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Recognizing the Homoerotic: the Uses of Intersubjectivity in John Addington Symonds' 1887 Essays on Art

In recent decades, the reputation of John Addington Symonds has undergone a transformation. His singular commitment to homoeroticist ethics and politics has made him an increasingly timely and compelling forebear for both activists and scholars in the struggle for the equality and legitimacy of non-normative sexual identities. His memoirs, published only in 1984, have become a standard work of reference for any scholar of nineteenth-century homoeroticism.¹ His earnest discussions of the realization of same-sex desire – as well as his treatises on its ethical, medical and legal aspects privately printed during his lifetime² – have secured for Symonds a central role in the history of homosexuality (see Figure 1).³ For his contemporaries, however, Symonds was highly regarded as a historian of the Renaissance, the biographer of Michelangelo and an authority on poetry. His seven-volume *Renaissance in Italy* (1875–86) established a new standard for inquiry into the period, and his translations of Michelangelo's sonnets (1878) and Cellini's autobiography (1888) became enduring authoritative versions. In considering these two reputations, however, no sharp distinction can be drawn between his influential historical writings and his commitment to homoeroticism, as commentators have observed in all aspects of Symonds' output.⁴ These two facets of Symonds' work overlapped, each discernible in and through the other.

In 1887, Symonds published a series of four essays on art in the *Fortnightly Review*.⁵ Largely overlooked in the critical discussions of Symonds, these writings offer pivotal insight into the relationship between same-sex desire and art in his work. These essays were some of the initial forays into a synthetic theory of art Symonds was planning.⁶ He was encouraged in this endeavour by Frank Harris, the newly appointed editor of the *Fortnightly Review*. As Symonds observed, the magazine had become 'a periodical wh[ich] is opening its arms wide to receive my new writings' under Harris' sympathetic management.⁷ The essays examine the roles of subjectivity, interpretation and idealization in ostensibly naturalistic representations by artists. I will explore an underlying theme in these essays, demonstrating how they outline a theoretical justification for the role of individual desire in art making and art viewing. In these essays, Symonds stealthily argued that the historian or critic of art could recognize the possibility of homoeroticist subject positions.⁸

Symonds' essays were primarily concerned with the question of 'corporeal investiture' – a term used just briefly in these essays yet encapsulating their recurring theme.⁹ 'Corporeal investiture' referred to the artist's pursuit of the

Figure 1. Photograph of John Addington Symonds, inscribed to Walt Whitman, 1889.



embodied exemplar or avatar – that is, the body that can be legibly read as the manifestation of an ideal or set of ideals. Symonds was quick to note that no one body can readily fulfil this expectation, and the artist is forced to adapt or to construct a figure to achieve the requisite bodily signs of ideality. The intersection between the exemplary and the bodily in such corporeal investitures, he argued, necessarily entails a compromise between Realism – that is, recognizable elements drawn from the perceived natural world, and Idealism – the higher concepts the artist hopes to convey. For Symonds, the accommodation of the ‘twin-born factors’ of the Real and the Ideal in a single object served as one of the central aims of art.¹⁰

On the surface, Symonds’ essays appear to be a modest corrective to the imprecise usage of the concepts of ‘Idealism’ and ‘Realism’ in reference to the *style* of visual representation. Contesting the presumption that the Ideal and

the Real were antithetical to each other, Symonds instead demonstrated that every artistic representation must necessarily partake of both. 'Realism and Idealism', he stated, 'are as inseparable as body and soul in every product of the figurative arts.'¹¹ In order to make his argument, Symonds contrasted the work of the contemporary artist to photography, characterizing the latter as merely a mechanical process entirely removed from artistic creation. Unlike the photograph, he argued, every artwork produced by an artist necessarily incorporated interpretation, which introduced a 'subjective quality' into all representations of objects and phenomena. Such subjective interpretation formed an inescapable component of the image, no matter how uncompromising a realist the artist might strive to be. Conversely, Symonds saw no possibility of idealization on the part of the artist without drawing from the experience of the natural world. He wrote of this interplay of concept and object when he defined his two 'twin-born factors': 'Realism is the presentation of natural objects as the artist sees them, as he thinks they are. It is the attempt to imitate things as they strike the senses. Idealism is the presentation of natural objects as the artist fain would see them, as he thinks they strive to be. It is the attempt to imitate things as the mind interprets them.'¹² Realism was not the faithful rendering of natural objects but rather the representation of the artist's perception of them ('as he thinks they are'). Idealism, too, entailed an imaging of one's own subjective experience of objects ('as the mind interprets them'). For Symonds, both Idealism and Realism emerged out of the accommodations occurring between the perception of objects and a perceiving subject.

On its own, Symonds' overall argument may seem unremarkable until we begin to investigate his examples and the further characterizations he provided for his terms. The artist, he asserted, 'unable to reproduce the object as it is ... must reproduce what his own self brings to it.'¹³ His formulation contained more than another defence of personal style, however. More importantly, Symonds allowed for the traces of the artist's inner 'self' to operate outside of conscious intention. He explained,

In every imitative effort, worthy of the name of art, the human mind has intervened. What is more, this mind has been the mind of an individual, with specific aptitudes for observation, with specific predilections, with certain ways of thinking, seeing, feeling, and selecting, peculiar to himself. It is precisely at this point, at the very earliest attempt to imitate, that Idealism enters simultaneously with Realism into the arts ... For when a man reproduces in art what he sees in nature, he inevitably imports himself into the product. Thus the object and the idea exist as twin-born factors in the merest rough sketch pencilled on a scrap of paper. *Strive as he will to keep himself out of the imitation, the man is powerless to do so.*¹⁴

The cumulative and shifting total of the artist's personal history, character and desires acted as a filter for the natural world in the process of representation. However, rather than the potentially transparent image of the self postulated in much nineteenth-century humanism, Symonds allowed for the possibility of self-alienation in which the mind, as we will see, may be unaware of its desires and proclivities. The complexity and contradictions in the 'self' could

become visible, in Symonds' schema, through the traces left in the process of mimesis. When an individual portrayed the world or its objects, her or his underlying character could not help but be imprinted, regardless of intent, upon the representation. He later called it the 'inevitable infusion of a subjective element into every attempt made by men to reproduce nature'.¹⁵

The *Fortnightly Review* essays repeatedly emphasized that the subjective residue of the artist in the artwork was not just inescapable; it could also be unintentional. While he agreed that most aspects of an artwork will be the result of the artist's intentional interpretation and attitudes, he also opened the door for the unintentional or hidden. Throughout his arguments, he asserted this undeniability of the subjective, which was there for the viewer to apprehend. More than the traditional notion of the genius or the soul of the artist shining through his work, Symonds was arguing for a deeper conception of individual subjectivity and its incorporation into creative activity. He encouraged the recognition of unthought attitudes or desires – unconscious determinants that made their way into creative activity. Both the laudable and the suspect components of an individual subjectivity became inextricably woven into the fabric of the artwork. As he would later write of landscape painting, 'Having passed through the artist's intellect, the scene becomes transfigured into a symbol of what the artist felt. His subjectivity inheres in it for ever after.'¹⁶

