, the Linked Ring also incorporated "pictorial" principles to create a revitalized agrarian, gothic past. British Pictorialism[184] sought to elevate photography to fine-art status through the use of uniquely photographic means to create images that mimicked the formal qualities of the established fine arts media, notably painting.[185] There were two co-existing aesthetic philosophies within the Linked Ring: the "Purists" and the "Impressionists." According to Margret Harker, the "purists" were, "concerned with 'truth to nature' modified by imagination but they maintained that the imagery must be photographic throughout…re-touching of the

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[181] Nicola Trott, "Gothic," in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, 482-83.

[182] Ibid., 482-83.

[183] E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17.

[184] See H. P. Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography* (Philadelphia: Edward L. Wilson, 1881), originally published in 1869 as the first example of trying to connect the principles of painting and art with photography.

[185] As defined in the *Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Photography, Volume 2, G-L*, ed. Lynne Warren (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 1262.

negative or manipulation of the print to alter tonal values, reduce detail or add non-photographic textures were not permissible…however combination printing, changes in tonal relationships, and even diffusion of detail, if brought about by photographic means, were acceptable."[186] Proponents of this aesthetic included Frederick Evans, Frank Sutcliffe, and Frederick Hollyer, all of whom had links to realist and naturalistic photography.[187] The "Impressionists" were concerned with "truth to the ideal aided by observation of nature modified by imagination…the extremists were not prepared to be limited by the photographic process, which they found too inhibiting maintaining the adage 'the end justifies the means' and used various ways of controlling the imagery, including etching of the negative and manipulative printing processes to produce the effect they had visualized."[188] This group comprised the dominant force within the Linked Ring and included George Davison, Alfred Maskell, Robert Demachy, Frank Eugene, and Alexander Keighley. According to Harker, "this group of practitioners closely related forms of drawing, painting and etching in association with photographic images, resulting in mixed media imagery. This deliberate fusion broke new ground."[189] In the process of embracing a "mystical" component to this new photographic society, the Linked Ring also placed itself firmly in the cultural fulcrum of London's "occult" and "mystical" circles in their overall rejection of scientific positivism. Organizations such as the Theosophical Society, focused on spiritual enlightenment through the study of both Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, as well as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which taught the theory and practice of ritual magic or practical occultism based on Jewish Cabbalism, Freemasonry, and Judeo-Christian sources were

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[186] Harker, *The Linked Ring*, 92.

[187] This group excluded P.H. Emerson who, because of his personal attacks on both George Davison and H. P. Robinson, was not offered membership into the Linked Ring.

[188] Harker, *The Linked Ring*, 92.

[189] Ibid.

responsible for fashioning a uniquely modern magical tradition with its roots in a "lost" and arcane past and its aspirations directed towards ideals of progress and future regeneration.[190]

Although on the surface, the link between photography and magic might appear antithetical, photographic discourse had been imbricated with notions of the magical origins of the medium for some time. The illusionistic qualities created by the photographic developmental processes of the Daguerreotype during the 1840s led many to incorporate the vocabulary of necromancy into photography's broader cultural appeal. Within the hidden space of the "dark room" the alchemist/photographer utilized his or her arcane knowledge in order to capture an "other-worldly" image of the natural world. These descriptive terms, such as magic, dark arts, and alchemy, remained a vital if covert component of popular cultural interpretations of the visual medium of photography. Throughout the nineteenth century this "magical" aspect of photographic production lent credence in some circles to the "authentic" or "original" nature of the photographic image. However by the early twentieth century, scholars such as Walter Benjamin questioned the impact of mechanical reproduction on the authenticity of a photographic image.

Benjamin critiqued the impact of mass reproduction within the photographic medium in terms of its potential "crisis of originality." "The cult value of a work of art," he wrote, "that is, its magic and ritual value was altered under conditions of reproducibility." An objective authenticity, what Benjamin called its aura, emanated from its singularity, which was diminished

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[190] See Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 51.

when multiple copies or images of it could be made available.[191] Mary Warner Marien argues against Benjamin's conclusions concerning the "aura of authenticity," stating that the image is not diminished by the photographic process of reproduction. In her assessment, Benjamin neglects the broader photographic discourse which viewed the photograph as a special, unique copy.[192]

In this context it is necessary to define how late nineteenth century Britain understood the terms "occult" and "mystical." At least one scholar has defined occultism as "the study of (or search for) a hidden or veiled reality and the arcane secrets of existence;" while mysticism, in contrast, related to the "immediate experience of and oneness with a variously conceived divinity, and experience that could be received as a divine gift regardless of training or preparation."[193] However, throughout the late nineteenth century, the Victorian comprehension of the terms was intimately interconnected to the point that even so called experts on the finer points of esoteric knowledge utilized the terminology interchangeably. The deeper significance for the Linked Ring's embrace of this "new" occult, mystical component to their ideology was to offer Victorians an alternative vision of Great Britain as well as to dissuade or challenge notions of effeminacy, which shadowed the group's controversial early history. According to Alex Owen, "an emphasis on practical magic had recourse to a masculine persona that appealed to men and women alike."[194] By avoiding the previous generation's connotation of "Victorian

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[191] *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), 217-52.

[192] Marien, *Photography and its Critics*, 14.

[193] Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 22.

[194] Ibid., 88.

Spiritualism"[195] with "emotionalism" or "feminine power," art photography held the potential for an alternative masculine identity in direct opposition to a more dominant masculinity of "Muscular Christianity."[196] Victorian culture was obsessed with secret societies and fraternities conceived both as imagined adversaries with their hidden agendas and as idealized fellowships. Both aspects created complex gender anxieties throughout nineteenth century society, which sought a secure representation of male privilege.[197] Art photography in late Victorian Britain coexisted in an environment where mysticism, Indian and Irish cultural nationalism, anti-vivisection, vegetarianism, humanitarian, and socialist endeavors intermingled on various levels. It was in this cultural milieu that art photography, as articulated by the Linked Ring, represented an "active" masculine pursuit to capture rural England photographically through artistic intuition. It thus contributed an unusual strand of thought and practice to the historical process of constructing and contesting notions of British modernity.

Revolution within British Photographic Circles

The tensions over issues of exhibition protocols, art vs. science, amateur vs. professional, and the "focus question," which emerged during the Photographic Exhibition of 1890, dominated the photographic discourse throughout the following year. By the time of the 1891 Exhibition those tensions would develop into a full-scale mutiny within the Photographic Society of Great Britain. As in 1890, George Davison was at the heart of this new controversy. Davison had entered images at the invitation of members of the Exhibition Committee, and although delivered

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[195] For an introduction to issues of Gender and Spiritualism, see Owen, *The Darkened Room.*

[196] For homosexuality and Anglo- and Roman Catholicism, see David Hilliard, "UnEnglish and Unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality," *Victorian Studies* 25, no. 2 (Winter 1982): 181-210; Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[197] Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 27.

thirty-six hours after the deadline for acceptance, they were accepted by a member of the committee, with the understanding that they were to be hung as eligible for competition, or not at all. They were hung, and listed in the catalogue, but after six days, on the day of the final judging, they were removed by the secretary Captain Mantell. On the same day, H. P. Robinson, a Vice President of the society, visited the judging with a visitor, and was asked to leave by Assistant Secretary H. A. Lawrence, although as a council member he was entitled to be present, and, indeed, had been asked to join the Hanging Committee. Although he had not been able to do this, he had agreed to lend a hand. This mixture of confusion, internal jealousy within the society, and inflexibility in applying the regulations had dramatic consequences, furthered by the refusal of the council of the society to express regret to H. P. Robinson over the affair, despite the fact that for years he had been the most active and prominent supporter of the society and its exhibitions. The ramifications of this latest controversy would have far reaching consequences as it led to H. P. Robinson, George Davison, and ten other members resigning from the Photographic Society of Great Britain.

It is interesting to read the first notice of the 1891 Photographic Exhibition in both *The Amateur Photographer* and *The Photographic News*, two of the most influential photographic periodicals of the time. *The Photographic News* describes it as follows: "The Exhibition which opened with the usual soirée on Saturday Evening last and to the general public on Monday is perhaps the most interesting one of recent years. It is true that nothing of a very novel or startling character is shown even in the way of pictures or apparatus but at the same time there is greater variety than usual to hold the attention of visitors and therefore [we] say that on the whole it is likely to prove a success."[198] This positive review of the overall entries in the Exhibition is

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[198] "The Exhibition at Pall Mall," *The Photographic News,* October 2, 1891, 689.

contrasted with a more somber and introspective article written in *The Amateur Photographer*. The author begins by recognizing the role of the Photographic Society of Great Britain in comparison to the multitude of other societies and exhibitions that had developed during the late nineteenth century. Its significance for photography is compared to that of the Royal Academy for painting. Nicknamed the "Parent Society," its roll was filled with the greatest names in the photographic world. This obvious admiration of the Photographic Society's role in the history of the medium is tempered by a critical evaluation of its current state of being. The author no longer viewed the Photographic Society as fulfilling its role as mentor and guide to the wider photographic community. "It has fallen into apathetic ways," he wrote, "and has ceased to show the vigour and initiative force which, we regret to say has frequently, within recent times, been answered with considerable unanimity in the negative."[199] Specifically the author mentions the growing role of the Camera Club, formed in 1886, in usurping "the functions of the Academic Society." Most critical in this initial notice was the general perception that something was fundamentally wrong with the Society and its exhibition: "it is not our intention at the present moment to enter into the question of the signs of decay and want of power which, with regard to the Photographic Society of Great Britain, are, at the present time, being loudly spoken to, into the causes which may have led to such a condition, or of the reforms in the constitution and working of this body which appear to be called for."[200] Without a photographic curiosity like the previous year's entry by George Davison, entitled *The Onion Field*, the 1891 exhibition had no public controversies to distract from the internal debates over societal and exhibition protocols. In regards to the absence of George Davison, the writer obviously sides with his point of view that the society could have accommodated "the meritorious pictures by a representative man

[199] "The Photographic Society's Exhibition (First Notice)," *The Amateur Photographer*, October 2, 1891, 232.

[200] Ibid.

whose influence and practice make a distinct mark upon photography of today."[201] In a fascinating turn of events, the editors of the *Amateur Photographer* rescinded a scathing critique from the previous edition. The photographic periodical offered "regret" and blamed the incident on an internal mistake missed before it went to press. Interestingly, the second notice's argument focuses on the intellectual biases of the original author, stating that "the critic in such a case should be without 'parti pris,' wedded to no school, without preconceived opinions, without preferences, and an, impassionate and intelligent observer. He must be careful not to reject all and every example before him which are conceived and executed in a spirit contrary to his own personal ideas. He should be able to discover and to praise productions which individually, perhaps, he may not like, but which to judge fairly he should understand and appreciate."[202]

Photographic Societies and the Question of Male Sociability

The overall debate within the photographic community concerning the direction and focus of the Society on artistic, scientific, and technological progress mirrors the objections of most of the Art Photographers who resigned from the society during and after the 1891 Exhibition. In the November 20, 1891 edition of the *Amateur Photographer* in the editorial section, an article titled "Society Suicide" was written by a retiring member of the Photographic Society of Great Britain. The writer's conclusion about current affairs, "when a society allows the secession of some of its best men without any serious effort being made to retain them,"[203] made it seem likely the society was finished. Critical to the author's assessment is the overall

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[201] Ibid., 233.

[202] "The Photographic Society's Exhibitions (Second Notice)," *The Amateur Photographer*, October 8, 1891, 252.

[203] "Society Suicide, by A Retiring Member", *The Amateur Photographer*, November 20, 1891, 374.

significance of losing Lyddell Sawyer, Valentine Blanchard, and Henry M. van der Weyde, in addition to the two most prominent photographers of the time, H. P. Robinson and George Davison. Robinson, in particular, was held to be "the most prominent figure in photography in this country or any other for that last thirty years, and the most constant exhibitor and upholder of the exhibition." "In Mr. Geo. Davison" the writer added, "the society loses the hope of the future as well as successful performance in the present."[204] Lyddell Sawyer, another disgruntled photographer, agreed with this assessment and went further by advocating a new National Photographic Institution, one which is a "more up-to-date, active, practical national institution connected with photography than this society has proved so far to be, and to note wherein it has principally fallen short."[205] Sawyer put it this way:

> There appear to me to be three clear and distinct duties devolving on an institution claiming the important privilege of being the parent representative society of Great Britain. These are: (1) to look after technical and scientific education, (2) to regulate and protect the art aspects of photography, and (3) to encourage social intercourse among photographers.[206]

Sawyer's analysis of the absence of the "social" component in the Photographic Society is expounded upon as he distinguishes between the needs of the "professional" in contrast to the "amateur" photographer. "A professional photographer, more than an amateur, requires the social element to be strongly in evidence at his place of meeting. When his professional daily duties are done, and the official share of his connection with photography is accomplished, he then wants a place to meet in and eat in, to read, to rest, to retire, and to generally feel that

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[204] Ibid.

[205] Lyddell Sawyer, "A National Photographic Institution Required," *The Amateur Photographer*, December 11, 1891, 437.

[206] Ibid.

absence from restraint which constitutes the home-like element of club life."[207] Recent

scholarship by John Tosh has illuminated the primary sites connected with Victorian

masculinity: the family, the all-male schools, and most importantly for this study, male

associations.[208] It was during the late eighteenth century that the "family" took on the pre-

eminent role in this process of masculine constitution.[209] Male intimacy as well as gender

conditioning were formulated within the Victorian domestic sphere and were considered a

critical component of a young man's foundation of character. Tosh argues that the domestic

sphere is integral to Victorian masculinity. "Domesticity represents not just a pattern of residence

or a web of obligations, but a profound attachment: a state of mind as well as a physical

orientation. Its defining attributes are privacy and comfort, separation from the workplace and

the merging of domestic space and family members into a single commanding concept (in

English, 'home')."[210] In this respect, Tosh argues that domesticity was essentially a nineteenth-

century invention.

The later nineteenth century, however, saw significant changes in each of these areas: in

family life, in schooling and associational life, and in relations between the sexes.[211] Specifically,

late Victorian Britain underwent a cultural transformation in its views on domesticity to the point

where the practice of "bachelorhood" became a growing, if troubling trend. The increased

suspicion or outright hostility towards domesticity and its feminine influence became a dominant

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[207] Ibid.

[208] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 105.

[209] Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[210] John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1999), 4.

[211] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 105.

literary theme utilized by writers from the 1880s on. Writers such as H. Rider Haggard signaled the rapid rise of a new genre of men-only adventure fiction, with iconic masculine protagonists such as Allan Quatermain, who symbolized the Victorian spirit of fantasy and danger, and a world without feminine influence.[212] The new paragons of imperial manliness were influenced by such individuals as Charles George Gordon and Robert Baden-Powell, and both were represented as men without the burden of female ties.[213] For this new generation of Victorian youths there were a variety of public associations to fulfill the growing need of male sociability. Both the universities and the armed services maintained their traditional appeal; colonial administration and public school mastering both offered many more openings during this period, while settlement houses and Anglican celibate orders were entirely new. All of these occupations provided a homosocial environment reminiscent of public school.[214] During the late 18th century, the English upper class shifted its primary social space away from the London coffee houses and developed the male members-only private club. London alone had over 400 of these private clubs expanding membership to include both middle-class men and women by the end of the nineteenth century. For men in particular, clubs became a refuge from the constant pressures of domestic life, providing drinks, meals, and gaming as well as a respectable environment for male sociability. Photographic societies, like the Camera Club, became more than just meeting places for photography enthusiasts; they became arenas of masculine sociability and status-seeking, the primary cohesive element of which was an interest in photography.

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[212] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siecle* (London: Virago Press Ltd, 1992), chapter 5

[213] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 107.

[214] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 114.

By 1892, this complex issue of defining what constituted an "Amateur," its relationship with art photography, and all the class and gender connotations encoded within the debate took a new and interesting turn. In *The Photographic News* in December of 1892, shortly after the first pictorial exhibition at the Camera Club, J. R. Tulloch acknowledges the growing animosity between "professional" and "amateur" photographers. Tulloch's initial assessment defines the problem as follows: professional photography is on the decline and amateurs are in great measure to blame for this. "An amateur is one who does for sport what another does as a means of livelihood."[215] If this definition is correct, Tulloch feels that the moment the amateur receives monetary compensation he ceases to be one, and in that case, the privileges assigned to an amateur disappear and the responsibilities of the professional take precedence.[216] This concept of compensation took center stage during the first pictorial exhibition at the Camera several months previously.

Photographic Salon: Pictorial Photography and the "Performance" of Alternative Modernities

In the fall of 1892, prominent art photographers, led by H. P. Robinson, George Davison, Alfred Maskell, and Alfred Horsley Hinton, organized an alternative photographic exhibition, invitation only, of "pictorial" photographs at the Camera Club as an alternative to the pre-eminent exhibition at Pall Mall. The London *Times*'s review of the Photographic Society of Great Britain's Exhibition of 1892 addressed the issue of abstention by prominent art photographers. "That abstentions so numerous and of such representative men could scarcely fail to have a marked effect on the general quality of the exhibits, and consequently on the success of

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[215] J. R. Tulloch, "The Amateur Question," *The Photographic News*, December 23, 1892, 819.

[216] Tulloch, "The Amateur Question," 819.

the exhibition, need not be said."[217] George Davison, the honorary secretary, invited visitors to this "alternative" exhibition via a notice in *The Photographic News*: "An exhibition of pictorial photographs, selected from contributions made up by the leading artist photographers at home and abroad, will commence at the Camber Club, Charing Cross Road, on Tuesday, October 18th and will be open free to visitors, from 10am to 12am and 2pm to 4pm daily, until the 8th December, on presentation of cards, which may be obtained from exhibitors, from members, or from the honorary secretary." However the invitations were addressed "only to those photographers who were known to produce pictures of artistic merit, the scientific side of photography being for the nonce put out of consideration altogether."[218] The Camera Club Exhibition included 200 pictures, of which several were singled out by the *Photographic News* reviewer for their resemblance to romantic artists of the past.[219] According to one reviewer, "Lyonel Clarke's *A Bridge near Dedham*, with its rain charged clouds, had the reviewer comparing its ominous landscape to the work of John Constable. Alfred Maskell's portrait of fellow exhibitor *Mr. George Davison* suggested an aesthetic link to Whistler's portrait of the violinist, *Sarasate*. Finally, several of Horsley Hinton's marshy landscapes, with reeds growing in pools of water, reminded the reviewer of co-founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Sir John Everett Millais's *Chill October*. Another key aspect to this collection of art photographs was the utilization of photographic manipulation. H. P. Robinson contributed a landscape photograph of cattle, utilizing the process of combination printing."[220] A composite photograph, a form which Robinson revolutionized during the 1860s, was "a photograph created through the

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[217] "*The Times* Review," *The Amateur Photographer*, September 30, 1892, 221-22.

[218] "Exhibition at the Camera Club," *The Photographic News*, October 21, 1892, 681-82.

[219] Ibid., 681-82.

[220] Ibid., 681-82.

combining of two or more individual images to form a whole and generally re-photographed to create a seamless final image, as distinguished from montage."[221] Another prominent art photographer and future member of the Linked Ring, Shapoor N. Bhedwar, exhibited a series of five images portraying the ordination of a Parsee Priest. This prominent ritual in the spiritual tradition of Zoroastrianism marks the first time an indigenous native Indian photographer utilized art photography as a political and cultural vehicle to represent supposedly universal concepts of "initiation" and "ritual," rearticulating Indian Spiritual Traditions from Buddhism to Zoroastrianism. By re-imagining an alternative Indian modernity, Bhedwar consciously developed an allegorical style which explored Parsee, Hindu, and Muslim attempts to redefine their own individual social and religious communities in the context of revitalized "masculine" nationalist paradigms. The *Naver Series* represented Bhedwar's initial foray into the contentious discourse of Indian nationalist politics and included the *Invocation*, where the chief priest invokes the blessing of heaven upon the candidate; next the *First Abulation*; third, the *Initiation*; in the fourth picture the *New Priest* is officiating; and finally in the fifth image the priest performs the important ceremony of *Feeding the Sacred Fire*.[222]

Birth of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring

The successful accolades received during the 1892 exhibition encouraged Alfred Maskell to contemplate an entirely new type of photographic society. In collaboration with George Davison, Maskell outlined the project, the creation of "an inner circle, a kind of little bohemian

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[221] "Glossary," in *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography, Volume 1 A-F*, ed. Lynne Warren (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[222] "Exhibition at the Camera Club," 681-82.

club."[223] "The circle such as I propose it," Maskell wrote, "will involve no subscription, no rules and regulations (but some customs); will be democratic to a degree, but exclusive in selection, liberal in the sense of liberty to all and only bound by mutual and loyal agreement. For some time, at least, it need number but comparatively few. I think it might become powerful, and use influence in counteracting many abominations, and suppressing vicious individuals."[224] According the *Journal of the Proceedings of the Linked Ring*, the first "Union" was at the Restaurant d-Italie in Old Compton Street, Soho, on May 9, 1892, when the following originators of the Association dined together at 7:30 p.m., viz.: Messrs. H. P. Robinson, Lyonel Clark, George Davison, H. Hay Cameron, and Alfred Maskell, Mr. A. Horsley Hinton being absent through mistaking the rendezvous. The society's first scribe, Alfred Maskell, reported that, "after an excellent dinner, the menu of which is preserved amongst our Archives, it was decided to form an Association having for its objects those which are now embodied in the book of Our Constitutions; and having regard to the mysticism and symbolism implied, the title of the '*Gimmal Ring*' was adopted. This was after wards changed to the '*Parabola*,' and finally changed on May 27th, 1892 at the Camera Club to '*The Linked Ring*'."[225] As the Book of the Constitution of the Linked Ring puts it, "the Linked Ring has been constituted as a means of bringing together those who are interested in the development of the highest form of Art of which Photography is capable…its device is "*Liberty and Loyalty*."[226] The Book of the Constitution of the Linked Ring remains the most elusive of documents, because of the Ring's strict secrecy requirements. Fortunately, several copies have survived and are held at the

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[223] A Letter in Alfred Maskell's handwriting, dated April 24, 1892, inserted in the Book of the Linked Ring.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Journal of the Proceedings of the Linked Ring.

[226] Introduction of the Book of Constitution of the Linked Ring, 1893.

National Media Museum, West Yorkshire, England. Within its sacred text, Alfred Maskell

organized the Ring's structure on a similar pattern to other private clubs and societies that

permeated London's social network. Although there were no formal rules and regulations, an

obvious commentary on the amorphous and archaic by-laws of the Photographic Society of

Great Britain, Maskell wanted the Linked Ring to have a foundation of 12 principles or rituals.

Male sociability was an important component to the Ring so it was desired that members met at

least once a month, a "union," at a local restaurant for dinner or supper (three shillings). The

removal of the sacred cloth from the Book of the Constitution of the Linked Ring began the

official proceedings before eating. Being class conscious, the founders wanted to make this an

accessible event for those members of the working class, an idea that no doubt was influenced by

P. H. Emerson's numerous attacks on George Davison's character because he was a mere

"clerk." Alcohol should be included with dinner, from a malt liquor or whiskey or perhaps a

good wine at moderate cost. Although the initial Link comprised the five most prominent art

photographers of that generation, they specifically decided to create an internal democratic basis

for official business. In real terms, this meant that there were no leadership structures (i.e.,

president or chairman). However, there would be a "centre link" to officiate over the Linked

Ring "union," which included offering suggestions over possible future interests of the society.

This position was temporary and was reassigned to other members on a regular basis making the

Linked Ring democratic in nature, with the important exception of applying for membership,

which, like most other private clubs in London, required a current member to submit a

candidate's name for debate, requiring a unanimous vote by the entire membership. The Linked

Ring also had official designations or pseudonyms for all members, chosen upon induction by

the initiate. The most important members were the ones that performed specific duties within the Ring, such as "scribe/secretary," "Comptroller or Financial Officer," and "Archivist."

Secondly, upon entering the sacred Ring, the "centre link" addressed the prospective member as follows,

> Mr. M, we have been informed of your wish to become a member of our society and I am happy to tell you that your name and desire having been submitted for our consideration, it was our unanimous opinion that in you we had discovered the missing link necessary to make our ring complete. By virtue therefore of the power vested in me as "centre link" for the time being of this most honorable Linked Ring, I admit you as a link, and in the name of your fellow links, equal in every respect. I give you the right hand of fellowship. This is the Book of our Constitutions, and I have only to remind you that it is desirable that you should guard it carefully, and keep it safely from the eyes of those who are without this honorable Ring. Fellow Links, I present to you Mr. M who has been duly admitted to the Fellowship of the Linked Ring, and who has assumed the style and duties of our (here follows the title chosen)—Upstanding: Link![227]

The concept of fellowship was at the very core of the Linked Ring, replete as it is with implications of religious affiliation and chivalric ideas. In fact, as will be revealed in more detail later, Alfred Maskell and Carine Cadby, wife of Will Cadby and fellow Linked Ring, envisioned the society as a reconstituted King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Upon admission, each new Link was expected to contribute ten pounds towards group expenditures and to provide a mounted print to the official portfolio, representing his "diploma picture." The constitution stated that members were required to provide written notification in the event they were going to miss one of the monthly unions, without which they would be forced to retire from the society.

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[227] Book of the Constitution of the Linked Ring, 1893.

The Centre Link, Comptroller of the Exchequer (Alfred Horsley Hinton), Scribe (Alfred Maskell), Keeper of the Archives and Records (Francis Seyton Scott), Chamberlain (Henry E. Davis), Master of Musick (Bernard Alfieri), and the High Executioner (H. P. Robinson, along with two Deputy High Executioners, George Davison and Henry van der Weyde) all performed vital functions in preparation of the monthly unions, banquets, and the annual photographic salons.[228] The Centre Link's primary responsibilities on a monthly basis consisted of "distinguishing himself by some brilliant idea, or the initiation of some work for the general welfare of the Ring. It is also expected that he shall see that all necessary notices are sent out to the links, and, in fact, everything is left with confidence in his hands—a confidence which he considers himself bound to prove himself worthy of possessing." The Comptroller of the Exchequer was responsible for maintaining the finances of the Ring as well as managing the funds, expenditures, etc. The official Scribe maintained reliable records of all proceedings and resolutions arrived at along with the names and addresses of all Links in the Book of the Linked Ring, which was provided with a lock and key. The Keeper of the Archives and Records protected the Portfolio, the Seal or Stamp, the Mace, and all portable property of the Ring and produced these whenever the Ring was regularly united. The Chamberlain arranged for the banquets, dinners and suppers of the Ring and collected the contributions of each link at each event. The Master of the Musick arranged for vocal and instrumental harmony at banquets, dinners, and suppers.[229] Most importantly, the High Executioner "arranges, with the assistance of other links whom he may desire to aide him, the hanging of pictures at exhibitions and ruthlessly, by the advice of those within or without the Ring whose competence is acknowledged, condemns to absolute execution such work as may be deemed utterly unworthy of being suspended even on

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[228] Harker, *The Linked Ring*, 86.

[229] Book of the Constitution of the Linked Ring, 1893.

the highest limits of the walls of the galleries included."[230] In this context, the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring exemplified the Victorian desire for exclusive, all-male associations.

Fraternalism, Gentleman's Clubs and Victorian Male Identity

Art photographic societies, such as the Camera Club of New York and the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring in London, represented a broader trend in Victorian Britain and America, through which middle-class men embraced all-male social institutions imbued with elements of fraternal ritualism and masculine precepts. Scholars have shown the importance of fraternal organization such as the Freemasons in the construction of Victorian masculinity. Mark Carnes has argued that "fraternal ritual provided solace and psychological guidance during a young man's troubled passage to manhood in Victorian America."[231] For the middle class, such societies embraced capitalism and bourgeois sensibilities as they simultaneously created rituals whose message was largely antithetical to those structural relationships and values. The rituals within the organization also provided for the establishment of a male identity that challenged the emotionally stifling rigidity of Victorian gender roles.[232] According to Carnes the primary purpose of the lodge and its rituals was to reaffirm masculinity. For young Victorian men its rituals were the equivalent of initiation rites, facilitating their transition to and acceptance of an adult manhood which had lost much of the virile quality associated with an earlier time. The author argues that fraternalism was successful precisely because it provided solace and psychological guidance on the route to manhood. Mary Ann Clawson describes how fraternalism

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[230] Book of the Constitution of the Linked Ring, 1893.

[231] Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1989), 14.

[232] Ibid., 113.

shaped and maintained concepts such as individualism and mobility, while at the same time idealizing mutuality and brotherhood, and thereby contained a critique of the changing Victorian social order which helped to ameliorate the worst failures of the new social system.[233] In retrospect, Victorian fascination with brotherhoods and fraternal organizations indicated an obsession with fellowship that transcend political ideologies, yet the villainization of these societies throughout popular nineteenth century literature demonstrates a pervasive uneasiness aroused by "all-male societies," largely because of their potential for gender transgression, in which "effeminacy" was seen as an outward manifestation of a private sexual deviance.[234] James Eli Adams argued that Victorians' view of "secrecy," dividing the world between initiates and outsiders, was not only an index of potential sexual transgression but also as a sign of conspiracy directed against the existing political order.[235]

More recently historical inquiries into male associations and the interconnected nature of masculinity and national and imperial identity in the late Victorian period have emerged at the forefront of contemporary scholarship on masculinity. Seth Koven begins his intriguing overview of the history of fraternity and fraternal ideologies in Victorian Britain with an analysis of the interplay of religion and sexuality in benevolent institutions devoted to cross-class brotherhood.[236] According to Koven, both the Anglican Oxford House and the pan-denominational Toynbee Hall represented fraternal ideologies which were "unabashedly male and framed the major problems and the solutions confronting modern Britain—poverty, class

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[233] Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1989), 83.

[234] Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 17.

[235] Ibid., 62.

[236] Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 21.

conflict, and debates about citizenship—in wholly masculine terms."[237] More importantly they were "sites for testing conceptions of masculinity and male sexuality."[238] Critical to his overall assessment is that "first generation male settlers responded to the slums and came to understand their own masculinity and sexuality through two key concepts, asceticism and aestheticism."[239] Koven defines asceticism as the "impulse to renounce material pleasures and luxury voluntarily as a way to purify the individual and society. Asceticism was not only a bodily regime by which some men chose to regulate their daily lives. It was also essential [to] how they saw themselves as men and to their sense of what was wrong with the industrial capitalist metropolis as a center for the profligate consumption of goods and services."[240] The term most commonly espoused by artists, historians, and literary critics during the nineteenth century, aestheticism, is defined as the "assertion of the centrality and power of art and beauty in modern life." Koven's demographic of male settlers embraced this concept of aestheticism into their personal identities in an effort to implement unique strategies to transform urban poverty. Ultimately, he concludes that "London's male settlement houses arguably had more success than any other institution in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain in launching their residents and associates into positions that allowed them to define not only what was or was not a 'social problem,' but also to influence official church, governmental and private voluntary responses to these problems."[241] Koven's analysis of the all-male settlement houses in London reveals one aspect of cross-class male relationships in Victorian Britain. Amy Milne-Smith examines another. She shows how the

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[237] Ibid., 229.

[238] Ibid.

[239] Ibid., 230.

[240] Ibid.

[241] Ibid., 231.

Gentleman's Club in London created an alternative "domestic" space in the heart of the public sphere which intelligently expands the historical discourse on Victorian masculinity.

She dramatically re-imagines Victorian Gentleman's Clubs as an alternative domestic space which nurtured its upper middle-class and elite members' emotional lives within the safety of this exclusive, private institution, thereby complicating Victorian notions of domesticity. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the club was "an association of persons (admittance into which is usually guarded by ballot), formed mainly for social purposes and having a building (or part of one) appointed to the exclusive use of the members."[242] During the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods this particular definition of the word "club," as a permanent institution for the sole purpose of social intercourse and cooperation, became commonplace. Historically, these types of all-male associations owe their heritage to the seventeenth-century English coffeehouses.[243]. By the 1850s, there were nearly two hundred gentlemen's clubs and their imitators, some with waiting lists as long as sixteen years. The decades leading up to World War I marked the height of the West End club as the central all-male institution in many men's lives. The exact definition of what qualified as a gentlemen's club varied, and there was no standard list of clubs existing in London.[244] Many nineteenth-century associations owned luxurious clubhouses where male members benefitted from the comforts and amenities traditionally associated with the Victorian home while simultaneously

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[242] See *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, vol. 1* (1933; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) [hereafter cited as OED], 534..

[243] Mrinalini Sinha, "Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere: The Genealogy of an Imperial Institution in Colonial India," *Journal of British Studies* 40, no. 4, At Home in the Empire (October 2001): 493, accessed October 25, 2010, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3070745.

[244] Amy Milne-Smith, "A Flight to Domesticity? Making a Home in the Gentlemen's Clubs of London, 1880–1914," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 4 (October 2006): 799, accessed October 25, 2010, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/505958.

experiencing a sense of emotional security conventionally linked to the Victorian family. Milne-Smith argues that "domesticity as a concept can be separated from the home and family life." The creature comforts provided by the Gentleman's Club included a private space within the city that functioned as a dining hall, library, entertainment center, sleeping quarter, bathhouse, and study. Most Gentlemen's Clubs excluded women, yet provided its members with the emotional bonds of friendship as a substitute family. In this context, Milne-Smith argues that the Victorian Gentleman's club became an "essential site of an alternative domestic life for men, and consequently members' relationship to their clubs complicates the perceived late nineteenth-century masculine rejection of domesticity."[245]

In examining Victorian male's relationship to their clubs it becomes clear that domestic comforts made them eminently more attractive as personal sanctuaries against the stresses of modern life.[246] Membership in these social institutions allowed for unprecedented personal privacy. This pervasive sense of personal privacy might sometimes evolve into secrecy, and even illicit behavior. Milne-Smith's inquiry into the private indiscretions of its members proved difficult, yet there are enough references to suspect that some men used their clubs as a means to plan and facilitate shameful acts. These illicit sexual acts most likely included both intimate relationships between men and between men and women. While it is difficult to demonstrate that men ever used their clubs as actual sites of sexual intercourse, the privacy and secrecy that the clubs guaranteed would have made them a logical place to arrange for future sexual encounters. The frequency of these sexual encounters is not at issue however; the public perception that male

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[245] It should be noted that Tosh's work on a late nineteenth-century flight from domesticity focuses on the middle classes and does not deal explicitly with the upper middle classes or the elites; see Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 107.

