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Old Schools:
Modernism, Pedagogy, and the Critique of Progress

by

Ramsey McGlazer

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Critical Theory

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Spring 2015

Old Schools:
Modernism, Pedagogy, and the Critique of Progress

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Abstract

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Ramsey McGlazer

Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature and the Designated Emphasis in Critical Theory

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Barbara Spackman, Chair

This dissertation marks out a modernist counter-tradition, analyzing a set of texts that locate critical potential in outmoded, paradigmatically pre-modern educational forms. I show that such an anachronism, common to Italian and English-language literary culture and, later, cinema, organizes works by Walter Pater, Giovanni Pascoli, James Joyce, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Glauber Rocha. All of these figures, I argue, oppose ideologies of progress by returning to the Latin class long since left behind by progressive educators.

Across the political spectrum, modernizing reformers claimed that old-school education, often disparagingly called “instruction,” had become a dead weight, an impediment to progress. From Jean-Jacques Rousseau to John Dewey and Giovanni Gentile, these theorists declared instruction obsolete, deemed it empty, mechanical, infantilizing, and futile. Time and again, the discourse of progressive education targeted Latin in particular; the dead language—taught through such time-tested means as recitation, memorization, copying out, and corporal punishment—needed to be updated or eliminated, reformers argued, so that students could breathe free and become modern, achieving a break with convention and constraint.

By contrast, the authors I study look to instruction’s techniques precisely, and they find unlikely resources for a critique of modernity in the very practices that progressive reformers sought to clear away. Registering the past’s persistence, these authors themselves persist in what look like most retrograde attachments—to tradition, transmission, scholastic rites, and repetitive verbal forms. But the pedagogies of constraint that they devise—pedagogies that I call “counter-progressive”—repeat the past to radical effect.

Thus, against his own early liberal tendencies and a backdrop of broad educational reforms, Pater assigns “mechanical exercise” in his late essays, lectures, and fiction. Pascoli’s *Paedagogium* makes the case for the embattled classical school, complementing the author’s defense of this school against a range of reformist detractors. Joyce re-imagines the pensum, or punitive copying of text, as a literary form in “Oxen of the Sun,” and Pasolini’s *Salò* radicalizes other instructional rites. Rocha’s *Claro*, finally, marks the limits of the counter-progressive pedagogy that it continues, returning, like all of the works I consider, to school, to Rome, and to a history that it cannot escape.

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Introduction

On Counter-Progressive Pedagogy

She followed not all, a part of the whole, gave attention with interest, comprehended with surprise, with care repeated, with greater difficulty remembered, forgot with ease, with misgiving remembered, rerepeated with error.

- James Joyce, *Ulysses*¹

With these phrases, the narrator of Joyce's "Ithaca" renders Molly Bloom's experience of "direct instruction" (17.698). From the perspective of her teacher, who is interested in outcomes, this experience is not a success. Molly's insouciance and inconsistency, as recorded in the sentence above, lead the self-appointed pedagogue Leopold Bloom to adopt a "more effective" approach: "indirect suggestion implicating self-interest" (17.703-704). Joyce's language suggests here, however, that the "direct" method proves surprisingly enabling—more so, in fact, than the "implicating" alternative. The latter leads, in "Ithaca," to an ultimately straightforward if initially perplexing consumer equation: "She disliked umbrella with rain, he liked woman with umbrella, she disliked new hat with rain, he liked woman with new hat, he bought new hat with rain, she carried umbrella with new hat" (17.706-708). Note the monotony of the sentence, its anodyne unfolding. It's as if "indirect suggestion implicating self-interest" could yield only this parade of pros and cons, this regular succession of dislikes and likes.

By contrast, as my epigraph suggests, "direct instruction" produces rich and strange results, both conceptual and syntactic. Such instruction, which might at first seem to demand full concentration by definition, in fact allows the student to follow "not at all," or only in part. Like *Ulysses* itself, "direct instruction" affords a range of possibilities for comprehension and repetition, remembering and forgetting, rerepeating and rerepeating. And the variation in the narrator's formulations belies their obvious and joking repetitiousness. Joyce's verbs and adverbial phrases, for instance, only belatedly and uneasily settle into the chiasmic pattern toward which they tend all along, and we are invited to notice that to rerepeat is already to repeat "with error." Here, then, "Ithaca," Joyce's catechistically structured episode, models the convergence of repetition and difference that instruction makes possible, the coexistence of past and present, memory and forgetting, that it sustains.

Readers may be surprised to find such an apology for "direct instruction" recessed in a high modernist text like *Ulysses*: a novel committed to radical formal innovation, written by an author who, as a young man, had forsworn instruction precisely in order to pursue autonomous literary production.² Surely nothing could be farther from the flagrantly rule-breaking Joycean text than the rule-bound method that the narrator names "direct instruction"? Surely the whole point of "Ithaca," in fact, is to highlight the contrast between the novel's enlivening capaciousness and the deadening constraints of the old school catechism? Surely Joyce, like his character Bloom, abandons instruction in favor of something like "indirect suggestion": a novel approach to the novel that lets us draw our own connections, revel in our own associations, and, above all, think for ourselves?

Before we can answer these questions—or just rethink our first, reflexive answers to them—we need to ask another, simpler one: what is "instruction"? In 1919, just before Joyce returned to Trieste from Zurich, the idealist philosopher and educational reformer Giovanni Gentile presented a series of lectures to that city's schoolteachers that undertook to offer rigorous definitions of key concepts in pedagogy, including instruction. Gentile's lectures, published during Joyce's brief 1920 stay in Trieste as *La riforma dell'educazione: Discorsi ai maestri di*

Trieste [*The Reform of Education: Addresses to the Teachers of Trieste*], took pains to distinguish true education from mere “instruction,” which, for Gentile and his followers, named a specific set of outmoded educational practices. These practices were, Gentile argued, “narrow, formal, and sterile”; they were deadening rather than enlivening, repetitive rather than allowing for innovation of any kind. And their prevalence led to the creation and persistence of a stagnant culture: “intrusa con violenza nella vita dello spirito, vi genera quella mostruosità che è la cultura che si dice materiale, meccanica, priva di valore spirituale” [intruding with violence into the life of the spirit, it generates the monstrous culture that we call material, mechanical, and spiritually worthless].³ Such a culture could not but be “frammentaria e inorganica” [fragmentary and inorganic], and yet it could grow, Gentile continued, mixing metaphors: “può crescere all’infinito senza trasformare la mente e fondersi nel processo della personalità a cui aderisce estrinsecamente” [it can grow to infinity without transforming students’ minds or merging with the process of the personality to which it adheres extrinsically] (186). Such outward adherence, like Joycean “direct instruction,” could thus only be partial—in the words of “Ithaca”’s narrator, “a part of the whole.” It could forge neither whole selves nor whole nations.

Gentile therefore devised an approach to education that was inward as well as integrative. This approach would follow from his discovery of the “secret” of effective education, as disclosed in the philosopher’s lectures in Trieste: “che il libro che si legge o la parola del maestro che si ode, metta in moto l’animo nostro, e si trasforma in vita nostra interiore, cessando di essere qualche cosa ... e trasferendosi nella nostra personalità” [the book is read, or the word of the teacher that is heard, must set our mind in motion and be transformed into our inner life, ceasing to be a thing ... and being transfused into our personality] (188). Gentile does not use the language of self-interest here, and his goals are spiritual rather than material. Reformed education forms personalities and minds; it does not traffic with things. In fact, Gentile finds fault with “instruction” for such traffic precisely. We would thus seem to be far indeed from the Blooms’ umbrellas and new hats. Clearly, however, the new method that Gentile advocates is nothing if not “implicating”; it shares with Joyce’s “indirect suggestion implicating self-interest” an investment in the student’s “inner life.” Whereas instruction centers on memorization and commands repetition, Gentile’s education and Joyce’s indirect suggestion alike seek transformation.

But “Ithaca” teaches us to ask: transformation to what end? And what’s lost when “direct instruction” is replaced by other, kinder and gentler, more efficient and more implicating educational techniques? My dissertation proceeds from these questions and considers the striking answers given in works by Walter Pater, Giovanni Pascoli, Joyce, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Glauber Rocha. Reading across Italian and English-language contexts and across genres and media, I trace a modernist counter-tradition’s surprising affinities with the very instructional methods that Gentile decried. I show that instruction’s outward and outmoded forms become key resources for a modernist aesthetic production that they might appear to rule out, or at least to impede. My account aligns this modernism with a didacticism that comes before—and counters—modernity.⁴ *Old Schools* thus challenges a still-widespread tendency to locate modernism’s critical potential in its attempt to break with the past: a tendency that, I show, informs both mainstream modernism, with its Marinettian “love of progress,” and the discourse of progressive pedagogy.⁵ Gentile’s *La riforma* exemplifies the latter discourse, which takes rightist as well as radical forms. By contrast, Joyce’s “direct instruction” instantiates the pedagogy that is the subject of this dissertation: the pedagogy that I call counter-progressive.

In this sense, the encounter between Joyce and Gentile that I have begun by staging emblemizes the work of the dissertation overall, its effort to bring literature and educational theory into comparative conversation. But by claiming that *La riforma* and *Ulysses* bear rereading alongside one another, I do not mean to suggest that Joyce drew direct inspiration—or, indeed, direct instruction—from Gentile’s lectures. Surely, however, the Irish author and sometime teacher would have been aware of the debates that both preceded and followed the influential *Discorsi*.⁶ These debates pitted old-school instructors—a whole old, degraded institution called “instruction”—against progressive educators equipped to usher students into modernity, to sponsor both collective innovation and individual self-realization. If at first it seems obvious that Joyce would side with the latter camp—that he would be among the moderns, not the ancients, the educators, not the instructors, the advocates of the mind in motion, not mechanical exercise—“Ithaca” suggests otherwise. In fact, read with Gentile, the episode compels us to revise available accounts of modernist aesthetics. So do the texts and films that I examine in the chapters that follow. For the most part, these works feature students who are much more studious than Molly Bloom and teachers who are considerably more demanding than Leopold. But all of the works that I discuss wager, with the Ithacan narrator and against Gentile, that “direct instruction” is strangely more enabling than the “more effective” teaching that takes its place. With its formative repetitions and enforced wastes of time, instruction becomes the model for the counter-progressive text itself.

The Problem of the School

A later moment in Gentile’s reception provides another context for understanding the modernist engagements with instruction that I am proposing to investigate—backward engagements that, I will argue, are motivated neither by nostalgia nor by a merely reactionary impulse. In the twelfth of his *Quaderni del carcere* [*Prison Notebooks*], Antonio Gramsci refuses the distinction between instruction and education, on which so much of Gentile’s pedagogical philosophy rests. For, Gramsci insists, education is also instruction; the former cannot do away with the latter. And this implies—perhaps scandalously, to today’s teaching sensibilities—that education cannot do without a degree of compulsion, or what Gramsci memorably calls “coercizione meccanica” [mechanical coercion].⁷ This is perhaps the inverse of the more familiar, affirmative, and humanist Gramscian claim that “in qualsiasi lavoro fisico, anche il più meccanico e degradato, esiste un minimo di qualifica tecnica, cioè un minimo di attività intellettuale creatrice” [in any physical work, even the most mechanical and degraded, there exists a minimum of technical qualification, that is, a minimum of creative intellectual activity] (*Q* 1516; *PN* 8, trans. modified). In no sense do Gramsci’s reflections on instruction cancel out this celebrated account of the universality of intellectual capacities. Still, his pedagogical reflections remain startling for the force and thoroughness of their dismantling of progressive fictions. These fictions, on which Gentile’s “idealist pedagogy” depends and which this pedagogy perpetuates, insist on the child’s wholeness, his active nature, his propensity for play, his spontaneity. Gramsci’s sobering corrective instead makes education a matter of work first and foremost. Whereas Gentile sought, in his own phrase, “la liberazione della scuola dal meccanismo” [the liberation of the school from mechanism] (167), Gramsci deemed such liberation impossible. His acknowledgment that all education is also instruction implies an acceptance of repetition, discipline, and even deadness—of traffic not only with the things that Gentile would conjure away in his drive to spiritualize, but more specifically with “dead things.”

For without such things, Gramsci insists startlingly, there can be no real study among children: “ogni analisi fatta da un fanciullo non può che essere su cose morte” [analyses made by children can only be of dead things] (*Q* 1544; *PN* 38).