Symonds quietly characterized the mind as unaware and possibly alienated from desires and attitudes. This image of the mind presages the later Freudian concepts of the unconscious and of the symptom, through which the mind's workings only become partially visible when manifested in the realm of representation and the symbolic. In his case study of Leonardo da Vinci, Sigmund Freud remarked, 'Kindly nature has given the artist the ability to express his most secret mental impulses, which are hidden even from himself, by means of the works that he creates; and these works have a powerful effect on others who are strangers to the artist, and who are themselves unaware of the source of their emotion.'¹⁷ Freud here established the possibility of a direct yet unconscious link between the viewer's unconscious 'most secret mental impulses' and those of the artist. Symonds arrived at a similar understanding of the artist's creative process by focusing on the inescapable interpretations and traces left by the 'intervention of a thinking, feeling subjectivity'.¹⁸ Freud developed his theory of the unconscious as part of a wide-ranging reconceptualization of the mind. Symonds' idea of the subjective lacked the justifying framework of drives and defences that Freud developed in conjunction. Nevertheless, it is striking that both theorists looked to artists in attempting to demonstrate the unwitting emergence into visibility of the personal and the intimate. For Freud, Leonardo's same-sex desire provided him with a case study in which he could argue, more generally, for the unconscious and for psychoanalysis as a method. It was clear to Freud (as it had been to Symonds) that same-sex desire could be fundamental to an individual but remain unspoken and hidden.

Decades before Freud's *Leonardo*, Symonds, too, emphasized that desire and hidden character inevitably made their way into creative activity. The

imitation and interpretation of perceived objects, both Symonds and Freud agreed, brought with them a host of personal associations and attitudes that could work beyond conscious intention, leaving their mark on an art object. Symonds' ultimate aim in so frequently stressing these subjective traces was to provide a framework for discussing those elements that may be unarticulated, hidden or buried – specifically for him, homoerotic desire. Homoeroticism was sometimes communicated in veiled and coded language throughout the Victorian era,¹⁹ and Symonds' essays themselves offer a coded formula for looking at artworks from the perspective of homoerotic interest. Whereas Freud used Leonardo's same-sex desire to demonstrate the presence of unconscious dynamics, we will see that Symonds argued for the unintentional imprint of subjectivity as a tool for recognizing homoeroticism in the artist. The homoerotic identification with and through visual art was not new to Symonds, and he was aware of his own historical and contemporary precedents.²⁰ He attempted to fix his method in the lingering traces of the artist's subjectivity, making the question of homoerotic viewing one of potentially historical, rather than merely personal, inquiry.

In his own life, Symonds recognized only too well how character and personality were not merely matters of will and intention. They were also determined by conflict, contradiction and desire. As he recounted in his *Memoirs*, Symonds identified his wish for same-sex love as the core issue for his character. In his earlier years, he had attempted to suppress his own homoerotic proclivities into alignment with societal expectations. By the last decade of his life, however, he had become an increasingly ardent advocate of homoeroticist ethics and politics. Symonds did not endorse the notion of gender inversion – a 'female soul in a male body' – but rather attempted to forge a compromise in which masculinity and the love for a man could be commensurable.²¹ More so than perhaps any other nineteenth-century writer, Symonds increasingly deployed historical, medical and political arguments to justify and defend same-sex love. This struggle to define a homoeroticist subject position, that is, emerged as a central theme in both his life and his works.

Symonds was intimately aware of the fact that, like him, others were forced to mask their desire and character, thus preventing mutual recognition and sympathy. In the sphere of art, Symonds considered such camouflage a sort of self-censorship resulting in a limitation of artistic expression. He understood well the necessity of such masking, but became increasingly impatient with it. In 1890, he wrote privately to Edmund Gosse, 'Good God! Why should it be forbidden? Will the time for prophecy never come – the hour of emancipation never strike? It will, I know, come some day: when we are dead. But posterity will not know how many martyrs suffered under the superstitious tyranny of a brutal majority.'²² In a later letter, he displaced his anger at his own complicity to Gosse, criticizing his friend for censoring the underlying meanings of his poetry: 'I feel bitter about this. Quoque tandem Domine? How long are souls to groan beneath the altar, & poets to eviscerate their offspring, for the sake of what? – what shall I call it? – an unnatural disnaturing respect for middle class propriety – I find no phrase for my abhorrence.'²³ While

appreciating the constraints put upon him and others by that 'middle class propriety', Symonds yearned for the ability to see more clearly those who felt as he did about same-sex love. He confided to Gosse, 'My heart burns within me to speak out ... A deliverer is called for; a champion; someone at any rate to fling his gauntlet in the face of Goliath, & let the truth look.'²⁴ This David for whom Symonds longed would be both his image of the ideal (in the tradition of the resonant *Davids* of Donatello and Michelangelo and of the Biblical beloved of Jonathan) and the as-yet-unrealized homoeroticist agent he implied in his essays and hoped to see in the artworks of the past.

While Symonds himself never took up that gauntlet as publicly as he might have wanted, the period after the 1887 *Fortnightly Review* essays to his death in 1893 became dominated by his driven work to defend homoerotic love. He pursued this aim in three arenas. He marshalled cases about the future status of same-sex love in his *Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891) and his collaborative work with Havelock Ellis on *Sexual Inversion* (published posthumously in 1896). At the same time, he rooted these prescriptions in historical excavations of a homoerotic past, such as through his translation of Cellini's and Gozzi's autobiographies (1890), in his ambitious biography of Michelangelo (1893) and by returning to earlier works such as his *Problem in Greek Ethics* (1873). Most significantly, he wrote an extended case study of homoerotic desire in the form of his *Memoirs*, to which he devoted himself in 1889.²⁵ These political and historical aims had been present throughout his body of work, but they gained a new urgency in the last years of his life. The 1887 essays mark a crucial juncture in this development. Coinciding with his translation of Cellini and preceding the important work on Michelangelo, Whitman and his own autobiography, these essays established a theory of reception in which the traces of the intrinsic character of the artist were both unavoidable and, crucially, discernible by later viewers.²⁶ When collecting the 1887 essays into *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, Symonds called it 'in many ways the most important book I have written for publication'.²⁷

Throughout this period, Symonds became increasingly concerned with recovering that which could not be said or represented openly – 'the Love that dare not speak its name' as it would be famously dubbed in the Oscar Wilde trials of 1895. Symonds sought out representations of same-sex love as a means to establish a historical justification for his and others' desire. Unambiguous examples were relatively rare, however. In his historical studies, he often found it difficult to confirm archivally his homoerotic hunches. For instance, when he translated Michelangelo's suppressed sonnets to Tommaso de' Cavalieri, he made explicit the amorous tone taken in writing to the younger man.²⁸ These had earlier been suppressed or altered by previous editors of his poetry. He remarked to Gosse that 'Very curious things work out about his devotion to beautiful young men' to which he believed the sonnets were the key.²⁹ Though his correction of the translated sonnets was a revelation to readers, Symonds seemed to want further confirmation of Michelangelo's same-sex desire. He wrote to Gosse in 1891 about his *Life of Michelangelo*; 'My book will, to some extent, be revolutionary. But I am afraid of the task before me: truth-telling, without seeming to dot i's willfully. I need

not say that I have discovered no scandal about M[ichel]A[n]gelo]. I did, by the way, about Cellini. He was actually imprisoned a long time for a very flagrant case.³⁰

If anything, the sonnets put Symonds on more solid ground, though (as we can see in subsequent discussions of Michelangelo) they could not on their own be seen as irrefutable evidence of the Florentine artist's same-sex desire. In his book, Symonds also engaged in detailed descriptions of Michelangelo's sculptures, stressing the artist's appreciation of the male nude and lack of interest in the female. Throughout, the problem of evidence presented itself. Symonds was convinced of Michelangelo's homoerotic desire and was determined to see its reflection in his creative activity. (He was not alone: in his trial Wilde said that same-sex love 'dictates and pervades' Michelangelo's work,³¹ and Lord Ronald Gower, in his monograph on Michelangelo, cited Symonds and Wilde in his discussion of the sonnets to Cavalieri, hinting at Michelangelo's love for him.)³² Despite the almost legendary question of the Florentine artist's homosexual inclinations, Symonds understood the importance of rooting any interpretation of homoeroticism in the artworks themselves. The evidence (however meagre) provided by the sonnets did reinforce Symonds' interpretation of the treatment of the nude in Michelangelo's work, but he realized that this kind of corroboration was exceptional.