[246] Milne-Smith, "A Flight to Domesticity?" 798.

members utilized their clubs for illicit contact or correspondence pervaded metropolitan society.[247] The centrality of the Gentleman's Club in the intimate social lives of Victorian men simultaneously represented a space in which national and imperial identity were constructed and constituted, and through which, as Mrinalini Sinha argues, the club was transformed into the quintessential "imperial institution."

As Sinha argues, the imperial nature of the Gentleman's Club was constituted "through its status as a privileged site for mediating the contradictory logic of 'Eurocentrism' in the creation of a distinctive colonial public sphere."[248] Central to her investigation of the European social club is defining those who qualified for membership, who were called "clubbable." As early as 1763, Samuel Johnson, the noted eighteenth century English poet, essayist and literary critic, labeled his biographer, James Boswell as an eminently clubbable man. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that the term became intimately connected with notions of Britishness. According to Sinha, the emergence of a distinctive "clubland" culture in Britain, consisting of a variety of private gentleman's clubs for the elite, was part of the recreation of urban elites in the specific conditions of the social and economic changes of the nineteenth century. Located primarily in central London in St. James's Street and Pall Mall, these elite all-male institutions, especially the ones located on St. James's Street, had a clientele drawn mainly from the British aristocracy, while the clubs on Pall Mall were mainly nineteenth-century creations, and their membership was predominantly bourgeois. Accordingly, Sinha argues that "the private gentleman's club in Britain, a cultural site for the distribution and mediation of elite power, articulated a concept of clubbability that was itself mediated by its imperial metropolitan

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[247] Ibid., 810.

[248] Sinha, "Britishness," 493.

location."[249] The model for the concept of clubbability that was embedded in such self-governing institutions as the clubs was always the "manly independent individual" whose social identity was defined in contrast to the subjected (i.e., women, children, servants, employees, slaves, and the colonized) in the nineteenth century.[250]

One of the most interesting features of Sinha's concept of clubbability is that it transcended the "network of power relations produced by the internal politics of Britain to include the wide set of class, gender, and race relations that was produced and enabled by British imperialism." The imperial articulation of clubbability, with its expressions of class, gender, and racial narratives were mutually constituted in both metropolitan and colonial locations.[251] The European social clubs in India, indeed, formed part of an elaborate set of mechanisms that articulated the legitimate boundaries of an acceptable image of "whiteness."[252] In this context, Sinha argues that colonial clubland both "held out the promise of potential clubbability to an emerging new 'Westernized' Indian middle class and endlessly deferred the realization of such a possibility. The colonial elaboration of clubbability, therefore, had to exist from the outset in constant tension with the potential clubbability of the 'right sort' of natives."[253] In the wider context of all-male associations, the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring was more than simply a social institution with art photography as its primary tenet; its advocacy for the mystical symbolism predominantly associated with organizations such as the Freemasons and the

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[249] Ibid., 497.

[250] Ibid.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid., 504.

[253] Ibid., 512.

Theosophical Society set it apart from the more prolific social or political societies that permeated central London.

Mystical Symbolism in the "Linked Rings"

The primary symbol of the Linked Ring, used by the Brotherhood on note paper and in various places in its *Journal*, as well as on the front cover of the catalogues of the *Photographic Salon, Annual Exhibition*, was three rings intertwined, each bearing a portion of the bexel in diamond shapes. In the Book of the Linked Ring it states,

> Linked Rings are ancient and pretty conceits consisting of two, three, four, five or even more gold circlets or finger rings, joined on a pivot or rivet and symbolizing a union of hearts and aspirations. Others, and these are known as *Gimmal rings*, consist of two circlets only, joined usually by two hands in enamel, clasped one over the other; the upper one, folding back on a spring, and disclose a small heart in enamel or precious stone.[254]

Historically, the Gimmal Ring, which in Latin is gemillus, meaning twin, has close associations with European betrothal rings and appears as such in Shakespeare's plays. It is interesting to contemplate the Ring's decision to change the primary symbol of the group from two interlocking circles to three. Perhaps the complex nature of "fraternal love" and the implied "marriage" between links symbolized in the Gimmal rings was too provocative for late Victorian eyes. The Linked Ring was well aware of the cultural authority Shakespeare had over late Victorian society, viewing him as a natural genius with near supernatural powers. He stood "like a magician above the race and [penetrated] with one glance into all the depths, mysteries, and

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[254] Book of the Constitution of the Linked Ring, 1893.

perplexities of human character."[255] This concept of embracing this obscure symbol was typical of art photographers' continued attempts to place the medium squarely in the realm of the highest form of art, Shakespearean literature. Both liberty and loyalty are terms that permeate the Book of the Linked Ring and combining the two terms in an unbreakable set of interlocked rings symbolizes the concept of "fellowship" or symbolic union (marriage) between the Rings. It is interesting that the original symbol of the Linked Ring, dual Gimmal rings, would evolve into a more universally recognized triple interlocked rings and would potentially evoke a strong emotional response by the multi-ethnic multi-cultural population inhabiting cosmopolitan London. The primary symbol of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring was evocative of spiritual transcendence, especially in London, where interest in Eastern and Western mystical traditions expanded among a Victorian audience desperate for alternative religious experiences. Specifically, middle-class Victorians became engaged in a broader social dialogue with Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism, and Shintoism, along with Judeo-Christian mystical traditions, Freemasonry, Medieval Chivalric Orders, Druidism, Greek Mystery Religions, and Neo-Platonic Philosophy. Within Eastern spiritual traditions, and especially Buddhism, the three interlocking circles held spiritual significance.

Buddhism is based on the life and teaching of the Indian sage Siddhartha Gautama (536-476 BCE), the Buddha or Enlightened One. Buddhists believe that persons can overcome the misery of the world and reach their own Buddha status by a process of mental and moral purification. The Buddhist canon has three main forms: Theravada, Mahayana, and Tibetan, with hundreds of scriptural texts and many different types of usage. The *Trikaya Doctrine* (Sanskrit for Three Bodies) is an important Buddhist teaching on both the nature of reality and the nature

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[255] Adrian Poole, *Shakespeare and the Victorians* (London, Thomson Learning, 2004), 77.

of the Buddha. This doctrine states that a Buddha has three kayas or bodies; the *nirmanakaya*, or created body, which manifests in time and space; the *sambhogakaya*, or body of mutual enjoyment, which is a body of bliss or clear light manifestation; and the *dharmakaya*, or truth body, which embodies the very principle of enlightenment and knows no limits or boundaries. Alternatively, the three interlocking rings may also represent the concept of the *triratna* or three jewels, which are highly valued in Buddhism for their indestructible and unchanging nature. Practicing Buddhists seek guidance or refuge from suffering by embracing the three principles. In Buddhist thought, the *triratna* consists of the Buddha, which, depending on one's perspective, can represent the historical figure or the Buddha nature, which represents the highest spiritual potential within all human beings. The second principle is the *dharma*, which is the teachings of the Buddha; and the third is the *sangha*, representing the community of fellow Buddhists who assist one in attaining enlightenment. Individuals who seek refuge in the *triratna* are considered to be practicing Buddhists.

The symbol of triple interdependence also permeates Western art and religion. Most significantly, in Christianity it represents the *Holy Trinity* (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). Throughout western history the *triquetra*, or *three corners*, can also be seen in multiple cultures with specific spiritual significance. In Northern Europe, the *Valknut* is found in rune stones and is associated with Norse god Odin. The *triquetra* is also found in Medieval Celtic artistic designs within texts such as the Book of Kells and on Celtic Crosses. This widely recognized knot has been used as a singular symbol for two centuries by both Christians and Pagans throughout the Celtic world. Both Eastern and Western mystical traditions recognized and embraced the symbolic power of three, so it is no wonder that late Victorian culture, imbricated with esoteric

spiritual traditions, would influence the Linked Ring's decision to select as its primary symbol

the three interlocking gimmal rings.

Royal Photographic Society vs. Brotherhood of the Linked Ring: Competing Visions of Britannia

The Brotherhood of the Linked Ring's position on the aesthetics of art photography

placed it in a unique position, in that it begged the question, is this new photographic institution

complementing the *parent society*, or is it challenging its political and cultural hegemony of forty

years? The photographic press addressed this in May 1893, when the periodical, *Photographic

Work*, threw down the metaphorical gauntlet in initiating a public rivalry between the Linked

Ring's first Photographic Salon and the 39th Anniversary of the Photographic Society of Great

Britain's Exhibition. According to the reviewer,

> Last week we made mention of the proposal to hold a rival exhibition in the
> Dudley Gallery during the autumn, and the fact that the new exhibition is intended
> to be pitted against the old-established exhibition of the National Photographic
> Society should be evident enough from the fact that the new exhibition is taking
> place at the Gallery in Pall Mall. If indeed, any further illustration of the spirit of
> rivalry were required, it might be found in the fact that the organizer of the new
> venture is no other than Mr. Alfred Maskell, whose efforts in connection with a
> recent exhibition at Pall Mall were so little appreciated by the authorities that a
> policeman was sent for to remove him from the premises.[256]

In the process of defaming its organizer, Alfred Maskell, the reviewer also attacks the label of

Photographic Salon, "a title which, if it applies to any photographic exhibition, applies to the

old-established national show of photographs at Pall Mall." Concluding the evaluation of the

potential success of the Salon, the reviewer implied that those photographs rejected by the

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[256] "A Rival Photographic Exhibition in London," *Photographic Work*, May 19, 1893, 230-31.

nomination committee of the Photographic Society of Great Britain would assist in filling the quota of photographs necessary to open the Photographic Salon.[257]

In response, George Davison argued that the Salon was in no way a rival to the Photographic Society, implying that the primary season for photographic exhibition made obtaining a proper venue a difficult task to say the least. Davison also stridently defended the artistic merits of the selection committee by naming a complete list of the prominent art photographers involved in the process, including George Davison, Chairman Organizing Committee, Photo Salon, Photographic Salon, 1893 (General Committee), Bernard Alfieri, T. J. Bright, J. S. Bergheim, A. Burchett, H. H. Cameron, Lyonel Clark, F. Cobb, W. L. Colls, H. E. Davis, G. Davison, J. Gale, J. P. Gibson, Karl Greger, W. A. Greene, A. H. Hinton, Fred Hollyer, A. Maskell, H. P. Robinson, R. W. Robinson, Lyd. Sawyer, F. S. Scott, Henry Stevens, F. M. Sutcliffe, H. van der Weyde, W. Willis, H. Tolley, E. Calland, Hector Colard, Rowland Briant, B. G. Wilkinson, Shahpur N. Bhedwar, R. Keene, W. Crooke, and J. B. B. Wellington.[258] Some members of the committee were involved in the mass resignation the previous year; however, a majority of committee members were also members of the Photographic Society of Great Britain. In a satiric take on the "rivalry" between the two photographic institutions, the *Amateur Photographer* printed an advertisement in its June 23, 1893 issue stating the following:

> Advertisement: Photography by a Photographer. To the Subjects of H. M. Queen Victoria, the fellow countrymen of H. R. H. Prince of Wales, ETC., ETC., ETC., INSTANTANEOUS OR PROLONGED AGONY. GOOD (OR BAD) PORTRAITS GUARANTEED. MONEY EAGERLY TAKEN, BUT NEVER RETURNED. "NOTE. -- Gentlemen are earnestly requested to refrain from heaving half a brick at, or shooting at, the artist; a wooden dummy being provided

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[257] Ibid., 230-31.

[258] George Davison, "*A Rival Photographic Exhibition in London*," *Photographic Work*, May 26, 1893, 249.

for that purpose. "Ladies are respectfully informed that throwing vitriol at the photographer is strictly prohibited." "For further particulars apply to "SIGNOR IMPRESSION ISTA.[259]

This rhetorical battle between "professional" and "amateur" photographers concerning issues of "amateur privileges" vs. "professional responsibilities" was waged over the Photographic Salon's policy of not awarding medals but instead allowing art photographers to sell their photographs by listing prices on individual pieces.

H. P. Robinson's response to the growing animosity between the organizers of the Salon and the Photographic Society of Great Britain exhibition was to dismiss unequivocally any hostility by focusing on the Salon's niche role in advocating photography as a fine art, a position the "parent society" had neglected, preferring the scientific and mechanical nature of the craft.

The selection committee's responsibility was to choose those photographs which best conveyed those qualities such as sentiment, composition, chiaroscuro, breadth, and atmosphere which all comprise pictorial ideals.[260] Again, the apparent hostility towards the Photographic Salon by the *Photographic Work* in its June 9, 1893 article argued its position in the following sardonic way:

> Rightly or wrongly, a large section of the photographic public regard the proposal to hold another exhibition at the same time as the old-established, and in the same neighborhood, as a part of an avowed and deliberate scheme on the part of a very small group of malcontents to "smash up the Photographic Society"; and it is this belief that at present gives the whole matter such special interest as to make its discussion an integral part of current photographic possible gossip. If the beliefs gains ground that the new exhibition is intentionally rival, the result will probably

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[259] "Satirical Exhibition Advertisement," *The Amateur Photographer*, June 23, 1893, 412.

[260] H.P. Robinson, "Rambling Papers: The Photographic Salon," *The Photographic News*, June 2, 1893, 344-46.

be that the next exhibition of the National Society will be its most triumphant success—a success even more notable than that which followed rumors of rivalry last year. If, on the other hand, the photographic public can be brought to see that no rivalry is intended, all keen interest will disappear, and the new venture will merely rank as one of the numerous secondary shows organized by small and obscure groups—a class of exhibition which has multiplied so inconveniently of late.[261]

This statement clearly defines art photographers as "malcontents" whose efforts will only strengthen the Photographic Society of Great Britain's role as the prime photographic institution representing the British monarchy and its people. The *British Journal of Photography* concurred with its fellow photographic periodical in its assessment of the Salon, but increased the antagonism within the photographic community by a vehement attack on the organizers of the Salon: "To run an opposition show to the Photographic Society's exhibition," it stated, "practically at the same date, and only about five hundred yards away, is the mean revenge of a vindictive clique still smarting under the whipping of two years ago, and made furious by the circumstance that the Society they deserted is getting on better without them than with them."[262] Alfred Horsley Hinton, the editor-in-chief of the *Amateur Photographer*, shortly before the beginning of the opposing exhibitions tried, like his fellow Link, H. P. Robinson, both to alleviate the tension and to remark on the revolutionary nature of the Photographic Salon. According to Hinton, art photographers were iconoclasts, disrupting the established order and time honored cannons of "respectable photography." The Linked Ring's photographic exhibition

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[261] "The Proposed New Exhibition: Is it Rival or Auxiliary?" *Photographic Work*, June 9, 1893, 265-66.

[262] Ibid., 265-66.

represented a revolutionary new space, the Salon, with "no classes, no awards, and no entrance fees."[263]

Historical Legacy of the Great Exhibition of 1851

  If in 1893 art photographers could be defined as revolutionaries, it is critical to provide the historical context which forced them into this political position. The Photographic Society of Great Britain Exhibition of 1893 represented the 39th anniversary of the first photographic exhibition of the society. In examining the first photographic exhibition, which took place in the fall of 1854, we cannot escape the role of the Great Exhibition of 1851. The emergence of Photography as a visual medium during the Great Exhibition of 1851 was instrumental in its continual association throughout the nineteenth century with cultural progress and decline. One historian has argued that "photography symbolized progressive and regressive change and a stillpoint within change—one of the many involuted contradictions that suffused photographic discourse."[264] It was at the Crystal Palace that the display of photographs took on a "performative" function as the embodiment of British Modernity. During the Great Exhibition there were 145 photographic objects displayed: various types of photogenic apparatus, magnifying lenses, telescopes, optical glass, calotype cameras, compound achromatic lenses, camera obscuras, dynactinometers (which measure the intensity of the reflected photogenic radiation), a focimeter, and a Mercury Box, along with numerous daguerreotypes and talbotype, and calotype photographs. Many of the exhibitors were interested in photographing the venue, such as British photographer John Jabez Edwin Mayall. In fact, Great Britain dominated the

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[263] A. Horsley Hinton, "Rivalry and Co-operation," *The Amateur Photographer*, August 4, 1893, 74-76.

[264] Marien, *Photography and its Critics*, 75.

entries with 90 exhibits demonstrating how crucial photography was to the organizers' overall

perception of themselves as a *modern* nation compared to other participants. This Great

Exhibition of 1851 was conceived by one of its initial advocates, Prince Albert, to symbolize the

industrial, military, economic, and cultural superiority of Great Britain. So it was only natural

that the British Monarchy would officially support the creation of the Photographic Society in

1853. *The Photographic Work*, in its article, *The Photographic Society of Great Britain: Its First

Year's Work in 1853*, recognized the historical significance of the society's anniversary in the

context of the current art vs. science debate. According to its author,

> Forty years ago the photographic workers of England felt the need of some central
> organization to assist in interchange of ideas and methods of working, and more
> especially on the art side of the subject. As a result the Photographic Society of
> Great Britain was founded; and turning to the opening paragraph of the first
> number of its Journal, we read that "The object of the Photographic Society of
> Great Britain is the promotion of the art and science of photography"—the term
> art coming before science. To this preference of the art aspect over the scientific it
> has substantially adhered ever since, as its records and the annual exhibition show
> clearly enough. That is to say, it has all along recognized that the main social use
> of photography is as a means of pictorial representation, rather than of scientific
> record.[265]

Stressing the point, from its inception, that art took precedence over science, the society became

the champion of the artistic qualities of photography. This is further supported by the location

and members leading the early society. At its inaugural meeting in the great room of the Society

of Arts on January 20, 1853, Sir Charles Eastlake, president of the Royal Academy, was in the

chair, Roger Fenton the leading exponent of pictorial photography of that time, officiating as

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[265] "The Photographic Society of Great Britain: Its First Year's Work in 1853," *Photographic Work*, September 22, 1893, 445-46.

secretary."[266] The first exhibition held on January 4, 1854 at the Suffolk Street Gallery was

patronized by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. As ardent supporters of both the Photographic

Society and its first exhibition, the royal couple requested a preview of the exhibition hall on

January 3. According to reports in the *Journal of the Photographic Society*, the queen and prince

"expressed extreme satisfaction at witnessing the wonderful advance photography has recently

made, and before their departure, after a prolonged examination of the collection, congratulated

the officers of the Society on the success which had crowned their efforts."[267] The direct

involvement and patronage by the royal couple imbued the society from its beginnings in 1853

with an aura of political and cultural authority. So, after forty years of hegemonic control, the

Brotherhood of the Linked Ring's attempted usurpation of the mantle as champions of art

photography created an atmosphere of animosity and anxiety. This overthrow of the

Photographic Society of Great Britain's role as the parent society and as defender of "proper"

photography was most assuredly addressed in the first notice of the Photographic Society of

Great Britain's Exhibition in the *Times*.

Photographic Salon of 1894

In a very straightforward and unbiased manner the reviewer for the *Times* remarked that

the Photographic Society was not an artistic, but rather a scientific society.

> Its principal aims are evidently to foster the researches of science in the
> advancement of the optical and chemical investigations which result in the
> triumphant discoveries with which photography from time to time startles the
> world; to encourage perfection in the instruments and apparatus employed; and to

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[266] Ibid., 445-46.

[267] "The First Exhibition of the Photographic Society," *Photographic Work*, September 22, 1893, 446-47.

preserve the standard of perfect technique so necessary for the successful application of theory to practice. To the scientific photographer the terms perfect negative and perfect technique have absolute and definite meanings. Qualities such as clearness and brilliancy would appear to be essential. On the other hand, in the production of results which would appeal more strongly to the eye of an artist than the ordinary topographical view or commercial portrait, negatives would probably be used and methods employed which it would be the duty of a jury of scientific photographers to dismiss as imperfect.[268]

This summation by the primary newspaper of record in Great Britain clearly and unequivocally discounts the previous assessments by several papers in the photographic periodical press sympathetic to the Photographic Society's claim of advocacy for pictorial photography. Whatever the original intent of the Photographic Society during its first years of existence, it had become obvious to many that by the 1890s, scientific progress as well as the display of cameras, chemicals, and optical appliances had overshadowed any attempts at maintaining even the illusion of artistic expression. This allowed an opportunity for the Photographic Salon to emerge as potential successor to the exhibition. The *Times* also reviewed the first annual Photographic Salon, recognizing its attempt to "separate photography from purely a mechanical science and that of the finer graphic arts."[269] Most importantly, the *Times* noted, "the pictures here exhibited claim to show a greater freedom, more individuality, and less of the bare registration of fact than are usually associated with what we call a photograph."[270]

In the *Photographic News*, the reviewer commented on the fact that those visitors unfamiliar with recent developments in pictorial photography or the aesthetics of the "New

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[268] "Press Notices of the Exhibition (*Times*)," *Photographic Work*, September 29, 1893, 459.

[269] "The Newspaper Press on the 'Photographic Salon'," *Photographic Work*, October 13, 1893, 488-90.

[270] Ibid., 488-90.

School of Photography" would be dumbfounded by these pictorial images. The reviewer clearly

sympathized with the general bewilderment, stating "how revolutionary these photographs are

compared to a decade ago."[271] One scathing review by the *Star*, reprinted in the *Amateur*

Photographer, referred to "folly of men who call their exhibition the Photographic Salon." It

went on,

> One of their objects, they announce boldly, is "to strengthen and advance the
> position that photography is making for itself among graphic arts." There could be
> no greater absurdity; photography may advance and develop and progress; it may
> have in store for us surprises and inventions innumerable; but it can never be
> ranked with the graphic arts. I realize that I repeat myself. I have more than once
> pointed out the distinction between photography, a mechanical contrivance, and
> art. But the men who exhibit here rest their claims to critical and public interest
> upon their artistic pretensions. They make it impossible to notice their work and
> ignore their ambition to be what they are not.[272]

The *Photographic News* ran a similar if more informative response in attacking the aims of the

Linked Ring exhibiting at the Photographic Salon. The reviewer transformed the aesthetic debate

into spiritual terms, transforming the art photographer into a religious zealot, performing sacred

rites through naturalistic or impressionistic photography. The commentator even invoked

Shakespeare's Hamlet to critique the photographer's "abominable attempt at imitating nature."

The article then goes into detail on the methodology engaged by photographers to transform a

photograph into a work of art, "The lines can be softened or blurred by inserting between

negative and printing surface a supplementary glass plate, or even by printing the negative wrong

side before and the lights can be degraded or the picture fogged more or less all over by sunning

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[271] "Photographic Salon: Dudley Gallery," *The Photographic News*, October 13, 1893, 649-50.

[272] A. U., "Salon Review in the *Star*," *The Amateur Photographer*, October 27, 1893, 271.

the print. By such expedients and by using a suitable printing medium with a certain amount of skilful manipulation any photograph almost can be made to look like what it is not."[273]

Among all the skeptical or outright negative reviews in the photographic periodical press, there were several encouraging or even optimistic appraisals of the performance of the exhibits at the Salon. The commentator for the *Amateur Photographer*, T. W., wrote enthusiastically about the results of the Salon, stating it had "done more almost than any previous one to prove that photography allows the artist free play for his own individuality…The value of photography as a medium for artistic expression is now established forever."[274] There were enough positive notices in the British periodical press to encourage the Linked Ring to attempt a second Photographic Salon in 1894. This second Salon surpassed the first in creativity and pictorial qualities, receiving almost universal praise. Unfortunately, an event would occur that had the potential to disrupt not only the future of the Salon, but also its most powerful proponent, A. Horsley Hinton.

Alfred Horsley Hinton and the "Black-Balling" Incident with the R.P.S.

As one of the founding members of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring and the editor-in-chief of the *Amateur Photographer*, Alfred Horsley Hinton had a unique platform from which to advocate pictorial photography to the masses. It was because of Hinton's powerful position within the photographic community that any blemish on his personal character would be incredibly detrimental to art photography as a whole and this is why the "black-balling incident" that occurred during the photographic salon of 1894 would call into question Hinton's status as a

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[273] "The Photographic Salon (Concluding Notice)," *The Photographic News*, November 3, 1893, 697-98.

[274] T.W., "The Studio Article on the Salon," *The Amateur Photographer*, November 24, 1893, 339.

"gentleman." Margaret Harker describes Hinton as "eccentric," but as "having enjoyed enormous respect and affection from British Pictorial photographers and colleagues in the press world…whenever he spoke at meetings it was always to the point and what he said commanded attention."[275] The facts of A. Horsley Hinton's *black-balling* incident breaks down as follows: following the mass resignations from the Photographic Society of Great Britain, 1891-1892, said society misplaced the resignation letter and never considered Hinton resigned from the society. By October of 1894, the letter was located through the assistance of Horsley Hinton himself, and his resignation was allowed by the Council. This complicated Hinton's application to "rejoin" the now *Royal Photographic Society* and led to the unfortunate rejection or black-balling by several council members.[276] I argue that it was the internal politics within the British photographic community surrounding the nature of art photography which allowed certain members of the Royal Photographic Society council the opportunity to discredit the most public member of the Linked Ring personally.

In the November 23, 1894 issue of the *Photographic News*, Hinton discusses the "incident" with good humor and sarcasm.

> Sir, at the exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society this year, the judges did me the honor to award me a medal. At the meeting of the Society on the 13th inst., the members paid me the further honor and distinction of "black-balling" me alone out of fifty-six candidates for membership; the first instance of the kind for many years…others may be glad to know that apparently some other qualifications than merit and good character are necessary for membership at the

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[275] Harker, *The Linked Ring*, 152.

[276] "The Black-Balling Incident," *Photographic Works*, January 11, 1895, 13-14.

Royal Photographic Society. I am sending a copy of this letter to all the photographic papers, and shall esteem it a favor if you will insert it.[277]

His published remarks sparked a huge controversy throughout the photographic periodical press, with multiple articles in the *Photographic Work* weighing in on the matter. The nature of the debate within the editorial pages of the journal indicated critical bias against A. Horsley Hinton, particularly his failure to provide proof of his allegations.[278] Chapman Jones, the secretary of the Royal Photographic Society, sided with Hinton stating "if his resignation some three years or more ago is really the reason why his present application for membership has been rejected, then I venture to state that had it been generally known that there was likely to have been an organized opposition to his election, he would have been made a member of the Society by a very large majority."[279] H. Snowden Ward believed that the incident did more to injure the reputation of the Society, stating that "whatever may be done by the other signatories, I have no intention of resigning. There is no question of injury done to us by the Society, but rather of a great and serious injury done to the Society by the action (surely capricious) of a few of its members."[280]

Again, the editorial staff of *Photographic Work* clearly stated their position on the black-balling incident by saying, "the present prosperous condition and bright prospects of the National

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[277] Alfred Horsley Hinton, "Correspondence: Mr. Horsley Hinton and the R.P.S.G.B.," *The Photographic News*, November 23, 1894, 750.

[278] "Black-Balling at the Royal Photographic Society," *Photographic Work*, November 30, 1894, 567.

[279] Chapman Jones, "'Black-Balling' at the Royal Photographic Society," *Photographic Work*, November 30, 1894, 573.

[280] H. Snowden Ward, "'Black-Balling' at the Royal Photographic Society," *Photographic Work*, November 30, 1894, 573.

Photographic Society are in no sense disturbed by the almost childish petulance of a candidate for re-admission, who was recently rejected at the ballot, and who, instead of thoroughly recognizing the full right of those present to ballot according to their views and opinions, has thought proper to discuss the matter by writing to the photographic press; indeed, the Society must ultimately benefit by the clearing of general issues arising out of the incident."[281] For the nineteenth century gentleman, membership in one of the numerous exclusive clubs solidified his social status and usually focused on a specific interest (e.g. politics, literature, sports, art). Historically, it was the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 which drove interest in joining a "gentleman's club." Membership was almost always limited to maintain an air of exclusivity, respectability, and masculine privilege and potential members most definitely needed to have an official member sponsor or support their petition to join. Victorians viewed club membership as a critical component of their overall social and political identity, so being rejected could negatively define one's public persona with the label of *unclubbable*.[282] During the 1890s the term *black-balled* was applied to one who was ostracized from a specific club. Historically, it was represented by a secret ballot, where a white ball indicating support and a black ball opposition. Clubs in the nineteenth century usually disallowed potential members if they received one or two ballets or black balls. Since the 17th century, this method of secret ballot had been utilized not only by gentleman clubs but also within Freemasonry and Fraternities. A black-balling from a Victorian gentleman's club could cause irreparable damage to a Victorian male's social standing. The gendered space of the gentleman's club was the scene in many works by Oscar Wilde during the 1890s populated by sexually and morally ambiguous dandies as club

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[281] "Minor Stress in Connection with the Royal Photographic Society: Aftermath of the Black-Balling Incident," *Photographic Work*, December 7, 1894, 577-78.

[282] Samuel Johnson coined the phrase "unclubbable" during the 18th century.

members. Oscar Wilde spent many of his leisure hours frequenting the over ten clubs of which

he was a member, including the Albermarle Club, the place where Lord Queensberry's

incriminating note accusing Wilde of sexual deviance was left.[283]

As we have seen during the period 1890-1895, Oscar Wilde became one of the most

influential writers in late Victorian Britain with a reputation as a brilliant wit, literary stylist, and

master of the English language.[284] When the Queensberry libel trial began in late March of 1895,

Wilde had two smash successes playing in the fashionable West End: *An Ideal Husband* at the

Haymarket Theatre and *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the St. James's. But as Wilde's first

criminal trial stretched into April, and the second into May, the daily press coverage of his sex

scandal quickly upstaged the plays, and growing public pressure soon forced them to close.

Following Queensberry's acquittal on the libel charge, Wilde himself was indicted for violating

section 11 of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, which criminalized "acts of gross

indecency between men," even those consensual acts committed in private. For a variety of

reasons, Wilde's first criminal trial ended in a hung jury, but following a second trial, Wilde was

convicted and sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labor, the harshest sentence

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[283] Allison Pease, *Wilde and the Club, Reading Wilde, Querying Spaces, Part 7*, accessed November 23, 2010, http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/fales/exhibits/wilde/6club.htm.

[284] The highlights of Wilde's literary production for the first half of the decade are the following: in 1890, "The Picture of Dorian Gray" was published in Lippincott's Monthly Magazine, causing great furor and debate in the press on the subject of art and morality. In 1891, Wilde published "The True Function and Value of Criticism" in two parts, later retitled "The Critic as Artist" when collected with three previously published essays ("The Decay of Lying", "The Truth of Masks", and "Pen, Pencil and Poison") in *Intentions*. Also in 1891, Wilde published "The Soul of Man under Socialism," the revised version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, as a novel, *Lord Arthur Savil's Crime and Other Stories*, and the play *A House of Pomegranates*. The play *A Duchess of Padua*, was anonymously produced in New York under the title of Guido Ferranti. In 1892, Wilde wrote *Salome*, in French. It was refused a license for production in England, but was later debuted in Paris in 1896. In 1892, *Lady Windermere's Fan* was Wilde's first theatrical success in London, followed by *A Woman of No Importance* in 1893. *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* both opened in early 1895.

permitted by law.[285] Recently historical scholarship by Michael Foldy situates the trials within

the prevailing cultural and intellectual climate which he terms "heterosexist" and "homophobic."

Both terms are seen as dynamic and transitive historical phenomena which are culturally specific

and socially constructed. Foldy argues that "the mechanisms of restraint and the structures of

repression, which represent the reification of 'heterosexism' in virtually every modern society,

comprised a very powerful (if very discreet) social presence within English society before the

trials, and that this presence became even more powerful, and even more obvious, as a direct

result of the Wilde trials.[286] Foldy further suggests that the late nineteenth-century variant of

"homophobia" was the historical correlative of medical and scientific criteria and was widely

supported and reinforced by both popular and professional discourses on "decadence,"

"degeneration," and "sexual inversion."[287] Paradoxically, Foldy examined the contradiction

between the codification of very strict laws on Victorian sexual behavior, specifically same-sex

practices, against governmental and law enforcement officials' reluctance in prosecuting sexual

offenders. In this context, Foldy argues that the Wilde Trials represented a broader societal shift

from more lenient views on gender and sexual deviance to a more radically intolerant view

towards homosexuality and male effeminacy.[288] Foldy demonstrates that throughout the course

of the trials, Wilde—whose literary works have always been regarded as quintessentially

"English"—came himself to symbolize the very antithesis of "Englishness." In effect, Wilde

came to represent a very potent threat to the "health" of Britain at a very critical juncture in that

nation's history, and Wilde's conviction and imprisonment in turn represented a concerted effort

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[285] Michael S. Foldy, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde: Deviance, Morality and Late-Victorian Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), x.

[286] Ibid., xiv.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Ibid.

on the part of "society" to address and cure a debilitating "sickness" and to reaffirm the existing moral order.[289]

The black-balling incident involving Alfred Horsley Hinton from the Royal Photographic Society paralleled the trial of Oscar Wilde in timing and, perhaps, in tone. Certainly it must have raised the question of "effeminacy" throughout the photographic community. Although there was never any implication of sexual deviancy implied in the black-balling of A. Horsley Hinton, it does demonstrate the social and cultural authority these private institutions had on an individual's public character. In the end it seems that the Victorian middle class had little patience for dangerous individuals, either Hinton or Wilde, threatening one of its sacred institutions.

Old Chivalry vs. New Chivalry

By the spring of 1896, the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring began to issue an intermittent journal, titled *The Linked Ring Papers*, and in its premier issue an anonymous author, the Linked Ring scribe (a.k.a. Alfred Maskell), wrote about the ideals of the society. According to Maskell,

> I disclaim any Right—we have no Rights, only Customs—to arrogate to myself the Writing of the First Paper, but I also have no choice, and cannot plead the Custom, to refuse to do anything which my Fellow Links consider of the least Service to our Mistress Photography, or any who truly love her with a whole Soul, or to that Worshipful Fellowship of the Linked Ring, which is now Glittering and Resplendent; arrived from Very Nothing to an Unspeakable Estate, as our Worthy Shakespeare observed, an Example to the World and all that therein is, like King Arthur and his Round Table: "To Serve as Model for the Mighty World, And be the fair beginning of a time."[290]

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[289] Ibid., xv.