The dead things that Gramsci has in mind here are words in a dead language, specifically Latin words. And Latin’s privileged place in his notes on instruction registers its status as a target of the reformers’ polemics. Just as traditional education centered on “the learning by heart of Latin grammar,” that is, Latin came to stand for this education’s inefficiency, its obsolescence.⁸ Instruction, in the discourse of reformers, was a relic from the pre-modern past. Hence the need that Gentile and others perceived: to update instruction so thoroughly as to clear it away. Yet this clearing was always meant to be differential, not indiscriminate. Gentile objected, in other words, not to Latin as such but rather to its function as what Gramsci calls the “fulcrum” in all public schools (*Q* 1546, *PN* 39). In the policies known as the *Riforma Gentile*, implemented by Gentile in his capacity as Minister of Education under Mussolini in 1923, Latin retained a place in the education of the ruling class. But for other students—for most students—in the new, tiered educational system, which now included vocational tracks, Latin was no longer compulsory.

These reforms, realized by a fascist regime but tellingly underwritten by progressive educational theories, form the backdrop of Gramsci’s reflections, and they help to account for the paradox of the Marxist’s “apparently ‘conservative’ eulogy for the old curriculum.”⁹ Though nominally democratic, the *Riforma Gentile* in fact entrenched class hierarchies, Gramsci observes. The new policies deprived all but the most elite students of the training in abstraction and the practice for critical reflection that alone, for Gramsci, form democratic citizens. Latin had long since marked the place of this training and practice, and the *Notebooks* locate the dead language’s pedagogical—and indeed political—value not ultimately in its substance or the civilizational “myth” that attaches to it (*Q* 1544-1545, *PN* 38). To be sure, Gramsci sees value in this myth as well. But above all, in his view, Latin instruction offers *forms* of discipline and disinterest, with the latter term defined in opposition to utilitarian pursuits. (Indeed, Gramsci would have had no patience for Joyce’s “indirect suggestion implicating self-interest.”) The Latin class is a repository of these forms, the site of “una tradizione culturale-scolastica” [a cultural-scholastic tradition] (*Q* 1545; *PN* 38, trans. modified) and an intellectual “itinerary” (*Q* 1546; *PN* 39). For these very reasons, however—by virtue, that is, of its privileging of forms and processes over contents—the Latin class becomes a truly democratic training camp. More than the ostensibly open technical alternative schools peddled by the regime, it seeks to make everyone—including every child of the subaltern classes—into an adult able to govern. “Mechanical coercion” in the Latin class—its knowing itself to be compulsory and even cruel, what Gentile would call its violent intrusion into the life of the spirit—thus represents a traditional means to a radical end.

For Gramsci, the co-optation of progressive pedagogy by the fascist regime revealed this pedagogy’s inherent limitations. This, at least, would be one way to translate Gramsci’s lesson on Latin, which would thus prompt us to interrogate the progressive education that we are still accustomed to treat as an unqualified good. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s recent work points to the urgency of this task in the context of new educational crises, different from but not altogether unrelated to those that Gramsci faced. Without emphasizing Latin or engaging specifically with the *Riforma Gentile*, Spivak has returned to the “tough effortfulness” of Gramsci’s educational writings and argued for their relevance to the joint project of defending and rethinking “humanist education” today.¹⁰ Noting that the Italian theorist made this education central to the project of

Marxism, Spivak also adduces Gramsci in order to counter ongoing scholarly biases; citing Gramsci, Spivak refuses “both ‘the position assumed by the social complex of intellectuals [whose philosophy] can be defined as the expression of that social utopia by which intellectuals think of themselves as “independent,” autonomous, endowed with a character of their own, etc.’ and those who have forgotten that ‘school is the instrument through which intellectuals of various levels are elaborated.’”¹¹ The arrangement of these Gramscian citations lets us see that the school’s occlusion both follows from and furthers the effort to shore up intellectual autonomy.

Indeed, a forgetting of the school has marked recent studies of modernism.¹² This is less obviously true in the Italian case than in the English-language one. For it has become something of a commonplace to note Pasolini’s pedagogical commitments, and Pascoli’s have likewise been impossible to ignore. Still, even studies of these authors have stopped short of the full theorization that I undertake here as I seek to restore both social specificity and political potential to the counter-tradition that I identify. This means working against still-prevalent liberal and progressive assumptions, “oriented to freedom and autonomous agency against the background of a modern social imaginary,” where the modernity of this imaginary is thought to reside in a refusal of convention and constraint.¹³

Inasmuch as the school—and what Gramsci calls the old school in particular—names the place of this convention and constraint, it stands to reason that progressive criticism has sought to leave it behind. But Gramsci’s *Notebooks* suggest that the attempt thus to abandon instruction may constitute a betrayal of education as such. It may entail consequences that are significantly less liberating than the release from scholastic strictures would seem. The works that I study in what follows all indicate how and why this is the case. And they share in Gramsci’s vision of instruction, whether anticipating it, as do Pater, Pascoli, and Joyce, or inheriting it as do Pasolini and Rocha. With his reassessment of the old school in the wake of its apparent eclipse, Gramsci establishes a template for the texts treated in this dissertation’s chapters, even if his version of the old school is pragmatic and philosophical, whereas the authors I consider set instruction to work aesthetically. I call their aesthetic efforts counter-, and not anti-, progressive because, like the Gramscian account, written after the Riforma Gentile, they look to the old school for means of resisting the progress that levels while pretending to liberate.

Teaching Styles

The texts that I address thus all refuse to leave the past behind. I mean this in a double sense: they refuse to abandon, or to graduate from, the past in order to attend to the concerns of the present on its “own” terms, as progressivism would dictate; but they also studiously avoid leaving *themselves* behind as appropriable pasts, as lessons easily learned. Instead, these texts and films foreground—and compound—the conditions that thwart transmission even while they insist, like Gramsci, on transmission’s crucial importance and radical potential—as though only a prolonged dwelling in and on, and not a denial of, obstruction could lead to this blockage’s giving way to something else.

Each chapter considers a late style. And in each case lateness implies both untimeliness and programmatic difficulty. “Late style is *in*, but oddly *apart* from the present,” according to Edward Said,¹⁴ whose definition recalls the contrast I have just made between anti- and counter-progressive tendencies. For to be in and apart is not to deny, but rather to respond to—even to “militat[e] ferociously against”—the present (22). It is actively to counter, rather than conjure

away, the modernity from which one takes distance through a “regression from *now* to *back then*” (23). Indeed, anachronism inheres in late-career regressions or “retreats” as dissimilar as Pater’s and Pasolini’s. “Lateness” in their works, as in those Said discusses, becomes “a kind of self-imposed exile from what is generally acceptable, coming after it, and surviving beyond it” (17). But Pater’s late lectures and Pasolini’s last essays also share other key qualities of the late style that Said identifies: “sustained tension, unaccommodated stubbornness” (17), “*negativity*” (12), and especially obscurity (14). These qualities pervade the works that I discuss even when, like Pater’s *Marius* or Pascoli’s *Paedagogium*, they might seem to reach for resolution, or when negativity is leavened by humor, as in Joyce or Rocha. All of the texts that I treat derive their “negative power,” to repeat Said’s paraphrase of Theodor Adorno, from their “dissonant relationship with the affirmative developmental thrust” of progressive discourse (17), often also the thrust of the same authors’ own earlier works.

Indeed, I look to moments in authors’ careers that many readers might reflexively dismiss as reactionary. In this sense, I follow the works that I analyze; my approach, too, is counter-progressive—not because it privileges earlier texts over later ones, but rather inasmuch as it valorizes backward- rather than forward-looking works. Let me explain. Every right-thinking reader knows how to love—and has been trained to affirm—the Pater of the liberating “Conclusion” to *The Renaissance*, the Pascoli whose little lyrics entered Italian public schools, the Joyce of *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and the Pasolini of the exuberant *Trilogy of Life* (1971-1974). The same might even be said of Rocha, who figures in my coda: the early populist works of his Cinema Nôvo present challenges, but their youthful, liberationist energy remains irresistible. In each case, we automatically affirm these works because they conform to our faith in the new, which we know to be good. Pater bravely casts off the shackles of convention in his “Conclusion,” just as, at the end of *A Portrait*, Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus leaves behind an imprisoning familial past and a parochial Irish scene. Pascoli the vernacular lyricist and author of *Il fanciullino* keeps renewing his commitment to youth in verse and prose, just as Pasolini addresses “la meglio gioventù” time and again. Even when this youth seemed to be disappearing, the latter poet made it his mission to salvage something of it, to sing it back into existence, however impossibly. Hence Pasolini’s late rewriting of an earlier collection of poems as *La nuova gioventù*; for all its disaffection, this late verse still unfolds under the sign of the new.

Something different happens, though, in *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* [*Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom*] (1975) and the writings that surround it, works that are at the center of my fourth and final chapter. Here Pasolini “abjure[s] the *Trilogy of Life*” and takes distance from all that it celebrates: youth and sexual freedom, rebellious bodies and their lovable vitality.¹⁵ Putting the partisan song “La meglio gioventù” into the mouths of fascists and their prisoners, *Salò* instead illustrates the persistence of old regimes, forces of constraint, coercion, and even death that no amount of youthful energy can vanquish. The film undertakes this demonstration, according to Pasolini, in the name of “legibility.”¹⁶ But this legibility gives rise to lessons reminiscent of, if not modeled on, the old-school Latin class, as I will show. *Salò* returns to, even while it re-imagines, this class and its ritual function. Like the initiatory techniques of instruction, Pasolini’s punishing insistence on the survival of outmoded powers compels viewers to reckon with a past that they would abandon and thus deny. *Salò* thus distills even while it radicalizes the broader tendency—the late turn or return—that my dissertation sets out to analyze. Various though they are, all of the works I treat share a determination to register the past’s persistence, enlisting outmoded scholastic forms in the service of a critique of the ideology

of progress. Although the definition and political inflections of progress differ in each case, a modern ideology that privileges the new, and posits a break with the old, remains consistently the target of my authors' polemics, whether the latter are overt or, as in the case of Joyce, mediated by fiction.

This counter-intuitive transvaluation of the old school—its return and radical recasting in modernist literature and cinema—has analogs, of course, in other cultural contexts. The processes that I examine represent only one set of attempts to redeploy what Raymond Williams calls “the residual” in response to a consolidation of the “dominant.”¹⁷ Other instances could of course be adduced. To take just two examples from earlier moments in European modernity: Massimiliano Biscuso and Franco Gallo argue compellingly that in the context of an ascendant bourgeois culture in Italy, the “aristocratic” thought of Giacomo Leopardi becomes a potentially revolutionary resource.¹⁸ And Anne-Lise François comparably reassesses an “aristocratic ethos of grace as form” found in certain strains of Romanticism.¹⁹ Though aligned with class privileges and mediated by pastoral forms that might appear retrograde, this ethos, for François, offers alternatives to “the modern ideology of improvement”; “this ethos,” François further contends, “far from negating, keeps alive the possibility of imaginative exercise” and thus counters the foreclosures of capitalism, so often falsely presented as sources of openness.²⁰

Scholars of modernism have also highlighted how the recuperation and transformation of old forms often marked attempts to forge the new. Recently, Barry McCrea has drawn attention to the role of “the vanishing vernaculars of the European peasant world” in the modernist effort “to find or invent new linguistic forms.”²¹ And Benjamin Baer has similarly repositioned “the peasant and the autochthon” in modernist writing: far from lagging behind the metropolitan authors who looked to them repeatedly, these figures came to occupy modernity’s “cutting edge.”²² Decades ago, Jean Franco had already analyzed a related phenomenon in the work the Peruvian modernist César Vallejo. In Franco’s account, Vallejo comes to imagine himself as “a poet-prophet who is not avant-garde or ‘vanguard’ but, as it were, bringing up the rear,” following rather than leading the workers whom his late poems intermittently address.²³

All of these critical approaches have informed my own.²⁴ But I consider a different site of “the residual,” one that, to my knowledge, has not yet been seen to shelter any radical potential. On the contrary, the old school and the Latin class in particular have seemed beyond saving. They have looked to us—as they looked to their nineteenth- and twentieth-century detractors, including Gentile—like sites of stagnation that allowed for nothing more than the rote repetition of the same. In arguing that there is a critical rather than merely antiquarian, revivalist, or reactionary use of classical education in modernism, I am therefore closer to Biscuso, Gallo, and François—or to Robert Kaufman, who analyzes the persistence of romantic lyric in the twentieth century and beyond—than to the scholars of modernism whom I have just mentioned.²⁵ For rather than bringing modernist cultural production into closer proximity with the demos—with the rural poor or revolutionary workers—as do McCrea, Baer, and Franco, I align it with an institution that had long since been claimed by and for the elite.²⁶ (Compare the Leopardian “letterato” discussed by Biscuso and Gallo, François’s pastoral, Kaufman’s lyric aura—or, for that matter, Said’s late style.²⁷) At the same time, however, following Gramsci, I work to show that this institution housed other possibilities, irreducible to and even at odds with the “shoring ... up” of “apparatuses of power.”²⁸ These were, I argue, the possibilities that a modernist counter-tradition recognized, and that it undertook to realize in order to counter progress.