The 1887 *Fortnightly Review* essays represent his attempt to ground the interpretation and the history of the homoerotic in a theory of reception and of identification in cases where there was no such evidentiary support. Rather than being technical inquiries into artistic style, the 1887 essays went directly to the activity with which Symonds identified most strongly in the last years of his life as a proponent and historian of homoeroticism. When collecting the essays into *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, Symonds wrote, 'I am interested in this book more than I have been in any other; not in its success, that must take care of itself, and really does not matter, but in what people think of it, for I put a great deal of myself into it, and what they think of it is what they think of me, the man here.'³³

In the veiled argument of these essays, his primary example clearly signalled his allegiances and intentions: Hippolyte Flandrin's *Etude (Jeune homme nu assis au bord de la mer)* in the Louvre (Figure 2). He compared a photographic reproduction of the well-known painting to a photograph of a young male model posed in an identical position, analyzing the differences in each. The photograph to which Symonds referred has not been identified. Flandrin's painting inspired scores of imitators and we can imagine that Symonds' photograph would have been comparable to Wilhelm von Gloeden's later treatment of the painting in his photograph sometimes titled *1900* (Figure 3). Symonds' photograph depicted the model in an analogous pose in a studio. It did not attempt to recreate the outdoor scene as Gloeden's later photograph did. Symonds, however, was focused on the youth. Comparing the photograph of the model to the photographic reproduction of the Louvre painting, he argued that the painting remained ultimately far more satisfying. While he recognized that the photograph of the model was more

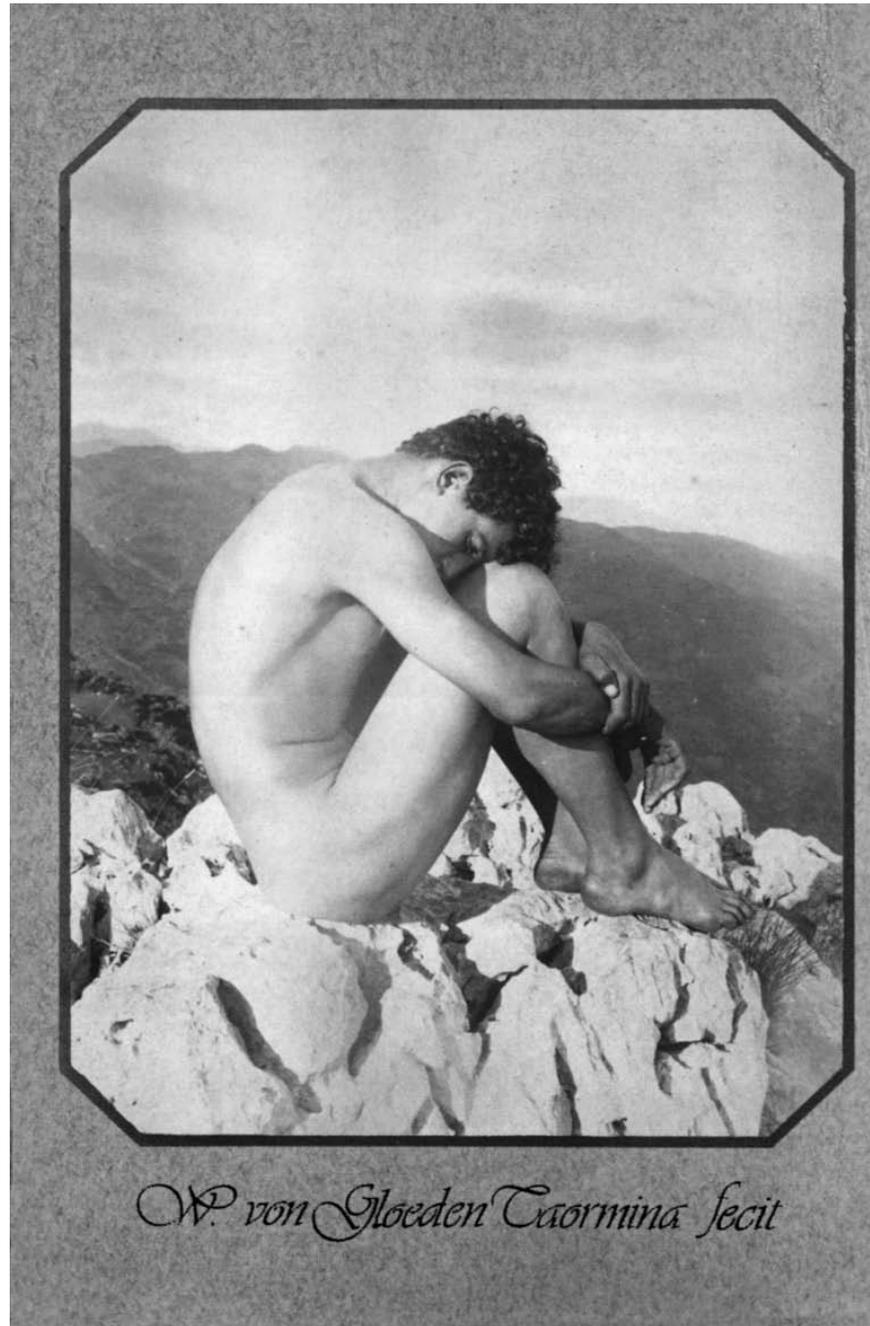


Figure 2. Hippolyte Flandrin, *Etude (Jeune homme nu assis au bord de la mer)*, 1835–37, oil on canvas, 98 × 124cm. Réunion des Musées Nationaux (Musée du Louvre, Paris) / Art Resource, New York.

accurate in its rendering of the youthful nude, the painting was a ‘painted poem’.³⁴

Flandrin’s image, as Michael Camille persuasively demonstrated, has come to function as an icon of gay sensibility, supporting homoerotic projection with its moody display of a solitary and beautiful male youth. Gloeden’s re-photographing of the painting attests to its homoerotic resonance. A crucial contributing factor in the homoerotic reception of this picture, Camille argued, is the figure’s isolation from narrative context, allowing it to become ‘an ideal site for the projection of fantasy’.³⁵ As a figure study, Flandrin’s painting rests on its display of design and its evocation of a mood rather than on didacticism, narrative or iconographic content. Symonds exploited this lack of such explicit content in order to emphasize the need to attend to the subtleties of bodily depiction. Consequently, his choice of this figure study allowed for a shift of emphasis to the viewer. Symonds argued that just as different aspects of the artist’s personality will emerge or recede in the making of an artwork, the viewer too cannot help but connect with those subjective traces with which he