[290] *Linked Ring Papers Numb. I: An Intermittent Journal*, Tuesday, February 11, 1896.

This was addressed to recently initiated Rings, who Maskell celebrates "with honor of being invited, solely on account of their talents and evident enthusiasm for our Art, to enter our Mystic Ring."[291] The Ring as a sacred circle, much like Arthur's Round Table, transformed the art photographer into something more than mortal, dependent, and bound to every other Link in brotherly and harmonious bonds. Arthurian masculinity and the "chivalric" ideal became important components of constructions of Victorian notions of the gentleman. The Linked Ring consciously advocated the concepts embedded within medieval chivalry in order to reject the *new chivalry* articulated by Charles Kains-Jackson, a London lawyer and editor of *The Artist and Journal of Home Culture*, an otherwise mainstream journal that nevertheless published a great deal of Uranian[292] material.[293] The term Uranian was in common usage at the end of the nineteenth century as a term which was free from the derogatory associations of alternatives such as *homosexual* or *paederast*.[294] This concept of the *new chivalry* was first published in the *Artist and Journal of Home Culture* in April 1894, and argued that "wherefore just as the flower of the early and imperfect civilization was in what we may call the Old Chivalry, or the exaltation of the youthful feminine ideal, so the flower of the adult and perfect civilization will be found in the New Chivalry or the exaltation of the youthful masculine ideal."[295] Charles Kains-Jackson

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[291] *Linked Ring Papers Numb. I: An Intermittent Journal*, Tuesday, February 11, 1896.

[292] The adjective "Uranian" is drawn from Plato's Symposium, where Pausanius argues that there are two Aphrodites: the "heavenly" and the "common" Aphrodite. The heavenly Aphrodite is the older, motherless daughter of Uranus, and the love that accompanies her "does not share in the female, but only in the male—this is love for young boys." Pausanius then goes on to describe in some detail the superior nature of this love. See Plato, "The Symposium," in *The Symposium and the Phaedrus: Plato's Erotic Dialogues*, trans. William S. Cobb (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 180c-181e.

[293] Richard Dellamora, ed., *Victorian Sexual Dissidence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 270.

[294] Ibid.

[295] Chris White, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Source Book* (London: Routledge, 1999); Charles Kains-Jackson, "The New Chivalry," *The Artist and Journal of Home Culture*, 2 April 1894, 155.

envisioned in this re-imagined chivalry a more spiritual type of English manhood embodied in the physical form of the male youth. Accordingly, "as in Sparta so once more, will the lover be the inbreather—eispnelos, the beloved "this listener"—aites." By embracing the hyper-masculine Spartan culture of ancient Greece, Kains-Jackson articulates an alternative path to reinvigorate the English male.

Interestingly, Carine Cadby, the wife of Linked Ring member Will Cadby, wrote in May of 1896 an article in the *Amateur Photographer* discussing the Linked Ring, King Arthur, and the question of masculinity. Cadby begins by examining the "mysterious" birth of the Photographic Salon, which sprang miraculously into existence. She then states, "One feels inclined to say 'Woman,' for who could imagine the Salon, with its charm and whimsicality anything masculine?"[296] However she explains how "solid," "earnest," and "serious" the salon is. Cadby then describes the spiritual sensations one experiences upon entering the salon.

> One feels it at once in entering the exhibition immediately one has paid one's shilling at the door. The air is weighty with seriousness of purpose, the walls are dark, the hangings are somber, and altogether there is a solemnity about it that checks the frivolous remark and damps the laugh. They seem irreverent and out of place in this church dedicated to art. Indeed, so religious becomes one's mood that a shock is experienced in finding sordid prices figuring in the sedate catalogue.[297]

The Photographic Salon can be viewed in the minds of art photographers at least as a sacred space. Paradoxically, the Salon's attempt to rebuke the Royal Photographic Society's exhibition's commercial aspects is somewhat undone by allowing for photographers to sell their

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[296] Carine Cadby, "The Salon and the Ring," *The Amateur Photographer*, May 1, 1896, 376.

[297] Ibid.

works of art to the public. Carine Cadby, like Alfred Maskell in the Linked Ring Papers a few months previously, attempted to merge the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring with the complex and recently reconstructed identity of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table.

> They figuratively sit at a round table, where none is, at any rate, given pre-eminence. When several men are drawn together by one interest centering round a gift they all possess in a measure, the atmosphere is rarely one of undisturbed serenity, but King Arthur looks high and far ahead, so the disagreements of his knights are not in his eye range. He is well repaid at the yearly tournament. Then he shines with pride at their prowess and beams with delight at their red-ticket laurel wreaths! To keep such a ring unbroken seems then well worth his careful handling, and we, the outside public are the gainers that Arthur and his knighthood, for a space, were all one will. Among the knights Sir Lancelot follows Arthur closely but the public neither understands nor appreciates their feats, so now they do not exhibit them to any great extent. Sir Galahad, too, has won distinction-but these remarks border on personality and having foresworn aught but comment I must hie back to it.[298]

As it is unclear who Carine Cadby identifies as Arthur, Lancelot, and Galahad, this sacred Arthurian trinity could represent Alfred Horsley Hinton, Alfred Maskell, and H. P. Robinson or George Davison. All four men were incredibly influential amongst the British Photographic community as well as being founding members of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring and the Photographic Salon. Regardless of whether this was a superficial attempt to connect the Linked Ring and Arthurian Legend (I believe it was not), the profound use of symbolic imagery and language found in a multitude of primary source documents such as the Book of the Constitution of the Linked Ring, for example, reaffirms the Linked Ring's embrace of Tennyson's Arthurian Chivalry.

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[298] Ibid.

Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (1859) was an immensely successful publication that dominated Victorian conceptions of King Arthur and his Round Table. For Tennyson, it was morality, in particular the avoidance of sexual misconduct, which became central to his interpretation of the myth of Arthur as a guide to the good maintenance of both the kingdom and the home.[299] The motivating impulse behind these poems, and what later would be the central concern in the whole work, was to show the rise and fall of a society and to suggest symbolically and allegorically a pertinence to the age in which he lived.[300] This domesticated version of the Arthurian legend would remain archetypal at least until World War I.[301] Tennyson's Arthurian chivalry had so permeated Victorian society that by 1893 a minister named William Byron Forbush (1868-1927) established the first of what was to become a national network of clubs for boys called the Knights of King Arthur. Forbush was concerned about what he called "the boy problem" and sought a positive outlet for the energies and inclinations of adolescent boys. He saw in the legends of the Knights of the Round Table as interpreted by Tennyson a model that could inspire boys to manly courage and moral virtue.[302]

Tennyson's "Arthur" reflected more than just Victorian gender anxieties creating a protagonist that was a leader who civilized a savage people and also a monarch with divine blessing. In the crisis of both idylls, Arthur is absent, righting wrongs: he and Tennyson do not share the medieval enthusiasm for love, religious or sensual. "Powerful, moral and tragic,

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[299] Elizabeth Archibald and Ed Putter, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 114.

[300] Robert W. Hill, Jr., ed., *Tennyson's Poetry: Authoritative Texts, Contexts, Criticism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 375.

[301] Archibald and Putter, *Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend*, 114.

[302] Alan Lupack, *The Oxford Guide to Arthurian Literature and Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 165.

Tennyson's Arthurian project gained massive contemporary consent, and its central and dominating importance makes it in retrospect seem obvious, inevitable, as the voice of Victorianism."[303]

Conclusion

In many respects the cultural climate which shaped the late nineteenth century photographic art world was dominated by alternative and competing forms of modernity, specifically ones reutilizing the principles developed during the first period of Romanticism earlier in the century. The main critique of "modern" life revolved around the tensions and fissures surrounding the transition between industrial capitalism and finance capitalism, with all the consequences of this transition. In this sense, modernity did not represent a static accomplished state, but rather a long and tenuous process of transition (modernization) requiring by definition the persistence of anti-modern others against which modernity can be constituted. According to Saree Makdisi, "This process of transition can be seen as a struggle between what appears as a totalitarian system and range of sometimes localized (and sometimes not) sites and zones and cultures of resistance, beginning though not ending in the early and late romantic periods."[304] Unique to this period is the emergence of occult and mystical organizations. What these groups represent, according to Alex Owens, is "a newly conceptualized subjectivity, that innovative sense of self that so often characterized self-identified 'we moderns' of the fin de siecle." It places occultism and mysticism at the heart of contemporary debate about what H. Stuart Hughes referred to as "the problem of consciousness." In this context, the fissure within the photographic community over

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[303] Archibald and Putter, *Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend*, 114.

[304] Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism*, 14.

principles of subjective artistic expression and scientific progress can be seen as part of a larger

societal debate over the complex meanings of modernity in late Victorian Britain.

Chapter 3

Through Parsee Eyes: Gender, the Indian Body, and the Contestation of Colonial Modernity within the Art Photography of Shapoor N. Bhedwar, 1890-1900

During the annual Photographic Salon held from September 24 through November 7, 1896 by the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, Shapoor N. Bhedwar, a Parsi photographer from Bombay, known within the Linked Ring by his pseudonym *Gul-o-Bulbul*, exhibited a provocative series of photographs collectively known as *Tyag, or The Renunciation*.[305] The September 25, 1896 issue of the *Amateur Photographer* remarked that there are "a series of pictures which one at once recognizes as the work of Shapoor N. Bhedwar. These, like several other series which have been produced by this thoughtful worker, represent the stages in an Eastern religious ceremony, and whilst it is impossible not to admire the admirable execution and clever arranging and posing of the many figures, yet one feels somehow that their chief value is illustrative, even dialectic and hence hardly admissible in an exhibition devoted to the pictorial aspect of photography." The photographic periodical, *Photograms of '96*, noted that "the subjects are full of interest, embodying as they do a panorama of a religious rite which is sacred to a vast number of our fellow citizens in India. But as pictures, pure and simple, they are derived from a period that no longer interests us. The various state-events commemorated in paintings shown at the Victorian Exhibition, were, as a rule, as unattractive as these photograms, yet real kings and queens were depicted in them, and real worshippers in these." Both reviews beg the question, why, at this historical moment in the relationship between Great Britain and its

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[305] The series included eight photographs, *Weary sits the Yogi-Rai*, *Abigail—The Surprise*, *All intent the Palm he reads*, *The Mystic Sign*, *The Soul's Awakening*, *The World Renounced*, *The Parting*, and *On the Temple Steps*, all of which were discussed in the photographic periodical press.

pre-eminent colony India, would a photographer's depiction of an "Eastern Religious Ceremony" generate such a dismissive response by the photographic periodical press?

This chapter endeavors to answer this intriguing question by analyzing the critical events that led to the controversy at the Photographic Salon of 1896 of Shapoor N. Bhedwar's (Shapurjee Nusserwanjee Bhedwar) (1858-1915) photographs, including Bhedwar's developing photographic art aesthetic, which embraced elements from East and West and was illustrated through his 1896 show and subsequent offerings. This chapter's primary focus is the connection between Bhedwar's art aesthetic and contemporary debates about the growth of national consciousness by indigenous Indians both in the Imperial Metropolis and throughout British India during the 1890s. My discussion thereby illuminates how Shapoor N. Bhedwar's *Tyag, or The Renunciation* marked both a continuation of broader literary and visual practices of Indian cultural nationalism that occurred throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and a radical re-articulation of a unique masculine "Hindu" identity, one that simultaneously appropriated historical agency and contested the British paradigmatic view of the "effeminate hindoo" constituted in various nineteenth century political and cultural treatises, most famously, perhaps, in James Mill's three-volume *History of British India* (1817), Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* (1835), and ethnographic photographic collections.[306] This chapter argues that this complex process was intertwined within the visual aesthetic of many of Shapoor N. Bhedwar's art photographs throughout the 1890s and most importantly within his *Renunciation Series* exhibited at the Photographic Salon of 1896. The photographs

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[306] See John Forbes Watson and John Wilson Kaye, eds., *The People of India. A Series of Photographic Illustrations, with Descriptive Letterpress, of the Races and Tribes of Hindustan, Originally Prepared under the Authority of the Government of India, and Reproduced by Order of the Secretary of the State for India in Council* (London: India Museum, 1868-1875).

themselves represent what Edward Said termed "sites of resistance," spaces and practices through which this artist challenged the morality and virtue of the British imperial project.[307]

The nationalist political landscape of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Western India was dominated by two figures: B. G. Tilak and G. K. Gokhale. Gokhale argued that India's political interests could be advanced by working inside British colonial institutions. Tilak, on the other hand, was perceived by many Anglo-Indians as being "extremist" because of his inflammatory journalism and new forms of religious/political mass action. Tilak's lasting legacy was his advocacy of *swaraj*, or self-rule, as well as his institution of indigenous public festivals such as the Ganpati festival in 1894.[308] The Ganpati Festival was used as medium for promoting a sense of nationalism, of opposition to British rule, and for inculcating a sense of self-confidence.[309] In this context, I argue that two primary events in 1896 led to a fundamental re-evaluation of Bhedwar's religious themed photographs by the British public: first, Swami Vivekananda's publication of *Raja-Yoga* in July, a text that articulated an authentic masculine Hindu identity based on self-mastery of the body through *pranayama* (breath control), yoga and meditation; and second, Bal Gangadhar Tilak's institution of the Shivaji Festival, which commemorated the man who had risen up against the Mughal Empire and had laid the foundations for the Maratha state. In the process, the Marathis were glorified and a symbolic but nevertheless unmistakable attack mounted against the British Raj. Both the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals resulted in a heightening of militancy locally, especially amongst the youth and the students of Poona, and influenced the emergence of revolutionary and terrorist organizations.

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[307] Said, *Yeats and Decolonization*, 69-94.

[308] Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 47.

[309] Jim Masselos, *Indian Nationalism: An History* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1993), 100.

They also antagonized the relationship between indigenous Hindus and the colonial

administration, as well as causing increased sectarian tensions with the Muslim community.[310]

Aesthetically, I argue that Bhedwar's *Tyag, or Renunciation Series* symbolically represented the

emergence of an indigenous "Hinduism," one that simultaneously embraced a re-configured

masculine Indian body with an increasingly radical political world view of *swaraj*, and therefore

represented a growing existential threat to colonial modernity.

Emergence of an Indigenous Indian National Consciousness

       The emergence in the second half of the nineteenth century of an indigenous, masculine

national consciousness was constructed and contested within what Antoinette Burton eloquently

categorized as the "unfinished business" of colonial modernity in British India.

> Modern colonial regimes are never self-evidently hegemonic, but are always in
> process, subject to disruption and contest, and therefore never fully or finally
> accomplished, to such an extent that they must be conceived of as "unfinished
> business." It also presumes that the gendered and sexualized social orders
> produced by such regimes are equally precarious, and hence offer us unique
> opportunities to see the incompleteness of colonial modernities at work.[311]

In this context colonial modernity is configured by the political and cultural regulation of

"difference" as transposed onto the physical bodies of colonial subjects through "technologies of

science, the law, ethnography, spirituality, motherhood, marriage, travel-writing and the

postcard."[312] Shapoor N. Bhedwar's art photography and most importantly its subject matter

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[310] Masselos, *Indian Nationalism*, 101.

[311] Antoinette Burton, ed., *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 1999), 1.

[312]

should therefore be considered as a "trans-national object" being produced in a photographic art studio in Bombay, India but permeating national and colonial borders as it was exhibited throughout the world, including Great Britain, Europe, India, Japan, and the United States. This persistent movement of both physical objects and the political and religious themes within them demonstrates what Burton has called the "regulatory challenges such practices posed to colonial states and their struggle to keep the subject in place."[313]

This chapter examines the complex interconnected modalities of Indian national consciousness. Included in this process is the reconfiguration of the Indian body through its complex interaction with and opposition to British colonial and Orientalist discourses on race and masculinity. This interaction produced a re-conceptualized masculine ideal within the Hindu, Muslim, and Parsi ethnic-religious communities. Historically, there existed a tradition of gendering the "Orient" as feminine. The predominant concept in Orientalist discourse defined Hinduism as a spiritual tradition that lacked a masculine, world-ordering rationality.[314] Hinduism was interpreted as placing fantasy and imagination above reason, dependent upon priests and idols and exemplifying the submissiveness and effeminacy that allowed Mughal warriors to defeat Hindus in the sixteenth century.[315] In this complex interaction of political, cultural, religious, and gender ideologies between British colonizers and Indian subjects, a newly configured masculinized body of the *Anglo-Indian* emerged.

According to E. M. Collingham, the British experience of India was intensely physical. The "agonies of disease and the threat of death allowed for a subtle constitutional transformation

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[313] Burton, *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities*, 2-3.

[314] Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 95.

[315] Ibid.

on the 'British body'."[316] The British body's deterioration was complemented by a fundamental

transformation in clothing attire, featuring loose trousers, white waistcoats, and later in the

nineteenth century by the flannels of the British Sahib. This alternation of physical appearance

through climate-appropriate clothing was associated with a perceived adoption by Anglo-Indians

of "Asiatic" manners, defined by Collingham as "a measure of his own humanity by the standard

of a conquered and degraded race." The immediacy of that sustained contact between colonizer

and colonized manifested itself through "the boils, mosquito bites and the altered composition of

the fibers and tissues of the body, to the colonists' characteristic clothing and confident

demeanor.[317] According to Collingham, study of the British body in India traces the

transformation of the early nineteenth-century nabob from the flamboyant, effeminate, and

wealthy East India Company servant, open to Indian influence, and into whose self-identity India

was incorporated, to the sahib, a sober, bureaucratic representative of the Crown. Historically,

this transformation from an open to a closed and regimented body coincided with the constitution

of the modern European bourgeois body in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The modern

European bourgeois body was effectively separated from its natural environment, mirroring the

wider social processes of moving bodily practices into the private sphere.[318] Self-discipline of

Victorian bodies included developing rituals of diet, exercise, and cleanliness in an overall effort

to establish a regime of physical empowerment.[319] The result of this process of physical and

emotional self-control was the transformation of what Collingham calls the "open unaffected

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[316] E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, 1800-1947*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 1.

[317] Ibid., 2.

[318] Ibid.

[319] See Michael Anton Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

body of the Georgian middle ranks into a tightly regulated Victorian bourgeois body."[320] Social and cultural interaction between the Imperial Metropolis and India, as well as the perceived physical transformation of the Anglo-Indian body by climatic conditions, created the necessity of reconfiguring what made a body British. Britishness in the colonial context was, then, conceptualized through a dialogue with difference.[321] Anglo-Indian identity was profoundly affected by these transnational processes of both the shift from sahib to nabob and the political shift in Britain towards utilitarianism in what Collingham defines as the "process of Anglicization."[322] Metropolitan signifiers of respectability were subtly transformed within the colonial context and reformulated as distinctively Anglo-Indian signifiers of Britishness.[323] In the racial theory of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the body and the ideology of prestige worked in dialogue together to produce the sahib, essentially ensuring that the body became the central site where racial difference was understood and reaffirmed in British India. The power of the body as a symbol of prestige was gradually eroded by Indian nationalism and the Indian refusal to respond to the British with deference.[324]

Alternative Conceptions of Indian Masculinity

Historical inquiry into British conceptions of the masculine identity of its Indian subjects can be conceptualized by a "spectrum of masculine archetypes" based on behavioral attributes

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[320] Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 4.

[321] See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 1995).

[322] Collingham**,** *Imperial Bodies*, 6.

[323] Ibid.

[324] Ibid., 8.

and ethnic-religious background. Critical in this analysis of masculine identity is how it permeates all aspects of colonial modernity. In Mrinalini Sinha's groundbreaking work on colonial masculinity, the historian intelligently examines the historically constituted categories of the "manly Englishman" and the "effeminate Bengali" as well as the constant process of "defining and re-defining the colonizer and the colonized against the backdrop of four controversies, the 'white mutiny' against the Ilbert Bill in 1883, the official government response to the Native Volunteer movement in 1885, the recommendations of the Public Service Commission of 1886, and the Indian opposition to the Age of Consent Bill in 1891."[325] According to Sinha, "in this colonial ordering of masculinity, the politically self-conscious Indian intellectuals occupied a unique place: they represented an 'unnatural' or 'perverted' form of masculinity. Hence this group of Indians, the most typical representatives of which at the time were middle-class Bengali Hindus, became the quintessential referents for that odious category designated as 'effeminate babus'."[326] The politically and culturally constructed category of the "manly Englishman" was identified by a "love of sports, particularly hunting, a disdain for the 'bookworm', a celebration of general competence ('trained for nothing, ready for anything'), a vigorous pursuit of play and 'japes' as well as work in its proper place, a chivalric (and therefore distancing) approach to women, all contributing to the 'manly character' which was seen as the well-nigh unique mark of the Briton."[327] These attributes were contrasted with those of the Bengali "babu", whose traits included "effeminacy, bookishness, [and being] over-serious,

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[325] Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 1.

[326] Ibid., 2.

[327] Ibid., vii.

languorous, lustful and lacking in self-discipline."[328] Sinha's contribution to the historiography

of colonial modernity and most importantly to gender relationships in the Metropolis and the

periphery was to challenge the political and cultural exclusivity of the politically, socially, and

culturally constructed categories of "colonizer" and "colonized."

Both Ashis Nandy[329] and Revathi Krishnaswamy[330] transcend Sinha's original inquiry

into the colonial stereotype of the "effeminate" Indian to include an analysis of effeminacy in

relation to androgyny in Hindu culture. Nandy investigates the sexual dimension in defining

English and Indian men through the gender parameters established by the colonial

administration. Her primary argument is that the English transformed the gender-neutral

meanings associated with androgyny or "klibatva or femininity-in-masculinity" in indigenous

India culture into the "final negation of a man's political identity, a pathology more dangerous

than femininity itself."[331] Revathi Krishnaswamy examines how Indian conceptions of

androgyny were based historically on Bhakti and Tantric traditions in Hinduism, in which "the

male worshipper must become female either to unite with a male god or to avoid uniting with a

female goddess."[332] According to Nalin Jayasena, indigenous Indian elites reacted to this process

of colonial discourse appropriating and transforming the meanings of "androgyny" in two

diametrically opposed ways. The Indians could either "abandon androgyny and embrace an

aggressive, militant brand of masculinity to challenge the manly identity assumed by

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[328] Ibid.

[329] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4.

[330] Revathi Krishnaswamy, *Effeminism: The Economy of Colonial Desire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

[331] Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 8.

[332] Krishnaswamy, *Effeminism*, 43.

Englishmen; or… reject this colonial revaluation of their society and defend the status of androgyny in Hindu mythology and deploy it as a tool in the anti-colonial struggle."[333]

Further complicating this "unnatural" dichotomy of masculine and effeminate attributes is the conceptualization of "martial races." Following the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the British crown's official incorporation of India into the administrative fold of empire, the British military shifted its recruiting base for the Indian Army from Bengal and lower India to the Punjab and Nepal. According to Heather Streets, this process coincided with a concerted political and cultural effort to disseminate a "mythic" narrative of the "martial races."[334] In this context, Highlanders from Scotland, the Rajputs from northern India, Sikhs from the Punjab, and Gurkhas from Nepal represented a physical and heroic type of masculinity as loyal soldiers of the British Raj, exemplified by their chivalric code of manly behavior, oppositional to Bengal's effeminate "babu" yet not quite synonymous with the English ideal. According to Joseph Alter, "even when colonial discourse essentializes the virile masculinity of various subject groups—in particular the so-called marital castes of South Asia—the putative masculinity of these groups is ascribed to breeding and latent 'savagery,' and is rarely, if ever, conceived of as an achieved status, much less something an individual from some other group might achieve on the basis of training or practice."[335] Taking Alter's assessment at face value, this is an interesting stage in the development of a more complex historical interpretation of "masculinity." We can explore its

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[333] Jayasena, *Contested Masculinities*, 16.

[334] Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 2-3.

[335] Joseph S. Alter, "Indian Clubs and Colonialism: Hindu Masculinity," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 3 (July, 2004): 497-98.

further development by examining the unique status of the Parsi community in the Imperial

Metropolis and in India.

The "Good" Parsi, Cricket, and the Hypermasculine "Gentleman"

As a unique ethnic-religious group, the Parsis consciously adopted hyper-masculinized

British ideals into their collective identity. According to T. M. Luhrmann, the Parsis can be seen

to have "chosen freely their adoption of British style, education and political orientation. They

can be seen to have accepted the colonial ideology of progress and superiority, of Westernization

as a means to advancement and of the British as an agent of positive change."[336] It was during

the late nineteenth century at the height of their political and economic influence that Parsi

literature began to articulate a distinctive identity called the "good" Parsi. These attributes,

according to Luhrmann, serve as "symbolic markers of identity, transforming the fundamental

ethical attributes contained within the Zoroastrian religion. Zoroastrianism assigns specific

qualities to the "good person": truthfulness, purity, charity, and progressive improvement. In this

context, the historical reliability of Parsi middle-men in international business transactions

between Europeans and Indians demonstrated their inherent truthfulness."[337] This coincided with

their charitable activity, a prime example of "Victorian ethical integrity" as well as their racial

purity and the superiority of that race by their embracing progressive reformism, and above all

by their similarity to English gentlemen.[338] In fact, these ethical attributes were transformed

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[336] T.M. Luhrmann, "The Good Parsi: The Postcolonial 'Feminization' of a Colonial Elite," *Man*, New Series 29, no. 2 (June 1994): 334

[337] Ibid
[338] Ibid.

during the eighteenth and nineteenth century into signifiers both by the Parsi community and by the British colonizers of the reconfigured English gentleman.[339]

The significance of physicality and athleticism in the role sports played in demonstrating English masculinity is most aptly embodied in the game of cricket, a game embraced whole-heartedly by the Parsi community. According to Arjun Appadurai, "in the second half of the nineteenth century, when cricket acquired much of its modern morphology, it also took shape as the most powerful condensation of Victorian elite values. Cricket was a quintessentially masculine activity and expressed the codes that were expected to govern all masculine behavior: sportsmanship, a sense of fair play, through control over the expression of strong sentiments by players on the field, subordination of personal sentiments and interests to those of the side, unquestioned loyalty to the team."[340] The Parsis were the first local community in India to take up the sport around 1840 and established the Oriental Cricket Club in 1848. By 1886, the first organized cricket tour of England was organized by C. W. Alcock, the Secretary of the Surrey Cricket Club, who served as an agent for the team in England while a gentleman by the name of Robert Henderson, a Surrey professional, acted as the coach.[341] The Parsi team, comprised of individual enthusiasts who could afford to self-finance the trip, also included Shapoor N. Bhedwar. During its sojourn to Britain the Parsi team played numerous teams, such as Lord Sheffield's XI, Ashton, and Chiswick, for which Bhedwar performed the fabled hat-trick.[342]

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[339] Luhrmann, "The Good Parsi," 338.

[340] Arjun Appadurai, "Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket," in *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, ed. Carol Breckenridge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 25-26.

[341] See Mihir Bose, *A History of Indian Cricket* (London: Andre Deutsche, 2002).

[342] A hat-trick occurs in cricket when a bowler dismisses three batsmen with consecutive deliveries. The deliveries may be interrupted by an over bowled by another bowler from the other end of the pitch or the other team's innings, but must be three consecutive deliveries by the individual bowler. Only wickets attributed to the bowler count

Bhedwar's noteworthy performance aside, the 1886 trip proved disappointing; however by 1890,

during the so called "Cricket Championship of India," the Parsi Gymkhana of Bombay defeated

George Frederick Vernon's English Eleven. According to the *Times* of India, "It may fitly stand

as the greatest achievement yet done by the Parsee cricketers, that they should beat a team which

has beaten the picked Elevens of Bengal and Northern India."[343] Many historians of cricket, such

as Neville Cardus, have argued that, "none except the people of England or of the English-

speaking countries has excelled at Cricket. Other nations not obsessed by sport are able to hold

their own with us at tennis, golf, football, but cricket is incomprehensible to them, a possession

or mystery of a clan, a tribal rite…It is far more than a game, this cricket. It somehow holds the

mirror up to English nature."[344] Cardus's ethno-centric view of cricket demonstrates its

importance to colonial discourse of the English masculine ideal disavowing individual desires for

achievement or self-expression. Nalin Jayasena associates these qualities with the "culture of self

deprivation and austerity embraced by ancient Sparta, in particular its emphasis on the primacy

of an all-male community."[345] In this historical context, of all indigenous groups in India, it

could be argued that the Parsi community represented the closest approximation of the English

masculine ideal with the caveat that this identity could be challenged or denied at a moment's

notice based solely on physical appearance. This is clearly demonstrated during the election of

Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917), for the Liberal Party in Finsbury Central (1892-1895) in the

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towards a hat-trick; run outs do not count. Extended Oxford English Dictionary 1999 Edition: "It came into use after H. H. Stephenson took three wickets in three balls for the all-England eleven against the twenty-two of Hallam at the Hyde Park ground, Sheffield in 1858. A collection was held for Stephenson (as was customary for outstanding feats by professionals) and he was presented with a cap or hat bought with the proceeds."

[343] "The Parsee Cricketers of Bombay," *The Illustrated London News*, March 15, 1890, 327.

[344] Neville Cardus, *English Cricket* (London: Collins, 1947), 7-9.

[345] Jayasena, *Contested Masculinities*, 62.

general election of 1892 as well as the subsequent victories of Mancherjee Merwanjee

Bhownaggree (1851-1933) for the conservative party in Bethnal Green North East (1895-1906).

As the first Indian MP in Great Britain in 1892, Naoroji was also a significant figure in

Indian history. He was a President of the Indian National Congress, the first Indian professor of

mathematics at the Elphinstone Institute of Bombay in 1853, and was appointed Prime Minister

of Baroda in 1874. Mancherjee Bhownaggree's career highlights included being called to the Bar

in 1885 as well as being a Commissioner of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition at South

Kensington in 1886. Historically the first Indian to stand as an MP was Lal Mohun Ghose in

1885, but he failed to win due to his publicly supporting the Ilbert Bill from 1883—a bill that

would allow senior Indian magistrates to preside over cases involving British subjects in India.[346]

Sumita Mukerjee has examined the politics of race during the 1890s and concluded that race was

not a great disadvantage to Naoroji or Bhownaggree and that their political success also

depended upon the popularity of the party they represented. The public's reaction to both Parsi

politicians was mixed, however. In December 1888, Lord Salisbury, the leader of the

Conservative Party, remarked in reference to the defeat of Naoroji in the 1886 election at

Holborn that "However great the progress of mankind has been and however far we have

advanced in overcoming prejudices, I doubt if we have yet got to the point of view where an

English constituency would elect a Blackman."[347] These comments caused a huge controversy in

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[346] Sumita Mukherjee, "'Narrow-majority' and 'Bow-and-agree': Public Attitudes towards the Elections of the First Asian MPs in Britain, Dadabhai Naoroji and Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownaggreee, 1885-1906," *Journal of the Oxford University History Society* VOLUME 1 (2004): 2, accessed March 2, 2011, http://oxford.academia.edu/SumitaMukherjee/Papers/319348/Narrow-majority_and_Bow-and-agree_Public_Attitudes_Towards_the_Elections_of_the_First_Asian_MPs_in_Britain_Dadabhai_Naoroji_and_Mancherjee_Merwanjee_Bhownaggree_1885-1906.

[347] C. J. Monk, "'Member of India?': The Parliamentary Lives of Dadabhai Naoroji (MP: 1892-1895) and Mancherjee Bhownaggree (MP: 1895-1906)" (master's thesis, Manchester University, 1985), 2.

the British press for the statement's personal "offence" to Naoroji and also more publicly within

sections of the press. Attention was focused on the fact that Naoroji was not "black," rather than

on Salisbury's assertions of English racial prejudice.[348] Interestingly, this incident was reiterated

in 1894 by the *Photographic Work* when it commented on Bhedwar's portrait of Naoroji

exhibited at the Royal Photographic Society Exhibition of that same year stating, "the gentleman,

whom Lord Salisbury, perhaps hastily, referred to as a mere 'Black Man,' is the subject of,

perhaps, the best example of portraiture in the gallery (No. 200). Mr. S. N. Bhedwar has caught

with remarkable truth the clear intellectual features of *Mr. Dadabhoy Nowrojee*, *M.P.,* this

spelling being that of catalogue, and, we assume, of Mr. Bhedwar, to whom we may bow in such

a matter. Portraiture, in the sense of securing a really truthfully characteristic expression, is,

perhaps, the most difficult branch of photography, and in this branch, Mr. Bhedwar notably

excels."[349] The Indian periodical press reacted to the insult unanimously by criticizing Lord

Salisbury for calling "one of India's leaders a nigger."[350] According to David Cannadine, British

citizens "were more likely to be concerned with rank than with race, and with the appreciation of

status similarities based on perceptions of affinity."[351] Mukerjee concurred with Cannadine's

assessment by arguing that the greater the assimilation with British manners and customs, the

more comfortable the British public felt about electing these candidates from India.[352] In this

context, I would argue that Bhedwar's Parsi background, like that of Naoroji and Bhownaggree,

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[348] Mukherjee, "'Narrow-majority'," 3.

[349] "The Exhibition at Pall Mall, Final Notice," *The Photographic Work*, November 2, 1894, 518.

[350] Mukherjee, "'Narrow-majority'," 5.

[351] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (London: Penguin, 2001), 123.

[352] Mukherjee, "'Narrow-majority'," 6.

was not considered a negative and in fact allowed his artistic aesthetic enhanced gravitas within

the British photographic art community.

Shapoor N. Bhedwar's Introduction to the Photographic Art World, 1889-1891

During the late Victorian period the Indian photographer Shapoor N Bhedwar was

prominent in the art photography salons of Europe and America. Bhedwar was born into a

wealthy Parsi family in Bombay and in his youth developed passionate interests in art and

Eastern and Western literature. His personal interest in the religion of his Parsi community,

Zoroastrianism, would be fully explored in his famous *Naver Series* in 1892. Bhedwar became

interested in the artistic and technical aspects of photography in 1888 and it was this personal

obsession which drove him to leave his family in Bombay and return to Great Britain in 1889 in

an effort to further his comprehension of the photographic medium. After his arrival, Bhedwar

attended the Polytechnic School in London as well as becoming the friend and apprentice to

prominent art photographer Ralph W. Robinson in Redhill, Surrey as well as Ward Muir, a critic

and writer for the British photographic press. Additionally, he was an affiliate member of the

Scottish Freemasonry Lodge and was introduced to the philosophies of the Theosophical

Society.[353] Bhedwar, who allegedly lived in Swiss Lodge, Cumballa Hill (an area preferred by

the British and Parsis in the 1890s) became an extremely accomplished photographer. So quickly

did he obtain mastery of the photographic art medium that during his first major exhibition at the

Crystal Palace in 1889 one reviewer commented on two of his most prominent photographs

Before the Bath and *After the Bath* proclaiming that in the spirit of Suetonius' description of

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[353] Rahaab Allana, "Performance for Camera: Shapoor N. Bhedwar and the Dimensions of Studio Photography in Bombay," in *The Artful Pose: Early Studio Photography in Mumbai, c. 1855-1940* (Ahmedabad, India: Mapin Publishing, 2010), 61.