This claim may still seem to be merely perverse, suspiciously contrarian. But when read closely and with a willingness to suspend liberal humanist pieties, the texts that I consider in

what follows all bear out my counter-intuitive claim, while attesting both to the recurrence and to the range of the aesthetic pedagogy that I call counter-progressive. As I have already suggested, these texts also compel us to rethink familiar accounts of education in modernity. These accounts often stress the school's role as "ideological state apparatus,"²⁹ or as guarantor "of legitimation of the social order and of hereditary transmission of privileges."³⁰ Does the school not, after all, one such account asks, "contribute towards persuading each social subject to stay in the place which falls to him *by nature*, to know his place and hold to it"?³¹ Does the school not function as a technology of domination?

Indeed, it does. There can be no denying the school's—and especially the old-school's—deadening, mind-numbing, and merely norm-consolidating potentials. But an abiding and nearly exclusive emphasis on these potentials in our accounts of literary history, and of modernism in particular, has prevented us from attending to the "other space of the institution."³² And we have ignored such an other space at our peril, for it has become difficult to articulate defenses of our endangered institutions, given our widely shared anti-institutional bent. It has become difficult, in other words, to defend teaching when we have complied, as Stefano Harney and Fred Moten suggest, with the demand to get beyond it, affirming instead, time and again, the value of being self-taught.³³

An "other space of the institution" might allow, however, for the flourishing of resistances even in contexts of compulsory docility. It might provide a venue for the elaboration of fantasies not fully determined by, and forms not compliantly synced up with, modernity. Such a space might, then, become a kind of refuge, letting students take distance from the ideology of progress, entailing as the latter does demands for individual self-realization and collective self-identity. Allowing for the interruption of these progressive processes, the teaching that happens in this "other space" might *not* ultimately keep pupils in place, or emphasize what "falls to him *by nature*"; on the contrary, under certain conditions, and perhaps against all odds, it might *denaturalize* and thus promote a certain kind of mobility, if only one exercised behind the institution's back or in its interstices.

Importantly, the works that I study do not merely represent such an other space; they actively seek to produce it, by *administering* the instruction they thematize. These texts programmatically solicit many of the resistances associated with the brick-and-mortar old school, even while they also afford pleasures ranging from the comic (as in Joyce's "Oxen of the Sun") to the voyeuristic (as in Pasolini's *Salò*). Incorporating—imitating, while also creatively re-imagining—the old school's techniques, works ranging from Pater's *Marius* to Rocha's *Claro* bore us with their didactic digressions. They block our narrative interest and impede our understanding. They cause us to chafe against the limitations they impose. But these very blockages, impediments, and frustrations become formative; these difficulties constitute the means by which my authors make the case for the school that progressive reformers and liberal critics would leave behind.

Latin for Losers

Counter-progressive pedagogy thus names a mode rather than a mere theme. And the specificity of the works—the coherence of the counter-tradition—that I discuss derives in part from this distinction. A pair of contrastive examples can shed light on this specificity by indicating what counter-progressive pedagogy is *not*. It is not, to be clear, any and every representation of the old school still in session in modernity, or any and every instance of Latin

still in use in a modern text. *Madame Bovary*, for instance, opens with a famously strange schoolroom scene. In this brief episode, to which I will return in Chapter Three, a teacher assigns two penums, requiring both the slow, bullied Charles Bovary and the rest of the class repeatedly to copy out phrases as punishment. But Flaubert nowhere takes cues from this pedagogue; in no sense does his opening scene itself resemble the repetitive penum its teacher assigns. Neither does Flaubert return to or redeploy this scholastic punishment later in his novel, although he did compare “the chore of writing *Madame Bovary*” to a penum precisely.³⁴

Anthony Asquith’s film *The Browning Version* (1951) deals with education at greater length, and might therefore seem more likely to belong to the small canon that this dissertation assembles. The film follows Mr. Crocker-Harris (Michael Redgrave), a pathetic and prematurely aged classics teacher in an old-fashioned English public school. This master’s class, “the soul-destroying lower fifth,” is so regimented—and the master himself so uninspired and mechanical in his methods—that “the boys have been known to set their watches by his comings and goings.” Crocker-Harris is therefore pitted against a representative of “the modern psychological method,” a fresh-faced and progressive younger instructor who will soon replace him. Far from siding with its protagonist, though, *The Browning Version* itself is, like this replacement teacher, both modern and psychological. There is nothing soul-destroying and very little that’s regimented about Asquith’s direction, even during the film’s early schoolroom scenes. Protracted silences in these scenes register students’ boredom, but these silences never last so long as to suspend the flow of the film’s narrative, which requires that the old teacher recognize and renounce the anachronism that he has become.

Indeed, when this recognition finally takes place, the teacher admits to being already dead; he can produce nothing more, he says, than “the muscular twitchings of a corpse.” But, his interlocutor insists, “a corpse can be revived!” And he speaks for the film, which remains committed to reanimation. Thus in keeping with a different regular schedule—not the regular schedule of the Latin class, but that of progress—Crocker-Harris returns to life. In order to be made fully human again, though, he must be brought down to the level of his students. This process is marked as complete in the film’s final exchange, when a student tells Crocker-Harris that his translation in progress of Aeschylus is “worth finishing”—precisely because “it’s like a modern play.” The student in this classically progressive scene schools his master; the child fathers the man. But well before this moment, the film has visually signaled—and trained us both to desire and to expect—the bad teacher’s transformation into a good-enough one, the old school’s effectively becoming the new. A dissolve shows Crocker-Harris’s empty classroom, with the image of the teacher at his home desk then superimposed onto the students’ vacant seats. In this way, the old schoolmaster comes to occupy the place of those whom he instructs, and he *must* do so in order to be deemed worthy of them. Progressive pedagogue that he is, Crocker-Harris’s replacement has taken his place among these students from the first, but Crocker-Harris must be schooled in the ways of the new generation. For their part the students, like those Gentile imagined, must be liberated from mechanism, taught not by a corpse but by a living spirit. In Gentile’s terms, they must be educated, not instructed.



Teaching as “Muscular Twitching”



“The Soul-Destroying Lower Fifth”



Dissolve (1): The Schoolroom, Crocker-Harris at Home



Dissolve (2): The Schoolroom. Crocker-Harris at Home

In the end, *The Browning Version* thus affirms the values with which we approach it as progressive spectators. It confirms what we already know, and congratulates us in our knowingness. A realist text—based on a “modern play” that is not a modernist one—Asquith’s film takes distance from the figure at its center, and it builds toward the climactic conversion of this figure, both narratively and at the level of the image, as we have seen. The disciplinarian is himself disciplined, though by apparently uncoercive means, through lessons taught by a child. To be sure, these lessons entail plenty of shame and social humiliation for Crocker-Harris, but such hard knocks are nothing, the film suggests, compared to the soul-destruction that he has long overseen as master of the lower fifth. “Out with the old,” Asquith’s film thus says. And is this not the progressive—and democratizing—dictate par excellence?

Gramsci has already offered us ways to complicate our immediate “yes.” The chapters that follow thus continue the work that my discussion of Gramsci’s response to the Riforma Gentile began: that of resisting the slippage between progress, or modernization, on the one hand, and democratization, on the other. This slippage still characterizes our approaches to education when they insist first and foremost on innovation. Indeed, in this sense, the Gentilean legacy lives. Consider this basic tenet of neoliberal educational reform, borrowed from earlier progressive pedagogical theories: that we should see students “not as receivers of information, but as shapers of knowledge.”³⁵ To be sure, few practicing teachers today would argue openly against such a view. Student-centered learning, with its emphasis on engagement, play, self-guidance, and spontaneity and its eschewal of rote activity in all its forms, has long since become hegemonic. In the Gramscian sense precisely, such learning constitutes our common sense. Alternatives to student-centered approaches have thus been rendered illogical, all but unthinkable. In particular, practices that center on the teacher and that privilege repetition rather than variation, work rather than play, have become outright heretical to right-thinking humanities educators at all levels.

But perhaps this very relegation of such methods to the trash heap of history suggests that they’re worth returning to—if not salvaging wholesale, then at least reworking. Imagine that, rather than being revived and modernized, Asquith’s Crocker-Harris had remained “a corpse.” Then imagine that this corpse’s very deadness had something to teach us—that this deadness, this difference from the living present, were a strength rather than a weakness, a resource rather than a deficiency. This is the sense shared by the authors studied here: that the old school’s potentials remained unspent and that the Latin class, of all things, might yet shelter alternatives to modernity, that it might put students in touch with the past and even in some cases show them ways out of a present impasse. Pascoli, the subject of Chapter Two, expresses this last hope most

forcefully. But he does so in an oddly mediated way, for his Latin poem *Paedagogium* also takes formal cues from the old school's grammar drills. Pater similarly makes the "mechanical exercise" into an organizing principle in his late works, which, against his own early liberal assertions and a backdrop of broad progressive educational reform, affirm both the past's persistence and instruction's complicating influence. Even more complicating is Joyce's use of the pensus to structure "Oxen of the Sun," a use that at once refers back to and outbids *Bovary's* beginning. In the dissertation's final chapter and coda, I turn to the modernist cinema of Pasolini and Rocha, considering corporal punishment in *Salò* and repetitious lectures in Rocha's *Claro* (1975).³⁶

Each of the following chapters thus foregrounds a different instructional technique, although the texts that I discuss often use several such techniques concurrently or in succession: recitation, memorization, copying out, and corporal punishment. Returns to Rome of various kinds—pilgrimages, field trips, forced migrations—connect these texts thematically. I begin, with Pater and Pascoli, very much in Rome—the place of emperors and early Christians—and move outward from there, locating in the works of Joyce and Pasolini an ongoing if underground engagement with Latinity, only to return again to Rome with Rocha. Throughout what follows, then, "Rome" refers not simply to a place, but rather, as in Gramsci, to the site of a whole "cultural-scholastic-tradition." This tradition—which for Gramsci also constitutes an "itinerary"—crosses both spatial and temporal boundaries, calling for the kind of comparative approach that I adopt here.³⁷ In this approach, comparison entails movement between languages. But it also entails attentiveness to means by which texts signal outside—or elsewhere within—their own historical moments.³⁸ Pascoli's Latin brings both types of comparison together, or rather demands both at once, since it effects a shift that is both linguistic and historical. But the "comparative" impulse to move beyond—to return to a time before—the present motivates all of the authors whose works I treat here. Implying a critique of historicism as well as of progress, these authors therefore share an understanding of the present as anything but "homogeneous [and] empty"³⁹—as heterogeneous and shot through with "survivals" from the past. Though threatened by progress, the past thus remains available as a resource. Or minimally, as in Pasolini's "Abiura," the past remains in the form of a mechanical, muscular twitching.⁴⁰

After Educations

I borrow the language of "survivals" both from the Victorian anthropology that I discuss in Chapter One and from Sigmund Freud, who takes up this anthropological discourse. In what follows, I use "the doctrine of survivals" to make sense of the temporal unevenness to which I have just referred. Yet my reference to Walter Benjamin's critique of progressive time will have sufficed to indicate already that I look to other theoretical discourses as well. Indeed, the internal heterogeneity of the historical field that I analyze leads me to seek recourse to a diverse field of theories. My methods are multiple and adapted to the texts and contexts in question. But patterns do emerge. For instance, all of my chapters deploy psychoanalytic theory to different but related ends. In my discussion of Pater, I look to Jean Laplanche's "general theory of seduction" to account for the peculiar power that the Paterian narrator and scholar-stylist wields across a range of fiction, essays, and lectures. In Chapter Two, D. W. Winnicott's distinction between relating and use helps me to make sense of the divergent deployments of "dead language" in Pascoli's poetics and Gentile's pedagogy. My chapter on Joycean instruction engages with psychoanalytically inflected queer theory, and in "*Salò* and the School of Abuse," I revisit

Freud's early understanding of "survivals" while also drawing on more recent work by Christopher Bollas, Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, and Leo Bersani. Finally, in my coda on Rocha I return to Laplanche's notion of "the priority of the other."⁴¹

Thus, although my dissertation is not systematic or orthodox in its engagements with psychoanalytic thought, it draws repeatedly on insights derived from Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalysis. I hope the reasons for this will become clear in what follows, that my recourse to psychoanalysis will strike readers as motivated, rather than merely eclectic, in the context of each of my readings. In order to provide an overall justification for this recourse, though, I will state at the outset that psychoanalysis, defined by Freud as a "second," a belated or "after-education" (*Nacherziehung*), represents one model of counter-progressive pedagogy.⁴² This is the case first because the clinical situation privileges process—the experience of the transference—over the imparting of knowledge as content. At the same time, the analytic process requires that one of its participants provisionally occupy a place "over and above" the other, as Pater might say.⁴³ Recall the analyst's perpendicularity with respect to the analysand: an illustration of the fact that, for a time, the former must become the figure Laplanche calls "adult" for the latter. This designation underscores the generic, generational rather than familial, nature of the analyst's authority, if it is authority. This follows not from particular qualities or qualifications, but rather from her willingness to occupy a place—and play a part—in a "situation," a limited relational field.