Figure 3. Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden, *Sleeping Boy* (sometimes called *1900*), c.1900 (this print, c.1905). Photograph: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, New York.



identifies. Some pictures, he implied, affect some of us more than others. Symonds subtly allowed for alternate (if not competing) associations with the artwork. He continued, 'Now it is just this intervention of a thinking, feeling subjectivity which makes Flandrin's study of the young man alone upon the rock a painted poem. We may not, while looking at this picture, be quite sure what the meaning of the poem is; different minds, as in the case of musical

Figure 4. John Talbot Donoghue, *Young Sophocles Leading the Chorus of Victory after the Battle of Salamis*, 1885 (cast 1911), bronze, 234.3 × 134.6 × 82.6cm. Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Robert Allerton 1911.583.

melody, will be affected by it in divers ways.³⁶ Symonds allowed for homoerotic identification to function beneath the surface, only selectively available to those like-minded individuals. The recognition of a homoerotic trace in the painting, he implied, need not be visible and legible to all viewers. In this way, he attempted to validate his intuition of homoerotic sympathy, what he sometimes called the 'aura'. Writing to Gosse of his perception of sexual inversion in works of literature, he said, 'the diagnosis is difficult & dangerous. The aura, when I feel it, seems to me very distinct.'³⁷ In a later letter, he discussed his *Problem in Greek Ethics* and the challenge of arguing for changes in the laws (specifically in reference to the Cleveland Street Scandal). He closed his letter with an aside, asking Gosse about the American sculptor John Donoghue, who had sent Symonds a photograph of his *Sophocles* (see Figure 4). He wrote, 'He sent me a photograph of the statue, wh[ic]h is good in



its way. I never saw the man. But I seem to feel the *aura* in him.³⁸ (Oscar Wilde seemed to agree, for he too became interested in Donoghue's work on his American lecture tour.)³⁹ On another occasion, Symonds wrote to Horatio Forbes Brown, 'Harry Strachey has painted a picture of "Football" on a Somerset meadow, full of the *aura*. Do you know what I mean by the *aura*?' In order to give Brown a reference point, he remarked of Strachey's *Football* that 'It is in the key of Tuke's work', comparing it to that painter's Whitmanesque scenes of naked boys at play.⁴⁰

Such attempts to discern homoerotic intent in an artwork can be found throughout the history of art criticism. Up to the present day, interpretations that stress the homoerotic have been in danger of being disregarded as idiosyncratic, subjective or projective if the evidence for such an interpretation is not accessible and clear to all viewers.⁴¹ Hostile critics denigrate all but the most irrefutable interpretations as anachronistic and personal, creating a situation in which the study of homoeroticism in the visual arts is guilty of specious scholarship until it proves itself innocent.

Critics such as Symonds understood the vulnerability of any interpretation based on qualities that are often intangible, illegible and elusive. He clearly recognized the need to incorporate such readings into Kant's demand for the universalization of aesthetic judgement and its enduring legacy in nineteenth-century aesthetics.⁴² Symonds pointed to this fundamental standard when he maintained that 'the test of excellence [of a work of art] must be a common sense or agreement of opinion between normal men and women'.⁴³ Within this test of excellence, however, Symonds allowed for multiplicity. The recognition of sympathies between viewer and artist – including but not limited to the homoerotic – contributed to the final judgement of beauty even if not universally shared. He argued that 'the final verdict of criticism is the total result of countless personal judgements, superimposed, the one above the other, coalescing in their points of agreement, shading off into blurred outlines at points of disagreement, but combining to produce a type which is an image of fundamental truth'.⁴⁴ Excellence in art moved, for Symonds, from cacophony to harmony in an extended accretion of individual and subjective opinions. By accommodating homoeroticism into the judgement of beauty, Symonds sought to demonstrate that same-sex love was compatible both with the universalized beauty and with the moral framework that form a central component of Kant's schema. He further pursued this goal by searching for historical precedents. The *Fortnightly Review* essays developed a theory that rationalized and grounded homoerotic reception through a focus on artists' subjectivity, validating the subjective connection with the work of art as just such a form of historical evidence.

The use of Flandrin's image alerted the homoerotic reader and registered Symonds' own commitments. It was a clue to interested viewers to read between the lines. He even told his readers in a footnote where they could acquire photographs both of the painting and of the posed model to whom he compared it.⁴⁵ He laced his essays with other subtle hints, such as his Whitman-inspired allusion to 'the youth stripped there upon the river's bank before his plunge into the water'.⁴⁶

The first essay in the series, 'Realism and Idealism', set out the terms for his theories of appropriation and viewing. In turn, the second essay, 'The Model', became Symonds' own text that he offered to readers to decode along these same lines. It was itself a model for the kind of historical excavation he hoped to validate. As in his reading of the painting, underneath the aesthetic text lies a distinct and irreducible homoerotic subtext to be recovered by readers attuned to it.

The concern with homoerotic reception that underlies Symonds' discussion of Realism and Idealism provided for a partial discernability and the private meeting of subjectivities through the artwork. The keen and interested viewer recognized in the artwork the interested eye of the artist staring back. Both the artist and the viewer bring something of themselves to the encounter, with the purported sympathies in their attitudes toward the male youth (even if unacknowledged) fuelling the viewer's engagement and identification. An analogous concept from psychoanalytic discourse can assist in identifying the stakes of Symonds' work. He characterized the aesthetic encounter as what could be called an intersubjective connection between the artist and the viewer. As he said in the third of the *Fortnightly Review* essays, 'Man's soul speaks to man's soul from the picture, and says something which nature does not say.'⁴⁷ The figure depicted was not the primary site of identification. Rather, the 'corporeal investiture' was the vehicle through which the viewer could recognize both himself and the artist's sympathetic subjectivity.

Theories of intersubjectivity have explored this mutual recognition and adaptation. The concept of intersubjectivity can be located in many divergent arenas in philosophy, politics and psychology. Symonds' formulations, however, are strikingly amenable to psychoanalytic definitions of the concept. In her study of the metapsychological and political implications of intersubjectivity, Jessica Benjamin remarks that it was

formulated in deliberate contrast to the logic of subject and object, which predominates in Western philosophy and science. It refers to that zone of experience or theory in which the other is not merely the object of the ego's need / drive or cognition / perception but has a separate and equivalent center of self.

Intersubjective theory postulates that the other must be recognized as another subject in order for the self to fully experience his or her subjectivity in the other's presence.⁴⁸

The theory of intersubjectivity, especially as deployed in psychoanalysis in the Object Relations tradition, aimed to dislodge the fundamental isolationism in many accounts of psychic processes and to critique the notion of an independent, bounded (however contingent) self.⁴⁹ Intrapsychic accounts of the mind made crucial use of projection and introjection but fell short of recognizing the degree to which the individual must adapt to the agency of another subject.