Julius Caesar's civil war against Pompey the Great, "he came, he saw, he conquered".[354] Shapoor

N. Bhedwar continued to show his artistic potential at the Photographic Society of Great Britain

Exhibition of 1890, which included his successful series of six tableaux photographs *The Feast*

of Roses, including *No. 184: Weaving the Garland*, *No. 185: Hanging the Garland*, a medal

winner, *No. 186: L'Inamorata*, *No. 187: The Flower Girl*, *No. 188: Confidences*, and *No. 189:*

The Messenger,[355] which won awards in London and Cardiff in the 1890s.They are images

associated with innocence, while simultaneously articulating a distinct connection with high

Victorian fine art.[356] According to the *Practical Photographer*, "this year's show has brought

forward a few new workers, and one of the most interesting exhibition is a series of six pictures

by Mr. S. N. Bhedwar, the Parsee gentleman whose studies '*Before*' and '*After the Bath*' we

reproduced in May and who, it will be remembered, only took on photography fourteen months

ago. Mr. Bhedwar's work is novel in subject as in treatment, artistically it is a great advance even

upon the excellent work shown by him at the Crystal Palace exhibition and the judges have

marked their appreciation by the award of a medal."[357] Gael Newton has argued that *The Feast of*

Roses was inspired by Sir Thomas Moore's popular 1817 poem, Lalla-Rookh;[358] this self-titled

tale of the daughter of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) is comprised of four

narrative poems and describes her betrothal to the King of Bactria while her true love lies with

one of her entourage, the poet Feramorz.[359] Most historians consider Sir Thomas Moore the

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[354] See Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars* (London: Penguin, 2007).

[355] "Photographic Society of Great Britain Exhibition, 1890," *The Photographic Journal*, September 27, 1890, 5.

[356] Allana, "Performance for Camera," 64.

[357] "Notes at the Pall Mall Exhibition," *The Practical Photographer*, November 1, 1890, 265.

[358] Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1861).

[359] Gael Newton, "Shapoor Bhedwar: The Naver—Invocation 1892," *ArtView* 62 (Winter 2010), accessed September 15, 2010, http://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=194884.

national bard of Ireland for the superior quality of his romantic poetry, so why would Shapoor N. Bhedwar be drawn to an Irish poet rather than an English one considering the Parsi community's admiration for English politics and culture? By utilizing the poetic themes within Lalla-Rookh through the visual medium of photography, Bhedwar demonstrated the unique and complex relationship between Ireland and India during the nineteenth century.

According to Michael Silvestri, the Irish, as ever-rebellious colonial subjects, pioneered the process of decolonization and provided inspiration to anti-colonial nationalists around the globe. This was particularly true of Ireland's relationship with India. From the late nineteenth century onwards, Ireland stood as an example of anti-colonial resistance for Indian nationalists, providing examples of both violent resistance and constitutional agitation.[360] Historians have recently demonstrated the mutual affinity that nationalists from both countries displayed from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century and have begun to analyze how these transnational relationships formed an important part of networks of information and exchange within the British Empire.[361] In the early nineteenth century, writings about India played a "significant part" in Irish political discourse.[362] A comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Ireland and India requires not only the perspectives of Irish nationalist or imperial servants, but those of Indians as well. In the same way that Irish views of India were far from unitary, Indian views of Ireland were diverse as well. Silvestri argues that many Indians

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[360] Michael Silvestri, *Ireland and India: Nationalism, Empire and Memory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 6.

[361] On the transnational nature of the British Empire, see Durba Ghosh and Dane Kennedy, eds., *Decentring Empire: Britain, India and the Transcolonial World* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 2006); Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trentmann, eds., *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c. 1880-1950* (Basingstoke, UK: Houndmills, 2007).

[362] Sean Ryder, "Ireland, India and Popular Nationalism in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Foley and O'Connor, eds., *Ireland and India: Colonies, Culture, and Empire* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), 12-25.

held sympathetic views of Ireland and eagerly sought aid, advice, and inspiration from Irish

nationalists.[363] The imperial project in India thus generated varying responses from Irish men and

women and Irish involvement in the British Empire and Irish nationalism in turn generated

varying responses from Indians. Irish nationalism attained a force and significance for many

Indian nationalists that transcended personal contacts. In the decades after 1857, the recurrence

of famine in India led Irish Home Rulers such as Frank O'Donnell to focus on India in their

critique of British imperialism.[364] The Irish Parliamentary Party's commitment to Home Rule

and the foundation of the Indian National Congress increased the level of transnational

engagement. In the late nineteenth century, Irish and India nationalist leaders shared to varying

degrees the ideal of a common struggle against the British Empire.

On the Irish side, Frank O'Donnell supported the transformation of the British Empire

into a commonwealth of equal partners, and argued that Ireland should lead a coalition with the

oppressed natives of India. In 1875, he helped set up an abortive Indian Home Rule organization,

the Constitutional Society of India, with a mixture of Irish politicians and Indian students in

London. Under Charles Stewart Parnell's leadership in the late 1870s and 1880s, Irish Home

Rulers dominated parliamentary question-time on India.[365] Alfred Webb, a Quaker Irish

nationalist who was also deeply involved in humanitarian causes, assumed the presidency of the

Indian National Congress at its Madras meeting in 1894.[366] Michael Davitt, who believed that the

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[363] Silvestri, *Ireland and India*, 9.

[364] Jill C. Bender, "The Imperial Politics of Famine: The 1873-1874 Bengal Famine and Irish Parliamentary Nationalism," *Eire-Ireland* 42, 1 and 2 (2007): 132-56.

[365] Brasted, "Indian Nationalist Development," 47.

[366] See Marie-Louise Legg, ed., *Alfred Webb: The Autobiography of a Quaker Nationalist* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), 67-72; Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan Nationalism in the Victorian Empire: Ireland, India and the Politics of Alfred Webb* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). At this point, the Indian National Congress did not have an institutional existence outside of its annual meetings. The 1894 meeting lasted for four days.

Irish should work on behalf of all the struggling nationalities in the British Empire and elsewhere, in 1883 proposed the Indian nationalist Dadabhai Naoroji for an Irish Parliamentary seat. Naoroji, who rose from a poor Parsi family in Bombay to own a cotton company in London, was a "father figure and counselor to Indian students and immigrants" and the "leader of the minority who were active in the Indian nationalist movement.[367] Irish nationalists, such as Davitt, hoped that Naoroji would not only provide a direct voice for India in Parliament, but would also bolster Indian support for Irish Home Rule.[368] Home Rulers' support for Indian nationalism and other anti-imperial causes thus more often than not took the form of strategic interventions, rather than unconditional displays of anti-colonial solidarity.[369] According to Ashis Nandy, Ireland signified for Indians a Western nation whose culture was "non-dominant" and therefore more accessible, and whose people were a co-victim of British imperialism.[370] In this context, Bhedwar's choice of Sir Thomas Moore for the inspiration of his *Feast of Roses* represents the complex nature of his personality, being an enthusiastic supporter of "Britishness" while simultaneously acknowledging the artistic beauty within the poetic work of a fellow "subject" people.

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[367] Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 185.

[368] Niamh Lynch, "Defining Irish Nationalist Anti-Imperialism: Thomas Davis and John Mitchel," *Eire-Ireland* 42, 1 and 2 (2007): 106; Bender, "The Imperial Politics of Famine," 149-50.

[369] In his discussion of Irish reactions to the Anglo-Zulu War, Paul A. Townend observes that "The Imperial relationship remained both complex and contingent and imperial concerns ebbed and flowed over time within nationalist movements at both the elite and popular level." Paul A. Townend, "Between Two Worlds: Irish Nationalists and Imperial Crisis 1878-1880," *Past and Present* 194 (2007): 173.

[370] Ashis Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 43.

<u>The Naver Series at the 1892 Exhibition at the Camera Club</u>

During the fall exhibition season of 1892, Bhedwar Shapoor was confronted with a minor controversy concerning his submission to the Photographic Society of Great Britain's Exhibition. An editorial in *Photographic Work* stated, "several queer stories are current in explanation of the remarkable photographs of Shapoor N. Bhedwar not being sent to Pall Mall in time for being included in an exhibition where they would have been almost sure to obtain a medal. They are mentioned in our report of the London and Provincial Association."[371] H. Snowden Ward weighed in on the controversy by stating, "Sir, I fear your note on p. 279 of today's issue may mislead some of your readers, as it seems to imply that I stated that Mr. Bhedwar's pictures were sent for the Pall Mall Exhibition. What I did say was that I understood they had been prepared for exhibition at Pall Mall, and that I regretted that they were not there. I believe that they reached this country after the last day for receiving exhibits at Pall Mall, but whether they were sent with any intention of being included in the show I do not know."[372] In an effort to clarify what truly happened to Shapoor Bhedwar's photographs, Ralph W. Robinson, the son of famed art photographer Henry Peach Robinson and Mr. Bhedwar's sole agent for exhibition arrangements in Great Britain, stated, "generally, I have a free hand to send or not, as I think fit, any of Mr. Bhedwar's work to exhibition in Great Britain; but in the case of the Pall Mall Exhibition this year I received unusually definite instructions. Mr. Bhedwar wrote to me under date Bombay, July 2nd, 1892: 'I do not propose to send any of my work this year to the Photographic Society of Great Britain Exhibition; however, in the course of a week or two, am sending work to you.'"[373] Robinson's assertions were strongly re-affirmed by Bhedwar himself

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[371] "Editorial," *Photographic Work*, October 7, 1892, 275.

[372] H. Snowden Ward, "Mr. Bhedwar's Photographs," *Photographic Work*, October 14, 1892, 286.

[373] Ralph W. Robinson, "Mr. Bhedwar's Exhibition Pictures," *Photographic Work*, October 14, 1892, 286.

in the November 25 correspondence section of the *Photographic Work*, stating, "I have appointed Mr. R.W. Robinson to act as my sole agent in England, with full powers to do just as he thought fit for all arrangements relating to the sending of my work to the exhibitions in Great Britain and elsewhere. But concerning this, my new series in question, I had written to him distinctly and emphatically, under the date 2nd July last, 'I do not propose to send any of my work this year to the Photographic Society of Great Britain exhibition,' and hence the reason of its exclusion from it."[374] What is most fascinating about this dialogue over why Bhedwar's photographs were not exhibited at the Photographic Society of Great Britain in 1892 is the great deference and respect he received by the commentators, labeling detractors and speculators as having perpetrated "queer" stories implying strange, unusual, suspicious behavior. From his emergence onto the British photographic art world Bhedwar was labeled a Parsee "gentleman," thereby establishing his masculine credentials to British society.

The National Indian Association published intermittent lists of Indians in Britain in its Journal from 1885 to 1900 and it is interesting to note that Parsee emigration to the Imperial Metropolis was second only to Muslim emigration. The statistics reveal that at their peak they formed over 25% of Britain's Indian student population and in 1885 Parsis even out-numbered Muslims, demonstrating Shompa Lahiri's critical argument that the "enormous over-representation of this community suggests strong links between Parsis and England. As Bhedwar himself, most Parsis in the London were students focusing on a variety of academic pursuits but most prominently on law, medicine and business."[375] H. Snowden Ward wrote of Bhedwar's

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[374] "Correspondence: Shapoor N. Bhedwar and the Photographic Exhibition," *Photographic Work*, November 25, 1892, 361.

[375] Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 6.

love of Great Britain in a brief biography published in *The Photogram*, stating, "Mr. Bhedwar is

an ardent lover of his people and of their traditions; but he is also an enthusiastic admirer of the

British character—or of what he believes that character to be."[376] Bhedwar was even quoted as

saying, "Oh, you English! You English! So earnest, so strong, no wonder you rule the world!"

This strong emotional attachment to Britain worried him upon his leaving the country in 1892

that it might hinder inspiration, incentive, and artistic expression, stating, "Oh Wardie, Wardie, I

shall do no more good work! Once back again in India, it will be all one dull groove." These

statements taken collectively represent the opinion of many in the Parsi community both in

London and Bombay. Where a middle-class Bengali civil servant stating the same sentiments

might be considered a thoroughly anglicized "brown" gentleman in the context of Macaulay's

educational ideal, Bhedwar and the Parsi community in general avoided effeminate stereotypes

established by colonial discourse on masculinity, thereby escaping the accusation of mere

"mimesis" of the ideal English gentleman.[377] Homi Bhabha's theory on mimicry is embodied in

the "mimic man: he is the effect of colonial mimesis in which to be anglicized is emphatically

not to be English."[378] Bhabha's examination of English ambivalence towards its Indian subjects,

simultaneously resembling and threatening colonial dominance is fundamentally missing in

Britain's relationship with the Parsi community. That is not to say that Parsis experienced no

racial discrimination in their historical relationship with the British either in Great Britain or

India. But it is to argue that in this context the nature of their character is interpreted as being

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[376] H. Snowden Ward, "Brief Biographies: Shapoor N. Bhedwar," *The Photogram*, II, no. 23 (November 1895): 252-53.

[377] Jayasena, *Contested Masculinities*, 95.

[378] Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man—The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (London: University of California Press, 1997), 154.

authentically masculine whether it is demonstrated on the cricket field or in a photographic

exhibition. Shompa Lahiri has argued that emulation of British life and values was only the first

of multiple emotional responses that Indian emigrants to the Imperial Metropolis experienced

along with total rejection of the West and a re-emergence of a reconfigured Indian ideal, while

others embraced those aspects of both cultures that most appealed to them personally.[379] This

dynamic of being Indian yet exhibiting a uniquely masculine persona within a predominantly

perceived "effeminate" Indian populace allowed Shapoor N. Bhedwar to express artistically

multivalent aspects of the Indian national consciousness within his photographic work and have

it interpreted by its British audience in a serious and thoughtful manner during the last years of

the nineteenth century.

It was during the Camera Club Exhibition for pictorial photographers in 1892 that

Shapoor N. Bhedwar exhibited those much anticipated photographs in a series of five images

portraying the ordination of a Parsee Priest. Known collectively as the *Naver Series* it included,

> No. 1—*The Invocation*; the chief priest invoking the blessing of God on the
> candidate. No. 2—*The First Ablution*. No. 3—*The Initiation*; the chief priest
> initiating the candidate into the rites and doctrines, secrets and philosophy of his
> religion. No. 4—*The New Priest Officiates*. The metal goblets and basin have
> symbolical significations. The sacred fire is distinctly understood to be merely a
> symbol of the Deity. The crescent-shaped stands, upon which the left hand rests
> during the whole of the ceremony, signify the dual aspect of the mind. No. 5—
> *The Ordained Priest* performs the ceremony of feeding the sacred fire."[380]

These five photographic images represented a prominent ritual in the spiritual tradition of

Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian religion which began sometime before the 6th Century BCE

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[379] Lahiri, *Indians in Britain*, xiv.

[380] "The Camera Club Exhibition," *Photographic Work*, October 21, 1892, 294.

and was based on the teachings of its primary prophet Zoroaster (in Avestan, Zarathustra). According to the reviewer in the *Photographic Work*, "the young novice is first of all taught to recite properly all the texts of the '*Avesta*,' or sacred writings. He undergoes ablutions, and passes through a course of discipline for nine days, and of contemplation for six days more. During this time two priests perform daily the '*Yacna*' ceremony."[381] During the spring of 1893 at the Photographic Exhibition in Tokyo, one reviewer labeled Shapoor N. Bhedwar a "Hindoo artist" and continued with a negative critique of his work the *Naver Series* stating, "they are technically perfect, but as works of art they do not stand on so high a plane as some of their fellow exhibits; the grouping of figures is too studied. This fault is often perceptible, especially when attempts are made to pose models in positions of passion or strong emotion. Great painters conceive such situations with more fidelity than models act them, and the photograph is seldom really successful when applied to these purposes."[382] These two examples of public response to the *Naver Series* culminated by the summer of 1893 with an article written by William Simpson (1823-1899), a Scottish artist and correspondent, in the *Illustrated London News*, which readdressed the *Consecration of a Parsee Priest* in greater historical detail. Simpson had visited Calcutta in October of 1859 to produce a series of sketches to capture the essence of the Indian Mutiny/Sepoy Rebellion (1857) which was eventually published in fifty chromolithographs under the title, *India Ancient and Modern*: *A Series of Illustrations of the Country and People of India and Adjacent Territories* (1867). The greater historical significance of Bhedwar's *Naver Series* is how it demonstrated the convergence between Orientalist discourse, Christian missionary efforts, religious reform, and the emergence of Theosophical interest in the "authentic" Zoroastrianism in the Parsi Community during the late nineteenth century.

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[381] Ibid.

[382] "The Photographic Exhibition in Tokyo," *The Photographic News*, June 30, 1893, 410.

Historical Re-evaluation of Zoroastrian Theology

Modern Zoroastrian theology was also shaped by the community reaction to Christian missionizing during the colonial period, and in particular to a powerful Scots Presbyterian named John Wilson, who arrived in Bombay in 1829. That community was deeply involved with the British in symbiotic patron/client relationships in which Parsis would advance the capital and the British would advance their name, apparently a profitable connection for them both.[383] Wilson was eminently qualified to engage in missionary activity with his extensive knowledge of Sanskrit, Gujarati, and Marathi.[384] The Parsi response to Dr. Wilson's anti-Zoroastrian critique involved the counter arguments of *Talim-i-Zurthoost* (The doctrine of Zoroaster) by Dosabhai Sohrabji (1840) and the *Hadie Gum Rahan* (Guide to those who have lost their way) by Aspandiarji Framjee (1841). Both texts confront the role of Ahriman, who is transformed from being equal and opposite to Zoroastrianism's primary deity, Ahura Mazda, into a metaphoric representation of vice and evil, which became the dominant Parsi interpretation of the faith by the mid-nineteenth century.[385]

By 1860, when European Orientalists, including Martin Haug, discussed the principles of Zoroastrianism, they sought to deny the dualistic nature of Ahura-Mazda and Ahriman.[386] By 1901, D. Menant commented, the religious obligations of the Parsi were few. Between the ages of five and seven, a Zoroastrian must be invested with the *sudeah* (shirt) and *kushti* (girdle), which are the visible symbols or emblems of the Mazdazasni religion. The ceremony is called

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[383] T. M. Luhrmann, "Evil in the Sands of Time: Theology and Identity Politics among the Zoroastrian Parsis," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 3 (August 2002): 864, accessed January 31, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3096349.

[384] Ibid., 865.

[385] Ibid., 866.

[386] Luhrmann, "Evil in the Sands of Time," 867.

naojot (new or first worship). The candidate declares himself to be a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zoroaster, an opponent of *daevas* (false gods), and subject to the laws of Ahura.[387] T. M. Luhrmann's anthropological study examines the historical process of demythologizing and depersonalizing Zoroastrianism in this period. According to Luhrman, Protestantized Zoroastrianism has three components, in keeping with the rationalization of the religion in the face of missionary attack. First, dualism is denied. There is said to be no "real" Ahriman, although the emphasis on the opposition of good and evil remains. Second, the religion is understood as scientific and non-ritualistic. Third, the only religious texts understood to be genuinely true to the spirit of Zoroastrianism are the *Gathas*, the seventeen hymns attributed to Zarathustra in the *Avesta*. Other texts in the *Avesta* and later Middle Persian texts, which are often more colorful, more folkloristic, and unambiguously more dualistic than the *Gathas*, are discounted.[388] Luhrmann has ultimately concluded that Wilson's take on Zoroastrianism, coupled with the discussion of the religion among nineteenth-century western scholars, suggests that Parsi Zoroastrianism indeed had a more dualistic quality prior to Wilson's arrival in Bombay, and that the Parsi response to his attacks indicates a shift towards Christian theology in an attempt to persuade themselves, Wilson, and the wider world that their religion was not barbaric by Western standards.

Luhrmann contextualizes this theological shift by discussing the *Brahmo Samaj*, a Hindu reform movement which emerged from the Bengali elite in the first third of the nineteenth century. The *Brahmo Samaj* represented a deliberately modernizing transformation of Hinduism along Unitarian lines. Ideologically, the *Brahmo Samaj* argued that rational faith should replace

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[387] D. Menant, "Zoroastrianism and the Parsis," *The North American Review* 172, no. 530 (January 1901): 144, accessed January 31, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25105117.

[388] Luhrmann, "Evil in the Sands of Time," 869.

myth- and ritual-filled popular religion and that joining social reform to rational religion would lead ultimately to the perfectibility of humankind. Luhrmann argues that like the Parsis, those Hindus involved in the *Brahmo Samaj* movement deeply respected selective portions of their own tradition, but were eager to interpret its texts from a modern and Western perspective.[389] Unfortunately, this theological transformation allowed for non-Parsi Indian communities to become other: barbaric, uncivilized, non-rational, dark-skinned, essentially different in their constitution. Parsi elites, for the most part, embraced this interpretation of their fellow Indians with notable exceptions and engaged in active religious reform of "traditional" Hindu customs, which lacked rational qualities, the antithesis of colonial modernity.[390] This attitude within the Parsi community was exemplified in an article Bhedwar wrote for *Photograms of 1995* concerning the status of art photography in Indian. According to Bhedwar, "It is well known that India has a teeming population, with a diversity of race, languages, manners, social customs, religious prejudices, and the like; and as education and enlightenment are limited to select centers, so far as the mass of the people is concerned, the art of photography is a sealed book and only a small fraction of the Indian population practices or is interested in photography. Owing to all these drawbacks, Indian workers are difficult to reach; and therefore much in the way of progress cannot be expected."[391] For those individuals who were working within the photographic medium Bhedwar was very critical of their capabilities, stating, "it may be safely said that the practice of art in this country is chiefly confined to the European section of the community. Of these photographers the greater number are merely dabblers, having little or no

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[389] Ibid., 867.

[390] Ibid., 868.

[391] Shapoor N. Bhedwar, "Photography in India," in *Photograms of '95: A Pictorial and Literary Record of the Best Photographic Work of the Year Compiled by the Editors and Staff of "The Photogram." The First Volume of the Series was issued in 1895* (London: Dawbarn & Ward, 1895), 88-92.

leisure for higher study. From such persons to expect a progress in the art is hopeless."[392] This

attitude towards the artistic potential of native workers was demonstrated at the International

Exhibition of the Calcutta Society in February of 1895. According to Bhedwar, "it was apparent

in this exhibition that the Indian exhibitors cannot as yet compete (with a solitary exception or

two), with the leading European and American exhibitors."[393] However critical of indigenous

photographers, he took personal responsibility of "educating" them in the crucial aspects of art

history and aesthetic theory stating, "I delivered at Bombay two public lectures on art

photography in the vernacular language before a crowded native audience; and intend to give a

few more on the same lines at the Novelty Theatre at Bombay."[394] This being said, Bhedwar's

overall sympathy or outright bias toward the superiority of European art photographers was

eloquently articulated when he said,

> a day may come, well nigh it may be, though I find it hard to believe that it is so
> near, when a Robinson, a Gale, a Sutcliffe, a Sawyer, a Blanchard, a Hinton, India
> may have the good fortune to produce; but till the very rudiments of art,
> knowledge, and perception, be inculcated in the mass of the people, till then the
> delicacy in conception, refinement in, and brilliancy of treatment and effect of the
> nicest touches of shade and tone, of life and light, all, all will be lost; and the hope
> cherished by ardent photographers for the onward progress of the art in India is
> faint, and for a long time to come will be a hope indeed, to be cherished, and
> dreamt of by a small enlightened and art-loving portion of the population of this
> vast country.[395]

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[392] Ibid., 88-92.

[393] Ibid., 88-92.

[394] Ibid., 88-92.

[395] Ibid., 88-92.

The community skepticism Parsis had towards Christian missionaries can be contrasted with an overall openness to Western ideas that led ultimately to an exposure to European studies in the field of philology and comparative religions. The nineteenth century brought an application of scientific methods of historical criticism to the study of scriptures of various religions, including Zoroastrianism. Various societies were formed, such as the *Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha* (Showing-the-right-path Society) in 1851, along with their journals (such as the *Rast Goftar*, "Truth-Teller") to keep these issues alive.[396] Debates were held and vigorous attempts were made to root out some of the ceremonial inconsistencies and un-Zoroastrian practices that had crept into the faith over the centuries. According to James Emerson Whitehurst, the "time-honored customs and dogmas were subjected to the most devastating assaults; western-style education had stimulated a searching, self-critical spirit."[397]

During this historical re-evaluation of the primary tenets of Zoroastrianism, conservative forces began a counter-movement with a publication called *Suryodaya* (Sunrise). Strangely, the leader of this movement, Hormusji Cama, was a close relative of the leading figure of the "Reformation," K. R. Cama. By the 1880s, an unexpected champion of orthodoxy appeared in the form of Theosophy. In 1882, Colonel Henry S. Olcott presented a lecture entitled "The Spirit of the Zoroastrian Religion" in Bombay. Theosophy, which he had created with H. P. Blavatsky, already had a sizable following in America and India. Theosophy was a western occult religious philosophy which claimed to divine the deep truths of all religions, using Tibetan and Indian mahatmas, great souls from other "planes," with whom the theosophical leaders had been in

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[396] James Emerson Whitehurst, "The Zoroastrian Response to Westernization: A Case Study of the Parsis of Bombay," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 37, no. 3 (September 1969): 227, accessed January 31, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1461653.

[397] Ibid., 228.

contact. A lecture given by Olcott in 1882 argued that from a theosophical perspective

Zoroastrianism contained the seeds of the true wisdom and also that Zoroastrianism was deeply

scientific.[398] Zoroastrianism had already been Protestantized and the resulting faith was rather

sterile. Theosophy encouraged a mystical, symbolic treatment of the *Gathas* and yet defined

these interpretations as scientific. Olcott enabled Parsis confronted with a secularizing,

rationalizing tradition to reinterpret that faith with more warmth, despite the secular,

rationalizing tone of his claims, because he gave Parsis an interpretive method that gave their

distant texts personal immediacy and intellectual depth.[399]Although this new religion claimed to

have the "key" with which to unlock the mysteries of Zoroastrianism, its teachings—involving as

they did such doctrines as *karma*, *maya*, and transmigration, along with an emphasis upon ascetic

practices—had more in common with the Hindu vision of life.[400] For a time, Parsis flocked to the

meetings of the Theosophical Society and the Bombay chapter drew much of its leadership from

their ranks.[401] In this context, I would argue that Bhedwar's *Naver Series* was aesthetically

influenced by conservative Parsi and Theosophical interpretations of Zoroastrian practices which

were more evocative of mystical experience through ancient ritual and which was antithetical to

the Protestantized version a majority of Parsis advocated. According to Whitehurst the "liberal

camp, led by reforming spirits such as K. R. Cama in the last half of the nineteenth century and

Maneckji N. Dhalla in the first half of the twentieth, wanted to cleanse Zoroastrianism of all

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[398] Luhrmann, "Evil in the Sands of Time," 869.

[399] Ibid., 871.

[400] Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), 502-08; Annie Besant, *Four Great Religions* (Chicago: Theosophical Press, 1897), 44-70; Henry Olcott, *Theosophy, Religion and Occult Science* (London: George Redway, 1885), 290-313.

[401] Whitehurst, "The Zoroastrian Response to Westernization," 228.

Hindu accretions, both ancient and modern."[402] Neither the conservative nor the liberal reformers

has been able to win a clear victory. The result of this theological discourse was an increasing

skepticism and a spiritual schism within the community that has yet to be healed.[403]

Photographic Salon of 1893: The Multiple Political and Spiritual Modalities of the "Fakir"

By 1893, several critical events occurred that would alter the artistic trajectory of

Bhedwar's photographic aesthetic to make it more politically provocative. First, Bhedwar was

nominated to join the "mystical" photographic society called the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring

on October 29, 1892. His membership in this elite institution encouraged him to transcend the

spiritual themes that embodied his *Naver Series* to critique the greater spiritual and political

upheaval on the Indian sub-continent during the 1890s. As a member of the Linked Ring, it was

expected that Bhedwar would select a pseudonym for use in all club business; his selection was

Gul-o-Bulbul. This phrase is taken directly from the highly ritualized and symbolic art form

known as Ottoman Divan poetry popularized during the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries.

An approximate translation is "the rose and the nightingale." Divan poetry is linguistically

androgynous and heavily influenced by Sufi thought as well as embracing elements of the

profane and eroticism. The Turkish language (like Persian) does not reveal gender and thus

allows lover and beloved to break free from a host of gendered rules and expectations.[404] As a

poetic binary, the rose and the nightingale suggests a complex relationship between the lover and

beloved. This binary also represents the greater spiritual relationship between the Sufi

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[402] Ibid.
[403] Ibid.

[404] See Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpakli, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 21.

worshipper and Allah. According to Andrews and Kalpakli, from a broad historical perspective, it is generally accepted that, in the high cultures of Greco-Roman antiquity, the boundaries of permissible love for men were quite a bit less restrictive; there were no such categories as homosexuality or heterosexuality, only a range of preferences. However, extreme sexual behaviors as well as "effeminacy" were viewed with suspicion, and, for men at least, same-gender attractions were considered to be of a higher moral and spiritual order. It was not assumed that a man would confine his pleasures to a relationship with one woman, and his taking of pleasure was regulated only by the avoidance of excess, immoderation being a sign of lack of control and lack of power.[405] Thus, the masculine norm appears to have been a manly man who is erotically attracted to both boys and women, who to some degree enjoys amorous relations with both genders and leans toward preferring the company of attractive and educated males. Andrews and Kalpakli's primary argument is that during the sixteenth century Ottoman empire, in situations where public life is dominated by men, where warfare is frequent and many men spend most of their time as warriors in the company of other men, and where men are educated and women are not, what people identified as masculine virtues—for example, strength, bravery, physical prowess, male beauty, artistic talent, eloquence—are highly valued. Being attracted to young men, loving young men, is an affirmation of those values and virtues, the very values and virtues that a man seeks in himself.[406] Ultimately, the Ottomans and our Greco-Roman ancestors were in substantial agreement that what was most special about same-sex (male-male) attractions and loving relationships lay, not in the mechanics of sexual satisfaction, but in the possibility of a relationship based on mutual understanding and something closer to a balance of power.[407]

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[405] Ibid., 12.

[406] Ibid.

[407] Ibid., 20.

Bhedwar's choice of pseudonym, for those who comprehend its historical/cultural significance, represents a provocative commentary on established Victorian gender norms in its association with love in same-sex relationships as well as the social and cultural parallels of male-sociability in connection with sixteenth century Ottoman society and nineteenth century Victorian society. What little we know of Bhedwar's personal life is that he had a wife and child in Bombay, but this does little to enlighten historians to his true sexuality. However, as a hyper-masculinized Parsi, it seems interesting that he would select such a pseudonym without intimate understanding of its implications.

During 1893 Bhedwar also chose photographic portraiture as the medium in which he would critique colonial modernity in India. During a lecture on the pictorial aspects of photography, the sixth public lecture of the season for the Photographic Society of Bombay, Bhedwar began by articulating the primary laws that govern pictorial effect in photography. According to Bhedwar,

> just as a true poet is supposed to be well acquainted with the laws of syntax and prosody and to possess an accurate knowledge of the language in which he pours out his effusions, so is an artist supposed to be well versed in the laws which govern his art. An artist might be doing his picture by means of a brush, the pencil, or the camera, but in every case it becomes incumbent upon him, however gifted by nature he might be [with] inborn taste and genius, to study well and be thoroughly grounded in the laws which go to make the composition of a picture perfect.[408]

He continued by discussing three principal factors or elements of composition which included, "(1) the story should be told in such a manner that the meaning and intention of the artist should at once be evident; (2) the arrangement of the whole composition should be in good general

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[408] "Photography and Art," *The Amateur Photographer*, July 21, 1893, 49.

form; and (3) the picture should admit of a pleasing effect being produced on the mind by the harmonious interplay of light and shade."[409] Most critical to Bhedwar's aesthetic is his definition of "unity": "the keystone of nature that expresses the harmony of the divine mind as rendered in creation, the lecturer said that unity was nothing less than the due relation of the whole to its parts, which alone could give to objects their time and touching character. The greatest pleasure and gratification of the beholder arises from the unity of the whole arrangement, for on unity depends the intention meant to be expressed in a picture."[410] The aesthetic language Bhedwar utilizes is emotionally evocative and contains elements of "mysticism" influenced by Theosophy and Eastern religions which permeated Bombay and London culture and which no doubt became a part of his own personal synthesis of Eastern/Western artistic and religious concepts.

It was during the Photographic Salon of 1893, the first official exhibition of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, that Shapoor N. Bhedwar continued his aesthetic exploration of one of the most complex figures in Indian history, the *Fakir*. According to *The Photographic Work*, "Mr. Shapur Bhedwar is hardly at his best in No. 50 ('In Commune'), showing an old man in distress, as the modeling on the old man's face. Still, we have here a very striking picture."[411] The reviewer from *The Photographic News* mentioned both No. 50: *In Commune*, which focused on a Fakir in a transcendental state, and No. 86: *The Voice of Silence*, which captured a young women writing down on a slate to the dictation of a blind Fakir. Collectively they were applauded for their beauty as well as Bhedwar's mastery of photographic themes dealing with "Indian Life." The photographic periodical then offered a full description of the second photo by

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[409] Ibid.

[410] Ibid.