In a similar sense, the works that I examine all stage *scenes of teaching* and all privilege *teaching's status as a scene* over its capacity to impart knowledge.⁴⁴ These works treat pedagogy as a matter of process, practice, and ritual form. Bracketing students' "understanding," and teachers' "intelligence," they resemble Jacques Rancière's ignorant schoolmaster, although they use different means.⁴⁵ I follow Rancière in emphasizing "capabilities" irreducible to contents. "Pedagogy" as I define it therefore names a site of transmission and a type of relationship, rather than a method for guaranteeing that particular, substantive lessons will be learned and retained. This is what distinguishes counter-progressive pedagogy from the critique of "cram," which I consider in Chapter One: whereas critics of the Victorian education of "cram" denounce this education's failure to deliver lasting content—its churning out generations of students who know nothing about history—Pater, perhaps improbably like Gramsci long after him, foregrounds the *form* of education, even at times the mere formality of formal education—the existence of instruction.

So, too, does clinical psychoanalysis, I have claimed. And at the level of theory rather than clinical practice, psychoanalysis informs the pages that follow because—like the queer accounts of temporality that inherit Freud's framework, accounts from which I have also learned—it offers eloquent and complex accounts of the persistence of the past in the present, the abiding afterlives and posthumous consequence of that which would appear to be dead and gone.⁴⁶ Not for nothing does Auden claim that Freud "wasn't clever at all: he merely told / the unhappy Present to recite the Past / like a poetry lesson."⁴⁷ Pointedly setting aside the question of cleverness—the content of Freud's lessons—these lines remind readers that psychoanalysis constitutes a pedagogy in its own right. They also suggest, though, that Freud practiced a particular kind of teaching, one familiar to schoolchildren and that would seem to have nothing to do with unconscious depths or adult analyses. But for Auden, in the context of the psychoanalytic session *cum* "lesson," the recitation of the past, its recollection and rote repetition, opened onto insights in ways that no Gentilean transfusion or traffic with inner life could. To return to Joyce's terms in "Ithaca," the poetry lesson is a method of "direct instruction"

and precisely *not* a means of “indirect suggestion implicating self-interest.” In Auden’s lines, the analysis thus comes to resemble Molly Bloom—rerepeating, rerepeating, and working-through, we might say.

For working-through—etymologically, Gramsci’s elaboration—is what instruction enables and progressive education precludes when it compels students to leave the past behind. “Progress is the pedagogical fiction built into the fiction of the society as a whole,” Rancière writes—and I would specify, the *progressive* pedagogical fiction. Indeed, the counter-progressive tradition allows us to complicate and ultimately refuse Rancière’s totalizing claim that “All pedagogy is spontaneously progressive” (119). In any case, Rancière continues: “At the heart of the [progressive] pedagogical fiction is the representation of inequality as a *retard* in one’s development: ... inferiority is only a lateness, a delay, that is posited so one can put oneself in the position of curing it” (119). This catching up is the cure—distinct from both Freudian working-through and Gramscian elaboration—that Gentile and other Italian reformers prescribe. And yet the Italian case is especially instructive because the shamed and shaming rhetoric of national belatedness in Italian politics and pedagogy is countered, though not conquered, by another way of relating to *arretratezza*, or belatedness, a way that Leopardi models as he ruins the dream of “*magnifiche sorti e progressive*” [splendid and progressive destinies].⁴⁸ In this ruin, Pascoli goes to school. And Pasolini follows with this reminder: “Ricorda che io, tuo maestro, non credo in questa storia e in questo progresso” [Remember that I, your teacher, do not believe in this history and in this progress].⁴⁹

In another context, Gramsci writes that Vico’s genius resided “nell’aver concepito un vasto mondo da un angoletto morto della storia” [in having conceived a vast world from a dead little corner of history]. His last phrase can serve as another name for the old school that emerges in the efforts of the other authors I treat here, Italian or otherwise. This close, confined place, relegated to the past, nevertheless sustains the acceptance of belatedness—again, the late style—that I have been trying to describe.⁵⁰ The “angoletto morto” indeed becomes the site of the setting-to-work of dead language and repetitive form that I analyze: for the Italian authors, the backward or politically belated space into which they are born (as Vico already was, according to Gramsci); for the non-Italians, Pater, Joyce, and Rocha, differently, the prison unto which they doom themselves. Wordsworth taught that such a prison, entered willingly, through literary form, “no prison is.”⁵¹ Pater and Joyce were not so sure, as I’ll show. But the dead little corner is, in any case, already for Gramsci, worth preserving not as such but rather because it opens onto a vaster world. As the “angoletto morto” becomes more, not less, confining with time, this world likewise becomes more, not less, difficult to reach with the ostensible expansion of postwar global space.⁵² The foreclosures of progress call for ever more extreme measures, ways out that are at once more urgent and more immanent than those previously imagined. In this sense, all roads in my dissertation lead to *Salò*. But the world of Rocha’s *Claro* is importantly vaster than that of Pasolini’s villa. *Claro* thus indicates the limitations of the counter-progressive project, its pedagogy of limitation. Still, the film’s return to Rome—and to rote learning—attest to this pedagogy’s persistence, the old school’s remains.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Italian are my own.

¹ James Joyce, *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler et al. (New York: Vintage, 1986), 17.699-702. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, with episode numbers followed by line numbers.

² In his early essay “Drama and Life” (1900), Joyce rejects the claim “that the drama should have special ethical aims, ... that it should instruct, elevate, and amuse. Here,” Joyce continues, “is another gyve that the jailers have

bestowed.” James Joyce, “Drama and Life,” in *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, ed. Kevin Barry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 26-27.

³ Giovanni Gentile, *La riforma dell’educazione: Discorsi ai maestri di Trieste* (Bari: Laterza, 1920), 186. Subsequent citations are given parenthetically in the text.

⁴ On the canonical opposition between modernism and didacticism, see Fredric Jameson, *Brecht and Method* (New York: Verso, 1998), 3.

⁵ For Marinetti’s affirmation of the futurist “amore del progresso, della libertà” [love of progress, of freedom], see F. T. Marinetti, *Democrazia futurista: Dinamismo politico* (Milan: Facchi, 1919), 211. But note that such affirmations already appear in the movement’s founding manifesto.

⁶ For a sense of the reach of Gentile’s text, see Donald T. Torchiana, “‘Among School Children’ and the Education of the Irish Spirit,” in *In Excited Reverie: A Centenary Tribute to William Butler Yeats*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares and K. G. W. Cross (London: Macmillan, 1965), 123-150. Torchiana discusses Yeats’s admiration for Gentile and his support for Irish attempts to imitate Gentilean reforms. The poet relied on an English translation of *La riforma* whose publication postdates *Ulysses* (132), but in Trieste Joyce would have enjoyed both earlier and less mediated access to Gentile’s published lectures and the debates in which they participated.

⁷ Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), vol. 3, 1544; *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 37. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *Q* for the original Italian and *PN* for the English.

⁸ *PN* 24; the phrase is taken from Hoare and Nowell Smith’s introductory notes to their selection of Gramsci’s educational writings.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Introduction,” in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 1-34; 20, 29.

¹¹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular,” in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, 429-442; 436. Spivak quotes from *PN* 8, 10; in the Italian, these sentences appear in *Q* 1515, 1517.

¹² For a notable exception, see Molly Nesbit, *Their Common Sense* (London: Black Dog, 2000).

¹³ Michael Warner, “Uncritical Reading,” *Polemic: Critical or Uncritical*, ed. Jane Gallop (New York: Routledge, 2004), 13-38; 19. Warner’s essay gives a sense of the prevalence of liberal assumptions within contemporary criticism. One classic equation of modernity with a break with constraint can be found in Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question ‘What Is Enlightenment?’” in *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Lara Denis, trans. Thomas K. Abbott (New York: Broadview, 2005), 119-126.

¹⁴ Edward Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature against the Grain* (New York: Vintage, 2006), 24. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

¹⁵ Pier Paolo Pasolini, “Abiura dalla *Trilogia della vita*,” in *Lettere luterane* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), 71.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 76. I discuss Pasolini’s late understanding of “legibility” in Chapter Four.

¹⁷ I take these terms from Raymond Williams, “Dominant, Residual, and Emergent,” in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121-127. It will become clear why I refer to the old school as “residual” rather than use another of Williams’s terms, “archaic”—and this despite my emphasis elsewhere on the institution’s past character, its status as the purveyor of a dead language whose power inheres precisely in its deadness. Williams writes: “The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past but is still active in the cultural process,

not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (122). I hope the reader understandably hard pressed to see how Latin could in any sense still be “active” in turn-of-the-century Dublin or in postwar Italy will refer to this dissertation’s individual chapters. Here the “residual” takes various forms, appearing, in Pater, for instance, as “superstitions” and “survivals,” and in Pascoli as the specific, scholastic traditions threatened by the regime of utility. I account for the recurrence of Latin—as opposed to Greek, say, or Sanskrit or any other ancient language—across these varied texts in part by pointing to its *preservation* by a range of institutions both religious and secular. In Italy, in Ireland, and differently in Pater’s England, Latin remained available if sidelined; it was actively used in ecclesiastical and boarding school contexts, though long since defunct as a lingua franca. The “dead language” was, in this importance sense, still alive, still circulating, although, again, following Pascoli, I will also go on to stress its deadness, defined as its difference from the living.

¹⁸ Massimiliano Biscuso and Franco Gallo, “Potenza emancipativa e disattivazione della riflessione leopardiana,” in Biscuso and Gallo, eds., *Leopardi antitaliano* (Rome: Manifesto, 1999), 39.

¹⁹ Anne-Lise François, *Open Secrets: The Literature of Uncounted Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 254.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

²¹ Barry McCrea, *Languages of the Night: Minor Languages and the Literary Imagination in Twentieth-Century Ireland and Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), xii.

²² Benjamin Conisbee Baer, “—your ghost-work”: *Figures of the Peasant and the Autochthon in Literature and Politics, 1880s-1940s* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2006), 5.

²³ Jean Franco, *César Vallejo: The Dialectics of Poetry and Silence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 168.

²⁴ In addition to the texts mentioned in the previous paragraph, see Jennifer Scappettone, *Killing the Moonlight: Modernism in Venice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), which shows that “the residual Venetian forms that appear to constitute hindrances to both modernization and high-modernist invention become the materials of experimental salvage” in a range of Anglo-American and Italian modernist works (41).

²⁵ Robert Kaufman, “Aura, Still,” *October* 99 (2002): 45-80.

²⁶ See, however, McCrea’s brief but suggestive remarks on “the peasantry and the aristocracy as a double alternative to middle-class progress.” *Languages of the Night*, 142.