The particularities of the psychoanalytic debates aside, the concept of intersubjectivity clarifies the stakes of Symonds' theory and provides a useful corrective to accounts of the legibility of homoeroticism in visual art. Especially in the realm of visual art, the registration of the homoerotic has been largely limited to bodily engagements, sex objects and sex acts. These are,

for the sceptical detractor of homoeroticism, the only allowable instances where homoeroticism can be brought into historical analysis. In contrast, Symonds sought to see another subject, reflecting not the intercorporeal dynamics of sex but the intersubjective dynamics of love. The theory of intersubjectivity in psychoanalysis argues that in and amongst the everyday interpersonal contact with individuals, transformation of the self occurs most strongly in those moments of mutual recognition and adaptation with another subject – that is, within the environment of what Symonds once called the ‘crossing, blending, interminglement, and quasi-chemical combination of divers subjectivities’ at any given historical moment.⁵⁰ Symonds sought to develop a homoeroticist subject position – a transformation of his individual desire into a replicable ethical role – from such episodes in which a desire analogous to his own could be recognized as originating from another subject. Symonds pursued the recognition of another homoeroticist subject in order to confirm its (future) possibility for himself and others.

In his later additions to the 1887 essays for their republication in *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, Symonds included a discussion of the transformative effects of art viewing. Adapting the Kantian concept of disinterested satisfaction, he argued that art did not lead to action or immediate physical effect. Rather, it contributed to a change of outlook. He stated,

Yet though the emotions stimulated by art are unfruitful of act, sterile of energy, purged of their selfish element, they are none the less real and serious. They possess a notable power over the formation of character. One effect of art has been too little observed by writers upon ethics. It is the arousing in us of what may be called indefinite illimitable desire. A desire which is tyrannous, precisely because it is vague, because its rhythms, excited by intangibilities, react upon the finest and remotest fibres of our being.⁵¹

Symonds provided examples of artworks that could inspire this ‘indefinite illimitable desire’, all of which are tacitly autobiographical: Plato’s *Phaedrus*, Michelangelo’s Sistine Ceiling and the so-called ‘Genius of the Vatican’, the Praxitelean *Eros* which had fuelled his imagination as a child.⁵² These examples provided further clues for sympathetic readers to uncover the homoerotic implications of his argument. Again, Symonds was careful to point out that works of art affect viewers in different ways, depending on ‘the moral temper of the man’. In turn, those viewers who recognize their desire in a work of art find themselves altered by it. Symonds rhapsodized,

As dreams of the night bring us home to ourselves and discover hidden fountain-heads of passion, so this indefinite illimitable desire, which art excites, creates for those who feel it lasting habits of emotion. The recurrent vibrations of that desire, the persistent images with which it is connected, the mode in which we have been touched to fine pervasive spiritual issues, remain with us for good or evil, abiding witnesses to art’s controlling power.⁵³

Herein lies Symonds’ vision for art and homoeroticism. Rather than inspiring base sexual lust or providing images of sexual objects, art provided the viewer with an image of his own desire. In recognizing the homoerotic elements of the

artist's treatment of the body, the viewer sees his own interests reflected back to him.

The 1887 essays offered the crucial transition to his important late work. As he wrote to his friend Brown, these essays 'are going to have a lot of my life-thoughts in them'.⁵⁴ When he revisited them for reprinting he added a series of appendices which strengthen the arguments about intersubjective connection. For instance, Symonds observed that 'Notes on "Realism and Idealism"' was 'an extension of the main principle to other matters beyond the sphere of art'.⁵⁵

The 1887 essays evince Symonds' wish not just to politically justify same-sex desire but to establish a kind of virtual historical community and continuity for the subject position he was attempting to articulate and defend. The profound loneliness and isolation that surge through his *Memoirs* derive from his desire for a sympathetic subject – not just a sexual partner. This was the 'fruitless longing' to combine the sexual and the subjective of which Gosse wrote in his memorial poem to Symonds: 'No more the fangs of fruitless longing close/Fast in that flesh from which the life-blood flows.'⁵⁶ The sex act itself – however much it was the catalyst for Symonds' self-reflection – was insufficient and, in isolation, counterproductive to the pursuit of the ideal. He desired more than physical intimacy or sexual liberty. He sought camaraderie and a rapport with other individuals, and looked distastefully at the depersonalized cruising of such contemporaries as Gower and Wilde, even though he himself indulged in it at times.⁵⁷

Symonds' urge for intersubjectivity was, at base, a struggle to find a way to argue for same-sex love in a society that considered sexual intimacy between males as immoral. In contrast, he desired 'spiritual closeness' with another subject. In his diary, he disappointedly contrasted one of his male companions with the 'spiritual closeness' he had with his wife:

What is painful about Norman is this – that as far as the selfish and lower parts of the desires expressed in my diary go, I have been satisfied; but the purer, nobler, more disinterested desires which have sprung up in personal contact with him are unsatisfied. Of physical closeness I have as much as I can want. Of spiritual closeness I get little – I am not even allowed to exercise my pedagogic faculty for his good in any definite way. I have learned how valueless, how worse than valueless, how degrading in my own eyes, is mere physical closeness without truly passionate or spiritual closeness. Yet, were there but passion on his part or spiritual unity, how would not hand touch, lips, scent of hair, be dignified? Do I dream? Are the two things really separate? I have spiritual closeness with Catherine.⁵⁸

Symonds' frustration ran deeper than his acknowledgment of Norman's shortcomings. It, too, arose from his desire for same-sex love on a day-to-day basis, rather than mere sexual contact. In the closing pages of his memoirs, he lamented,

[I must] think how desolate are the conditions under which men constituted like me live and love. Into comradeship itself does not our abnormal nature introduce an element of instability, even as it distorts marriage? Something remains amiss, unsatisfied, ill-correlated in each case. The utmost we dare expect is tolerance, acceptance, concession to our inclinations, gratitude for our goodwill and benefits,

respect for our courtesy and self-control. The best we obtain is friendship grounded on the intimate acquaintance with our character derived from long experience in extraordinary circumstances. Love for love we cannot get; and our better nature shrinks from the vision of what a love aroused in the beloved (corresponding to our love for him) would inevitably involve. We are therefore too often goaded into insane acts by the mere discord between our desires and their dearly beloved object – between our cruelly repelled senses and our sustained ideal – by the impossible cul-de-sac into which nature has driven our sexual instincts, and the rebellion of the aspiring spirit, finding itself in a ‘waste of shame’ or in the desert of unfulfilled longings.⁵⁹

Symonds frequently returned to an antagonism between the ideal of love and bodily sexuality. Sex was always a constituent yet contradictory part of his ideals. He believed that the sexual act had to be downplayed in order to make a case for an ideal love between men. This was not the case with other theorists of same-sex love, such as Edward Carpenter, who argued for the importance of the ‘free sane acceptance of the human Body’.⁶⁰

In contrast, Symonds justified same-sex love through comparisons to other desexualized ideals of emotional closeness. He wrote to Carpenter, ‘My hope has always been that eventually a new chivalry, i.e. a second elevated form of human love, will emerge.’⁶¹ In an 1890 essay, ‘The Dantesque and Platonic Ideals of Love’, Symonds equated Greek same-sex love with heterosexual chivalrous love, eliding Greek pederasty: ‘In theory, at any rate, both Greek and mediaeval types of chivalrous emotion were pure and spiritual enthusiasms, purging the lover’s soul of all base thoughts, lifting him above the bondage of the flesh, and filling him with a continual rapture.’⁶² In reference to his own life, he continued to make a distinction between the spiritual and the carnal. He wrote of the young Christian Buol, ‘If the soldier whom I met in the London brothel taught me the rudiments of comradeship, Christian made me perceive its higher, more delightful issues. I have never enjoyed a more sense-soothing and more elevated pleasure than I had with him – sex being nowhere – drowned and absorbed in love, which was itself so spiritually sensual that the needs of the body disappeared and were forgotten.’⁶³

The metaphor of being drowned and absorbed in love resonates strongly with the mutual relinquishing and the incorporation of the other subject in accounts of intersubjectivity. Symonds experienced brief episodes such as these but remained caught between the Ideal and the Real, unable to conceive of a suitable integration of the two as a general model for his own (and others’) future ethical practice.⁶⁴ In place of being able adequately to envision normalized love between men in the present, Symonds turned to history to excavate a transhistorical homoerotic community as a basis for the future. By developing a way to begin to search for other like-minded individuals in the past, he helped to conquer his ‘spiritual’ isolation while shoring up his own contingent identity. He adapted his personal distinction between the spiritual and the carnal into a general method for the investigation of homoeroticism. He looked to art not for sex objects but for homoerotic subjects.