[411] "Photographic Salon at the Dudley Gallery," *The Photographic Work*, October 13, 1893, 484-86.

the artist himself. According to Bhedwar, "early in prime the privation of sight and the cup of life having been made bitter to the brim by the loss of his dearly beloved wife, thus suffering the greatest miseries that flesh is heir to, this man retires from and renounces the world and adopts the life of a recluse—a 'Yogi' or 'Fakir'."[412] Bhedwar articulates the two main components that define the masculine character of the Fakir, overcoming personal loss and physical suffering of the body in an effort to achieve spiritual enlightenment.

> Living in a hut far away from the bustle and hum of busy life, he passes the remainder of his days in search of those spiritual comforts which teach him to realize the grand lesson of humanity, "to suffer and be strong." In his seclusion he tends devotedly his only daughter—his solace and his sole surviving link— instructing her in the path of virtue and divine wisdom. Although the Fakir is physically blind, yet his mind or, say, his mental eyes are full of light and holy learning. In this sense, though he is cut off by this physical defect from enjoying a sight of this terrestrial world, his mind is in constant communion with that Supreme Power in whom he has bound his faith. With great fervor and holy love does he cherish his only daughter, who is the only light in his darksome and dreary existence upon this Earth.[413]

Most important to Bhedwar's exposition on symbolic meanings of his protagonist within the photograph is his recollection of a personal encounter with an "authentic" Fakir in the busy streets of Bombay. Bhedwar's physical description of the Fakir is telling: "his clustering locks flowing down upon his shoulders, and that Messiah like similarity of features, with a face stamped with pious suffering and look of calm resignation, at once arrested my attention."[414] By imbricating the Fakir in the spiritual language of the Judeo-Christian West (i.e., Messiah) it is clear his intention was to elevate the Fakir's spiritual and cultural significance in a way his

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[412] Ibid., 484-86.

[413] Ibid., 649-50.

[414] Ibid., 649-50.

predominately European audience would comprehend. According to Sara Suleri, "British imperialism in India is predicated on an act of cultural looking that then translates into a hysterical overabundance of the documentation of racial vision. Its compulsive attempt to classify, to categorize, and to construct racial inventories supplies a postcolonial reader with overwhelming evidence of the trauma of colonial gendering, which intrudes to illustrate the over-determination of imperial classification of 'cultures'."[415] In the context, Bhedwar's "Indian Fakir" represents the antithesis of the ethnographic photographic project of the multi-volume work *The People of India: A Series of Photographic Illustrations with Descriptive Letter Press of the Races and the Tribes of India*.[416]

Photographic Images of Indigenous Indians: Artistic vs. Ethnographic

According to Suleri, "this early foray into ethnographic photography was designed to record a "photographic likeness of a few of the more remarkable tribes in India," and became—along with James Mill's *The History of British India*—a textbook for British administrators training for the Indian Civil Service.[417] The eight volumes of *The People of India: A Series of Photographic Illustrations, with Descriptive Letterpress, of the Races and Tribes of Hindustan*, originally prepared under the authority of the Government of India and reproduced by order of the Secretary of the State for India in Council, were published during the second decade of the British Raj, from 1868 to 1875.[418] The volumes consist of 468 photographs, each of which is

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[415] Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 18.

[416] Watson and Kaye, *The People of India*.

[417] James Mill, *The History of British India*, ed. John Clive (1817; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

[418] Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India*, 103.

accompanied by a "descriptive letterpress," or text that veers between excessively unfavorable

and favorable racial and cultural commentary. Edited by John Wilson Kaye, Secretary of the

Political and Secret Department of the India Office, and John Forbes Watson, reporter for

Products of India in the same institution, *The People of India* represents a massive consolidation

of the picturesque into the official information with which the India Office supplied its civil

servants. Suleri effectively argues that the

> intertwining of these impulses, in which scientism cannot sustain its commitment
> to catalog without a heavy reliance on a picturesque aesthetic, converts *The
> People of India* from an official ethnographic record into a text of colonial
> ambivalence: which racial type will be selected or censored from its sequence; to
> which image will the letterpress arbitrarily choose to confer or deny its racial
> favor, and how is a reader subsequently to cope with the deranging discrepancy
> between image and text? Each photograph is categorized according to race,
> religion, caste, geographic region, and traditional occupation, as well as with
> reference to the represented type's most typical vices and virtues, if there are any
> of the latter to record.[419]

Suleri argues that *The People of India* demands to be read as an "act of cultural negotiation

through which the Raj could symbolically demonstrate its intimate knowledge with the range and

diversity of colonized peoples, constructing thereby an ethnographic manifesto of colonial

legitimacy." While the commentary is intended to supply an authoritative illustration of such

claims, the interplay between image and text creates a confrontational narrative in which

commentary cannot finally contain its subject, focusing instead on fixities of racial categories as

a means to stave off its hidden admission of cultural ignorance.[420] While its record of race calmly

implies a familiarity with questions of cultural difference, the actual text mutates into a narrative

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[419] Ibid., 104.

[420] Ibid.

fearfully conscious of the terrors of colonial categorization; religious, racial, and regional

affiliations are conflated to produce a grid into which each Indian type may be potentially

slotted, but the completion of such a geometry continues to evade the totality of colonial

control.[421] Where the physiognomy of racial difference can evoke only a colonial fear of the

greater culture alternatives it symbolically represents, costume provides comfort: it can be

regularized and itemized into a sartorial aesthetic that somehow suggests that the colonized can

be completely known.[422]According to Suleri, "the photograph itself represents an imperial

reliance on the gendering and costuming of its empire, the image confirms what the text has

already guiltily acknowledged—to dress the colonial picturesque in either feminine or masculine

garb is tragically to defer that cultural realization which knows that its official representations

remain psychically skin-deep.[423] In this context, Bhedwar's "Indian Fakir" lacks the aesthetic

element of colonial "costuming" that fundamentally underlies British colonial discourse on racial

types on the Indian subcontinent. It also illustrates the uncontainable, symbolic potential of

political militancy behind the historical figure of the Fakir.

Symbolic Meanings within Photographic Representations of the Indian "Fakir"

The term "Fakir" in Arabic roughly translated means "poverty" and is primarily

associated with Muslim Sufi ascetics, who thrived in Sufi shrines in Mughal India before the

arrival of the British. During the 17th and 18th centuries the term became closely connected in

Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali with the word beggar, and it is the interrelated nature of poverty and

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[421] Ibid.,105.

[422] Ibid., 108.

[423] Ibid., 110.

begging that most British and European observers associate with the Fakir. In an Indian context, by the end of the Mughal period and throughout the historical period of the Raj, the term Fakir became associated with wandering ascetic mystics within the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, most importantly the yogi, guru, swami and saddhu. Those with knowledge of eighteenth century India could interpret Bhewar's artistic choice of protagonist, the Fakir, as politically provocative, transforming him from a Sufi Muslim beggar/ascetic into a political revolutionary.

During the peasant struggles in Bengal against the British East India Company between 1763 and 1793, Muslim Fakirs took part in spontaneous and organized rebellion. After the military success of the battle of Plassey in 1757, the British East India Company formally took over administrative control of the province of Bengal. By 1765, the company began two policies which would ultimately alienate the rural poor of Bengal, which included the Fakirs, and led to open rebellion. First, it used its political power to establish monopolistic control over the production and marketing of commodities in which it was interested, and second, it made continuous experiments in the agrarian sector to maximize surplus appropriation from the land. As a consequence, indigenous traders, artisans, and peasants suffered tremendously and this created conditions for a spontaneous eruption of rebellion with the Sannyasis and Fakirs taking a leadership role.[424]

A critical aspect of popular Muslim spiritual practice was saint-worship or the visitation of shrines. This originated from the belief that "the saints of God die not, they merely depart form one habitation to another." The headquarters of the Muslim Fakirs belonging to the Madari Order, named after Pir Shah Madar, was at Makhanpur, in Kanpur district. Most religious

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[424] Suranjan Chatterjee, "Reflections on the Sannyasi, Fakir and Peasants War," *Economic and Political Weekly* 19, no. 4 (January 28, 1984): PE-2, accessed January 28, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4372886.

festivals commenced after the harvests, which was advantageous for Muslim Fakirs, primarily

mendicants and peasants, with their spiritual pilgrimages being sustained by local contributions

of alms. The rulers of Murshidabad had given rent-free land grants (or *lakhirai* tenures) to these

Sufi sects for the management of the *dargahs*. The curtailment or obstruction of these privileges

accounted for the hostility of the Muslim Fakirs towards the British East India Company and

ultimately led to a tightening of their organization and cross cultural cooperation with Hindus.[425]

This twenty year struggle during the late eighteenth century between the Fakirs and the Company

transformed Sufi mystics into political revolutionaries and exemplified the symbolic potential of

Bhedwar's *Fakir* for an increasingly anxious Victorian audience witnessing the political tensions

in India escalate between moderate and extremist groups. The potential danger represented by

the eighteenth century Fakir was mirrored by the late nineteenth century Fakir's self-

transformation into a self-controlled masculine body.

The Re-Imagined Indian Body

Nile Green's fascinating work, *Breathing in India, c. 1890*, demonstrates the articulation

of a re-masculinized Muslim Sufi body through the distribution of meditational manuals in the

colonial public sphere. In India's increasingly communalized colonial public sphere, Francesca

Orsini argues that "Yogis and Sufis articulated rival forms of physical culture and religious

identity in response to the wider crisis facing pre-colonial Indian lifeworlds."[426] The promotion

of these distinctly Hindu and Muslim body practices is seen to represent a shared movement

towards the indigenization of physical culture in the face of colonial British modes of personal

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[425] Ibid., PE-4.

[426] Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1892-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

conditioning from table manners to military service and cricket. "Reform" was in this sense not merely an intellectual process of doctrinal dispute, but a means of reconditioning the physical body into atavistically new ways of being, both private and public. Green argues that through their participation in the new vernacular public sphere of print, Sufis and Yogis became important agents of social change whose connections to modernity were disguised through the widespread colonial figuration of the Fakir as the embodiment of tradition. Since the public nature of the politicizing of breathing techniques and other methods of control of the body is evident from the large number of printed manuals addressing such practices, vernacular print culture plays a central role in Green's analysis.[427] Older scholarly paradigms interpreting meditation primarily in terms of "mysticism" have been largely incapable of recognizing the rhetoric of meditation. For Sufi and Yogi, meditation forms not only a practice of the body but also a discourse on physical culture.[428] According to Green, access to the knowledge and power granted by manipulation of the physical to the knowledge and power granted by manipulation of the physical and subtle body was based upon the relationship between master and disciple (*guru*/*shishya*, *murshid*/*murid*).[429] Although still described as such, Sufi doctrines were no longer "secrets" (*asrar*) in any socially meaningful sense, not least due to the publication and translation projects of European Orientalists.[430] With the final dissolution of Muslim power in nineteenth century North India had come a re-evaluation of Muslim norms of comportment that placed

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[427] Nile Green's formulation of this project has been helped by a number of works on the "history of manners", in particular Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978). With regard to theoretical discussion of the religious body, Green has especially benefited from the essays in Sarah Coakley, ed., *Religion and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Catherine Bell's "The Ritual Body", in *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 94-117.

[428] Green, "Breathing in India," 286.

[429] Ibid., 287.

[430] For a discussion of the social ramifications of "secret" religious knowledge in colonial India, see Hugh Urban, *Tantra: Sex, Secrecy, Politics and Power in the Study of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

Islamic *tahzib* (etiquette) and *adab* (property) into a new relationship with neo-Hindu as well as British systems of physical comportment and bodily conditioning.[431] Green argues that this "politics of meditation is most clearly discernible when meditation practices are placed into the wider discourse on physical culture that from the later decades of the nineteenth century increasingly sought to control—and indeed define—Muslim and Hindu bodies."[432] Indo-British cultural relations therefore emerged out of a series of debates that may be simplified into a pattern of what Green calls a "trialogue" of Christian, Hindu, and Muslim, a polemical geometry that came to lay out the possibilities of definition for the self as for others.[433] The proponents of Sufi and Yogi discipline were competing with the imperial Anglo-Saxon mode of physical culture in its broadest sense. As numerous studies have emphasized, in its innumerable manifestations this vigorous imperial culture of the body combined sporting prowess and military drill with a sense of missionary "action" so encompassing an originally Protestant discipline of the flesh with an imperial culture of socially hierarchical personal etiquette. As with the rival systems of physical culture offered by those speaking in the name of Muslim and Hindu tradition, properly bodily restraint and physical endeavor for the British in India were underwritten by a strong ideological and moral code that drew on ascetic strands of Protestant Christianity and public school sports adapted to the muscular contexts of empire.

    Indian Sufi manuals of the colonial period gave central emphasis to control of the body. Such works promoted a form of physical conditioning that, in accordance with longstanding tradition, was described in terms of (physical) training (*riyazat*) and "work" (*shughl*). Indeed, in

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[431] Green, "Breathing in India," 288.

[432] Green, "Breathing in India," 292.

[433] Ibid., 293.

the *Ziya al-qulub* (*The Brilliance of the Hearts*) of Hajji Imdad Allah (d. 1899), the author went

so far as to term the breathing practices he was describing as *varzesh* (athletic exercise, sport) in

their own right.[434] In its account of the practice of breath control (*pas-e-anfas*), the *Ziya al-qulub*

even described a technique that enabled the initiate to breathe the living breath of his spiritual

guide mystically: to breathe as a Sufi was quite literally to be inspired by one's master. Breath

had now become a way of articulating authority.[435] Sufi training manuals also need to be situated

in relation to the failure of the jihad movements of the nineteenth century. An illuminating

example of the inverse relationship between armed struggle and meditation is seen in the life and

works of Hajji Imdad Allah (d. 1899), whose involvement in the jihad of 1857 led him to seek

exile after the revolt's suppression in the Hijaz, from where he continued to write one of the most

significant manuals on Sufi meditation of the nineteenth century, the *Ziya-al-qulub*. However,

Imdad Allah also composed a lengthy Urdu *masnawi* poem, the *Jihad-e-akbar* (*The Greater*

Jihad), on the moral struggle against the self; it was in many ways the poetic companion to his

prose guidebook on meditation.[436]As one examines Bhedwar's "Indian Fakir" in conjunction

with other nineteenth century photographic representations, I would argue that unlike that latter,

Bhedwar's "Fakir" illustrates through symbolic internal and external manifestations of

meditation and Jihad the dynamic potential for political resistance and historical agency against

the external influence of British colonial policy. This evolving artistic aesthetic is even more

fascinating when we consider Bhedwar's personal admiration for the British. It is very clear that

his opinion on indigenous Indians is reflective of other Parsi elites, namely that they are inferior;

however this does not detract from his personal interest or admiration for the historical

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[434] Green, "Breathing in India," 296
[435] Ibid.

[436] Ibid., 297.

development and transformation of Hinduism and Islam or their inherent connection to anti-colonial modernity, which he seems to capture most effectively in his artistic representations of both the "Fakir" in 1893 and his more controversial "Yogi" in 1896.

Photographic Salon of 1896, *Tyag, or the Renunciation*

It was during the Photographic Salon of 1896 that Shapoor N. Bhedwar fully articulated his aesthetic vision of a re-articulated masculine Hindu identity. According to the review in the British photographic periodical *Photograms of 1896*,

> Shapoor N. Bhedwar, drawing his inspiration, as before, from the religion and mysticism of his native India, has given us a series of eight pictures entitled, "*The Tyag, or the Renunciation*." The pictures represent a series of tableaux in the life of a holy man—the Yogi-Raj, his awakening of the religious fervor in the soul of a young girl, and her acceptance of the life of self-denial and devotion. The pictures are entitled—(1) *Weary sits the Yogi-Raj*; (2) *The Abigail—the surprise*; (3) *All intent the Palm he reads*; (4) *The Mystic Sign*; (5) *The Soul's Awakening*; (6) *The World Renounced*; (7) *The Parting*; (8) *On the Temple Steps*. The work is a serious effort, well worthy of careful study and consideration, for we take it for granted that the whole series will be hung at the Salon, to which we suppose it will be consigned. It is far in advance of anything that the same worker has done, showing a mature power and far greater dramatic ability than Mr. Bhedwar's previous work. Altogether, this "*Tyag Series*" is a work of which photographers may be proud and for which they should be grateful to the producer."[437]

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[437] "Photograms of '96," in *Photograms of '96: A Pictorial and Literary Record of the Best Photographic Work of the Year Compiled by the Editors and Staff of "The Photogram." The First Volume of the Series was issued in 1895* (London: Dawbarn & Ward, 1896), 22-23.

Figure 2: "Weary Sits the Yogi Raj"

I.—WEARY SITS THE YOGI-RAJ

Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (134), Weary sits the Yogi-Raj, 1896 by Shapoor N. Bhedwar (1858-1915) reproduced in The Photographic Times, Volume XXIX. 1897 Edited by Walter E. Woodbury, New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association 1897, Tyag or the Renunciation by Shapoor N. Bhedwar, pages 25-29, Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

Figure 3: "Abigail, The Surprise"

II.—ABIGAIL, THE SURPRISE

Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (135), Abigail, The
Surprise, 1896 by Shapoor N. Bhedwar (1858-1915) reproduced in The Photographic Times,
Volume XXIX. 1897 Edited by Walter E. Woodbury, New York: The Photographic Times
Publishing Association 1897, Tyag or the Renunciation by Shapoor N. Bhedwar, pages 25-29,
Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

Figure 4: "All Intent the Palm He Reads"

III.—ALL INTENT THE PALM HE READS

Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (136), All Intent the Palm He Reads; 1896 by Shapoor N. Bhedwar (1858-1915) reproduced in The Photographic Times Volume XXIX. 1897 Edited by Walter E. Woodbury, New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association 1897, Tyag or the Renunciation by Shapoor N. Bhedwar, pages 25-29, Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

Figure 5: "The Mystic Sign"

Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (137), The Mystic Sign, 1896 by Shapoor N. Bhedwar (1858-1915) reproduced in The Photographic Times Volume XXIX. 1897 Edited by Walter E. Woodbury, New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association 1897, Tyag or the Renunciation by Shapoor N. Bhedwar, pages 25-29, Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film
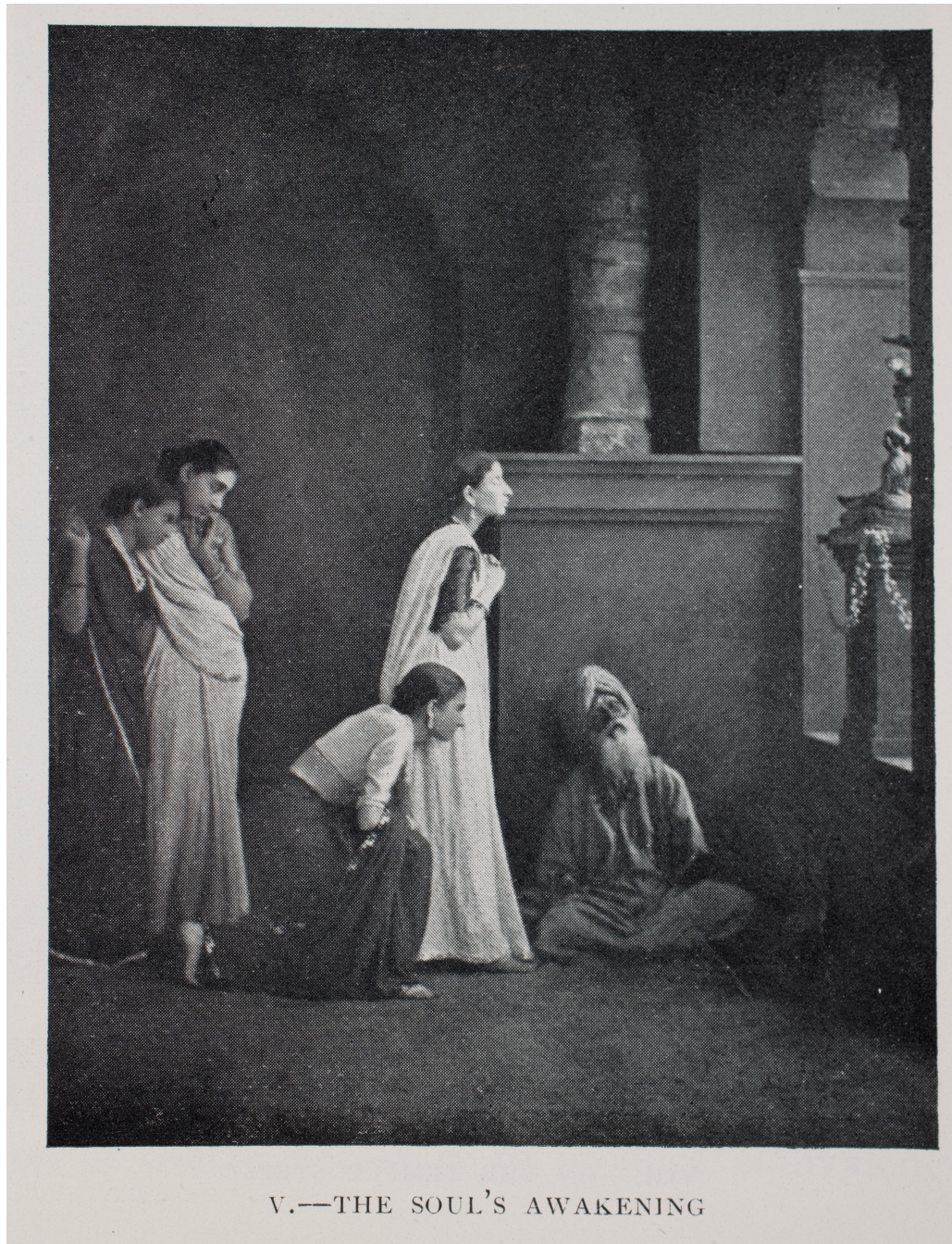
Figure 6: "The Soul's Awakening"

V.—THE SOUL'S AWAKENING

Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (138), The Soul's Awakening, 1896 by Shapoor N. Bhedwar (1858-1915) reproduced in The Photographic Times Volume XXIX. 1897 Edited by Walter E. Woodbury, New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association 1897, Tyag or the Renunciation by Shapoor N. Bhedwar, pages 25-29, Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

Figure 7: "The World Renounced"

VI.—THE WORLD RENOUNCED

Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (139), The World Renounced, 1896 by Shapoor N. Bhedwar (1858-1915) reproduced in The Photographic Times Volume XXIX. 1897 Edited by Walter E. Woodbury, New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association 1897, Tyag or the Renunciation by Shapoor N. Bhedwar, pages 25-29, Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

Figure 8: "The Parting"

VII.—THE PARTING

Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (140), The Parting, 1896 by Shapoor N. Bhedwar (1858-1915) reproduced in The Photographic Times Volume XXIX. 1897 Edited by Walter E. Woodbury, New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association 1897, Tyag or the Renunciation by Shapoor N. Bhedwar, pages 25-29, Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

Figure 9: "On the Temple Steps"

VIII.—ON THE TEMPLE STEPS

Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (141), On the Temple Steps, 1896 by Shapoor N. Bhedwar (1858-1915) reproduced in The Photographic Times Volume XXIX. 1897 Edited by Walter E. Woodbury, New York: The Photographic Times Publishing Association 1897, Tyag or the Renunciation by Shapoor N. Bhedwar, pages 25-29, Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

By January of 1897, public reception for the *Tyag Series* was mixed and in some photographic periodicals, reviews even dismissed it, which prompted Bhedwar to expound not only on the internal narrative of the photographs but also on the deeper spiritual themes in an article in the *Photographic Times*. According to Bhedwar, "Art is nature humanized and the following pictures are calculated to spiritualize art by inspiring into our life nobler aims and purer aspirations. The inner workings of the mind of the Yogi-Raj and his would be disciple [are] portrayed [so] as to leave no doubt as to the meaning of the story intended to be conveyed by these productions and help us to the elucidation of the mysterious problem of our future existence." Primarily, Bhedwar's *Yogi-Raj* is concerned with the "eradication of selfishness in all forms and the cultivation of broad and generous sympathy in an effort for the good of others; secondly the absolute cultivation of the inner spiritual self by meditation; thirdly, the control of all carnal desires; and lastly the careful performance of every duty belonging to one's action in life without desire for reward." If Abigail is successful in demonstrating her unselfishness, self-sacrifice to the higher interests of others, gentleness, purity of body and mind, patience, and fortitude, she will progress on the Yogi path of enlightenment[438] Abigail symbolically represents an immature materialistic west in need of Swami Vivekananda's spiritual intervention in order to achieve spiritual enlightenment. As the primary protagonist in the *Tyag Series*, the *Yogi-Raj* symbolically represents the reconfiguration of a masculine Indian body through mastering *pranayama* (breathing), yoga and meditation. I will also argue that Bhedwar's *Yogi-Raj* is a play on words, reflecting its historical connection with the publication of Swami Vivekananda's *Raja-Yoga* in July of 1896. Finally and most importantly I will demonstrate the primary points of connection between the *Tyag Series* and the historical significance of the "guru/Yogi" for Indian

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[438] Shapoor N. Bhedwar, "Tyag, or The Renunciation," *The Photographic Times*, January 1897, 25-29.

spiritual life during the nineteenth century as well as the evolution of Indian national

consciousness through the critical reconfiguration of Neo-Vedanta, specifically on ideas of

renunciation, social activism and missionary responsibility, all of which were advocated by its

historical proponent, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902).

Swami Vivekananda as Bhedwar's "Yogi Raj"

Just as Bhedwar's photographic series is divided into eight photographs representing the

individual stages on one's personal journey towards renouncing the materialistic world and

engaging in a process of spiritual and physical self-mastery, Vivekananda's Raja-Yoga is divided

into eight principal steps, "the first is yama, which consists of non-killing, truthfulness, non-

stealing, continence and non-receiving of gifts. Next is niyama, consisting of cleanliness,

contentment, austerity, study and self-surrender to God. Then come asana, or posture;

pranayama, or control of the prana; pratyahara, or restraint of the senses from their objects;

dharana, or fixing the mind on a spot; dhyana or meditation; and Samadhi, or superconsciousness

experience."[439] These principal elements coincide with Bhedwar's own description of the

internal meanings of the *Tyag Series* and more broadly represent the development of a new

Hindu identity which asserted the individual's right to unmediated access to the religious culture

of India. Vivekananda professed what he called Advaita Vedanta, a philosophical system

founded by the great teacher Sankara around 800 CE. This is a branch of Hinduism that stresses

the non-duality (*advaita*) of reality and claims that the only thing that really exists is Brahman,

the Absolute. Everything, including the self (*atman*), is really identical with this Absolute and it

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[439] Swami Vivekananda, *Raja-Yoga, or Conquering the Internal Nature* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1982), 22.

is only illusion (*maya*) caused by ignorance (*avidya*) that makes us perceive them as individual entities separate from the Absolute. Vivekananda sought to create a new basis for national unity and a religious ethic that would provide an initiative for charitable work among the poor of India.[440] As Bhedwar's "Indian Fakir" represented the wider Muslim discourse on the body through the publication of Sufi meditation manuals, his "Yogi-Raj" represented a parallel Hindu discourse on self-mastery illustrated through Yoga manuals. Vivekananda was not only instrumental in the gradual mechanization of Yoga, he also passed on an older political discourse on Yoga breathing that, in pre-colonial Indian society, had served as the ideological underpinning of the activities of the Sadhu orders as Warriors, merchants, and bankers. It is here that a discourse on breathing re-enters our analysis, since for Vivekananda the physical exercises of Yoga were primarily concerned with control of *prana* (breath), which he described as "the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe" and whose force could only be mastered through the practice of breath control (*pranayama*).[441] In his promised transformation of the colonial subject into the enlightened Yogi, Vivekananda unveiled the centrality of power to his worldview by describing the vast cosmic forces accessible to the masters of this indigenous practice of breath control that "opens to us the door to almost unlimited power."[442] Indeed, Vivekananda's vision of *pranayama* went as far as to offer an explicit political sociology: "The gigantic will-powers of the world, the world-movers, can bring their Prana into a high state of vibration, and it is so great and powerful that it catches others in a moment, and thousands are drawn towards them, and half the world think as they do. Great prophets of the

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[440] Torkel Brekke, *Makers of Modern Indian Religion in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 13.

[441] Vivekananda, *Raja-Yoga*, 34-35.

[442] Ibid., 34-35.

world had the most wonderful control of the Prana, which gave them tremendous will-power…and this is what gave them power to say the world. All manifestations of power arise from this control."[443] Here Vivekananda finally turned India's political reality upon its head to provide an indigenous key to political empowerment capable of undermining a colonial discourse explaining power in terms of moral supremacy, technological advancement, and political maturity. The relationship that Vivekananda framed between breath and power was also evident in vernacular works on meditation from the period. If breathing was related to power, then here we see rather the relationship between Indian cultures of breathing and the discursive power of scientific knowledge and physical culture of the British Empire. In this vision of Indian breath as Indian empowerment, we see meditation as a form of politics. To comprehend Vivekananda's agenda of spiritual and political rebirth fully it is crucial to understand his personal relationship with his own guru, Ramakrishna.

Ramakrishna as Symbol of Indian Masculinity?

Ramakrishna (1836-1886) was an illiterate priest in a Kali temple in Calcutta during the mid-nineteenth century whose spiritual belief system was based on a specific, highly eroticized tradition of Tantra.[444] Ramakrishna's mystical presence was manifest to those who saw him: he was living proof of higher states of consciousness, and this immediacy is preserved in the few photographs of him that exist, complementing the several detailed first-hand accounts of his maturity.[445] Shapoor N. Bhedwar's embrace of photographic portraiture as the perfect medium to

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[443] Ibid., 44.

[444] van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, 70.

[445] David Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 173.

capture the hidden realms of spirituality were very similar to the beliefs of the followers of Ramakrishna. They were adamant that photographs of holy people were not merely symbolic but were living and spiritually vibrant. The three photographs of the living Ramakrishna show him in his characteristic state of *samadhi* (ecstatic bliss), mouth open and eyes half-closed. The best known of the three, which shows him seated cross-legged, is known in the Ramakrishna movement as the "Worshipped Pose," and hangs in all its shrine rooms. [446] The same photograph is also used in poster prints which set him beside the image of Kali. According to Beckerlegge, "the Ramakrishna Math and Mission's reliance on photography as the medium through which to construct its iconography gave these figures a recognizable presence, which, in certain cases, persists to the present day, evoking a response beyond the boundaries of a shared religious or cultural heritage."[447] Beckerlegge also argues that the use of the medium of photography made both Ramakrishna's and Vivekananda's iconography more easily transferable across the geographical and cultural boundaries that separated his early followers, namely, by adopting conventions of portraiture that were becoming increasingly familiar as photographic studios spread in different regions of the world.[448] Many prominent Indian personalities had little or no control over their visual representation under British colonial rule. In contrast, the "biography" of the photographs of the Ramakrishna movement's inspirational figures—Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and Sarada Devi—records their continuing ownership almost entirely within the community of devotees.[449] The historical and spiritual identity attached to Ramakrishna by his primary disciple, Vivekananda reveals a fluidity and degree of manipulation, which was

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[446] Ibid.

[447] Gwilym Beckerlegge, "Swami Vivekananda's Iconic Presence and Conventions of Nineteenth-Century Photographic Portraiture," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 12, 1:1.

[448] Ibid., 2.

[449] Ibid., 3.

absolutely necessary if Vivekananda's Hindu universalism and its tenets of a reconfigured masculine body were to be accepted throughout India.

Ramakrishna's worship of the Goddess Kali, with her protruding tongue and her necklace of skulls dancing on the corpse of Siva, stood perhaps for everything a Victorian male would find abhorrent in Hinduism and thus could not easily be adopted in a Brahmin religion meant to mediate the worlds of the colonizers and colonized. Ramakrishna's own sexuality would also prove a hindrance to Vivekananda's grand scheme of remasculizing Hindu males.[450] During moments of *samadhi* Ramakrishna would place his foot on the genitals of one of his young boy disciples, whom he called "pure pots" that could hold the "milk" of his divine love.[451] Jeffrey Kripal has effectively argued that Ramakrishna's Tantra spiritual practices allowed him to publically express his homosexuality, a behavior which represented the antithesis of Victorian norms of masculinity. Whereas we can still interpret most of Ramakrishna's beliefs and practices in terms of Hindu discursive traditions, with Vivekananda we enter the terrain of colonial translation. Vivekananda was entirely devoted to Ramakrishna, on the one hand, but, on the other, he decided to create a Hindu religious system that sanitized everything characterizing Ramakrishna's beliefs and practices. Vivekananda removed Tantric Shaktism and the awesome spiritual power of Kali and replaced her with mother India, as Tantrism was replaced by an ascetic dedication to the nation of India.

Bhedwar's *Yogi-Raj*, like Ramakrishna, represented the highest embodiment of humanity in its fully evolved and perfected state.

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[450] Jeffrey Kripal, *Kali's Child: The Mystical and the Erotic in the Life and Teachings of Ramakrishna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 2.
[451] Ibid.

He is supposed to be a great initiate into the mysteries of life and soul and death, and who by deep devotion has come to acquire supreme purity and perfect control over self. No impurity of thought ever touches him, no impurity of action ever stains him, for he must be pure in the threefold cord of duty, that threefold thread of thought, word and action. Supernatural truth, compassion, and fortitude are the virtues he has acquired by practice and steady meditation.[452]

This concept of impurity caused by human interaction with the natural world is crucial if we are to comprehend the necessity of "renunciation" as well as its historical significance in Hindu devotional sects. According to Brekke, the "tradition of renouncers and the devotional sects had virtually no common theological or philosophical ground and there were in fact often tensions between their followers where they co-existed."[453] In contrast, at different stages in Indian history an individual could, at least in theory, choose to join one of the heterodox traditions or one of the sects within the Hindu fold. Such membership was not ascribed by birth; it was achieved through initiation. Religion was personal, defined by the chosen guru and his line of transmission, and expressed through devotion and obeisance to him.[454]

In his religious reformism Vivekananda struggled to fuse two mutually exclusive ideals: the ideal of renunciation and the ideal of charitable work. He insisted that every Hindu should take responsibility for the religion and culture that was his or her birthright, but which had been monopolized by the Brahmins. However, this did not imply renunciation of the social world, it meant social activism and involvement combined with detachment from one's actions and their results. This fusion resulted in an ethic of this worldly asceticism, typical of the spirit that

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[452] Bhedwar, "Tyag, or The Renunciation," 25-29.