²⁷ Kaufman explains “the critical negation formally enacted by aesthetic aura” in terms that resonate with—because they have influenced—this dissertation’s account of modernism’s engagement with outmoded educational forms: “‘distance from auratic distance’ entails the baleful negation of a previously generative, protocritical of suspension-negation. In other words, distance from auratic distance involves a movement *away* from experience of formal suspension or negation (away from experiences of provisional, enabling distance from the reigning concepts of presently-existing society) and *toward* affirmation, positivity, and—especially in terms of aesthetic experience—immediacy vis-à-vis ruling concepts and the social status quo.” Kaufman, “Aura, Still,” 66, n. 33; emphases in original. I am claiming that the old school is recognized as affording a comparable kind of “protocritical” and “provisional, enabling distance from ... reigning concepts” after its eclipse by progressive education (whether this eclipse is merely threatened or already accomplished). Gramsci’s pages on Latin vividly attest to this recognition, but so do the various literary and cinematic projects I consider below.

²⁸ Françoise Wacquet, *Latin or the Empire of a Sign: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, trans. John Howe (New York: Verso, 2001), 233.

²⁹ See Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation),” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 152-157, on “the

educational ideological apparatus” as “the ideological State apparatus which has been installed in the *dominant* position in mature capitalist social formations” (152, emphases in original).

³⁰ Pierre Bourdieu and Jena-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*, trans. Richard Nice (London: SAGE, 1977), 210.

³¹ *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

³² Stefania Pandolfo, “Testimony in Counterpoint: Psychiatric Fragments in the Aftermath of Culture,” *Qui Parle* 17.1 (2008): 110. See also Michel de Certeau, “The Institution of Rot,” in *Heterologies*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 35-46.

³³ “But what would it mean if teaching ... is precisely what one is asked to get beyond?” Harney and Moten ask. Here they mean teaching defined as pedagogical labor, but also, more broadly, the condition of being taught. Their question is thus not only whether scholars today are urged to get beyond the often implicitly feminized work of teaching to focus on value-adding, self-appreciating, entrepreneurial research. (For the answer to this question is obvious.) They wonder more generally what would follow from the recognition that we have all long since been enjoined “get beyond” the scene of teaching, to leave it behind in the name of autonomy. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, “The University and the Undercommons,” in *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013), 27. For more on neoliberalism’s impact on education, see Wendy Brown, “Educating Human Capital,” in *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), 175-200; and on the neoliberal ethos of self-appreciation more generally, see Michel Feher, “Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital,” *Public Culture* 21.1 (2009): 21-41. For an account of the gendering of teaching that also builds on the claims of Moten and Harney to redress “our exclusion of teaching from our readings of literary production,” see Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *We Can Learn to Mother Ourselves: The Queer Survival of Black Feminism*, Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2010, 294.

³⁴ Chris Ackerley, *Demented Particulars: The Annotated Murphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 114.

³⁵ *Design Thinking for Educators*, <http://www.designthinkingforeducators.com/design-examples/>. Quoted in Megan Erickson, “Edutopia,” *Jacobin* 17 (Spring 2015), <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/03/education-technology-gates-erickson/>.

³⁶ On modernist cinema, see András Bálint Kovács, *Screening Modernism: European Art Cinema, 1950-1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Although neither *Salò* nor *Claro* figure in Kovács’s study, both engage meaningfully with the late modernist, post-neorealist film tradition that he outlines. Both films also evince key features of cinematic modernism as it is generally defined, including notably self-reflexivity and a privileging of the director’s perspective or what Kovács calls “the auteurial text” (395). With its insistence on the diegetic presence of modernist artworks, moreover, *Salò* constitutes a reflection on the broader modernist legacy. I treat this legacy as first and foremost a history of responses to modernity, rather than limiting my treatment of modernism to the high modernist decades represented in my dissertation only by *Ulysses*. In this sense, I follow the enablingly expansive handling of modernism in works like McCrea, *Languages of the Night*, and Scappetone, *Killing the Moonlight*. See also T. J. Clark’s defense of “limit cases” in the Introduction to *Farewell to An Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 7.

³⁷ For an overview of this tradition, see Wacquet, *Latin, or the Empire of a Sign*. Lest my interest in tradition seem merely retrograde, or like a defense of uncritical adherence to norms, I should add that I understand “tradition” not only to allow for, but also to entail, internal contradiction as well as the transgression or boundary-crossing that I allude to here. Giorgio Agamben has argued that a tradition betrays itself by definition. Giorgio Agamben, “Tradition of the Immemorial,” in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 104-115; especially 105. And Talal Asad, in another context, refusing the “idea that traditions are essentially homogeneous,” maintains instead that “widespread homogeneity is a function, not of tradition, but of the development and control of communication techniques that are part of modern industrial societies.” Talal Asad, “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,” *Qui Parle* 17.2 (2009): 22. Sameness is

thus wrongly attached to the past by a present that claims difference for itself alone, just as closure is ascribed to tradition by a modernity that pretends to monopolize openness.

³⁸ See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, 467-483; 474, which proposes that “we acknowledge as comparativist any attempt the text makes to go outside its space-time enclosure, the history and geography by which the text is determined.”

³⁹ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 261.

⁴⁰ Pier Paolo Pasolini, “Abiura dalla *Trilogia della vita*,” 75. Here Pasolini worries “che l’Italia ... è nel suo insieme ormai un paese spolticizzato, un corpo morto i cui riflessi non sono che meccanici” [that Italy is on the whole a depoliticized country, a dead body whose reflexes are nothing but mechanical].

⁴¹ The phrase “the priority of the other” recurs in Jean Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness*, ed. John Fletcher (New York: Routledge, 1999), e.g. 74.

⁴² See Sigmund Freud, “Analytic Therapy,” Lecture XXVIII in *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 16, 1916-1917, trans. and ed. James Strachey with Anna Freud et al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1963), 451. Interestingly, Freud here associates both education and psychoanalysis—that is, analytic rather than hypnotic therapy—with *work*: “The work of overcoming resistances is the essential function of analytic treatment; the patient has to accomplish it and the doctor makes this possible for him with the help of suggestion operating in an *educative* sense. For that reason psychoanalytic treatment has justly been described as a kind of *after-education*.”

⁴³ On the provisionality of the transference, see, for instance, Sigmund Freud, “Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis, II),” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 12, 1911-1913, trans. and ed. James Strachey, with Anna Freud et al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1958), 154.

⁴⁴ I borrow the phrase “scenes of teaching” from Spivak. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee, and Certain Scenes of Teaching,” in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, 316-334. For different reflections on the scene of teaching, see Jane Gallop, ed., *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995).

⁴⁵ Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 8, 9. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

⁴⁶ For key texts in queer theory that question progress, linearity, generationality, and other forms of normative development, see Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). And for related but differently inflected refusals of developmental narrative within gay studies, see D. A. Miller, *Place for Us: Essay on the Broadway Musical* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Christopher Nealon, “Queer Tradition,” *GLQ* 14.4 (2008): 617-622.

⁴⁷ W. H. Auden, “In Memory of Sigmund Freud,” in *Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Vintage, 1991), 274.

⁴⁸ Giacomo Leopardi, “La ginestra,” in *Canti*, ed. Fernando Bandini (Milan: Garzanti, 2010), 309 (line 51; emphasis in original).

⁴⁹ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Gennariello*, in *Lettere luterane* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), 27.

⁵⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 2, 1317.

⁵¹ William Wordsworth, “Nuns fret not at their Convent’s narrow room,” in *The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 286.

⁵² “For, paradoxically,” political theorist Carlo Galli writes, “the completely open space of globality (or at least the space which, in globalization, tends to present itself as such) can be as suffocating as”—Pasolini would say more suffocating than—“the narrow space of statuality [*sic*] (even though the latter tends to present itself as closed).” *Political Spaces and Global War*, ed. Adam Sitze, trans. Elisabeth Fay (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 103.

Chapter One

Surviving *Marius*: Pater's Mechanical Exercise

The sacraments were instituted for the sake of exercise. – Hugh of St. Victor¹

Every school exercise ... is like a sacrament. – Simone Weil²

The Idol of Their School

To posterity, Walter Pater has handed down phrases. Today's readers tend to remember only one or two of these: "to burn always with a hard, gemlike flame"; "She is older than the rocks among which she sits"; "*All art constantly aspires to the condition of music*"; "failure is to form habits"; "art for art's sake."³ Pater lifted the last of these phrases from Swinburne and coined the rest himself; all but one appeared in the first edition of his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, published in 1873.⁴ With this text, Pater made his name, and for better and worse he continues to be associated with the sound bites that *The Renaissance* contains.

These were effectively sound bites from the start, already verging on cliché when they were first circulated. This, at least, is what W. B. Yeats startlingly suggests in the Introduction to his edition of the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*.⁵ Here Yeats recalls that among Pater's earliest readers, habits were, despite Pater's own warnings against them, very quick to form; that the author's gems and aphorisms were right away repeated *ad nauseam*; and that the flame imagined in the "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance* had no sooner been ignited than it had burned out, or at least led to collective burn-out among Pater's many disciples and devotees.

In light of Yeats's claims, Pater's later reflections on lines learned by heart, phrases worshipped, and "short rememberable sayings" put into practice are especially striking.⁶ These recur in the fiction, essays, and lectures that Pater wrote after *The Renaissance* and the controversy that it sparked: later texts that also return repeatedly—and tellingly—to schools. Consider, to begin with, one such return, staged in an exemplary passage from the story "Emerald Uthwart" (1892):

Horace!—he was, had been always, the idol of their school; to know him by heart, to translate him into effective English idiom, have an apt phrase of his instinctively on one's lips for every occasion. That boys should be made to spout him under penalties, would have seemed doubtless to that sensitive, vain, winsome poet, even more than to grim Juvenal, quite the sorriest of fates; might have seemed not so bad however, could he, from the 'ashes' so persistently in his thoughts, have peeped on these English boys, row upon row, with black or golden heads, repeating him in the fresh morning, and observed how well for once the thing was done; how well he was understood by English James Stokes, feeling the old 'fire' really 'quick' still, under the influence which now in truth quickened, enlivened, everything around him.⁷

This is vintage Pater. From the opening self-interruption—"was, had been always"—to the convergence of old and new in the scene of schoolboys "repeating [Horace] in the fresh morning"; from the single words in arch quotation marks to the archaizing epithets ("grim Juvenal," "English James Stokes"); from the reiterated words and phrases ("row upon row"; "how well for once ... how well") to the thoughts that circle back to qualify previous thoughts

(so that Horace's turning over in his grave becomes his finding "quite the sorriest of fates" "not so bad"), the passage collects some of the author's most distinctive tics and tendencies.

These constitute Pater's own "effective English idiom": a language that might at first seem to rule out the reception that it here describes. Who, after all, even "under penalties," could learn such sinuous sentences by heart? Under what conditions could these sentences ever quicken or enliven readers, rather than trip them up or weigh them down? There is a heaviness to Pater's prose and a laboriousness to the reading of it, as the above passage attests. At the same time, however, and at every turn, the passage aspires to the condition of the "apt phrase" it celebrates. For by means of the hedges, hesitations, and punctuation that the above passage features, Pater's sentences *decompose* themselves even while they compose scenes of school-wide study and recitation.⁸ This was, in fact, one charge leveled against Pater's prose during his lifetime: "the unity of the book," one critic complained, "is decomposed to give place to the independence of the page, ... the page is decomposed to give place to the phrase, and the phrase to give place to the independence of the word."⁹ Such a privileging of parts over wholes leads, by this account, to incoherence. But from another perspective the "independence" of the Paterian phrase makes it "rememberable," repeatable (*PP* 198). This independence makes it possible, in other words, "to know him by heart," if only partially and likely never as well as the gifted James Stokes knows Horace.

Pater's style thus "blends, or contrasts itself"—both blends *and* contrasts itself—with the scenes it renders in "Emerald Uthwart" (*MS* 215). And the content of these schoolday scenes is as distinctive as Pater's style in rendering them. Most significantly, the repetition of Horace's verses is, for Pater's schoolboys, first a thing to be "done"; only secondarily, in the passage quoted above, is the Roman poet "understood." Learning by heart forms habits, and Pater delights in poetry's outward performance more than in its inward significance:

One's day, then, began with [Horace], for all alike, Sundays of course excepted,—with an Ode, learned over-night by the prudent, who, observing how readily the words which send us to sleep cling to the brain and seem an inherent part of it next morning, kept him under their pillows. Prefects, without a book, heard the repetition of the Juniors, must be able to correct their blunders. Odes and Epodes, thus acquired, were a score of days and weeks; alcaic and sapphic verses like a bead-roll for counting off the time that intervened before the holidays. (*MS* 215-216)

Odes and Epodes saturate everyday scholastic life. And the "bead-roll" or rosary that measures passing time also confirms what the narrator's earlier architectural digression had already posited: it becomes the sign of a continuity between "Roman bricks" and "Gothic stones"; pagan and Christian worlds; "un-instructed" and instructed times; Horace himself and the "English James Stokes" (*MS* 215). But the shading of "alcaic and sapphic verses" into "a bead-roll for counting off the time" suggests something else as well: namely that Paterian instruction is resolutely non-secular and, more specifically, ritual, aligned with what *The Renaissance* already calls "the unprogressive, ritual element" in religious observance (*R* 100).