Of course, the search for intersubjectivity that underlies Symonds’ theory of reception can be nothing other than fantasy. Intersubjectivity, and the

potential for transformation and inflection of subjectivity it entails, requires an on-going process in which the other subject is active and mutually recognizing. As Whitney Davis has argued, 'Artworks are never subjects, but always objects; only subjects are subjects.'⁶⁵ The fantasy of communication through artworks has been a mainstay of modern theories of art and can be seen in everything from Romantic aesthetics to Abstract Expressionist polemics. Such accounts of expression assume a relative stability and unchanging coherence of the subject, locate this subjectivity in the 'mind' to the neglect of the body and maintain the belief that some essential element can be transmitted. Symonds acknowledged the contingent and ever-changing nature of subjectivity, but sought to fix it in the artwork in order to allow the viewer's transformative identification with the artist.

No matter how many clues the viewer may believe she or he sees, any 'intersubjectivity' will only ever be one-sided. By recognizing the illusory nature of this intersubjective recognition, however, we should not wholly disregard Symonds's formulations or agenda. We need not accept this theory as truth in order to appreciate its aims or take up its questions. The importance of Symonds' argument lies in the fact that he desired to see another subject and, by extension, himself behind the painting. These theories may not produce the kind of historical evidence he desired, but they do emphasize the importance of the encounter with the artwork and the possibility of contingent transformation for the viewer. However much that intersubjective recognition may be illusory, it can still act as a catalyst for the viewer's own identifications. Symonds' fantasies of homoerotic subjects in history, we should not forget, contributed directly to his own unprecedented advocacy for a legal and ethical homoeroticist identity.

Perhaps what I find so compelling about Symonds' essays is the alternative they suggest to the persistent conflation of homoeroticism and the depiction of the body. Without embracing Symonds' fantasy of intersubjective rapport, we can recognize the need for a more flexible and nuanced understanding of the intersection of homoeroticism and visual art. In studies of the homoerotic in art, it has proven convenient to equate same-sex object choice with the nude body, almost exclusively male. This assumes a direct link between what is being depicted and what is being desired. Inversely, however, this same equation has been used by unsympathetic scholars to discount histories of the homoerotic that do not squarely rest on depictions of ephebic boys or involve explicit sex acts. Wherever homoeroticism deals with aspects other than sex, it can be disregarded as merely the viewer's (or the historian's) fantasmatic projection. According to this view, any historical discussion of homoeroticism must be limited to those cases in which the artist explicitly displayed her or his object choice as the content of his artworks or where there is unquestionable archival evidence of her or his sexual activities.

Symonds, however, provided a model in which the homoerotic and the sexual were not conflated. He once wrote to Edmund Gosse of the need '[t]o see the making of Chivalry where the vulgar only perceive vice'.⁶⁶ In his pursuit of this love over 'vice', he opened up a space for the history and interpretation of homoeroticism that can extend beyond the circulation of

images of sex objects. Rather, it is based on the relations of like-minded subjects. Paradoxically, Symonds' discussion of the necessary element of realism in any artwork prompts us to question how we can talk about homoeroticism in all artworks (including even, I would argue, abstract art). If the homoerotic is an intersubjective and interpersonal dynamic, rather than just a sexual act upon an object, then, following Symonds' line of inquiry, scholars of the homoerotic can legitimately attend to the possibility of coded or latent traces of homoerotic investment above and beyond the potential desirability of any single body. The importance of the 'corporeal investiture' in an artwork, Symonds implied, does not rest in the corporeal alone.

This is not to deny that Symonds enjoyed depicted or actual young men. Rather, he argued that the art object was significant for doing far more than that. It formed the basis of an imagined transhistorical community in which the individual can find sympathy in the writers and painters of the past (much like the list of fifty-two noteworthy homosexual British men that Symonds presented to Havelock Ellis in preparation for *Sexual Inversion*.)⁶⁷ While allowing that the beautiful youth could be arousing, he nevertheless maintained a separate sphere of interest in the aesthetic encounter.

Symonds' further comments on Flandrin's picture are indicative. In comparison with the painting and the fantasmatic intersubjective connection between artist and viewer that Symonds built into it, the photograph of a youth posed in exactly the same position yielded only a sexual confrontation. 'Instead of being toned to the artist's mood by sympathy with ideas – vague but deep as melody – which the intervention of his mind imports into the subject, we should dwell upon the vigour of adolescent manhood, we should be curious perhaps to see the youth spring up, we should wonder how his lifted eyes might gaze on us, and what his silent lips might utter.'⁶⁸ As if to provide his readers a further hint, the photographed body itself becomes actually present, seductively looking up from his introspective position and about to speak.

Symonds was able to make his distinction between the subjectively infused painting and the photograph by disallowing the interpretive act of the photographer and equating photography with its mechanical processes alone. The uncompromising lens of the camera has captured the minute detail of the boy's body completely, making it far more visually present than a painting could. Symonds contended that there was 'no doubt that Flandrin's study is a painted poem, while the photograph of the nude model is only what one may see any morning if one gets a well-made youth to strip and pose'.⁶⁹ However erotically charged these Pygmalionesque scenes of the photographed boy coming to life are, they nevertheless function in the text as negative examples. Symonds draws a distinction between the lustful intercorporeality offered by the actuality of that photographed body and the loftier 'intervention of a thinking, feeling subjectivity' one can see in the painting.

In excavating Symonds' search for intersubjective recognition, it has not been my intention to repudiate the importance of the erotic appeal of represented bodies. Nor should we be tempted to reduce all of Symonds' aesthetic arguments to a single, overriding homoeroticism or to an avoidance

of the sexual. Rather, I find in these essays a knowing subtext that self-reflexively offers a theory for speculative interpretations of artworks above and beyond what they depict. In sum, the complexity of Symonds' position demonstrates that it is essential to acknowledge and explore the multiple and sometimes competing interactions of homoerotic interest and its visualization in and through art in this period. Symonds reminds us that the study of homoeroticism in art need not be categorized (and consequently regulated) as solely the cataloguing of images of appealing sexual objects. As a historian of the homoerotic, Symonds pointed to the need to look for subjects beneath and beyond such images in order to be able to recognize himself and others outside of the bedroom.