[453] Brekke, *Makers of Modern Indian Religion*, 13.
[454] Ibid.

animated many South-Asian religious leaders.[455] Vivekananda attempted to legitimize his new

position by redefining essential concepts to suit his needs, and perhaps the most essential concept

to undergo radical change was renunciation. For the purposes of Vivekananda's nationalist

project the traditional asocial role of the renouncer was useless, but at the same time the

archetypal figure of the half-naked ascetic in deep mediation was a powerful symbol of the

intellectual and spiritual might of India, and could be used to good effect. The renouncer

embodied spirituality, wisdom, unselfishness, incorruptibility, and strength of will for

Vivekananda and although he could not promote the values of world-weary renunciation, he

wished to keep the renouncer as an ideal for emulation. First of all, Vivekananda said, the object

of renunciation was not the social world but rather misguided thoughts, beliefs, and feelings.

Renunciation was leaving one's false ideas of the nature of reality. It was seeing the world as it

really is. By redefining the concept of renunciation Vivekananda was trying to solve one of the

central tensions of Indian religion: the contradictions between the Brahminical tradition, with its

emphasis on ritual action, and the ascetic tradition, which renounced all action and abandoned

the world. One was seen as oppressive and exclusive; the other threatened to undermine the

structure of society.[456] This theological ideal of merging "renunciation" and "social activism"

into a new spiritual discourse of Hindu identity implied the necessity of confronting nineteenth

century Western notions of materialism as well as their destructive impact on human nature.

　　According to Vivekananda, the religious treasures of India were not only the rightful

heritage of Indians; they were also the only remedy for a world blinded by materialism. It seems

natural, then, that Vivekananda should become a zealous Hindu missionary. But the fact is that

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[455] Ibid., 14.

[456] Ibid., 38.

Hinduism had no real tradition for missionary activities comparable to Buddhism, Islam, or Christianity. Indeed, it seems quite meaningless to talk about missionary Hinduism before the late nineteenth century and the crystallization of Hinduism as a distinct religion. Vivekananda stood at the end of this conceptual development; it was a precondition for his becoming the first Hindu missionary.[457]

Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission, the aims of which (formulated in May 1897) were both national and international in scope. It was only during Vivekananda's stays in the United States that he gradually realized that he wished to spread Hinduism, or more specifically the Vedanta tradition, in the West.[458] The Parliament of Religions in 1893 marked the beginning of Vivekananda's missionary work outside India. Significantly, Shapoor N. Bhedwar was in attendance at the Chicago World's Fair giving a speech on photographic portraiture and it is not inconceivable that he attended the Parliament of Religions, thereby providing the genesis of his artistic aesthetic. Vivekananda's foreign mission was an intensely political activity. In a lecture in London 1896, Vivekananda spoke on the spread of Advaita Vedanta in the west. He made it clear that the missionary endeavor of Advaita Vedanta was part of the self-assertion of Hindus: he said that he wished to flood the country of the Yankees with idolatrous missionaries and he had grandiose ideas of how the United States and Europe could be converted to Advaita Vedanta in a matter of decades.[459] It was the spiritual qualities of India that would make Hinduism victorious in the West, while at home, Vivekananda's religion was about national uplift and social reform. In this context, the exhibition of Shapoor N. Bhedwar's *Tyag,*

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[457] Ibid., 46.

[458] Ibid., 47.

[459] Ibid., 48.

or the Renunciation Series at the Photographic Salon of 1896 revealed a symbolic window

through which British audiences could examine not only indigenous Indians' rejection of

colonial discourse on the ideal masculine body but also the development of a unique Hindu

national consciousness built around the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Internal self-mastery

of the Hindu body through *pranayama*, Raja-yoga, and meditation coincided with an external

renunciation of the evils of the material world, along with direct engagement of social activism

within the Hindu communities, and allowed for the potential disruption of the British assigned

"Hindoo" identity to a more authentic "Hindu" one.

Crystal Palace Exhibition and Changing Aesthetic Tastes of British Audiences

By the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1898, Bhedwar's much appreciated "mystical" appeal

amongst British audiences for his artistic renderings of eastern religious ceremonies had reached

its apex. According to the *Photograms of '98*, "Shapoor N. Bhedwar, with twenty-two examples

of the grouped models in appropriate mise-en-scene, showed both his talent and its limitation.

Despite the remarkable series of the '*Naver*' ceremonies, which is an exception, one felt

(speaking generally of the rest) an operatic, rather than a pictorial."[460]Another review stated that

> Shapoor N. Bhedwar strikes one on the whole as a man somewhat suffering from
> lack of direct contact with his fellows. His work has lost the spontaneity and
> charm it once possessed, and his two pictures of this year are distinctly on the
> lines of a theme which he has worked in the past three or four years, and from
> which it would be well to have a distinct change. This is intended as no
> disparagement of the actual pictures shown, for both are good, and one of them,

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[460] "The Crystal Palace Exhibition," in *Photograms of '98: A Pictorial and Literary Record of the Best Photographic Work of the Year Compiled by the Editors and Staff of "The Photogram." The First Volume of the Series was issued in 1895* (London: Dawbarn & Ward, 1898), 22.

> "*The Burden of Life*," reproduced on page 68, is a distinctly fine piece of
> character study, thoroughly well planned and thoroughly well handled.[461]

This overall decrease in British public admiration of Shapoor N. Bhedwar's art photography is directly related to increased political tensions in colonial India. By 1897 the environment of militancy, of terrorist violence, had grown to what the British considered dangerous proportions. Concurrently, a plague had broken out in the city and in the Presidency and the measures taken by the Government to prevent its further spread had provoked considerable resentment and hostility amongst the Indian population. Such a situation provided fertile ground for the growth of terrorist and militant groups.[462] Members of one such group in 1897 assassinated Mr. Rand, the Plague Commissioner. In retaliation, the Government clamped down hard upon all elements it considered had aided in promoting such unrest. Although the murderers were apprehended, the authorities in addition persecuted a number of journalists and other public men for having preached disaffection and sedition. Amongst them was Tilak, who was convicted for a term of one and a half years. It was in concert with leaders thrown up by this agitation in Bengal and also in the Punjab that Tilak developed a national role and ultimately succeeded in producing a schism in the ranks of the Indian National Congress.[463] These increasing political tensions between the British and their Indian subjects left little sympathy or aesthetic interest in Shapoor N. Bhedwar's art photography while his isolation in Bombay from his fellow Linked Rings in the

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[461] "The Two Great Exhibitions: The Photographic Salon," in *Photograms of '98: A Pictorial and Literary Record of the Best Photographic Work of the Year Compiled by the Editors and Staff of "The Photogram." The First Volume of the Series was issued in 1895* (London: Dawbarn & Ward, 1898), 99.

[462] Masselos, *Indian Nationalism*, 103.

[463] Ibid., 104.

Imperial Metropolis left Bhedwar's artistic imagination tired and uninspired. By the late

Edwardian period, his photographic work had drifted into obscurity.

Chapter 4

Edwardian Superman: *Le Penseur*, George Bernard Shaw, and the Question of the Masculine Gaze in the Art Photography of Alvin Langdon Coburn, 1900-1914

During the Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon held from September 14 to October 27, 1906 at the Gallery of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colors, the relatively young American art photographer, Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882-1966), known within the Linked Ring by his pseudonym *Hustler*, entered a photographic reproduction of Auguste Rodin's *Le Penseur* (No. 130), the heroic figure captured in the nude in the art historical tradition of Michelangelo's David and based on his theme of the *Divine Comedy of Dante*. The thinker was meant to depict Dante in front of the Gates of Hell, pondering his great poem. This photographic image and its unknown model not only won vast praise amongst the reviewers of the Salon but also erupted into an enormous controversy which shook the late-Edwardian art world. It is difficult to comprehend how a single photographic image of the nude male body, or as it was colorfully described as *the altogether*, *puris naturalibus*, *horrececimus referentes*, *au natural*, and *mit nodings on*, could cause such social anxiety in its presentation that it dominated the British periodical press throughout the fall of 1906. This debate culminated in the public awareness that the "unknown" nude model was in reality the fifty year old Irish playwright and cultural critic George Bernard Shaw. Shaw had been an ardent supporter of and mentor to Coburn since he emerged onto the international photographic art world in 1900. George Bernard Shaw had even stated that, "Mr. Alvin Langdon Coburn is one of the most accomplished and sensitive artist photographers now living. This seems impossible at his age—twenty-three; but as

he began at eight, he has fifteen years' technical experience behind him." So why, at this historical moment in British history, would Coburn's photograph produce such widespread unease concerning Britishness, subjectivity, and the contested nature of masculinity and homosexuality?

This chapter uses *Le Penseur* as a launching point to investigate Alvin Langdon Coburn's broader critique of Edwardian masculinity, physical culture, racial degeneration, and homosexuality in the context of two of his major photographic projects, *London Portfolio* (1909) and *Men of Mark: Pioneers of Modernism* (1913), both of which consisted of photographs taken and exhibited from 1904 to 1907. Historically, societal discourse on homosexuality shifted with the publication of Henry Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symond's *Sexual Inversion* (1898), which argued that "inversion" was an inborn condition and should not be treated as a crime. George Bernard Shaw commented at the time, "Its publication was more urgently needed in England than any other recent treatise." Sean Brady has argued that in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain, the existence or extent of sex between men was, with rare exceptions, denied or ignored by the legislature, the national newspapers, and the medical profession and in this context I argue that Coburn's *Le Penseur, Men of Mark,* and the *London Portfolio* represented unique cultural spaces in which societal anxieties surrounding the nature of masculinity and homosexuality could be argued and contested against the backdrop of established social and gender order in Edwardian Britain. This chapter argues that this complex process permeated Coburn's artistic aesthetic within the photographic medium of portraiture and landscape. Coburn's *Men of Mark* consisted of portraits of the early twentieth century's most notable writers, artists, philosophers, including Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937), Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946), Arthur Symons (1865-1945), and

most importantly George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950). All five men were sexually ambivalent figures whose own sexuality reflected the complex spectrum of homosocial relationships in Edwardian Britain. Coburn's *London Portfolio*, on the other hand, illustrated a thoughtful, moody, and atmospheric landscape of picturesque London. Unlike earlier Victorian depictions of London, which exposed urban decay and human degradation caused by industrialization, Coburn's London represented a more ethereal, sensual experience permeated with Masonic and religious symbolism. Most importantly, I argue that Coburn's *London Portfolio*, when experienced with Arthur Symons's original text, allowed for a homosexual subjectivity, one which visualized within London's public spaces the potential for random sexual encounters.

The societal consternation caused by the exhibition of *Le Penseur* at the Photographic Salon of 1906 can only be understood in the context of several crucial events which occurred during the same year. Throughout 1906, the British periodical press covered the prosecutions for the murders of West End actor Arthur Mellors and artist Archibald Wakley. Both lived outside middle-class domestic arenas: in a small flat in Victoria and a studio in Bayswater respectively. Both also used public spaces to find or entertain partners: Mellors in the West End theatres, Wakley in Hyde Park.[464] According to *The Times*, "at the Paddington Coroner's court, yesterday, Dr. G. Danford Thomas, the coroner for Central London, opened an inquest concerning the death of Mr. Archibald Wakley, aged thirty three years, an artist, who was found dead at his studio at 76s, Westbourne-grove, Bayswater, on Thursday morning last. Superintendent Duncan Macintyre, of the F division, was presenting Court on behalf of the police authorities."[465] Dr. G. Danford Thomas commented that the "wounds were terrible in character," about twenty were

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[464] Cooks, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality*, 58.

[465] "The Murder in a Studio," *The Times*, May 29, 1906, 15.

inflicted upon Mr. Wakley after the initial fatal head wound. Dr. Thomas also speculated that the assailant "must have been very determined" while another witness commented that he must have been in a "frenzied condition." Amongst the numerous documented wounds the most telling were the marks of spurs on Mr. Wakley's thighs which led Inspector Stockley and two other detectives to investigate several soldiers from the mounted regiments. Also a witness found on a table in the room a number of addresses on loose pieces of paper, thirty or forty in total. One piece of paper had upon it in pencil the name and address "Trooper J. T. Walker, D Squadron, R. H. G. Hyde Park. The soldier belonged to the Horse Guards Blue; he had on a blue tunic uniform with a while belt and a peak cap. Upon questioning, Mr. Walker revealed that he knew Mr. Wakley and that the scrap of paper was written in his own hand writing. According to the witness, "Mr. Wakley offered him a cigarette, and as they walked through the park together the deceased asked him if he had anything to do and invited him to come to his studio and have a drink. Witness had some port wine; it was in a bottle. He was there about an hour, arriving there at 12 midnight and leaving at about 1 o'clock. Mr. Wakley asked witness to come again on the following Sunday afternoon."[466] Following this crucial testimonial by Mr. Walker, the foreman of the jury provided stated, "something was proposed which was distasteful and that was why the witness did not keep the appointment on the following Sunday afternoon."[467] Although never explicitly stated in the evidence presented in the trial, the slips of paper with addresses found near Wakley's body indicate, according to Matt Cooks, "a large social and sexual network.[468] In analyzing evidence surrounding the prosecution of Trooper J. T. Walker, two probable scenarios emerge. Either Walker unwittingly accompanied Wakley back to his studio and was

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[466] "The Murder at a Studio. Adjourned Inquest and Verdict," *The Times*, June 6, 1906, 3.

[467] Ibid.

[468] Cooks, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality*, 67.

propositioned for sex, or he was a willing participant. The graphic, violent nature of the murder indicates that Walker, in either a moment of self-loathing or fear of his personal sexuality being exposed, murdered Wakley after they had sexual intercourse, as indicated by the spur marks on his thighs. Another possibility was that Walker simply murdered Wakley immediately following the initial proposition. Both explanations would have been implicit to an Edwardian jury familiar with London's various public venues associated with men looking for sex. The significance of this trial is that it demonstrated the permeability of the boundaries between public and private spheres in regards to male homosexual encounters. According to Matt Cooks, "the city centre, as opposed to the suburbs, was shown to be permissive of homosexual activity in its public, private and more liminal aspects, and a fluid movement between them was suggested."[469]

The second and more critical event which influenced Britain's response to Coburn's *Le Penseur* was the publication of *Homogenic Love*, which was published as a chapter, entitled "The Intermediate Sex," in Edward Carpenter's book *Love's Coming of Age* (1906), the first published work in Great Britain to discuss the matter of same-sex sexuality in any detail.[470] In *Homogenic Love*, Edward Carpenter attempted to demonstrate the unique nature of homogenic love between men and between women. To accomplish this endeavor Carpenter relied on the sexological work of continental scientists to differentiate homosocial relationships including the male "urning."[471] The text is revolutionary in that it utilized the term "homosexual," which until that point was not seen in any work published in Great Britain. Carpenter's text also cited the

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[469] Ibid., 59.

[470] *Homogenic Love* was not published until 1906, though Carpenter had an edition privately printed by the Manchester Labour Press in 1894, "which [was] not sold but sent around pretty freely to those I thought would be interested." Edward Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams: Being Autobiographical Notes* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1916), 195.

[471] Sean Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality in Britain, 1861-1913* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 203.

sexological work of Krafft-Ebbing, which analyzed the kind of "homosexuals" that were "mutatis mutandis" or exclusively attracted to their own sex.[472] Sexual Inversion, on the other hand, contained case histories which admitted to the existence of proscribed sex. Also, his critique of gender and marriage in the first *Love's Coming of Age* caused the publication to be hastily withdrawn in the panic over the Wilde trials.[473] By 1906, Carpenter regarded himself as the "prophet of homosexuality" in Britain, supported by his lover, George Merrill, and a milieu of contacts gained through the project of *Sexual Inversion*. Carpenter had also found himself a new progressive publishing house, Swan Sonnenschein. In 1906, against a background of the militant women's movement and its increasing attacks on sexual taboos, Swann Sonnenschein felt able, for the first time, to include *Homogenic Love* in *Love's Coming of Age*. Both the Wakley trial and the publication of Carpenter's *Homogenic Love* represented turning points in the public discourse on the nature of homosexuality in Great Britain.

Nineteenth Century Photographic Portraiture as a Medium of "Performance"

According to an initial review in the *British Journal of Photography*, "the greatest sensation of all, however, will prove to be the portrait of George Bernard Shaw—the ubiquitous. We call it a portrait because, in the guise, it arrests attention. The catalogue calls it 'Le Penseur,' which is the name of a much talked–of statue larger than life, though not so natural as this by the French sculptor, Rodin."[474] This statement seems antithetical to political and cultural discourses embodied in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century practices of photographic portraiture.

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[472] Edward Carpenter, *Homogenic Love and its Place in a Free Society*, Privately Printed (Manchester: Labour Press Society, 1894), 11.

[473] Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality*, 206.

[474] "The Photographic Salon: A First Impression," *British Journal of Photography*, September 14, 1906,

According to Suren Lalvani, photographic portraiture "operated within a certain set of discourses and practices to socially constitute the bourgeois body, providing it meaning within an established hierarchy of values; at the 'anatomo-political' level, in order to surveil, regulate and discipline the movement of deviant bodies across the social; and to identify and represent deviancy itself; and finally, as an 'anatomo-political' level in certain discourses and practices operating within the capitalist mode of production, so that 'what is most material and most vital in bodies is invested in them'."[475] Late Victorian photographic portraiture as a medium of representation intersected in three essential sites for bourgeois society: the nation-state, the family, and the individual. This complex process of bourgeois self-fashioning depended on two interconnected discourses: physiognomy and phrenology.[476] Examining nineteenth-century portraits had the potential to reveal an individual's personality, intellect, and personal character through facial configuration and expression.

Discourses of physiognomy tended to focus on an individual's facial structures to determine character, while phrenology or the study of the shape of the human skull hoped to illuminate the inner workings of the brain, which identified psychic functionality. Both pseudo-sciences hoped to catalog human beings according to class and morality in a hierarchical structure. Therefore through a careful analysis of nineteenth-century portraiture one becomes cognizant of "conventions of display" in relation to middle-class male attire. Clothing became a crucial site to configure bourgeois cultural ideals and in that aspect became a "performative" practice of interiority (i.e., "respectability, character, and sexuality, conveyed via bodily significations whose meanings are guaranteed by the discourses of physiognomy, phrenology

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[475] Lalvani, *Photography*, 41.

[476] Ibid., 48.

and gender").[477] In this light the nude body of George Bernard Shaw completely disrupted this process of bourgeois self-fashioning due to his own revolutionary social, cultural, and political critique of Edwardian Britain. Shaw's revolutionary nature attempted to re-write Edwardian notions of love and sex, romance and sentimentality, marriage and divorce, prostitution and venereal disease, asceticism and adultery, obscenity and censorship, birth control and sexual education.[478]

Edwardian Conceptualizations of Masculinity and the Homosocial Continuum

During the late Victorian and early Edwardian period, the precarious notions of masculinity were defended by what Sean Brady argued was a "culture of resistance." British culture overtly denied any public discussion or discourse on sex and sexuality of a "devious" nature in contrast to the more lenient European continent. Both Victorian and Edwardian cultures advocated a masculinity constituted through marriage and domestic life. Edwardian males needed to support their families financially as well as maintain a freedom of movement between the permeable sites of the home, workplace, private all-male associations, and the public domain. It was these essential sites which Sean Brady argues contained the most potential to examine the social dynamics of masculinity in this period. "The inherent contradictions and instability of the often-stifling domesticity of the home, its clash with the demands of the workplace, the temptations of all male association and the presentation of masculinity in the street, was held in a

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[477] Ibid., 59.

[478] Michel W. Pharand, "Introduction," in Shaw, vol. 24: Dionysian Shaw (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2004), 1, accessed September 13, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40681680.

precarious balance. This makes it easier to understand why masculine insecurity had such wide social ramifications in this period."[479]

In his examination of male homosexuality, Brady reviews the differing and often conflicting approaches to the "history of homosexuality." In doing so, he attempts to place the question of male homosexuality in a broader historical framework, through an exploration of the meaning of masculinity as a social status in this period.[480] The process of self-fashioning by British homosexuals during this period was revealed through private diaries, personal letters, and memoirs. Most importantly Brady historicizes this in critiques of conceptualizations of "Uranianism" by John Addington Symonds (1840-1893) and Edward Carpenter (1844-1929). Brady examines the fleeting sexual experiences between British men, particularly in institutional settings, such as the public school, army barracks, and prison and in informal locations, such as public parks and toilets. The emotional dynamic inherent in male friendships during this period held the potential for discrete encounters of a sexual nature. Once these encounters entered the public discourse, they immediately took on the form of "sexual scandal" with public institutions and the periodical press defining them as isolated "unnatural crimes" or as "exceptional." The British judicial system had great difficulty prosecuting these types of crimes, with convictions leading to harsh sentences.[481]

Brady's analysis challenged the dominant historical discourse on sexuality that legislative developments in late nineteenth-century Britain constructed a legal category of the "male homosexual" or "all male homosexuals as a class" (i.e., the legal-medical classifications of male

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[479] Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality*, 1.

[480] Ibid., 2.

[481] Ibid.

homosexuality). Britain rejected both internal inversion theorization and the sexological work done on the European continent. There was in fact a complete aversion to public discourse on homosexuality for fear that it legitimated variant forms of masculinity for British males.[482]

The precarious nature of Victorian and Edwardian notions of masculinity was exemplified by James Matthew Barrie's (1860-1937) *Peter Pan. Or the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* first produced as a play in 1904 and as a novel in 1911. Barrie imaged the character of Peter Pan after a 1901 visit to the Black Lake Cottage in Surrey at the age of forty. Most of his time was spent fraternizing with the sons of a woman named Llewelyn Davies. It was during these glorious summer days that Barrie saw in his young cohorts the iconic archetype of Peter Pan. Edwardian audiences were introduced to the whimsical celebration of youth at London's Duke of York's Theatre on December 27, 1904. For most Edwardians, their subjective experience revealed all that was repressed or denied in British conceptions of domesticity, sexuality, and emotionality.[483] During the opening of the production in 1904 there was a palpable homosexual anxiety as actress Nina Boucicault took the stage.[484] Barrie's Peter was gendered male but was traditionally performed by female actresses. This juxtaposition of femininity onto a male character upset the gender dynamic for Edwardian audiences.[485] John Rutherford argues that "imperial manliness, in its production of emotionally repressed, sexually confused, mother fixated, women fearing men, fostered in them a morbid nostalgia for the brave bright days of

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[482] Ibid., 157.

[483] Jonathan Rutherford, *Forever England: Reflections on Masculinity and Empire* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1997), 24.

[484] Krystal Lynn Hawkins, "Masculine Uncertainty and Male Homosociality in J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan Stories" (master's thesis, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, 2008), 20, http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/opendissertations/4680.

[485] Ibid., 21.

[their boyhoods]. In the body of the body, the narcissist had hoped to discover his sense of aliveness and destiny. Instead he finds only romanticism and a death within."[486]

Historically, the relationship of masculinity to English ethnicity is constituted within the intimate relationships of the domestic sphere. Rutherford argues that during the late nineteenth century a historical conjuncture occurred in which the gendered relations of the middle-class family and the social demands of the new imperialism created the hegemonic ideal of English manliness.[487] Central to this theoretical model is the relationship between male children and their mothers. The concept of motherhood was being transformed within discourses of British domesticity. Primarily motherhood became endowed with the national and imperial mission of raising children and providing a refuge for their husbands. However this newly created maternal power created the potential of feminization of male children. It was according to Rutherford "the patriarchal institution of motherhood and the fraught relationship of boys to it, which contributed to the making of a late Victorian masculinity characterized by narcissism, emotional immaturity and a preoccupation with self-sacrifice: qualities that found a popular expression in the first years of the twentieth century in the figure of Peter Pan—the Englishman as the eternal adolescent."[488]

The gendered order in late Victorian Britain produced an intense ambivalence in the masculinity of its male youth. Psychologically, British males dealt simultaneously with the absent father figure and the often unresolved need for their mothers' affections. This dynamic between mother and son often led to a lingering emotional attachment by the son, thereby embracing the "feminine" and transforming sexual desire from the mother to the absent father.

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[486] Ibid., 24.

[487] Rutherford, *Forever England*, 7.

[488] Ibid.

Thus, according to Rutherford, "the cultural construction of manliness which had been intent on ironing out all traces of 'feminine feelings' had the converse effect inscribing homoerotic desire into the psychic structure of masculinity."[489] Historically, the British Empire was filled with these so called mother's boys, such as Major-General Charles Gordon (1833-1885), Lord Alfred Milner (1854-1925), and Robert Baden-Powell (1857-1941), to name just a few. Gordon was a military officer who gained fame leading Chinese soldiers during the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) and during his final struggle against the Mahdist forces in Sudan, where his ultimate martyrdom inspired a whole generation of British males. Various biographers have identified a sadistic streak in his character, a death wish and desire for martyrdom, a penchant for remorse and penitence, a neurotic disposition and alcoholism. Gordon was driven perhaps by Christian charity to help poor and orphan boys, whom he took into his home and to whom he ministered with unusual personal attention. He mended their clothes and took pleasure in washing the youths. Throughout his travels Gordon kept a map with the current location of all of his "kings"; those youths he had rescued and nurtured throughout their lives. As Robert Aldrich has argued, historians should be cautious about surmising the sexuality of historical figures based on lack of interest in women, close association with other men, or an inclination to "feminine" pursuits. Gordon, Kitchener, and Baden-Powell all were military officers, which necessitated an association with young men which in and of itself does not indicate homosexuality or heterosexuality. However, historians may differentiate between those figures with "sexual proclivities" with those who expressed their emotional attachment to other men in a non-sexual manner. This social and emotional attraction to British youths is clearly demonstrated by the relationship between George Bernard Shaw and Alvin Langdon Coburn. Historically, their relationship took the form of a "mentorship" compared to Shaw's "instructor" relationship with

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[489] Ibid.

Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946). What Coburn and Granville have in common is the fact

that they both took nude photos of Shaw...Granville-Barker took multiple nude photos of Shaw

during a 1901 excursion to a beach near Studland Bay, Dorset. Also, unlike the Coburn's *Le

Penseur*, which photographed Shaw's body from the side, Granville-Barker captured him from

behind. Shaw's pose was reminiscent of many female artist's models and in this context Sally

Peters argues that "unconsciously the camera focuses on the buttocks—gluteus maximus, gluteus

medius and gluteus minimus in all their naked glory."[490] Both images intimate an emotional

bond between photographer and subject based on trust. One primary difference between Shaw's

relationships with these two twenty-somethings was a comment he made about Granville-Barker

in a letter to Ellen Terry, "that young man is a genius—a cold hearted Italian devil, but a noble

soul all the same."[491] This comment lead Peters to argue that the "code word genius, along with

the noble soul and the handsome Italian (uranians were especially fond of Italians) all show

Shaw romanticizing Barker and adopting the pattern of the idealized Greek love of older man to

younger man, the higher order of love appropriate to the aesthetic artist."[492] This discourse on

male sexuality, of photographing the male nude body, intimates a disruption of the "male gaze"

and allows for a potential dual subjectivity by an Edwardian audience.

During the Edwardian period, a dual subjectivity could be read in the writings of E. M.

Forster's novels, with their distinctly homoerotic subtext. A. A. Markley argues that Forster

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[490] Sally Peters, *Bernard Shaw: The Ascent of the Superman* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 238.

[491] "Letter to Ellen Terry, November 25, 1905," in *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters, Volume 2 (1898-1910)*, 582, quoted in Peters, *Bernard Shaw*, 243

[492] In Lacan's Theory of the Male Gaze, it is constituted by the man's desire for the other (perceived as female), and for the lack, the missing petit objet that his perception of the other represents for him. See Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978).

achieves this dual subjectivity by a radical reconfiguration of the male gaze, as Jacques Lacan[493]

defined it, by "switching the gendered object of the male gaze from female to male, and by

disrupting the progress of his narratives at important moments during which the reader is invited

to gaze on a tableau in which the male body is the central focal point, Forster invented a kind of

narration that powerfully expresses male homoerotic desire while shrewdly maintaining the

veneer of heterosexual conventionality.[494] Forster's dual subjectivity can be read on three of his

more famous Edwardian novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey*

(1907), and *A Room with a View* (1908).[495] Before the open acknowledgement of homosexuality

scholars have searched for a potential subjective homosexual perspective within the writings of

Victorian and Edwardian authors. "Eccentric"[496] writers, as defined by Ed Cohen, found ways to

express their interiority as never before (e.g., John Addington Symond's concept of homo-

textuality in literature).[497] In *A Room with a View* the main characters George Emerson and Lucy

Honeychurch appear to be a typical Edwardian heterosexual couple. However in describing their

initial romantic encounter in the meadow overrun by violets Forster utilizes subjective language

in the form of linking Emerson to that of a swimmer preparing to dive. This places Emerson's

body in a nude or near nude state of being while also foreshadowing a bathing scene later in the

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[493] Peters, *Bernard Shaw*, 243.

[494] A. A. Markley, "E. M. Forster's Reconfigured Gaze and the Creation of a Homoerotic Subjectivity," *Twentieth Century Literature* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 268, accessed September 13, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/827852.

[495] Ibid., 269.

[496] Ed Cohen uses the term eccentric to describe men of the late Victorian period whose self-awareness drove them to find ways to express their "true selves through their writings" in Ed Cohen, "The Double Lives of Man: Narration and Identification in Late Nineteenth-Century Representations of Ec-Centric Masculinities," in *Cultural Politics at the Fin De Siecle*, ed. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 88.

[497] See R. S. Byrne Fone, *A Road to Stonewall: Male Homosexuality and Homophobia in English and American Literature 1750-1969* (New York: Twayne, 1995).

novel. Forster's description thereby allows for a subjective visualization of George's body. In this context I argue that Alvin Langdon Coburn's *Le Penseur*, *Men of Mark*, and the *London Portfolio* all hold the potential for a homosexual subjectivity and as such should be read as texts of interiority of both Coburn and Shaw's psyche. The Edwardian literature of authors like Forester, with their potential homosexual subjectivity, paralleled a cultural movement in academia led by the Cambridge Apostles or Brotherhood of the Conversazione Society, which advocated an alternative creed of manliness and transcendental love between men.

On April 8, 1906, Lytton Strachey (1880-1932) and John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) re-imagined Britain as entering a "new monastic age" embodied in the maxim, "new style of love" which was antithetical to the social and moral codes of Victorian society.[498] Keynes and Strachey could be considered social revolutionaries for their renunciation of religion and politics, proclaiming the death of God, declaration that "love is the only reality" and most critically advocating a Platonic inspired form of male love known as "higher sodomy."[499] According to Julie Anne Taddeo, "the assumption that the Higher Sodomy was merely a code name for homosexuality obscures the complex emotions and experiences that united, and sometimes divided, the Society members. The different ways in which the Brothers interpreted and followed their philosophy of manly love, whether for a lifetime or simply during their undergraduate careers, suggest a multiplicity of identities subsumed under the category of Higher Sodomite."[500] The Brotherhood allowed Cambridge students to explore alternative masculinities and sexualities within the safe all-male space of the university. Brothers advocated a Platonic version of male

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[498] Julie Anne Taddeo, "Plato's Apostles: Edwardian Cambridge and the 'New Style of Love'," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8, no. 2 (October 1997): 196, accessed January 28, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704216.

[499] Ibid., 197.

[500] Ibid., 198.

love that emphasized class privilege, gender difference, and male superiority. The Cambridge Apostles or Brotherhood of the Conversazione Society belongs to the British tradition of all-male associations such as the public school, gentleman's club, and the Victorian university. However, Taddeo argues that "restraint defined normative masculinity, and in principle, sexual self-control was exercised by even the higher sodomites at Cambridge."[501] The Cambridge Apostles saw in "higher sodomy" the potential for regeneration within the Greek model of male relationships with its discourses on bonding of male equals: a spiritual, educational, and or sexual union between two men of slightly different generations.[502] Critically, this aspect of Greek Love was never encouraged outside of the university setting, where the normative modes of masculine behavior prevailed and in most cases upon graduating marriage was the norm. This discourse on the "higher sodomy" no doubt affected public interpretation of the gendered and sexual meanings encoded in *Le Penseur* in the fall of 1906. It was also clear that Shaw's nude body disrupted western art-historical adulation of the Greek aesthetic ideal. Philippa Levine has argued that "what constitutes a state of unclothedness is fluid and unstable—a historical problem, a problem of spatiality and temporality"[503] and in this regard I will contextualize the contested nature of Shaw's naked body with its discourses of regeneration and degeneration in relation to the physical culture movement of late Victorian and early Edwardian Britain.

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[501] Ibid.

[502] Ibid., 199.

[503] See Philippa Levine, "States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination," in *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 190, accessed January 29, 2011, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/vic/summary/v050/50.2.levine.html.

The Edwardian Nude in the Era of "Physical Culture"

Throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century the medical profession in Great

Britain became involved in the public discourse on physical degeneration due to the perceived

impact of various environmental factors in Britain's industrial cities, including an unhealthy diet.

Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska argues that the "lower middle-class men's domesticated lifestyles in

the suburbs had been linked to 'widespread anxieties about physical and cultural degeneration'

since the start of the century. It is not argued here that obesity eclipsed the dominant 'hungry

England' debate but rather that reducing culture provided an important and neglected

undercurrent."[504]

This period also saw the emergence of new bodily norms and ideals advocated by the

medical profession and included public programs of food reform and the open air movement.

Obesity, a major risk factor of heart disease, became a leading public health problem in Great

Britain. Late Victorian masculinities were constituted by normative codes of manliness and

valued neo-Spartan virility, as exemplified by stoicism, hardiness and endurance, self-discipline,

and restraint.[505] They celebrated the soldier-hero or imperial explorer.[506] In this context, the

growing threat of obesity in the middle classes represented a deviant "countertype" to Victorian

modes of masculinity and the muscular male body.[507] It was at the height of the growing public

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[504] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "The Culture of the Abdomen: Obesity and Reducing in Britain, circa 1900–1939," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 242, accessed September 13, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/427124

[505] See J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800–1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 1.