For Pater, then, as for Simone Weil, "every school exercise," in the old school of "Emerald Uthwart," "is like a sacrament." And "exercise" in all of Pater's later works, as in Hugh of St. Victor, names a crucial function of the sacraments themselves. These are not primarily, then, institutions that secure belief; they represent "something to be done, rather than

something to be thought, or believed, or loved” (*M* 137). Doing can, of course, in Pater, lead to thought, belief, and love, just as James Stokes can truly understand the Horatian verses he repeats. But doing comes first, and its primacy matters. Indeed, it gives a critical—a counter-progressive—edge to what might appear to be a merely nostalgic or reactionary project.

Pater’s prioritization of ritual over belief, and of practice over understanding in education, follows from his refusal of the liberal ideology of progress. Like their Enlightenment antecedents, late Victorian versions of this ideology defined modernity as a liberating exit from convention and constraint, a means of achieving freedom from traditional bonds, outward forms, and various kinds of historical baggage. The weight of the past, of religion and superstition, of “illegitimate rulers, rigid traditions, and unreal fetishes,” could be shed.¹⁰ So liberal reformers claimed, and in his “Conclusion” Pater concurred. Indeed, a break with convention is what the youthful—the famous, the familiar, and, I am suggesting, the naïve—Pater sought to achieve. To be sure, the essays collected in *The Renaissance* had everywhere stressed the value of tradition, and some had even gone so far—or rather stayed so close—as to extoll “limitation” as a virtue (*R* 106). But the singularly influential “Conclusion” sounded another note. For in prose whose programmatic fetteredness escaped most readers’ notice, eclipsed as it was by an epoch-making energy, Pater sided with the new: “What we have to do is be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy” (*R* 120). Nor should we be bound by convention, for “what is only conventional,” Pater wrote, “has no real claim upon us” (*R* 120).

Proclamations like these contrast starkly with “Emerald Uthwart.” Here “what is only conventional” is shown to be worthy of loving attention, even veneration: “The well-worn, perhaps conventional, beauties of their ‘dead’ Greek and Latin books ... really shine ... with their pristine freshness; seem more than to fulfill their claim upon the patience, the attention, of modern youth” (*MS* 213). The language of conventions and claims from the “Conclusion” returns here, but with a difference: “Emerald Uthwart” affirms what the “Conclusion” denies. The late text advocates that “modern youth” attend to—and, as the etymology of “patience” suggests, even suffer from—the old, “well-worn” things and even the orthodoxies that the early Pater urged readers to outgrow. At the same time, the late “Emerald Uthwart” reverts to—indeed, reveres—the old school that had long been the target of progressive educators’ polemics. Pater’s late text thus not only revises his own earlier position; it also counters liberalism’s tendency to devalue the traditions that it relegates to the past.

Pedagogy occupied a central place in the project of liberalism, and educational traditions—the old school’s well-worn conventions—were chief among the past practices that liberal reformers sought to leave behind.¹¹ In his *Autobiography*, John Stuart Mill lamented that most students “have their mental capacities not strengthened, but overlaid by” the “knowledge drilled into them” at school.¹² Such students learn merely to repeat “the opinions or phrases of other people, and these are accepted as a substitute for the power to form opinions of their own.”¹³ But here Mill himself repeated an opinion of Rousseau’s: that children should be protected from exposure to facts and phrases they are not equipped to understand. Such phrases, for Rousseau, stunted students’ individual growth and impeded societal progress; the education that centered on such phrases—which was all traditional education, according to *Émile*—led to the creation of dependent subjects, rather than self-reliant citizens. Hence the founding stipulation that *Émile* should “never learn anything by heart.”¹⁴

Pater never seconded this stipulation, of course. Still, the distance that separates the “Conclusion” from “Emerald Uthwart” in this respect is remarkable. With its *Émile*-like

emphasis on “Present interest,”¹⁵ the “Conclusion” (which cites Rousseau) advances a liberal and progressive agenda—and this, even if *The Renaissance* as a whole everywhere engages with the past. By the time of “Emerald Uthwart,” however, things had changed: at the cost of any semblance of narrative momentum, Pater’s late story refutes progressive educational theories in a series of asides that find “value” in the very “classical education” that Rousseau and Mill aimed to overturn (*MS* 218). The techniques of this education—learning by heart, the use of “penalties,” and even the inculcation of “Submissiveness!”—teach first and foremost “the preponderating value of the manner of the doing it in the thing done”: “Just at those points, scholarship attains something of a religious colour. And in that place”—in that school—“religion, religious system, its claim to overpower one, presented itself in a way of which even the least serious by nature could not be unaware” (*MS* 218).

Religion, again, marks the place where “the manner of the doing” trumps “the thing done,” and here Pater affirms even what is least liberating—because most overpowering—about “religious system” as it informs “scholarship.” This passage makes critical characterizations of the late Pater as reactionary seem perfectly understandable. Indeed, we might well wonder who *but* a reactionary could write such an apology for “authority” (*MS* 218). I have already begun to argue, however, that moments like these in Pater’s late works need to be read otherwise in light of both Pater’s own “Conclusion” and progressive educational discourses. Such moments, which abound in *Marius the Epicurean* and the texts written after it, represent retractions of Pater’s youthful views and refutations of educational reformers’ projects.

These projects culminate in the widespread effort to liberate “the school from mechanism” that I considered in my Introduction.¹⁶ Pater’s late work, by contrast, affirms the mechanical methods of the old school precisely: unenlightened methods aligned with religion and based on what Mill calls “the phrases of other people,” on what Rousseau decries as mere imitation. For Pater, such practices become the means by which to acknowledge the claims and the systems from which we can never be free. These claims and systems are social, and they are old. Pater’s attempts to affirm them therefore counter liberalism’s tendency to level the collective past from which it would to liberate its subjects. Progressive education shares this tendency. The new school—in both Rousseau and Mill, a home school—even makes this impulse into a principle; its pedagogy centers, again, in theory if not always in practice, on the individual student and his “Present interest.” What Pater recognized in the old school was its ability to sustain another interest, one at a “diagonal” to the present (*MS* 205).

This becomes clear early in “Emerald Uthwart,” when Pater’s narrator makes the all but explicitly anti-Rousseauist case for teaching “modern boys the Classics” “amid the haunts, the traditions, and with something of the discipline, of monasticism”:

The French and others have swept their scholastic houses empty of it, with pedantic fidelity to their theories. English pedants may succeed in doing the like. But the result of our older method has had its value so far, at least, say! for the careful aesthetic observer. It is of such diagonal influences, through complication of influence, that expression comes, in life, in our culture, in the very faces of men and boys—of these boys. (*MS* 205)

The breathlessness of those last phrases registers, even while it risks obscuring, the force of Pater’s polemic.¹⁷ According to the logic of this polemic, to sweep away monasticism’s residues is to leave “scholastic houses” “empty.” It is to deprive students of resources that constitute

“complication of influence.” To be sure, such complication here is in the eye of the beholder; or rather, it benefits the “careful aesthetic observer.” But the generalizing, interpellative phrases that follow, “in life” and “in our culture,” indicate that such observers are by no means the only beneficiaries of the old school’s “older method,” in Pater’s view. On the contrary, this method at least potentially offers *everyone* access to formative complications of influence. Indeed, the last sentence above implies that the men and boys—and boys—gathered here, occasioning Pater’s particular breathlessness, are only one “expression” of this general phenomenon.

Strikingly, for Pater, is it the enemies, not the advocates, of the old school, who are pedants. Pascoli will make a similar claim. Both authors thus refuse the rousing image of a cleaned-up, swept-out, and pedant-free present enshrined in discourses of progress. Such a progressive present looks impoverished indeed when, as in “Emerald Uthwart,” it is shown to be bereft of the “complication of influence” that alone adds value to life. This past influence, which “Emerald Uthwart” calls “diagonal,” *Marius* more forcefully repositions “over and above” the present and modernity (*M* 178). Pater thus unexpectedly overturns one of the civilizational hierarchies that figures like Mill had naturalized: forms of life that liberalism takes to be lower come to reside on another plane, one that the present cannot rightly claim to have superseded, to have left behind.

In what follows, I show that such a critique of progress inheres in Pater’s pedagogy. In this as in other chapters, I take “pedagogy” to name both a theme and a mode. I consider *scenes* of instruction in Pater, while also attending to his work’s tendency to look to the old school for its *means* of expression. More specifically, I trace Pater’s redeployment one of the classical school’s “older methods” in particular (*MS* 205): the “mechanical exercise” or task in memorization and recitation that Mill would have teachers forego. I ask what “mechanical” might have meant for Pater and what led him to locate critical potential in rote and ritual tasks. Then, having developed the contrast between Pater and Mill that I have set up, I turn by way of conclusion to another contrastive pairing. I read Pater alongside Roland Barthes, who cultivated—indeed, “*overcultivated*”—another “clipped” and classicizing style.¹⁸ If it has been easier for us to learn from the late Barthes’s style than from the late Pater’s, the latter is, I suggest, surprisingly the more instructive today inasmuch as its influence is complicating.

Imitatio Patris

The late Pater’s lesson has proven difficult to learn because, from the perspective of progress, it has looked both pedantic and retrograde; it has both seemed scholastic, in the disparaging sense, and like a betrayal of the principles enshrined in Pater’s galvanizing “Conclusion.” Here is how the usual critical story goes: after the scandal caused by *The Renaissance*, the once-liberated Pater “slouched back toward Anglo-Catholicism.”¹⁹ He returned to and remained within the institutional strictures from which the “Conclusion” had gotten free. In this narrative of retrenchment, youthful enthusiasms give way to soberer, not to say stilted, reflections; Pater’s early “outcast fame” becomes his late “conservative reprobation.”²⁰

The mature Pater acquiesces, by this account, in the orthodoxy that he had foreworn.²¹ Thus whereas the “Conclusion” builds toward the assertion that “what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us” (*R* 120), convention acquires another valence altogether—and makes all kinds of real claims—in and after *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*, first published in 1885. Here Pater’s protagonist and narrator both treat convention with reverence from the start, and the “liturgical” principle announced on the novel’s first page remains

operative—just as that page’s “repetitions of . . . consecrated form[s] of words” remain repetitive—until the end (*M* 37). With its *incipit*’s valorization of the ancient Roman “religion of usages and sentiment rather than of facts and belief” (*M* 37), moreover, *Marius* sets itself up to fail according to the younger Pater’s lights, for the “Conclusion” claims, again, that “failure is to form habits,” to rely on usages and repeat oneself in such reflexive reliance (*R* 100). It’s not surprising, in this light, that generations of critics have agreed that Pater’s novel *does* fail: to come to life or to an end; to make a difference and thus measure up to *The Renaissance*; and, especially, to deliver on the earlier text’s liberal and liberating, its modern and modernizing, promises.²²

Contesting these critical verdicts, some of Pater’s more recent readers have reclaimed the author’s works for a range of projects.²³ In the process, they have reconsidered the relationship between Pater’s early texts and his late work, and they have shed new light on the “institutional and instructional contexts,” in which Pater wrote and with which he engaged.²⁴ William Shuter has shown that his responses to these contexts went beyond the denial of reality and the defensive escape from modernity that Pater’s detractors find in his works. These responses were, in fact, less retreats from than rejoinders to the public world that had either maligned or compulsively quoted the “Conclusion.”