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Notes

- 1 Phyllis Grosskurth, ed., *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*, New York: Random House, 1984. Also of note is Grosskurth's groundbreaking 1964 biography of Symonds, which was an important reference for both the pre- and post-Stonewall eras. See Phyllis Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian: A Biography of John Addington Symonds*, New York: Random House, 1964. For a critical analysis of the publication of Symonds' memoirs, see Sarah J. Heidt, "Let JAS words stand": Publishing John Addington Symonds's *Desires*, *Victorian Studies*, vol.46 no.1, 2003, pp.7–31.
- 2 See John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics, Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion, Addressed Especially to Medical Psychologists and Jurists*. This text was written in 1873 but not privately published until 1883 (ten copies). In his collaborative work with Havelock Ellis, Symonds revised and expanded it as an appendix for *Sexual Inversion* (first published as Havelock Ellis and J. A. Symonds, *Das Konträre Geschlechtsgefühl*, Leipzig: Wigand, 1896). This revised text was surreptitiously republished in 1901, eight years after Symonds' death in 1893. See also, John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Modern Ethics, Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion, Addressed Especially to Medical Psychologists and Jurists*. As with the earlier text, *A Problem in Modern Ethics* was first privately published (1891) in Symonds' lifetime and then reprinted by another party after his death (London, 1896).
- 3 For instance, see the relatively early study by Rupert Croft-Cooke, *Feasting with Panthers: a New Consideration of Some Late Victorian Writers* (London: W. H. Allen, 1967) for an example of the centrality of Symonds in histories of homoeroticism. For a more recent indication of Symonds' continued importance, note his prominent role in Chris White, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: a Sourcebook*, London: Routledge, 1999.
- 4 For a range of discussions, see John Pemble, ed., *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- 5 John Addington Symonds, 'Realism and Idealism', *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. vol.42 no.249, 1887, pp.418–29; John Addington Symonds, 'The Model', *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. vol.42 no.252, 1887, pp.857–61; John Addington Symonds, 'Beauty, Composition, Expression, Characterization', *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. vol.43 no.254, 1888, pp.211–22; and John Addington Symonds, 'Caricature, the Fantastic, the Grotesque', *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. vol.43 no.256, 1888, pp.518–25. These essays were reprinted with additions and further notes in 1890 as part of a two-volume anthology, itself reprinted as a single volume in 1893: John Addington Symonds, *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, new edn, London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1893. Wherever possible, I cite the original *Fortnightly* publication.
- 6 Preliminarily entitled *Essays on the Principles of Art and Criticism*, Symonds later opted for the more ambiguous and less committal title, *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*. See Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown, 31 July 1887, in Herbert Schueller and Robert Peters, eds, *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, 3 vols., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969, vol.3, no.1621, pp.254–65; and Symonds to Charles Edward Sayle, 13 November 1887, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no.1637, pp.275–6. Immediately after their publication in *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, Samuel Richards initiated an

- ultimately unsuccessful plan to reprint the four essays on art as a separate, fully-illustrated publication. See Symonds to Henry Holt and Co., Publishers, New York, 7 August 1890, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no.1816, pp.486–7.
- 7 Symonds to T. S. Perry, 4 January 1887, *ibid.*, p.197. On Harris and his recollections of the *Fortnightly Review*, see Frank Harris, *My Life and Loves* [1925], New York: Grove Press, 1963, pp.632–64.
 - 8 I use the term ‘homoeroticist’ to avoid the problems of anachronism that arise with the application of ‘homosexual’ to this period and, more fundamentally, to point to a wider range of identities and engagements involving same-sex desire than are customarily considered to make up the ‘homosexual’. Labelling Symonds’s project ‘homoeroticist’ allows for this inclusiveness while nevertheless signalling the fact that he was interested not just in individual acts or desires, but identities, subject positions and ways of life.
 - 9 Symonds, ‘Realism’, p.424.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, p.421.
 - 11 *Ibid.*
 - 12 *Ibid.*, p.426.
 - 13 Symonds, ‘Model’, p.861.
 - 14 Symonds, ‘Realism’, p.421, my emphasis.
 - 15 Symonds, ‘Note on “Realism and Idealism”’, in *Essays Speculative and Suggestive* (1893), p.438.
 - 16 Symonds, ‘Landscape’, *ibid.*, p.320.
 - 17 Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo: A Memoir of his Childhood* [1910], trans. Alan Dyson, London: Routledge, 2001, p.61.
 - 18 Symonds, ‘Model’, p.860.
 - 19 For instance, see Thais Morgan, ‘Reimagining Masculinity in Victorian Criticism: Swinburne and Pater’, *Victorian Studies*, vol.36 no.3, 1993, pp.315–32; Linda Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s Pied Beauty and the Constitution of a “Homosexual” Code’, *The Victorian Newsletter*, no.75, 1989, pp.1–8; J. B. Bullen, ‘Pater, Mill, Mansel and the Context of the Conclusion to *The Renaissance*’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, vol.21 no.1, 1999, pp.1–15; Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: the Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990; Christopher Craft, *Another Kind of Love: Male Homosexual Desire in English Discourse, 1850–1920*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994; Elizabeth Prettejohn, ‘Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting’, in Elizabeth Prettejohn, ed., *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, pp.36–58; and Jason Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert’s Aestheticism: Gilbert amongst Whistler, Wilde, Leighton, Pater and Burne-Jones*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
 - 20 The most prominent example would have been Johann Joachim Winckelmann, whose works were well known to Symonds. See Walter Pater, ‘Winckelmann’ [1867], in Adam Phillips, ed., *The Renaissance*, 4th edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp.114–49; Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994; and Whitney Davis, ‘Winckelmann’s “Homosexual” Teleologies’, in Natalie Boymel Kampen, ed., *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp.262–76. On Symonds’ rivalry with Pater in the homoerotic interpretation of Michelangelo, see Alex Potts, ‘Pungent Prophecies of Art: Symonds, Pater, and Michelangelo’, in Pemble, ed., *Symonds*, pp.102–21.
 - 21 Grosskurth, ed., *Memoirs*, p.65. See also Jonathan Kemp, ‘A Problem in Gay Heroics: Symonds and l’Amour de l’Impossible’, in Pemble, ed., *Symonds*, pp.46–61. For context, see Gert Hekma, ‘“A Female Soul in a Male Body”: Sexual Inversion as Gender Inversion in Nineteenth-Century Sexology’, in G. Herdt, ed., *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, New York: Zone, 1994, pp.213–39, 541–48.
 - 22 Symonds to Edmund Gosse, 21 February 1890, in John Younger, ‘Ten Unpublished Letters by John Addington Symonds at Duke University’, *The Victorian Newsletter*, vol.95 no.4, 1999, p.5. For a discussion of Gosse’s relationship to homoeroticism, see Ann Thwaite, *Edmund Gosse: a Literary Landscape, 1849–1928*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1984, pp.184–206; David J. Getsy, ‘Physicality and Modern Sculpture in late-Victorian Britain’, PhD, Northwestern University, U.S.A., published Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 2002; Michael Hatt, ‘Near and Far: Homoeroticism, Labour and Hamo Thornycroft’s *Mower*’, *Art History*, vol.26 no.1, 2003, pp.26–55; and David J. Getsy, *Body Doubles: Sculpture in Britain, 1877–1905*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004, pp.65–9, 196–7.
 - 23 Symonds to Edmund Gosse, 25 May 1890, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no.1786, pp.450–51.
 - 24 Younger, ‘Ten Letters’, no.4, p.5.
 - 25 Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown, 3 March 1889, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no.1702, pp.356–7.
 - 26 Two years after Symonds’ essays, Oscar Wilde would similarly put forth a method of close reading as a means towards discerning the homoerotic in Shakespeare’s sonnets. See Oscar Wilde, ‘The Portrait of Mr. W. H.’, in Richard Ellmann, ed., *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp.151–220.