[506] See Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[507] George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12-13.

concern for obesity that Eugen Sandow and Jorgen Peter Muller emerged as the inspirational

physically fit figures who advocated self-discipline through physical exercise and diet. The late

nineteenth- and early twentieth-century visual medium of photography became inevitably linked

to representations of Sandow's body in both "classical aesthetics and modern technology into a

heroic masculinity that struck a chord among men coming to terms with modern urban

lifestyles."[508]

According to Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, the physical culture movement was

"Stimulated by anxieties about perceived physical deterioration, physical culturalists represented

the cultivation of a fit male body as an obligation of citizenship and a patriotic response to the

needs of the British Empire."[509] In this context of societal fear over deterioration, a mass

movement in Great Britain advocated for social reform and health education as necessary

vehicles of racial regeneration. British reform efforts took shape in a study by the

Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, whose report of 1904 rejected claims of

physical deterioration and precipitated the Edwardian welfare reforms and formation of

voluntary associations such as the Boy Scouts, launched in 1908. A less well-known initiative

aimed at men was the Health and Strength League inaugurated in 1906.[510]

Some physical culturalists, like Eugen Sandow, embraced a regime of self-discipline,

which they argued held the potential for bodily regeneration, in contrast to the eugenicists, who

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[508] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "The Culture of the Abdomen: Obesity and Reducing in Britain, circa 1900–1939," Journal of British Studies 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 242, accessed September 13, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/427124

[509] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41, no. 4 (October 2006): 596, accessed September 13, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30036410.

[510] Ibid., 597.

advocated selective breeding in order to increase the inheritance of desirable masculine traits. During the 1890s, Eugen Sandow, inspired by the aesthetic of ancient Greece, marketed a physical culture aimed "to bring the body to the highest possible state of power and beauty . . . [and to] undo the evil which civilization has been responsible for."[511] Sandow created a rational system of bodily discipline which allowed for the cultivation of "self-control," "temperance," and "personal cleanliness." This system also utilized the photographic images of muscular nude bodies, including Sandow's own, marketed on a massive scale to the British public. Constructing these masculine bodies required physical fitness regimes imparted through manuals, magazines, correspondence courses, and institutes through the use of dumbbells and chest expanders. In 1898, Sandow launched Britain's first physical culture monthly, *Sandow's Magazine*, an innovation which was quickly followed by *Health and Strength and Vim* (later *Health and Vim*), published from 1898 and 1902 respectively.[512]

By the Edwardian period there were diverse representations of the male body within the physical cultural movement, including a less muscular body advocated by amateur tennis and racquet champion Eustace Miles and Danish athlete Jorgen Peter Miller. Both body ideals coexisted with Sandow's overly muscular frame and remained popular well into the interwar years. Eustace Miles promoted both the "cult of games" and Christian manliness which focused less on muscular development and more on physical fitness based on a daily practice of gymnastics, self-massage, breathing exercises, auto-suggestion meditation, and vegetarianism. Jorgen Peter Muller, the "Danish Apollo," published *My System: 15 Minutes Work a Day for Health's Sake* in 1905 and by 1906 he had travelled to England to demonstrate his physical

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[511] Ibid., 599.

[512] Ibid.

regime of a daily gymnastic routine performed without equipment, combined with care of the skin by means of self-massage and a bath or sponge bath. Muller eventually settled in London in 1912, opening the Miller Institute in Dover Street, Piccadilly.[513] The historical significance of the physical culture movement in Victorian and Edwardian Britain peaked in the formation of the Health and Strength League in December of 1906. The League's primary motto was "sacred thy body even as they soul" and as a badge for members to signify the "upward tendency of our glorious cause," physical culture was placed "upon the loftiest possible plane."[514] Comprehending the diversity within discourses of the physical culture movement will enlighten our understanding of the controversy over the nude photographic image of George Bernard Shaw. At first glance, the body of the fifty year old Irish playwright seems an unlikely place to contest the nature of British physical bodies represented by the physical culture movement. One constant observation within the British periodical press was the muscular development of Shaw's midsection or "flanks" with the *Daily Chronicle* suggesting Shaw represented a new "muscular socialism."[515] Shaw's physical frame as well as his advocacy of vegetarianism links him to the physical practices of Muller more than Sandow. The *Yorkshire Observer* called Shaw the "original superman" a reference to Shaw's 1903 play *Man and Superman*. However, in a broader context, Edwardian notions of the "superman" had connections with Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) referring to his "Ubermensch or superman" discussed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883) as well as Shaw's own conceptualizations of the purified Urning-invert as prototypical superman.

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[513] Ibid., 600.

[514] Ibid., 601.

[515] "G.B.S.'s Joke: Proves by Photo that Clothes Don't Make the Man, Muscular Socialism," *Daily Chronicle*, September 14, 1906.

Edwardian Superman and Conceptualizations of the Genius

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conceptualizations of genius were primarily concerned with reorganizing British society around the concept of greatness as well as showing how the figure of the genius could be harnessed for the regeneration of the nation and empire. According to Lucy Delap, Edwardian discourses on the superman drew on earlier Romantic notions of the "genius" which "became associated with the sublime, with lack of interest in material possessions and unconventionality. Genius status was potentially available to all, an inclusive concept to which all might aspire. It was used in progressive discourse as a concept with democratic potential, and this persisted into the nineteenth century."[516] By the Edwardian period, the genius was re-conceptualized in the work of Havelock Ellis in 1904 into a remote and even illegible figure who had transcended personal weaknesses through his own power of will. Delap argues that the Edwardian superman "hovered uneasily between these two meanings, drawing on the unconventionality of the romantic discourse, as well as the aloofness of early modernist ideas. The romantic 'outsider' who 'exfoliated' society became what some within the progressive avant-garde termed an 'illegible authority,' which turned his back on humanity."[517]

The Edwardian periodical press was permeated with the prefix "super," which it assigned to "super-athletes," "super-ladies," and "supermanity." Its widespread usage connoted a wider societal appreciation of Nietzsche's work and of George Bernard Shaw's adoption of the term in his *Man and Superman* (1903). According to Delap, the primary explanation offered for why the "superman" resonated with Edwardian audiences was because of a reaction against the political

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[516] Lucy Delap, "The Superwoman: Theories of Gender and Genius in Edwardian Britain," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 1 (March 2004): 103, accessed September 13, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4091547.

[517] Ibid., 110.

and aesthetic developments within mass culture, politics, and education and the increase in suffrage. Most Fabians saw extending the suffrage as being incompatible with personal liberty and public service. For George Bernard Shaw the Edwardian "superman" was embodied in the artist, the purified Urning-invert, a figure who was diametrically opposed to Max Nordau's "degenerate." According to Sally Peters, "Shaw was influenced by Carpenter's view that the artist's very homosexuality was the source of his greatness, endowing him with a cosmic consciousness."[518] The "Uranian" artist as Edwardian superman must also be seen through the lens of the *new chivalry*, as proposed by Charles Kains-Jackson.

Mike Weaver has argued that Alvin Langdon Coburn's mental basis was "committed to a hidden or ideal philosophy from his beginnings as a 'young Parsifal' in 1904 to his Grand Stewardship of England in the Allied Degrees of Masonry in 1930."[519] In this context I argue that Coburn's obsession with chivalric orders like the Knights Templar and the Freemasons as well as his appreciation for the writings of both George Bernard Shaw and Edward Carpenter demonstrated that his hidden philosophy was more closely associated with Kains-Jackson's *new chivalry* than the old chivalry of Arthurian legend, a "Uranian Parsifal" if you will. This disruption of Victorian conceptions of Arthurian chivalric masculinity was also contested by the destructive nature of the second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

Edwardian Fears of Deterioration

During the late Victorian and early Edwardian period, no event caused such social consternation in the British public as the second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). The conflict

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[518] Peters, *Bernard Shaw*, 201.

[519] Mike Weaver, *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Symbolist Photographer 1882-1966* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1986), 8.

against the two independent Dutch states of the South African Republic, a.k.a. the Transvaal

Republic and the Orange Free State, was cursed with early military defeats and protracted

difficulties encountered in the process of subduing the smaller Boer population through the

policy of concentration camps. Britain emerged from this conflict with a renewed concern for

national deterioration due mainly to the performance of British soldiers during the four-year

conflict. Political advocates of national efficiency saw in the aftermath of the war a citizenry

suffering from physical, mental, intellectual, even cultural and artistic deterioration, which

indicated a diminishing of the racial energy that had carried imperial Britain to pre-eminence in

the nineteenth century.[520] Richard Soloway analyzed the public debate around the discourse of

race deterioration, especially the collective pessimism by middle- and upper-class politicians,

physicians, statisticians, scientists, churchmen, military officers, social reformers, journalists,

and others in the years before World War I. For Edwardian Britain, these fears of racial

deterioration were caused by three areas of concern: the effects of urbanization and rural

depopulation on the health and vigor of the working classes, the problems of military

recruitment, and the explanations and implications of the falling birth-rate.[521]According to

Soloway, "however much people believed or disbelieved that the race was on a downward slope,

there was little reliable, comparative data to prove it one way or the other. In addition, there was

a great deal of confusion and emotion surrounding the use of such terms as 'deterioration,'

'degeneration,' and 'decadence,' which were frequently used interchangeably to describe the

past, present and future condition of the race."[522] The British Government responded to these

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[520] Richard Soloway, "Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, no. 1, Decadence (January 1982): 137, accessed September 19, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/260448.

[521] Ibid., 138.

[522] Ibid., 140.

concerns by appointing a Royal Commission on Physical Training (Scotland) in 1902. The

commission chose to utilize the term "deterioration" rather than "degeneration" both to avoid

any suggestion of inheritable abnormalities and to distance its inquiry from Nordau's idea of

"degeneration." The medical authorities under the direction of the Inter-Departmental Committee

reported in July of 1904 that "the most reliable evidence indicated that most children were born

healthy; whatever deterioration followed was the result of the impoverished conditions in which

they were raised."[523] In stressing the unhealthy effects of ignorance, neglect, malnutrition, slum

housing, fetid air, polluted water, minimal hygiene, excessive drinking, and the absence of

physical training, the Committee emphasized that the causes of deterioration were remediable if

the state was prepared to intervene on an unprecedented level.[524] Even with this initial

assessment by government officials the overall cultural malaise concerning racial deterioration

remained an ever present concern for most Edwardians.

Alvin Langdon Coburn's Introduction to the Photographic Art World, 1899-1905

During the Edwardian period, a young American photographer, Alvin Langdon Coburn,

rose to become the most prominent art photographer in both the United States and Great Britain.

Coburn was born into a middle-class family in Boston in 1882. During his youth he developed a

passionate interest in photography along with Eastern and Western esoteric spiritual traditions,

especially freemasonry. His personal interest in Zen Buddhism and Taoism would be fully

explored in his landscape photographs *London Portfolio* (1909), taken between 1904 and 1905.

According to Mike Weaver, "the mental basis of Coburn's life was committed to hidden or ideal

philosophy—the years 1900-1905 were his apprenticeship; 1905-1910 was his Symbolist period,

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[523] Ibid., 140.
[524] Ibid., 149.

in which he made his great contribution to photography; 1916-1923—years that Coburn himself described as wasted—saw him in confusion, dabbling in astrology and the occult; 1923-1930 was the period when he became completely devoted to the life of the Universal Order, a comparative religious group that had begun in 1911 as the Hermetic Truth Society and the Order of Ancient Wisdom."[525]

Coburn was educated in the aesthetics of Eastern art and religion at Ipswich School of Art under the guidance of Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922), an American painter, photographer, and influential arts educator. Coburn spent two summers with Dow in 1902 and 1903, and eventually apprenticed with Gertrude Kasebier (1852-1934), a fellow Linked Ring, at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Arthur Dow's artistic aesthetic was described in his seminal text *Composition: A Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers* (1899). According to Dow, the purpose of landscape art was to express emotion; however for Coburn landscape photography embodied the potential for spiritual awakening. Coburn was a voracious reader of Asian philosophical treatises, such as the *Tao Teh Ching or The Way and Its Power* by Lao Tzu, which influenced Coburn to visualize landscape as not only the Tao but also the substance of the Tao.[526] Another text, *The Book of Tea* (1906), by Okakura Kakuzo, which placed Japanese art in relation to Taoism and Zen, fueled Coburn's lifelong passion for the fifteenth century Zen master of ink and wash painting, Sesshu Toyo (1420-1506). Coburn's artistic aesthetic embodied the esoteric principles of Taoism and Zen Buddhism, exploring within the medium of photographic landscape the relationship between the spiritual and the

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[525] Weaver, *Alvin Langdon Coburn*, 8.

[526] Ibid., 18.

physical, by which physical things in the world are seen to be endowed with larger, infinitely interpretable meanings. This complex synthesis is best illustrated by symbolist theory.

According to Weaver, Coburn's knowledge of symbolist theory influenced his landscape aesthetic in that it attempted to "eliminate the insignificant by distilling transient effects into formal elements, to idealize without losing a sense of the particular, to simplify by employing spellbinding geometrical forms, and to produce from the relation between the subjective and the objective a spiritual quality—this was the goal of Symbolism in photography."[527] Coburn was introduced to the theoretical teachings of the symbolist movement through his admiration for the Belgian playwright and essayist Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949). Many of Coburn's most important sitters for portraits were deeply influenced by Maeterlinck: William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), Arthur Symons (1865-1945), Harley Granville Barker (1877-1946), George Brandes (1842-1927), Israel Zangwill (1864-1924), Max Beerbohm (1872-1956), and Herbert Trench (1865-1923). Coburn did not manage to photograph Maeterlinck until 1915, when the dramatist had turned metaphysician, but Edward Steichen (1879-1973) photographed him in 1902 for the frontispiece of Maeterlinck's Neo-Platonist book *The Buried Temple*, which proposed the study of the mystery religions as the noblest of all human activities. One of the bonds of friendship between Steichen and Coburn may have been Maeterlinck.[528]

However it was Coburn's personal friendship with Arthur Symons, the author of *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899), which influenced his landscape aesthetic the most. Arthur Symons wrote a symbolist inspired book titled *Cities* which became the inspiration for Coburn's own artistic project, *The Adventures of Cities*, including London, Birmingham,

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[527] Ibid., 30.

[528] Ibid., 23.

Liverpool, Edinburgh, Paris, Pittsburgh, New York, and Boston. Symons theorized that all cities had personal characters and mystical insight was required to comprehend their individual natures fully.[529] This essence of the city could be expressed through the symbolist method, which incorporated subjective experience. In 1906, Coburn and Symons planned a collaboration, *London: A Book of Aspects*, but failed to agree on a publisher, and in 1909 a book of that title appeared with Symons's text but without Coburn's photographs. These appeared separately in Coburn's portfolio of London the same year.[530] According to Weaver, the London photographs taken during the Edwardian period were comparable to "zenga" or Buddhist aesthetic objects for meditation. The *London Portfolio* incorporated pictorial themes applicable to "Buddha-nature although they are embodied in the Judeo-Christian tradition."[531] Coburn's lifelong interest in Chivalric orders and Freemasonry influenced his inclusion of Masonic elements into his landscapes (e.g., arches and bridges, domes and towers, steps and stairways, doorways and portals, fountains and rivers, groves and gardens, and natural and artificial temples, all of which are motifs in Coburn's work).[532] Mike Weaver aptly named Coburn the photographer-priest for his illustrating Eastern and Western religious motifs within the photographic medium of landscape in the same vein as Sesshu, who was an artist-priest. By the age of thirty, Alvin Langdon Coburn was married and thoroughly committed to a serious exploration of the spiritual traditions he had been introduced to in his twenties, hence transforming himself into a priest-artist.[533]

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[529] Ibid., 33.

[530] Ibid., 34.

[531] Ibid., 52.

[532] Ibid., 54.

[533] Ibid., 52.

Controvery at the Photographic Salon of 1906

According to the *Daily Mirror*, "the great attraction of the fourteenth annual exhibition of the Photographic Salon, which opens tomorrow at the Gallery of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, will be '*Le Penseur*'—a photographic study after Rodin's great masterpiece of sculpture. There is a great air of mystery about the picture but yesterday it was revealed that Mr. George Bernard Shaw sat in the nude for the portrait. The artist is Mr. Alvin Langdon Coburn, a young American, who has been perfecting photographic studies for the past fifteen years."[534] Coburn replied: "You must draw your own conclusions as to whom the photograph represents. If the papers think it is Mr. Shaw, why do they not interview him? But that would be as good, because I know he has refused to be even as the subject. The picture is not for sale."[535] The *Yorkshire Observer* commented, "If Mr. Coburn's 'Thinker' is not Mr. Bernard Shaw, the likeness is remarkable, and the critics have agreed that it is the original 'Superman,' with nothing between him and his maker."[536]

The *Daily Chronicle* commented "that here we had a pre-sentiment of the Superman as he exists from brain to big toe."[537] The *Liverpool Post* speculated that "the face, the beard, the neck and the hands are undoubtedly the property of Mr. George Bernard Shaw but we have no authentic knowledge of the rest of the Shavian frame and a study of the anatomy shows more

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[534] "Le Penseur: G.B.S.: Photographic Study in Imitation of Famous Piece of Statuary," *Daily Mirror*, September 13, 1906.
[535] Ibid.

[536] "Art in Photography," *Yorkshire Observer*, September 13, 1906

[537] "G.B.S.'s Joke," *Daily Chronicle*, September 14, 1906.

muscular development than some people would expect of a combination of high thinking and vegetarianism."[538] Finally the British Journal of Photography called *Le Penseur* an

> Astounding piece of dare-devilry on the part of all concerned. There appears to have been no anxiety, on the part of either sitter or operator, that the well-known features of a much-discussed play wright, novelist, Socialist, journalist, musical critic, photographers model, etc., should not be recognized. The only grace of the photograph in question is the fine way the light falls on Mr. Shaw, his flanks. There are other nudes in this show: but none is so naked and unashamed.[539]

The common denominator within photographic periodical press analysis of *Le Penseur* was the focus on the physical body of George Bernard Shaw. Symbolically, Shaw's body represented an essential site in which discourse of masculinity and sexuality were contemplated, contested and constituted. There is also the question of how duplicating Rodin's sculptor within the photographic medium of portraiture affected British response during the exhibition.

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[538] "Mr. G. B. Shaw as a Statue," *Liverpool Post*, September 15, 1906.

[539] "The Photographic Salon," *The British Journal of Photography*, September 21, 1906, 745.

Figure 10: "Le Penseur"

Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Salon, Catalogue No. (130), Le Penseur, 1906 by Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882-1966), Care of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film

<u>The Symbolic Meanings in Rodin's *Le Penseur*</u>

Historically, there have been various interpretations of Rodin's *Le Penseur*. Albert E. Elsen has argued that before 1903, it embodied the "superman" and "thoughtful Dante." However, the thinker was not simply a poet but an "eternal poet," an "observer," a "perpetual dreamer" about the past and the future.[540] On April 20, 1906, Rodin's statue was inaugurated in front of the Pantheon in Paris and in this context Elsen argues that *Le Penseur* was transformed into a social symbol.[541] In the months before April, mine and textile workers engaged in strikes and demonstrations throughout France and by 1906 numbered 435,000 in 1,309 separate strikes. The length of the strikes and the nature of the violence took a dramatic toll on French society, climaxing in the defeat of the eight-hour work day on May 1, 1906. In this historical context, with the timing of the inauguration of Rodin's Thinker at the very crest of national social and political upheaval, it is not hard to understand why the conservatives were generally opposed to *Le Penseur* and the socialists supportive.[542] The Political left in France viewed *Le Penseur* as the embodiment of the worker-peasant, which is why Rodin refused to engage in public discourse on its symbolic meanings. Naomi Schor examined the meanings of "thinking" in the context of literary characters and one of her conclusions was that "thoughtfulness arises at moments of tension in the narrative, which are often linked to sexuality and seduction. The pensive

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[540] Albert E. Elsen, *Rodin's Thinker and the Dilemmas of Modern Public Sculpture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 64.

[541] Ibid., 106.

[542] Ibid., 108.

character–most often a female or an effeminate male protagonist–hesitates on the verge of a fall; pensiveness corresponds to a lack of desire, a moment of aphanisis."[543]

Le Penseur: Edwardian Concepts of Masculinity, Sexuality, and Effeminacy

Schor also argues that although George Bernard Shaw staged his own mimesis of *Le Penseur*, "Shaw's pose in fact differs significantly from the Rodin sculpture: whereas The Thinker's feet are parallel and grip its base, Shaw's ankles are loosely crossed; whereas The Thinker's body is rotated, with his left elbow resting on his right knee, Shaw's legs and arms are naturally aligned."[544] Shaw's version of *Le Penseur* implied that it was his nude body which prompted Alvin Langdon Coburn to photograph it. During the history of their relationship Coburn had taken over fifty portraits of Shaw of which he commented that Shaw was "quite proud of his figure and well he may have been, as the photograph testifies."[545] Photographic analysis corroborated by commentary in the British periodical press revealed a lean, tone, and muscular frame.

According to Sally Peters, "in assuming the pose of The Thinker, the one-time art critic displayed himself as an object, much as European oil painters displayed the female, their nudes painted with a male spectator in mind." Yet however proud Shaw claimed to be about his physical body, the sitter averts his eyes from the camera, indicating a modicum of embarrassment or shame. In posing nude, Shaw became the feminized object for an Edwardian

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[543] Naomi Schor, "Pensive Texts and Thinking Statues: Balzac with Rodin," *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 2 (Winter 2001): 214, accessed September 13, 2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344249.

[544] Ibid., 251.

[545] Alvin Langdon Coburn, *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Photographer, An Autobiography*, ed. Helmut and Alison Gernsheim (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 40

audience unfamiliar with viewing its literary elite stripped of societal pretense. In this context, Peters concludes that Shaw's theatrical gesture both flouted the dress code of patriarchy and violated the empowered British male. As a revolutionary social and gender symbol, Shaw's body represented a paradox, "as he displayed himself as a woman for the entire world to see, he revealed that the disguise of the bloodless, sexless intellectual did not hide the soft, limp contours of the effeminate man but the hard, muscular body of the warrior." If this process of feminizing Shaw's nude body did not bother the Irish playwright, then what can that tell us about his own sexuality?

Historically, there has been a growing consensus over the nature of Shaw's homosexuality. In 1964, a professor of psychiatry concluded that "it is probable, therefore, that Shaw was impotent, a latent homosexual, and that his relish of teasing and hurting women was the expression of a pre-oedipal oral-sadistic and especially anal fixation."[546] In 1982, Arnold Silver argued that Shaw's preeminent Edwardian play, *Man and Superman*, allowed him to turn his own sexual inadequacies into a public victory as a writer by demonstrating to an Edwardian male audience his intellectual genius.[547] Finally in 1995, Sally Peters effectively argued that analyzing Shaw's childhood background, beliefs, interests, obsessions, relationships, prose writings, and dramatic art revealed the playwright's tormented inner life; an inner life which illustrated the conflicting desires and motives Shaw had in a constant struggle between fatalistic genetic inheritances against the power of individual will.[548] George Bernard Shaw's articulation of the genius artist, the antithesis to Nordau's "degenerate," in relation to Edward Carpenter's

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[546] Lisbeth J. Sachs and Bernard H. Stern, "Bernard Shaw and His Women," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 37 (1964): 349.

[547] Arthur Sliver, *Bernard Shaw: The Darker Side* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 175.

[548] Peters, *Bernard Shaw*, x.

"Uranian" revealed an Edwardian superman whose homosexuality was an intimate component of his persona.

Gentleman, Dandy, and Priest: What is the "Essential" Nature of Mr.Coburn?

During the 1906 Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society, organizers placed a photograph of the young American photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn both at the main entrance and the exit, presenting a symbolic salute and adieu. The first picture in the show, (No. 1) was seen immediately on the left when entering the door and was a full length of Alvin Langdon Coburn, by F. J. Mortimer.[549] The reviewer of the *Photographic News* commented that

> Mr. Coburn stands his back to his prints, looking as though just out of a band-box; coated, hatted, and with trouser-crease and cane, positively the very last of photographic dandies. He regards us with that innocent sub-smile of his, placid and satisfied. This, in my humble opinion, is the best likeness in the room, because it gives what few others do, namely, all the man, spiritual and material. The companion portrait, by E. O. Hoppe, is no doubt a clever print enough; but it shows nothing characteristic of the sitter, because a mere face does not afford much opportunity in the way of deportment, and a map of mask of a countenance submerges temperament.[550]

The *Photographic News* especially focused on his youthful appearance, "Mr. Coburn is barely twenty-three"[551] while an editorial two month later reminded readers that Coburn was "exceedingly young, his appearance belies his age, a curious dignity being added to his otherwise gentle features by the beard, which seems so popular with Englishmen at present. He is not like

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[549] "The Royal Photographic Society's Exhibition—First Notice," *The Photographic News*, September 21, 1906, 752.

[550] "The Royal Photographic Society's Exhibition—Second Notice," *The Photographic News*, September 28, 1906, 772.

[551] "Alvin Langdon Coburn's Exhibition at 66 Russell Square," *The Photographic News*, February 9, 1906, 110.

other men, too, in the ways he sees things. He is the infant prodigy of modern photography, and

his future work can only be awaited with unbounded interest."[552] Other periodicals focused on

his physical features and attire, "the tall French hat of the true 'Bohemian' give it quite a

'Whistler' touch,"[553] or "we are cheered by a sight of Mr. Coburn's sensitive, though bearded,

face glimmering in a photograph by one of his friends, a disciple of Mr. Coburn, Mr. M.

Arbuthnot,"[554] while the *Standard* prophetically anointed Coburn as an "apostle of the New

Photography**. He is a genius. Even the Academicians bow down to the prophet."[555] The *British*

Journal of Photography observed, rather sardonically,

> There are no sensations at the New Gallery, unless the portraits of Mr. Coburn
> constitute a mild one. He greets us jauntily—a veritable "Last of the Dandies"—
> as we enter; and he deplores our departing—on the companion door jamb—as we
> leave. Those who have been unlucky enough ever to glance into the distorting
> mirrors outside some popular eating houses will have some idea of the varying
> expression on Mr. Coburn's respective faces.[556]

A careful examination of the commentaries in the British photographic periodical press reveal a

coded language based on Edwardian conceptions of gender and sexuality, contested and

constituted in the physical body of Alvin Langdon Coburn, wearing the mask of the Paterian

Aesthete. Alan Sinfield[557] and Ed Cohen[558] have both argued that the new man of the late

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[552] "Editor's Note Book," *The Photographic News*, April 5, 1907, 286.

[553] "Alvin Langdon Coburn's Exhibition at 66 Russell Square," *The Photographic News*, February 9, 1906, 110.

[554] *Glasgow Evening News*, September 17, 1906.

[555] "Art and Science of Photography: The New Gallery Exhibition/A Genius with the Camera," *The Standard*, September 19, 1906.

[556] "Ex Cathedra: The Royal Photographic Society Exhibition," *British Journal of Photography*, September 20, 1906.

[557] See Sinfield, *The Wilde Century*.

nineteenth century represented a complex synthesis, one whose identity was revalued when the effeminate male and the homosexual male came to occupy the same space. The dissidence caused by the revaluation of effeminacy and homosexuality became the primary diagnosis for art photographers in late Victorian, early Edwardian Britain.

Throughout 1906, the British photographic periodical press repeatedly utilized the coded language of gender and sexuality, "youthful," "clean shaven vs. bearded," "Victorian attire," "bohemian," and "genius" to question Edwardian notions of masculinity. Coburn's youthful exuberance at the age of twenty-three exemplified what Jonathan Rutherford defined as "mother's boys—repressed, sentimental, forced to renounce—maternal love, their own bodies, sexual desire,"[559] a personality type created in the process of repressing the domestic world of mothers, sexuality, and emotional need. Fearing adult heterosexuality and masculinity, Coburn's relationship with his own mother fits this archetype perfectly. In Coburn's own words,

> My mother was a remarkable woman of very strong character, who tried to dominate my life. To this I had serious objections, so I retired into my own hidden self and there built up my defenses, and it was battle royal all the days of our life together. Yet in her own way she loved me deeply. My mother was married three times, my father being her second husband. I think he loved her more than she loved him. Her third husband came, of course, in my own time, and I made his life fairly miserable, I am afraid.[560]

This mother-son dynamic was never truly resolved, which affected his intimate relationships with men and women for the rest of his adult life. For Coburn, most of his twenties were spent

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[558] See Ed Cohen, *Talk on the Wilde Side: Toward a Genealogy of a Discourse on Male Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1993).

[559] Rutherford, *Forever England*, 24.

[560] Coburn, *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Photographer*, 18.

seeking out much older men, looking for that father-figure or perhaps trying to reconfigure his own sense of self through theoretical writings on spirituality, gender, and sexuality. This process of reconfiguration was complicated by the traumatic nature of his father's death. "My father died when I was seven years old, and I was shown his body lying in the coffin in a bank of flowers. This was a sight I shall never forget, and I do not think a young and impressionable child should ever be presented with the spectacle of death."[561] After F. Holland Day and Maurice Maeterlinck, the three most important figures in Coburn's early life were Edward Carpenter, Arthur Symons, and Henry James. Like Day, these were sexually ambiguous figures who preferred what Plotinus called "non-copulative love" to a full heterosexual relationship. Carpenter's expressed ideas on homosexuality took a high moral tone. Symons and Carpenter in particular considered the art of life more important even than the life of art and they must have done much to help an immature Coburn in search of a father.[562]

His companionate marriage to Edith Wightman Clement in October of 1912 at the age of thirty represented a crucial turning point in his personal development. Coburn described his relationship with Edith in the following manner,

> At this period I was far from well. How my wife (bless her) had the courage to marry me I often wonder…She was the most unselfish person I have ever known, and what I ever did to deserve the forty-five years of happiness spent in her blessed company I will never know. She did not have any children of her own, but she would have made a lovely mother, and much of her maternal feeling was lavished on this unworthy little boy, which I did my best to appreciate.[563]

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[561] Coburn, *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Photographer*, 11.

[562] Weaver, *Alvin Langdon Coburn*, 23.

[563] Coburn, *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Photographer*, 88.

In the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods, when many British considered sexual continence a virtue, a lack of physical relations should not be surprising. However, sexual continence coexisted along what Eve Sedgewick termed a "homosocial spectrum" of male relationships which included homosexuality, intimate friendship, male bounding. Coburn, who demonstrated possible homosexual proclivities, preferred male bonding. Coburn's sexual ambivalence was demonstrated in his companionate marriage with Edith, childless and passionless, though filled with a loving appreciation for one another. Coburn as a repressed figure failed to integrate sexuality into his perception of women and therefore remained at the superficial level, idealized or maternal. Coburn's sexual ambivalence and his desire for emotional connections with older British men produced a direct and identifiable influence on his spiritual, philosophical, and artistic aesthetic. Nowhere is this more evident than in his relationship with George Bernard Shaw.

George Bernard Shaw had been an ardent supporter and mentor to Coburn since he emerged into the international photographic art world in 1900. It was through his relationship with George Bernard Shaw that Coburn was introduced to such literary figures as Henry James, Edward Carpenter, and Arthur Symons. According to Mike Weaver, it was extraordinary how attracted—and attractive—Coburn was to his seniors: "in 1906, when Shaw considered the twenty-four-year-old Coburn the greatest photographer in the world, Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), Arthur Symons (1865-1945) and Fred Holland Day (1864-1933) were in their forties, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) in [his] fifties, Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) in [his] sixties."[564] In this respect, Coburn's aesthetic sensibilities were influenced by such nineteenth-century political and cultural movements as Aestheticism, Decadence, Symbolism, and

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[564] Weaver, *Alvin Langdon Coburn*, 6.

Socialism. Maeterlinck, Carpenter, Symons, and James, all sexually ambiguous or advocates of homosexuality, were central figures in Coburn's early life in Edwardian England. For Coburn, to capture the essence of these men in photographic portraiture he needed to saturate himself in the subject's books, "so that I might previously come to know something of the inner man. The inner man would be recognized at the release of the shutter."[565]

On November 21, 1903, Alvin Langdon Coburn was elected to become a member of the Brother of the Linked Ring. Traditionally upon becoming a member one selected a pseudonym by which one would be recognized. Coburn's provocative choice was *The Hustler*. In the context of Edwardian Britain, the term "hustler" was defined as "a prostitute who attracts customers by walking the streets" and as a "shrewd or unscrupulous person who knows how to circumvent difficulties." If Coburn's behavior demonstrated sexual ambivalence, his pseudonym did not. In adopting the term hustler, in the physical guise of a Victorian Dandy, I argue Coburn was engaged with Edwardian discourses on sexuality symbolized in the literary figure of Jack Saul. Jack Saul was the main protagonist in the pornographic novel, *Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, which was published with only two hundred and fifty copies in 1881 by William Lazenby. The narrative takes the form of the memoirs of a young male prostitute, Jack Saul, who is paid to set down his experiences by a client, Mr. Cambon of Cornwall Mansions, Baker Street—the address of a pornographer friend of Lazenby, William Potter. Historically, a male prostitute by the same name was featured in the Cleveland Street male brothel scandal of 1889-1890. Matt Cooks effectively argued that the text usefully illuminated the way in which prevailing class, gender, and racial power dynamics were replicated in conceptualizations of homosexual behavior during

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[565] Coburn, *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Photographer*, PAGE.

the period.[566] It also outlined a "fictionalized homoerotic geography of London which drew on real people and places and reproduced many of the images emerging from the courts, press and broadsheets."[567] The sexually provocative nature of Coburn as the hustler was exacerbated by the British periodical press labeling him as a dandy and a bohemian.

The caricature of Alvin Langdon Coburn during the exhibition season of 1906 was as "the last of the dandies" wearing his "tall French hat of the true 'Bohemian'." By the Edwardian period both the dandy and the bohemian were increasingly associated with the aesthetic fringe,[568] symbolizing potential sexually deviant behaviors. They were also considered transgressive figures because they lived outside middle-class domesticity (i.e., unmarried men living in small flats and studios throughout urban London). In this context, both categories were imbued with an "outsider" status by the dominant middle-class conceptualization of domesticity. Bohemian artists became identifiable not only by their homes but also their shaven faces. Artists who had become dandified and bohemian followed the fashion for shaving, which, though certainly not a definitive indication of sexual deviance, was a commonly noted feature of defendants in cases of gross indecency between men.[569] Numerous amateur theatre groups included in their memberships "young men of the shopkeeper class who are terribly clean shaven, let their hair grow as it will, wear long coats, and in many instances white hats."[570] These complex discourses of sexuality also became imbricated with Edwardian notions of the genius.