In this world, the ordinary business of educational reform continued apace. Shuter notes that Oxford was “decisively reformed, secularized, and, in effect, modernized” even while it was Hellenized during Pater’s tenure there. These processes, according to Shuter, prompted corresponding changes in Pater’s teaching—and not only, others have shown, in his teaching, but also in his texts. Matthew Kaiser, for instance, reads Pater’s later work as attempting to correct by re-eroticizing “an Oxonian Platonism from which *eros* had been all but excised” by the very reformers who were busy modernizing the curriculum.²⁵ Insisting on *eros*, then, Pater would have undertaken to counter reform not from a conservative position, but rather out of a progressive and proto-gay allegiance to individual bodies and pleasures.²⁶

These readings indicate that, in recent years, we have learned to complicate the received portrait of the late Pater as a hidebound pedant. But we have yet to reckon with how, precisely Pater would have us learn. For, as my paraphrase of Kaiser’s argument already suggests, in their efforts to recuperate the late Pater, critical revisions of the “retreat hypothesis” have tended to downplay and domesticate the moments in Pater that *do* look a lot like retreats: from modernity and from the liberal individualism celebrated in the “Conclusion.” Minimizing such backward movements and moments, these readings have sacrificed the specificity of Pater’s late pedagogy, and have thus stopped short of registering his critique of progress.

Paradoxically, this critique depends on a pedagogy that centers on uncritical imitation, on mechanical, ritual repetition. Pater both outlines and extolls this pedagogy in “Emerald Uthwart,” with its rows upon rows of boys repeating Horace. But the methods of the old school inform Pater’s late work even when they are not treated directly. Yeats’s reading of Pater gives sanction to this claim. In fact, Yeats implies that a pedagogical model is already operative in *The Renaissance*. He writes of the “uncritical admiration,” verging on devotion that “a single passage” in Pater’s book elicited, prompting a generation of aestheticists to accept the author “for master.”²⁷ Yeats thus invites us to imagine Pater’s *readers* as so many schoolboys, ranged in row upon row and keeping *The Renaissance*, rather than the Odes and Epodes, “under their pillows” (*MS* 215).

Moreover, mechanicity inheres, for Yeats, not only in the endless repetition of phrases from *The Renaissance* by Pater’s self-appointed students, but also in the phrases themselves. For

“Pater was accustomed to give each sentence a separate page of manuscript, isolating and analysing its rhythm” (viii). This process made it possible for “a poem to arise” at every turn in Pater’s prose (viii), but Yeats suggests that Pater’s piecemeal writing procedure also made the resulting sentences *repeatable*—“rememberable” as Pater himself might say (*PP* 198). Counter-intuitively, then, Yeats locates habit-forming potential in the very Paterian text that would have left habit behind; readers of *The Renaissance* become repeaters of its claims. It is as though they were compelled by the text itself, as though Pater here already prompted the “Submissiveness!” he apostrophizes in “Emerald Uthwart” (*MS* 218). But the old school remains latent in *The Renaissance*. Its “older methods” become manifest only in Pater’s later texts (*MS* 205), his variations on mechanical exercise.

The Condition of Mechanicity

The school is central to many of these texts written after *The Renaissance*. *Marius the Epicurean*, for instance, follows its protagonist’s philosophical, religious, and “‘aesthetic’ education” (*M* 117), and the scholar figures prominently in Pater’s essay on “Style.” As we have seen, “Emerald Uthwart” weighs the advantages and disadvantages of the “English manner of education” (*MS* 209), and “Lacedaemon,” one of Pater’s lectures on *Plato and Platonism*, reconstructs Sparta, lavishing particular attention on the ancient city’s methods of public schooling. In each of these texts, Pater returns to the mechanical so as to redefine it. What begins as a disparaging charge—the charge of mechanicity—becomes, transvalued, an organizing principle of Pater’s late aesthetics and literary pedagogy, which repeatedly affirm the “mechanical exercise” that educational reform would disallow. This section tracks that process of redefinition.

Yeats was not alone, of course, in summoning the specter of mechanically phrase-repeating students. Nor was he the only reader to note Pater’s penchant for the phrase or to relate this penchant to the author’s way of working, by isolating single sentences and even words. For Pater’s first biographers and critics, this method was precisely “mechanical”—by which they meant artificial, bloodless, or pedantic. Their comments are disparaging and even dismissive but still worth taking seriously, not least because they index a response to something that really does inform Pater’s texts: an aspiration to what I am calling *the condition of mechanicity*.²⁸ Two instances of disparagement are particularly telling. First, in his biography, Thomas Wright observes the same compositional procedure that Yeats admires, but he arrives at a different assessment altogether. According to Wright, Pater “worked in the most mechanical way a man could work, with his squares of paper and his ceaseless turning of the leaves of his dictionary. . . . As a rule, his method of work was like that of Pope, only worse. ‘If,’ said one of Pater’s most intimate friends . . . , ‘Pater found a word anywhere that pleased him, in that word would go—somewhere or other, whether it meant anything or not.’”²⁹ And in his study of Pater, Edward Thomas laments the author’s penchant for using learned words—plucked, presumably, from the dictionary to which Wright refers—that call much too much attention to themselves, thus “sticking out, like the raisins that will get burnt on an ill-made cake. It is clear,” Thomas concludes of these words, which here go from being desiccated to belonging to a dead language, “that they have been carefully chosen as the right and effective words, but they stick out because the labour of composition has become so self-conscious and mechanical that cohesion and perfect consistency are impossible. The words have only an isolated value; they are labels; they are anything but living and social words.”³⁰

The staid writer pictured in passages like these is laughable rather than threatening. But this writer's slavish adherence to norms—his obsessive decorousness, his attachment to dictionaries, his "mechanical" method and arduous discipline—turns out to give rise to its opposite: an indulgence of the author's own whims that makes his language so idiosyncratic as to be "isolated." And Pater gives offense by thus opting out of signification, as if propriety taken to such an extreme could only result in impropriety, or at the very least in inconsistency: like so many burnt and badly blended-in raisins, labels in Pater's prose become detached from their referents. In the process, they become inoperative, or they come to operate only as indices of the baker's blunders. The problem, for Pater's biographers, then, is not such words' signifying nothing, but rather their signifying all too plainly that "the labour of composition has become ... self-conscious and mechanical."

This last phrase, which verges on oxymoron, is striking not least because in Pater's own prose "mechanical" means first and foremost unselfconscious. For Pater as for many others, mechanical activity is generally "routine, unthinking activity—thus action without consciousness."³¹ When the narrator of "The Child in the House" (1878) notes, for example, that "accidents ... so mechanically determine" the feeling we have for home (*MS* 179), he plainly locates this instinct outside the reach of conscious thought and willful intervention. We are powerless to resist such forces, for in our infancy "irresistibly, little shapes, voices, accidents ... become parts of the great chain wherewith we are bound" for life (*MS* 178). *Bildung* thus gives way to *Bindung* in "The Child in the House," where what happens mechanically is what happens early—or what keeps us in touch with our formation in and by the material world, "in that process of brain-building by which we are, each one of us, what we are" (*MS* 173).

Pater uses "mechanical" in a related but somewhat different sense on the penultimate page of the slightly later *Marius*. Here the agent or at least the initiator of the mechanical process is human, and though the word implies "unthinking" it does so paradoxically, since it is used to describe precisely a movement of thought. With death fast approaching, Pater's protagonist calls to memory "all the persons he had loved in life," "like a child thinking over the toys it loves, one after another": "One after another, he suffered those faces and voices to come and go, as in some mechanical exercise, as he might have repeated all the verses he knew by heart, or like the telling of beads one by one" (*M* 296). That toys become faces and voices, which become verses, which become beads during this act of recollection already indicates that the faculty of memory—or, more precisely, the practice memorization—in *Marius* is closely and counter-intuitively linked to a potential for metamorphosis.

The implications of this connection and its place in a broader critique become clear if we read this moment in *Marius* alongside progressive theories of education ranging from Rousseau to Mill. For if, in a sense, as critics have maintained, hearing echoes of Rousseau throughout Pater's novel, *Marius* is meant to be "an Emile of the second century,"³² then it's worth noting Pater's flagrant violation of Rousseau's stipulation that his pupil should "never learn anything by heart."³³ More pointedly, the ending of Pater's novel also suggests that the ailing protagonist reverts—and mercifully so—to the "mere exercises of memory" that the home-schooled Mill was spared.³⁴ Far from dead weight to be shed, such exercises become for *Marius* means of staying in touch with a past he has learned painstakingly not to leave behind: ways of summoning those "others, from whom he could not endure to break away" (*M* 178), "those elect souls ... whose faces averted from him, would be more than he could bear" (*M* 179). He *can* bear, by contrast, what Mill cannot: the thought of a past that makes a continuing claim on the

present that would supersede it. In *Marius* this claim takes the form of “observances, customs, usages” (*M* 178), and the mechanical exercise turns out to be one of these.

The moment of mechanical recollection in *Marius* that I have been reading itself suggestively recalls another moment in Pater’s work, one in his essay on “Winckelmann,” included in his book on the Renaissance. Here Pater swerves from his imaginary portrait of the art historian to consider the relationship between art and an archaic cultic practice that persists, Pater suggests, in later forms of religion that would appear to be based on inward belief rather than outward form: “Even the mysteries,” Pater writes in “Winckelmann,” “the centres of Greek religious life at a later period, were not a doctrine but a ritual; and one can imagine the Catholic church retaining its hold through the ‘sad mechanic exercise’ of its ritual, in spite of a diffused criticism or skepticism” (*R* 101). The words quoted here are from early in Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*:

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;
 For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.³⁵

In the context of his essay on “Winckelmann,” Pater’s gesture toward these lines is striking and more than a little strange, since Tennyson’s “mechanic exercise” refers not to the language of liturgy, but rather to the speaker’s own rendering of grief despite his “hold[ing] it half a sin” to do so, given all words’ tendency to deliver half-truths, to “half reveal / And half conceal the Soul.” There are a lot of halves here, and in Tennyson language “measured” both rhythmically and by means of moderation splits the difference between print and privacy, while also making the speaker’s mournful recourse to mere words feel less sinful, if not less “sad.” But this recourse, for Tennyson, is not strictly recitation. *In Memoriam*’s “sad mechanic exercise” instead names the production of the poem itself, here recast as a discipline that entails repeatedly trying and half-failing to give verbal form to “unquiet” inward states. The heart isn’t fully in this process, and neither is the brain, since both are anaesthetized rather than enlivened by it.

Pater, too, at times associates liturgical practice, “mechanic exercise,” with such anaesthetizing effects. Consider a claim he makes earlier in “Winckelmann,” about the cult that forms “the base of all religions,” and survives in them: “It is the anodyne which the religious principle . . . has added to the law which makes life somber for the vast majority of mankind” (*R* 100). So for Pater as for Tennyson a certain repetitive verbal practice administers opiates, if it does not cure.³⁶ But Pater’s citation of *In Memoriam* tellingly transposes what is originally an aesthetic problem into a religious register, reactivating the cultic senses of “exercise,” which can mean “the practice and performance of rites and ceremonies” as well as, more generically “operation” and “habitual employment” (*OED*).³⁷ What purpose might this transposition serve? Clearly the intertext says something—something that seems to be *retracted* by the moment in *Marius* that I have analyzed, when “mechanic exercise” reappears, without quotation marks, as “mechanical exercise” and with a very different valence. In the most polemical terms, this

“something” is the claim that it’s both possible and desirable to graduate from mechanical exercise and accede to altogether organic and original, new and not-yet-recited speech.³⁸

What I have called Pater’s retraction of this claim I can now rephrase as the opposing wager that there is a mechanical exercise that is not “like dull narcotics,” not numbing, but rather invigorating, even indispensable. In *Marius*, it’s true, “mechanical exercise” appears most strikingly as that which eases the passage out of life and into death, defined as a state of obliviousness as anodyne as nightly sleep. So it would seem that in Pater’s novel we haven’t traveled that far from “Winckelmann”’s reference to Tennyson’s “mechanic exercise” after all. But we have, I would argue,³⁹ because elsewhere in the novel, such exercises work, and set the protagonist to work, differently, so that the reader has been trained to hear “mechanical” as connoting something—many things, in fact—other than “sad.” If the word sometimes designates, as in “The Child in the House,” the shaping force of contingency, the object world defined as “a mechanical and material order” (*MS* 208), elsewhere in the novel it describes pagan aesthetic practices that are also touched with cultic significance: a performance in which dancers “contrived that their mechanical march-movement should fall out into a kind of highly expressive dramatic action” (*M* 291); or Homeric epic as “but the mechanical transcript of a time, naturally, intrinsically poetic” (*M* 91).