- 27 Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown, 21 January 1890, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no.1777, p.443.
- 28 For context, see Potts, 'Pungent Prophecies', pp.102–21; and Lene Østermark-Johansen, *Sweetness and Strength: the Reception of Michelangelo in Late Victorian England*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998.
- 29 Symonds to Edmund Gosse, 6 March 1891, in Younger, 'Ten Letters', no.8, pp.8–9.
- 30 Symonds to Edmund Gosse, 22 June 1891, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no. 1897, p.586.
- 31 'Second trial, fourth day' [1895], reprinted in White, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Writings*, p.57.
- 32 Ronald Sutherland Gower, *Michael Angelo Buonarroti*, London: George Bell and Sons, 1903, p.94. Whereas Symonds was quoted directly, the reference to Wilde (in the post-1895 climate) was limited to an oblique reference to the latter's 'The Portrait of W. H.'. On Gower's identification with Shakespeare in relation to same-sex desire, see Whitney Davis, 'Lord Ronald Gower and "The Offending Adam"', in David J. Getsy, ed., *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain, c.1880–1930*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, pp.63–104.
- 33 Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown, 15 July 1890, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no.1805, pp.473–4.
- 34 Symonds, 'Model,' p.860.
- 35 Michael Camille, 'The Abject Gaze and the Homosexual Body: Flandrin's Figure d'Etude', in Whitney Davis, ed., *Gay and Lesbian Studies in Art History*, New York: Haworth, 1994, p.166.
- 36 Symonds, 'Model,' p.860.
- 37 Symonds to Edmund Gosse, 4 April 1890, in Younger, 'Ten Letters', no.5, p.6.
- 38 Symonds to Edmund Gosse, 23 February 1891, in Schueller and Peters, eds, *Letters*, vol.3 no.1861, p.556.
- 39 Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith, *Oscar Wilde Discovers America: 1882*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1936, pp.179–80. Wilde responded to the preliminary statuette for what would become, in 1885, the heroic-size statue. The statue was shown at the Paris Salon of 1886, the National Academy of Design (NY) in 1887, the Royal Academy of Arts in 1890 and the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, where it won first prize and was given to the Art Institute of Chicago. It was cast in bronze in 1911. Two other bronzes on this scale are extant (St. Louis Art Museum and the Metropolitan Museum, NY), and a number of smaller-scale reductions were produced around 1890 (e.g. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston). See Thayer Tolles, 'John Talbot Donoghue (1853–1903)', in Thayer Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Volume 1: *A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born before 1865*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999, pp.342–4.
- 40 Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown, 6 March 1891, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no.1872, p.559. The reference is to Henry Scott Tuke (1858–1929).
- 41 This issue forms the catalyst for Hugh Stevens' account of Henry James' fascination with Symonds. See Hugh Stevens, 'The Resistance to Queery: John Addington Symonds and "The Real Right Thing"', *Henry James Review*, vol.29, 1999, pp.255–64. See also Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- 42 For a discussion of some attempts to accommodate (and validate) homoeroticism with Kant's Third Critique, see Whitney Davis, 'Homoerotic Art Collection from 1750 to 1920', *Art History*, vol.24 no.2, 2001, pp.247–77. This widespread problematic was also addressed by Davis in his paper 'Homoeroticism, Sexual Selection and the Sense of Beauty' and by Elizabeth Prettejohn in her 'Eroticisms of the Imaginary Portrait', both presented at the 'Anxious Flirtations' conference.
- 43 Symonds, 'The Criterion of Art', in *Essays*, 1893, p.436.
- 44 *Ibid.*, pp.437–38.
- 45 Symonds, 'Model', p.858. It was not an uncommon practice to communicate the names and addresses of dealers in nude photographs through innocuous-appearing articles that stressed technical concerns. See, for instance, 'The Nude in Photography: With Some Studies Taken in the Open Air' (*The Studio*, vol.1 no.3, 1893, pp.104–108), which reproduced only photos of nude boys, including examples by Gloeden and Frederick Rolfe (aka Baron Corvo).
- 46 Symonds, 'Model', p.859.
- 47 Symonds, 'Beauty, Composition', p.216.
- 48 Jessica Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, p.30.
- 49 See D. W. Winnicott, 'The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications', in *Playing and Reality*, London: Routledge, 1969, pp.86–94; Christopher Bollas, 'The Self as Object', in *The Shadow of The Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, pp.41–63; Benjamin, *Like Subjects*; and Jessica Benjamin, *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis*, New York: Routledge, 1998. For commentary on Benjamin see Judith Butler, 'Longing for Recognition', in her *Undoing Gender*, New York and London: Routledge, 2005, pp.131–51. For an alternative methodological position see also the brief commentary on shifts in Lacan's attitude toward intersubjectivity in Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, London: Verso, 1997, pp.8–10.

- 50 Symonds, 'Note on "Realism"', p.439.
- 51 Symonds, 'Beauty, Composition, Expression, Characterisation' [revised 1890], in *Essays*, 1893, p.166.
- 52 Grosskurth, ed., *Memoirs*, p.78.
- 53 Symonds, 'Beauty, Composition' (revised 1890), p.167.
- 54 Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown, 9 September 1887, in Schueller and Peters, eds., *Letters*, vol.3, no.1630, p.268.
- 55 Symonds to Samuel Richards, 8 April 1890, *ibid.*, no.1789, p.455.
- 56 'J.A.S.' [1893-94], in Edmund Gosse, *The Collected Poems of Edmund Gosse*, London: William Heinemann, 1911, p.321.
- 57 John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South*, Oxford: Clarendon, pp.160-61; and Grosskurth, *Woeful Victorian*, pp.266-7.
- 58 Grosskurth, ed., *Memoirs*, p.207.
- 59 *Ibid.*, pp.266-7.
- 60 Edward Carpenter, 'The Human Body and its Relation to Art', in his *Angels' Wings: A Series of Essays on Art and its Relation to Life*, 6th edn, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1898, p.83.
- 61 Symonds to Edward Carpenter, 29 December 1892, reprinted in White, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Writings*, p.94.
- 62 John Addington Symonds, 'The Dantesque and Platonic Ideals of Love' [1890], in his *In the Key of Blue and Other Prose Essays*, London: Elkin Mathews & John Lane, 1892, p.76.
- 63 In Grosskurth, ed., *Memoirs*, p.266.
- 64 On the roots of this struggle, see Whitney Davis, 'The Image in the Middle: John Addington Symonds and Homoerotic Art Criticism', in Prettejohn, ed., *After the Pre-Raphaelites*, pp.188-216; and Whitney Davis, 'Symonds and Visual Impressionability', in Pemble, ed., *Symonds*, pp.62-80.
- 65 Whitney Davis, 'The Subject in the Scene of Representation', *Art Bulletin*, vol.76 no.4, 1994, pp.571.
- 66 Symonds to Edmund Gosse, 28 February 1890, in Schueller and Peters, eds, *Letters*, vol.3, no.1783, p.448.
- 67 Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, 'Preface to Sexual Inversion' [1897], reprinted in White, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Writings*, p.95.
- 68 Symonds, 'Model', p.860.
- 69 *Ibid.*, p.859.

David J. Getsy, "Recognizing the Homoerotic: The Uses of Intersubjectivity in John Addington Symonds's 1887 Essays on Art," *Visual Culture in Britain*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 37-57.