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[566] Cooks, *London and The Culture of Homosexuality*, 19.

[567] Ibid.

[568] See Moers, *The Dandy*, 314.

[569] Cooks, *London and The Culture of Homosexuality*, 35.

[570] Margaret Elise Harkness, *Tempted London* (London: Holder and Stoughton, 1889), 218.

When *The Standard* prophetically anointed Coburn as an "apostle of the New Photography**….**he is a genius…even the Academicians bow down to the prophet"[571] it was invoking Edwardian reconfigurations of the "genius."[572] During 1904, Havelock Ellis[573] attempted a more empirical analysis of an earlier Victorian study by Francis Galton in 1869.[574] Galton's esoteric view of genius was influenced by a "flow of mental energy" which was "highly sensitive and complexly developed adjustment of the nervous system along special lines."[575] Havelock Ellis clarified this idea of vital energy and reflected it through the lens of sexual potency. Ellis argued that the visual characteristics of the genius might include a beard, signifying male sexuality, or perhaps sexual promiscuity. Coburn altered his facial appearance, shifting from beard to clean shaven, throughout the Edwardian period to the constant consternation of a British periodical press determined to label him. Most importantly, by invoking gendered characteristics of genius Ellis helped to give a clearer definition to "vital force" which was a prominent theme in the plays of George Bernard Shaw (e.g., *Man and Superman*, 1902). All of this gendered language attempted to disrupt Alvin Langdon Coburn's masculine self-fashioning, a process which incorporated qualities of the Paterian aesthete. Walter Pater's (1839-1894) "aesthete" embraced theatricality or the "mediated, dandyistic identity–that attends programs of masculine self-fashioning." According to James Eli Adams, "as the aesthete solicits a public gaze, which would acknowledge his very being as the consumption of 'culture,'

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[571] "Art and Science of Photography," *The Standard*, September 19, 1906.

[572] See Delap, "The Superwoman," 101-126.

[573] See Havelock Ellis, *A Study in British Genius* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1904).

[574] See Francis Galton*, Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into Its Laws and Consequences* (London : MacMillan,1869).

[575] Delap, "The Superwoman," 103.

his display of disciplined reserve marks an especially distinctive convergence of the Victorian gentleman, the dandy and the priest."[576]

Historically, Walter Pater's primary contribution to British modernism was his subversion of the masculine ideology of Charles Kingsley, "Muscular Christianity." Pater re-inscribed Victorian notions of masculinity within the ethos of aestheticism by advocating "spectatorship as an exercise in the eminently virile self-discipline."[577] This regime of self-discipline was antithetical to middle-class notions of the gentleman through its advocacy of theatricality as a strategy of self-representation. So in this instance Pater's gentleman draws a closer affiliation with the dandy, a figure closely aligned with Victorian discourse of effeminacy. Through Tractarianism, Walter Pater utilizes a vocation, the priest, which elicits suspicion amongst the uninitiated by evoking "otherworldly values," thereby allowing significant societal influence. Hence the priest joined with the dandy and the gentleman as a means of embodying new forms of masculinity, charisma, and social authority through an active solicitation of hostile surveillance. Whatever the burdens of that surveillance, Adams argues, "it offered Pater new rhetorical strategies and hence new forms of social authority—most notably, an ideal of the critic's vocation as a mode of seduction."[578]

As the Paterian aesthete embodied the permeable interconnected sites of the gentleman, dandy, and priest, the professional also defined himself through the "possession of a knowledge or talent in some degree arcane, the value of which tends to be charismatic."[579] Homoerotic

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[576] Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 18.

[577] Ibid., 185.

[578] Ibid., 186.

[579] Ibid., 192-93.

desire, Adams argues, is but one structure that may be articulated through an appeal to secrecy, which operates within a more comprehensive, more inchoate construction of charismatic masculine authority that we have been tracing throughout Victorian rhetorics of masculinity. [580] Self-regulation imbued with rhetoric of secrecy posed a potential threat, acknowledged by the gendered norm of communication that was intensely proscribed in rhetorics of secrecy.[581] As the last of the photographic dandies, Alvin Langdon Coburn personally embraced this archetype of the Paterian aesthete—gentleman, dandy, and priest—figures which typically elicited suspicion of "effeminacy," in an effort to critique Edwardian norms of gender.[582]

Men of Mark: The Interiority of Edward Carpenter's Portrait

During the spring of 1904, Alvin Langdon Coburn met with Perriton Maxwell, the Editor of the metropolitan magazine, *New York*, and requested a list of English authors and artists to photograph during his visit to London. This long term project resulted in Coburn's books *Men of Mark* (1913), *More Men of Mark* (1922), and an uncompleted *Musicians of Mark*. According to Coburn, "I have always been deeply interested in consummation in the arts, and I think this was the chief reason why I began making photographic portraits. If I admired the writings or expressed vision of any person, I was impelled by the desire to meet and photograph him. This was the beginning of the urge, and it has remained with me through life."[583] Coburn argued that a photographic portrait required collaboration between the sitter and the photographer. The time constraints for such collaboration necessitated a thorough examination of the sitter's writings in

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[580] Ibid., 207.

[581] Ibid.

[582] Ibid., 208.

[583] Coburn, *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Photographer*, 24.

order to comprehend the mind and character of the person. Interestingly, if during this process Coburn did not find something admirable in their writings he would be unable to take a satisfactory portrait because it was necessary to like them. If Coburn did appreciate the literary work of an individual, says George Bernard Shaw, for instance, he would gladly agree to photograph them. This experience of photographic portraiture was in many ways an emotional and intellectual exchange for Coburn, one in which "the camera naturally records the slightest change of expression and mood, and the impression that I make on my sitter is as important as the effect he has on me."[584] This intimate encounter was duplicated when Coburn photographed Edward Carpenter.

Coburn saturated himself in the complete collection of books by Carpenter, but his favorites were *Towards Democracy* (1883) and *The Art of Creation* (1904). This self-education took a number of years until Coburn finally felt comfortable enough to photograph Carpenter on November 28, 1905. Carpenter visited Coburn's studio on Guildford Street, Bloomsbury, where he lived and worked during his number of transatlantic visits between 1899 and 1909. Historically, Bloomsbury was an area where an influential group of English writers, intellectuals, and artists lived. Collectively this group also provided a homosexual support structure for artists and writers exploring their sexuality.

Coburn liked the portrait of Carpenter, claiming it "breathed the spirit of his remarkable book Towards Democracy…it was the eyes which have the most to say in a portrait, they are the windows of the soul and particularly expressive in this photograph."[585] In *Towards Democracy*, Carpenter argued that the socialist millennium could only be achieved if man's nature desires or

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[584] Ibid.

[585] Ibid., 34.

instincts were liberated from the repressive nature of modern society. This was Carpenter's

seminal text and it was very influential amongst socialists, feminists, and radical Victorian

thinkers. The 1890s, witnessed increased tensions and fracturing among the political left in Great

Britain, specifically with the formation of the Fabian Society, which advocated industrial

working class politics and parliamentary representation through the Labour Party. Carpenter

maintained the esoteric tenets represented in *Towards Democracy* (1883). Mankind, uninhibited

by societal norms of sexuality, held the potential for sexual liberation of both sexes and more

broadly for political liberation too.[586]

The other book that so influenced Coburn's perception of Carpenter was *The Art of*

Creation (1904). For Coburn, "the time at which a book is read is, of course, very important, for

we are receptive to certain influences at certain phases of our mind's development but it certainly

made a deep impression upon me in 1905."[587] The *Art of Creation* articulated the metaphysical

idea that human consciousness had three separate stages of development: the simple

consciousness (of the animal or the primitive man), the self-consciousness (of the civilized or

intellectual man), and the mass-consciousness or cosmic consciousness of coming man.[588]

Carpenter articulates the idea that

> The idea of the three stages of Consciousness is that matter in itself is an illusion,
> being only a film between soul and soul: called matter when the film is opaque to
> the perceiving soul, but called, mind when the latter sees through to the
> intelligence behind it. And these stages again relate logically to the idea of the

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[586] Edward Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1985), 25. The 1985 edition is an unabridged reprint of the poem, published in eighteen editions before 1931.

[587] Coburn, *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Photographer*, 34.

[588] Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams*, 206.

Universal or Omnipresent Self. *The Art of Creation* was written to give expression to these three ideas and the natural deductions from them.[589]

This process of the evolution of human consciousness would theoretically bring the various races of the world together in the form of a non-governmental form of society, which would include "Communalization of Land and capital, the freeing of Woman to equality with Man, the extension of the monogamic Marriage into some king of group-alliance, the restoration and full recognition of the heroic friendships of Greek and primitive times; and again in the sturdy simplifications and debarrassment of daily life by the removal of those things which stand between us and nature, between ourselves and our fellows—by plain living, friendship with the animals, open-air habits, fruitarian food, and such degree of nudity as we can reasonably attain to."[590] This social revolution would have been more than acceptable to Coburn who later in life embraced many of these same principles, including vegetarianism. It was in the wake of *Towards Democracy* and the *Art of Creation* that a more radical, revolutionary text on same-sex relationships emerged, *Love's Coming of Age* (1906). In a chapter titled "The Intermediate Sex," Carpenter opened a public dialogue on the nature of "Homogenic Love" or same-sex sexuality. In this context, the figure of the "urning" emerges as superior to normal men and women. Carpenter thoroughly embraced the theory on the biological nature of the Urning of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-1895). Carpenter believed that this intermediate type of being was special, "Urning men in their own lives put love before money making, business, success, fame, and other motives which rule the normal man. I am sure that it is also true of them that they put love before lust. I do not feel sure that this can be said of the normal man, at any rate in the

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[589] Ibid., 207.

[590] Ibid., 208.

present stage of evolution."[591] Carpenter also attempted to demonstrate in his work that these

beings were not only more numerous than supposed, but also had the potential to form a band of

comrades that would do work to alter and enhance society. These revolutionary ideas on

"urning" were met with hostility from both foes and friends like George Bernard Shaw.

Historically, it is significant that *Love's Coming of Age* was published in 1906 and 1909 without

any official prosecution by the British Government. Sean Brady argues that it was the entire

sublimation of the presence of sex in the milieu of the urning which allowed it to go unscathed

by the legal system.[592] In a wider context, the *Intermediate Sex* stood alone in the Edwardian

period in regards to an open discourse on homosexuality in Great Britain, in comparison to the

numerous publications on inversion theory being produced on the European continent since the

mid Victorian era. In the final analysis, Carpenter's struggle to comprehend his own desires for

men led to his critiques of Edwardian notions of masculinity, domesticity, and sexuality but

achieved little or nothing of their aims in the period in question.[593]

Alvin Langdon Coburn's London Portfolio

During the fall of 1909, an American art photographer, Alvin Langdon Coburn, published

a portfolio of twenty photogravure images of historic sites throughout the Imperial capital of

London.[594] Included in this edition was an introduction written by Hilaire Belloc, an Anglo-

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[591] Edward Carpenter, *Selected Wrings, vol. 1: Sex* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1984), 244. "Love's Coming of Age" in this edition is a reprint of Carpenter's 1908 edition.

[592] Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality*, 205.

[593] Ibid., 209.

[594] See Alvin Langdon Coburn, *London, with an Introduction by Hilaire Belloc* (London: Duckworth, 1909): Plate I: Westminster Abbey, 1905; Plate II: The Temple/Fountain Court, 1906; Plate III: Waterloo Bridge; Plate IV: Kingsway, 1906; Plate V: Hyde Park Corner, 1905; Plate VI: St. Paul's from the River, 1906; Plate VII: Trafalgar Square, 1905; Plate VIII: The Tower Bridge, 1906; Plate IX: Paddington Canal; Plate X: Wapping, 1904; Plate XI:

French writer/historian, President of the Oxford Union, and MP for Salford from 1906 to 1910. Alfred Stieglitz, editor of *Camera Works* and fellow American member of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, recognized the unique nature of the portfolio by acknowledging, "Like Whistler, Mr. Coburn has the advantage of looking at London much more imaginatively than any born Londoner could."[595] London occupies a unique position in England's imagination. The city has stood for the literary, social, and political center against which the rest of the country is in various ways contrasted. From the Industrial Revolution onwards, it has also been the primary site in which notions of emerging urban modernity have evolved and been tested in writing and photography. If the understanding of the modern city is expressed primarily in a discourse of fracture, alienation, anonymity, then London—sprawling, unfocused, so huge as to be virtually unknowable—provides a peculiarly appropriate site in which to explore this experience.

Holbrook Jackson has argued that the dandy's true nature was constituted in the modern urban landscape.[596] If this assessment is accurate, then metropolitan London must be viewed as a critical site in which alternative masculinities and sexualities are manifested. In this context, Coburn's *London* represented a radical re-imagining of the Imperial Metropolis in terms of a potential homosexual subjectivity. Historically, the *London Portfolio* represented the swan song of Coburn's "symbolist period" (1905-1910), as well as the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring. Just as Alvin Langdon Coburn was prophetically labeled the "last of the dandies" in 1906, the

Leicester Square, 1906; Plate XII: Regent's Canal; Plate XIII: From Westminster Bridge, 1905; Plate XIV: Kensington Gardens; Plate XV: The Tower; Plate XVI: On the Embankment, 1905; Plate XVII: Houses of Parliament; Plate XVIII: London Bridge; Plate XIX: The British Lion, 1905; Plate XX: St. Paul's From Ludgate Circus, 1905.

[595] Alfred Stieglitz, "London—Twenty Gravures by Coburn," *Camera Work: Photographic Quarterly*, Numbers 25-28, (1909): 50.

[596] Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (Franklin, TN: Tantallon Press, 2002), 109.

London Portfolio was intimately connected with the matrix of meanings around gender and sexuality in the context of the sexual politics of Edwardian London. The performance of these photographic images, as acts of transgression, inhabited the gap between art and life, convention and taboo, and between normality and deviance.

The paradoxical nature of metropolitan London was as a modern, Imperial capital, a cosmopolitan and frivolous metropolis, and a degraded and degenerate city, blighted by poverty and immorality. These and other conceptions of London, and the complex dynamics which existed between them, were repeatedly caught up in accounts of homosexual activity. Judith Walkowitz has argued that certain areas of London were, "sites of exchange and erotic activity, a place symbolically opposed to orderly domestic life."[597] Stations, theaters, public toilets, particular streets and parks, restaurants, pubs and hotels, university settlements, sports clubs, swimming pools, and even the British Museum were loaded with expectations and associations which intersected with the different ways of thinking about homosexual encounters. These places were each implicated in the social, sexual, and political aspects of emerging homosexual identities.[598] Matt Cook has argued that the "diagnostic, rhetorical and theoretical connections between the city and sexual pathology were apparently confirmed in the commentary and case studies [of] sexological tests."[599] For many sexological theorists, the modern cityscape fostered sexual abnormalities within some of its citizens. Case studies in Henry Havelock Ellis' *Sexual Inversion* (1897) and Xavier Mayne's *The Intersexes* (1908) likewise included details of homosexual exploits in London's parks, theaters, and streets in the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s. A

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[597] See Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[598] Cooks, *London and The Culture of Homosexuality*, 3.

[599] Ibid., 83.

diagnosis of "homosexuality" was closely associated with a social milieu of willing, consensual relationships. The "invert" was repeatedly linked to a social scene based around popular public venues of major European cities, and was shown to have a particular personal investment in urban life. The artificial construction of the effeminate "invert or homosexual" as a sexually deviant type was the most prominent characteristic of this scene.[600] In this context, if we are to unlock the potential for the homosexual gaze, one must reconnect the *London Portfolio* with its original script, written by Arthur Symons.

On September 22, 1906, Alvin Langdon Coburn produced a photographic portrait of Arthur Symons, the author of *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*,[601] who was largely responsible for exposing Anglo-American literary circles to French Symbolism. This initial meeting led to a relationship of creative collaboration between the two men which influenced the aesthetic qualities of the *London Portfolio*. Arthur Symons's earlier work, *Cities*,[602] was inspirational in Coburn's own conceptions of capturing the character of metropolitan London, which would have culminated in the publication of *London: A Book of Aspects*. Coburn utilized the essential methodology of the symbolist to comprehend reality through subjective means. Unfortunately, Coburn and Symons could not come to terms on a publisher and their respective projects were published separately, as the *London Portfolio* and *London: A Book of Aspects* respectively. Coburn was clearly disappointed in his publisher's selection of writer for the introduction, stating that "it completely ignored my pictures!"[603] Coburn wanted the introduction

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[600] Ibid.

[601] Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2010).

[602] Arthur Symons, *Cities* (Charleston, South Carolina: BiblioBazaar, 2009).

[603] Coburn, *Alvin Langdon Coburn, Photographer*, 74.

to be written by his friend and mentor George Bernhard Shaw, but for whatever reason the publishers preferred the alternative thirteen page introduction by Belloc.

According to Hilaire Belloc, London, among all English cities such as Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham, or European capitals such as Paris, Vienna, and Prague, has a unique spirit with two primary characteristics. It is Belloc's historicization and glorification of London's past which distracts from Coburn's original artistic project and its intended subjective experience of the city. That is why it is critical to reconnect with Symons's original text, *London: A Book of Aspects*, to bring true insight to Coburn's *London Portfolio*.

According to Coburn, landscape aesthetics depend greatly on conveying mood, not local information.

> If you ask how a camera can be made to convey a mood, I can only say that photography demands great patience; waiting for the right hour, the right moment, and recognizing it when you see it. It also means training in self-control, which [requires] you to forgo the subjects, attractive in some respects, which you know, [are] not entirely satisfactory. The artist-photographer must be constantly on the alert for the perfect moment, when a fragment of the jumble of nature is isolated by the conditions of light or atmospheres, until every detail is just right.[604]

This evocative aesthetic for landscape emerges once the original text of *London: A Book of Aspects* is read while viewing Coburn's *London Portfolio*. For Arthur Symons, "the real London is not a city of uniform brightness, like Paris, or a savage gloom, like Prague; it is a picture continually changing, a continual sequence of pictures, and there is no knowing what mean street corner may not suddenly take on a glory not its own. The English mist is always at work like a

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[604] Arthur Symons, *London: A Book of Aspects*, (London: Privately Printed for Edmund D. Brooks and His Friends, 1909), 44.

subtle painter, and London is a vast canvas prepared for the mist to work on."[605] As he surveyed

the cityscape, he identified the Thames as the soul of London, the parks as its eyes, and Trafalgar

Square as its heart. If we examine Plate VII: Trafalgar Square (1905) within the portfolio while

we read Symons's description of his sensory experiences at Trafalgar Square, there seems to be a

potential for homosexual subjectivity in the synchronicity between the two. Symons's states,

> There is no hour of day or night when it is not admirable, but for my part I
> preferred the evening, just as it grows dusk, after a day of heavy rain. How often
> have I walked up and down, for mere pleasure for a pleasure which quickened
> into actual excitement, on that broad, curved platform from which you can turn to
> look up at the National Gallery, like a frontispiece, and from which you can look
> down over the dark stone pavement, black and shining with rain, on which the
> curved fountains stand with their inky water, while two gas-lamps cast a feeble
> light on the granite base of the Nelson monument and on the vast sulky lions at
> the corners.[606]

Symons's subjective experience of London's streets is evocative of sensual pleasure, an evening

sojourn exploring the city's scenic landscape culminating in an almost sexual excitation.

Homosexual activity is reticent with nightly excursions by men seeking anonymous encounters

throughout London's public spaces, such as rail stations, theaters, public toilets, particular streets

and parks, restaurants, pubs, and hotels. Symons's own sexuality lends a powerful sense of

authenticity to this subjective experience and explains Coburn's disappointment with Belloc's

rather dispassionate "historical" description.

The *London Portfolio* not only represented a radical re-articulation of the aesthetics of the

picturesque, but also demonstrated how Alvin Langdon Coburn incorporated the potential for

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[605] Ibid., 2.

[606] Ibid., 6.

homosexual subjectivity. It also represented the climax of a decade-long critique of Edwardian concepts of masculinity, sexuality, and national and imperial identity. Coburn's aesthetic embraced the devotional meditation texts drawn from the great mystic traditions, such as Hermetic (Hermes Trismegistus), Greek (Pythagoras and Plato), Neo-Platonic (Plotinus and Thomas Taylor), Christian Neo-Platonic (Dionysius the Areopagite and St.Augustine, Chinese (Lao Tzu), Indian (the Gita), and Buddhist (the Mahayana School), which placed him solely in the realm of what H. Stuart Hughes,[607] Owen Chadwick,[608] Jose Harris,[609] and most recently Alex Owen[610] all addressed as key elements of modernity, consciousness, subjectivity, and mysticism. By January of 1910, F. J. Mortimer commented that "the cleverest of us realized that Coburn was cram-full of genius; the rest of us pretended that we did."[611] For many critics, when Coburn emerged onto the photographic art world he was considered an eccentric both in art and dress. However, by the end of the Edwardian period, his trademark Paris hat and flowing tie were gone and he was at the forefront of the avant-garde revolution.

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[607] H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958).

[608] Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

[609] Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain 187-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[610] Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*.

[611] F. J. Mortimer, "Photographers I have Met: XIII. Alvin Langdon Coburn," *The Amateur Photographer and Photographic News*, January 4, 1910, 9.

<center>**Conclusion**</center>

In 1903, the British House of Commons passed a critical resolution to begin an official investigation into the alleged atrocities, mutilations, and use of slave labor perpetrated on the indigenous Congolese population by the Congo Administration of King Leopold II (1835-1909).[612] Roger Casement (1864-1916) the official British consul of Boma subsequently travelled on the Upper Congo from June 5 to September 15, 1903. The report of His Majesty's Consul at Boma was published as a Parliamentary paper (Africa, No. 1, 1904. Cd. 1, 933). While giving the Congo government full credit for the improved facilities which had been provided for travelling, he stated that the most striking change he observed was the great reduction in the native population. According to *The Times*, Mr. Casement stated that the district of Lukolela had a population of 5,000 inhabitants the last time he visited the region in 1887, compared to about 600 in 1903. Casement also described a sixty to seventy percent decrease in overall population in the towns surrounding Lake Mantumba. But the most onerous aspect of this depopulation was the first-hand accounts, mainly from indigenous women,

> At one of these villages, after confidence had been restored and the fugitives had been induced to come in from the surrounding forest, where they had hidden themselves…I asked them why they had run away at my approach and they said, smiling "We thought you were 'Bula matadi' (i.e., 'men of the government')."[613]

This overwhelming fear of the Congo administration was coupled with an official policy of economic exploitation enforced by punitive mutilation. Casement personally interviewed two

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[612] For the most recent work on the Congo Atrocities see Hochshild, *King Leopold's Ghost.*

[613] "The Congo State," *The Times*, February 15, 1904, 6.

children who suffered the brutality of the bodily mutilation: "One, a young man, both of whose hands had been beaten off with the butt ends of rifles against a tree, the other a young lad of 11 or 12 years of age, whose right hand was cut off at the wrist."[614] The most egregious maltreatment of Congolese people came at the hands of the armed men in the pay of so-called trading societies. According to official testimony,

> Each time the corporal goes out to get rubber, cartridges are given him. He must bring back all not used; and for every one used he must bring back a right hand. As to the extent to which this is carried on, he informed me that in six months they, the State, on the Momboye River, had used 6,000 cartridges, which means that 6,000 people are killed or mutilated. It means more than 6,000 for the people have told me repeatedly that the soldiers kill children with the butt of their guns.[615]

Although Casement applauded the Congo government for its initiative of curbing the open practice of cannibalism, he stated with sardonic irony that in suppressing these barbarous practices the government relied upon "savage agencies wherewith to combat savagery."[616] The troops who employed punitive measures were and often are themselves savages, only removed by outward garb form those they are sent to punish. Through these punitive measures an atmosphere of fear and anxiety permeated the collective consciousness of the Congolese and was embodied in the nickname given to one of the officers who was the chief authority for a district: the natives called him "Widjima," or "Darkness."

The Casement Report of 1904 consisted of a forty page document and included additional eyewitness testimony that substantiated the roughly twenty years of accusations against King

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[614] "The Congo State," *The Times*, February 15, 1904, 6.

[615] Ibid.

[616] Ibid.

Leopold's Congo Administration, including mass killings, mutilations, and the practice of economic extortion against the Congolese populace. The publication of this official government document furthered the process of global awareness on the continuing humanitarian crisis in the Congo. It also led to the formation of the Congo Reform Association (1904-1912) by Dr. Henry Grattan Guinness (1861-1915), Roger Casement, and Edmund Dene Morel (1873-1924). The political consequences included a conference by the fourteen signatories of the original Berlin Agreement of 1885. The Belgian Parliament created its own official commission to investigate the accusations made by Roger Casement. Despite the nationalistic aspects of this controversy, the Belgium commission's inquiry substantiated most of Casement's claims against the Congo Administration. Consequently, the Belgian authorities arrested and convicted government officials who directly or indirectly perpetrated acts of violence against the indigenous population during the rubber collection expedition in 1903. For his public advocacy of human rights in the Congo, Roger Casement was honored in 1905 with the CMG, Companion of the Order of St Michael and St. George, and was knighted in 1911 for his humanitarian efforts on the behalf of the indigenous Peruvian tribe known as the Putumayo.

It is not without historical irony that the Casement Report crystallized Edwardian concerns for the humanitarian crisis in the Congo State during final months of Henry Morton Stanley's life.[617] This historical event represented a fundamental shift in Edwardian notions of race, masculinity, and national and imperial identity. In the late Victorian period Henry Morton Stanley represented the masculine archetype of the explorer-hero, one whose masculinity embodied the Kingsleyan model of "primitivism" and "muscular Christianity." Roger Casement, on the other hand, represented a new and dynamic masculinity, one which embodied

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[617] The Casement Report was released in February 1904; Henry Morton Stanley died on May 4, 1904.

humanitarian principles augmented by new conceptualizations of race and empire. According to Paul Rich, this transition away from Anglo-Saxon racial ideology coincided with the re-emergence of liberalism in 1905-1906. Liberalism in Edwardian Britain embraced the racial ideology of ethnographer Mary Kingsley (1862-1900) as well as a new political paradigm of empire known as the "Commonwealth."

The Liberal parliamentary victory in the 1906 general election signaled the arrival of new potentialities for inter-racial relations. However this newly conceptualized relationship still depended on the political and cultural hegemony of Great Britain but became more flexible in its depictions of racial others. Rich argues that this flexibility was supported by a "growing sensitivity to the anthropological study of non-Western and non-white societies which began to undermine many of the simplicities of Victorian racial theory."[618] Historical discourse on race in Great Britain became increasingly ambiguous during and following the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), especially during Lord Kitchener's (1850-1916) scorched earth policy of destroying Boer farms, slaughtering livestock, building blockhouses, and moving women, children, and the elderly into concentration camps. This long and protracted conflict also coincided with a conscious geopolitical shift by British liberals away from preoccupations with the Indian subcontinent towards the strategically important African colonies and the Caribbean. This decision was predicated on a re-evaluation of Britain's "civilizing mission" (i.e., Macaulay's Minute of 1835).[619] This attempt at Westernizing a new middle-class Indian civil servant loyal to the Raj became increasingly untenable and by the twentieth century missionary hopes for converting Indians to Christianity had also met with mixed results. In this historical context, the

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[618] Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 26.

[619] Ibid., 27.

ethnographic work of Mary Kingsley created the opportunity to espouse the idea of the separate

cultural worth of African societies compared with those of Europe, for in some respects this ideal

developed out of the romantic tradition of the noble savage of the eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries. Mary Kingsley's writings, *Travels in West Africa* (1897) and *West African Studies*

(1899), were thus of importance in "rejuvenating the cultural relativist ideal at the high point of

imperial enthusiasm and went on to have a significant impact on political and anthropological

thought in the years after the Anglo-Boer War."[620]

Mary Kingsley conceptualized race in the context of Victorian notions of "polygenism or

the multi-lineal hypothesis of human evolution" as well as a hierarchy of racial fitness, with the

white Anglo-Saxon race representing the pinnacle of human development. Mary Kingsley argued

the there was a distinct "fitness" within West African societies and associated their nineteenth-

century existence with that of thirteenth-century Europeans. This ethnographic evaluation

removed the necessity of a "civilizing mission" and articulated a newly constituted relationship

based on humanitarianism which could ensure their own separate cultural path of

development.[621] In this process of re-conceptualizing race relationships, British liberals

introduced a new idea of empire, the Commonwealth.

The "Commonwealth" as an intrinsically pacific conception increased in stature as a key

liberal strategy to redefine the British Empire in the years after the Anglo-Boer War. This

reevaluation particularly occurred in intellectual and cultural bodies which sought to temper

imperial ideals with liberal principles.[622] The primary proponents of an Imperial Commonwealth

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[620] Ibid., 31.

[621] Ibid.

[622] Ibid., 54.

were the Round Table movement formed in 1910. The Round Table movement was formed by a number of members of the former staff of Alfred Milner in South Africa after 1902. The Milner Kindergarten, consisting of such figures as Lionel Curtis, Geoffrey Dawson, Leo Amery, Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian), and Robert Brand, managed to exert considerable influence on British political debate despite its relatively marginal position inside the establishment and the absence of strong institutional support.[623]

The experiences of working in South African colonial administration between 1901 and 1908 led them towards a vision of the empire as an integrated entity and one to be considered from an international perspective. When they returned to England in 1908-1909 and began to establish the Round Table movement of wider imperial consolidation, they began to address the question of the two empires of the Indian Raj on the one hand and the colonies of white settlement on the other. The Round Table favored a federal imperial parliament with 110 representatives from Britain and 79 from the dominions.[624] This vision of a new imperial order based upon the representation of India in a federal imperial parliament grew out of the recognition of a new and politically significant Indian middle-class and fear of a possible future race war in India and the Asian empire.[625] This theoretical process of constituting a British Commonwealth allowed for renegotiation of Victorian racial theories, for it was thus not so much the British "race" per se which had built the empire—Commonwealth but British institutions.[626]

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[623] Ibid.

[624] Ibid., 58.

[625] Ibid., 59.

[626] Ibid., 62.

The debate within Edwardian Britain concerning the nature of inter-racial relations and national identity mirrored the internal struggles within the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring concerning the two opposing philosophies of exhibition advocated by the "perfectionists" and the "latitudinarians." The perfectionists, or as some commentators labeled them "city impressionists," with their new interest in urban aesthetics, were led by George Davison and supported the maintenance of high standards and a closed exhibition which in essence excluded all but the most advanced pictorial workers. This would have the effect of excluding many British photographers from exhibiting their work. Davison argued that there was insufficient new and exciting work to hold annual exhibitions although respectable shows could be held at least every three to five years. The opposing group, the latitudinarians, advocated for large open exhibitions with less stringent selection protocols.

By the spring of 1909, the latter group gained ascendancy within the Linked Ring and led to the severing of links, including Alvin Langdon Coburn, Alexander Keiley, Alfred Stieglitz, and Kuehn de Meyer. On November 24, 1909 George Davison, the Centre Link at the Union and the Deputy High Executioner proposed "That in view of extensive resignations and the opinion expressed on several hands by prominent Links that the Ring has ceased to do the work for which it was organized to perform, it is advisable that he Ring be wound up and given an honorable burial."[627] With the dissolution of the Ring, the latitudinarians, led by F. J. Mortimer, formed the "London Salon Club" in order to expedite an exhibition during the fall of 1910. They supported the notion of the open exhibition whereby entries were sought from all photographers who were interested enough to submit their work for selection, based on the philosophy that

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[627] Ibid., 122.

there was still a need for an annual open exhibition of pictorial photography.[628] There is a strong indication in the presentation of the catalogues and in press comments that the London Salon was the successor to the Linked Ring and based on similar lines, but there were important major differences in that the symbolism associated with the Ring and its mysteries were not introduced and there were no monthly dinner meetings. Neither were any records kept of the proceedings of the London Salon until after the death, in 1944, of F. J. Mortimer who acted as Honorary Secretary for twenty-five years. In fact the London Salon, which is still in existence, is an open annual exhibition of pictorial photography promoted and selected by a small closed membership with certain privileges.[629] Pictorial photography continued as an artistic aesthetic even after the demise of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring in 1909.

Christian A. Peterson argues that by 1914, photographers began to "reject the manipulative techniques and escapist attitudes, represented by the ideals of the Linked Ring, thereby establishing a modern aesthetic for photography. Initially most Pictorialists found this work mere documentary or record photography but by the end of the 1920s many of these same photographers began accepting aspects of a new hard-edged modernism."[630] Melinda Boyd Parson interprets this transition through the lens of aesthetics when she states, "it was the increasing ubiquity of this equation between formalism and modernity that displaced traditional Pictorialism, making it seem outmoded."[631] World War I absorbed both artists and their art, quenching much of the combativeness that had informed prewar aesthetic wrangling—the kind

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[628] Ibid., 123.

[629] Ibid., 124.

[630] Christian A. Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: An American Pictorial Photography 1910-1955* (New York: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1997), 39.

[631] Melinda Boyd Parsons, "Malcolm Arbuthnot: Modernism and the End of Pictorialism," in Weaver, *British Photography in the Nineteenth Century*, 295.

of contentiousness that had destroyed the Linked Ring, for example, or the aesthetic in-fighting in the Photo-Secessionist movement in the United States.

The notion that art photography during the late nineteenth century was a contested site of representation, one in which issues of national and imperial identity were mutually constituted and contested within a cultural framework of class, gender, religion, and race relies heavily on the perspective of a small sampling of British photographers. This leaves the opportunity for future research to incorporate an American and French perspective represented in the aesthetics of the Photo-Secession (1903-1917), led by such notable American Pictorialists as Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946), Eduard, J. Steichen (1879-1973), Clarence H. White (1871-1925), and Gertrude Kaseiber (1852-1934), as well as the Photo-Club de Paris (1888-1928), led by Robert Demachy (1859-1936) and Emile Joachim Constant Puyo (1857-1933). How did these American and French photographers contribute to the contested discourse of national and imperial identity in their respective countries? Specifically, how did the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906) affect cultural representations of race and national identity? How did these photographic societies interact with one another on a global scale through transnational cultural networks such as international exhibitions and the photographic periodical press? Such questions can only be addressed through further archival investigations. Comparing these various discourses will illuminate both the larger historical processes at work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century world and also the particularity of local contexts.

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