Such usages retain Tennyson’s suggestion that poetic production is in some sense like manual labor, that the latter is at least sometimes constitutive of dramatic or poetic practice. Again, though, Pater tends actively to affirm—and not, like Tennyson, reluctantly to accept—mechanical work. It matters in this sense that *In Memoriam*’s speaker becomes mechanical while grieving alone, whereas *Marius* repeatedly if inconsistently associates mechanical exercise with collective phenomena, whether ensemble dances or whole historical periods. “Inconsistently” because the novel also includes moments like this summing-up of its protagonist’s work routine: “‘The morning for creation,’ he would say; ‘the afternoon for the perfecting labour of the file; the evening for reception—the reception of matter from without one, of other men’s words and thoughts—matter for our own dreams, or the merely mechanic exercise of the brain, brooding thereon silently, in its dark chambers’” (*M* 252). Here the phrase from Tennyson appears for the first of two times in *Marius*, without quotation marks but a syllable short of its more modified form in the novel’s conclusion. The phrase appears, in other words, in its original, Tennysonian scansion, and its association with *In Memoriam* is reinforced by the “brain” said here to do the exercising. But this in effect gives the phrase’s second, modified appearance in *Marius*—in the novel’s concluding deathbed scene—the force of a redoubled retraction. It is as if Pater must repeat “Winckelmann”’s citation of Tennyson’s poem not once but twice in order fully to take back the disparagement it implies, to decouple sad, solipsistic individuality from “mechanic exercise.”⁴⁰ This would also suggest that the first of *Marius*’ two citations of Tennyson represents a view that the second citation supersedes. Yet by making this exercise an instance of “the reception . . . of other men’s words and thoughts,” *Marius*’ first citation already complicates the isolated grief of *In Memoriam*. Already, moreover, Tennyson’s “numbing” has become Pater’s “brooding,” at once dark and dynamic, the work of a brain that is active rather than anaesthetized.

More obviously in keeping with *Marius*’ overall transvaluation of the mechanical are moments like these: among the Cyrenaics, Marius accepts “some curtailment of his liberty,” and this acceptance prompts Pater’s narrator to observe: “The authority they exercised was that of classic taste—an influence so subtle yet so real, as defining the loyalty of the scholar—or of some beautiful and venerable ritual, in which every observance is become spontaneous and

almost mechanical” (*M* 188). “Classic taste” both defines the scholar and becomes interchangeable with ritual in the space of this single sentence, whose handling of categories is as telling as it is slippery. For programmatically, as I have been suggesting, *Marius* brings the aesthetic, the scholastic, and the religious (persistently and polemically made synonymous with ritual) into inextricable relation, and here, with his category-shuffling, Pater implicitly makes the case that he will make explicit in “Lacedaemon”: the case for a good-enough mechanical method of instruction, in which memory aids, rather than impedes, imagination: “Hard and practical as Lacedaemonians might seem, they lived nevertheless very much by imagination, and to train memory, to preoccupy their minds with the past, as in our own classic or historic culture of youth, was in reality to develop a vigorous imagination” (*PP* 223).

“As in our own”: the phrase, reminiscent of the many proleptic moments in *Marius*, points to the “classic or historic culture of youth” in Pater’s present. In his capacity as a practicing teacher, Pater criticized what was called “the education of cram”: with reforms at Oxford leading to increased emphasis on competitive examinations for undergraduates, Pater distanced himself and his own teaching from “the long, pedantic, mechanical discipline . . . which is the necessary accompaniment of a system of examination.”⁴¹ Indeed, the author went so far as to engage in small acts of protest against this discipline, which he was under considerable administrative pressure to apply: asked to help with preparation for one such exam, Pater is reported to have told his grade-grubbing student to read all of Kant (Shuter 82). But the corrective to the reformed system that he imagined was an old-school rather than a progressive one;⁴² this system centered on a type of memorization that long predated “cram.”

This never becomes a matter of valuing mechanical exercise as such, for its own sake, because for Pater there are better and worse mechanical methods. There are the kinds of test-prep associated with “cram,” again, but also the drills in the recitation of “rememberable sayings” by which philosophers were made (*PP* 198). According to Pater, punishments in ancient Sparta were handled, like “musical exercises” (*PP* 206). Likewise, there are the numbingly unthinking modes of participation in ritual (“sad mechanic exercises”), but then there are the quickening, even soul-impregnating means by which one can be mechanically affected by the world, or at least some of its places: “‘Abide,’ [the Platonist] says to youth, ‘in these places, and the like of them, and mechanically, irresistibly, the soul of them will impregnate yours. . . . [T]hey will tell (despite, it may be, of unkindly nature at your first making) upon your very countenance, your walk and gestures, in the course and concatenation of your inmost thoughts’” (*PP* 279-280).

Yet Pater also suggests that it’s not possible fully or finally to separate “sad, mechanic exercises” from other kinds—which is also to say, that even the most enlivening exercises are still liturgical. The Lacedaemonians, after all, were, according to Pater, deeply religious, and their education was also a kind of ritual programming. But Pater returns to this Sparta not simply to endorse the cultic practice and punishing pedagogical program that he sees operative there. He goes “to school again” in Sparta in order to locate the promise that what look like the most determined and determining, the most closed and conventional forms might shelter the possibility of the as yet undetermined (*PP* 213). What seems to be, in the late Pater, an insistence on the repetition of the same therefore turns out to be a desire to preserve the conditions that make it possible for difference to emerge.

Note, for instance, the parenthesis in the passage that I have just quoted: “(despite, it may be, of unkindly nature at your first making).” This is as close as Pater comes to faith in aesthetic education as *reprogramming*, or rather *remaking*, since the phrase “first making” invites us to regard Spartan schooling as a *second* making. This is also to say that what “The Child in the

House” took to be fixed, “Lacedaemon” makes malleable: unkindly nature or no, there’s hope for the scholar who is late in his loyalty to Sparta. Better late than never indeed, since it remains conceivable—“it may be”—that even “inmost thoughts” will be affected by this youth’s abiding in the right place.⁴³ But I am as interested in the performative force of this parenthesis as in its announcing a qualified reprieve from determination by “first making” and finding this reprieve in, of all things, a mechanical movement. Pater here seems not only to retract, or at least to revise, the proposition about first formation that he made in “The Child in the House,” replacing that text’s “great chain” with a kinder and gentler “concatenation”; he also does so *in the mode of exercise that he recommends*. The parenthesis, I mean, and the passage that it qualifies both participate in the provisionality that mechanical exercise, for all its apparent fixity, comes to enable, in Pater’s view.⁴⁴ The quotation from “the Platonist” here is imaginary, which means that Pater’s is not a real recitation; the passage beginning with the imperative “Abide” and including the parenthesis that I have been considering does not constitute a veritable mechanical exercise. But what matters most is that it presents itself as though it were just that: in his praise of memorization, Pater remembers and then repeats bits of what the Platonists have said *about* memory.

This moment clarifies a more general tendency in Pater’s later work: here *repetitions* of formulae or of lines learned by heart enable the *revision* (if not, again, the retraction) of past iterations of the same. This is why, of Dante’s three *cantiche*, Pater prefers the *Purgatorio*.⁴⁵ It’s not as if—in Purgatory, in Sparta, or for that matter on one’s deathbed—one gets fully to rewrite the formula or verse. But one can re-inflect it, or see how it already has been re-inflected without one’s willing, because the world’s “little accidents” will have changed the context of its repetition, its remaking. By this account, one is bound *to* the world, but not bound *by* a prior version of oneself—or by a provocation that one once made, say, in the sound bites of one’s “Conclusion.”

This reading thus helps us to make sense of the fact that *Marius* itself is a long exercise in mentation: the quotation-laden record of a mind as it takes up and then traverses philosophies and forms of life “one after another,” without being finally identified with or by any, even the last. (Not for nothing is the singular designation in Pater’s title, *Marius the Epicurean*, supplemented by the subtitle’s plurals: *His Sensations and Ideas*.) What T. S. Eliot disdainfully calls the novel’s “prolonged flirtation with liturgy” thus becomes legible as an out-and-out love affair, or a practice of serial monogamy in which attachments are no less intimate for being impermanent.⁴⁶ It’s not, then, that *Marius* can’t commit but rather that he keeps committing, just not finally, but rather mechanically, liturgically, with this latter word broadly defined, understood to entail contact with the ancient anodyne that, as Pater’s later works show, does not always anaesthetize. Relinquishing his claim to stand alone, as we’ll see, to author and speak for himself, the student imagined in these texts instead, like *Marius*, like Pater pretending to speak for “the Platonist,” suffers the voices and verses of others to come and go through him, formatively, where what’s formative is understood as what’s processual and ongoing rather than once and done, even if it’s still the case that first makings, like ancient histories, leave behind the most lasting traces.

With these traces, I have returned again to “The Child in the House,” where the world and its accidents “mechanically determine” “each one of us” with a force that we who are brain-built in this way cannot hope to forestall (*MS* 179, *MS* 173). Since the world already thus shapes and enchains us, according to Pater, it is good to be trained in a place where constraint knows itself, and education through memorization, recitation, and other forms of mechanical exercise

molds a brain and an imagination that are “vigorous” but not for all that unchained. This suggestion may be troubling to critical sensibilities steeped in liberal and progressive educational traditions and used to associating Pater, at least the better Pater, with an expansion, rather than a limitation, of perceptual and political possibilities.⁴⁷ But Pater undertook precisely to think expansion and limitation, freedom and constraint, imagination and memory, and inward and outward forms, together, as “woven through and through each another into one inextricable texture” (*MS* 173).⁴⁸ The author whom, in Yeats’s words, generations of writers “accepted . . . for master,”⁴⁹ thus fittingly came to resemble one of his imaginary students in “Emerald Uthwart,” reciting classical texts because he was all but compelled to: “Singular!—The words, because seemingly forced from him, had been worth hearing” (*MS* 225). My next section attends to some of the words seemingly forced from *Marius*.

The Mechanical *Marius*

None of the above is meant to suggest that Pater’s preoccupation with the mechanical was unique. From Shakespeare to Swift and from Blake even to Wordsworth—to say nothing of Pope, of Tennyson, of Yeats’s mechanical bird, or of the whole host of other modernist machines that arose during the decades following Pater’s death—a wide range of mechanical bodies, spirits, and poets appear regularly in early and late modern English literary history.⁵⁰ They appear variously as well, so that the mechanical is sometimes devalued but at other times nearly value-neutral, “used sometimes descriptively, sometimes abusively.”⁵¹ The “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), for instance, includes both a famous refusal of the “mechanical device[s] of style” as opposed to “the very language of men,” and the resigned admission that, “However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that, while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical.”⁵² Likewise, if today a certain still-prevalent critical commonsense disparages as “formalist” “those works of art which mechanically perpetuate outmoded or depleted aesthetic formulas,”⁵³ deconstructive criticism has long since sensitized readers to the machine-like properties of language as such, properties that animate even while they automate all literary texts.⁵⁴ The mechanical would thus appear to be old news by now at both the literary historical and the theoretical levels.

But if the mere fact of Pater’s attention to the mechanical is relatively unremarkable, his *inflection* of mechanicity sets his project apart precisely as it renders this project pedagogical. For Pater’s “singular” effort, beginning with *Marius*, was to privilege the scholastic forms of “mechanical exercise” and to disclose what “Winckelmann” calls “the unprogressive, ritual element” in them (*R* 100). In the process, countering progress, Pater re-imagines such exercises as techniques for subject-constitution that begin with collectivity and give pride of place to the past. I do not mean that no one before or after Pater paid attention to the mechanical nature of certain scholastic chores. I am claiming instead that Pater distinctively affirms these chores, and sets them to work, on account of their very mechanicity. This mechanicity becomes a strength rather than a weakness, and a resource for the critique of progress: because for Pater the way to correct the present is by going over and along with the past again, mechanically.

In her reading of *Marius* as a “post-philological” text, Linda Dowling argues that Pater took on and even turned to profit the charges leveled by philologists against a modern literature presumed to be in decline. Pater, Dowling writes, devised “a strategy of what amounts to victory through acquiescence, an attempt to establish a new kind of writing that granted scientific philology its essential claims.”⁵⁵ Chief among these was the claim “that literary English is quite

literally a dead or moribund language,” and granting this claim meant undertaking “to establish a new mode of writing on [this language’s] very morbidity, dissolving the antagonistic opposition [then prevalent] between philology and literature in a new vision of the writer as a sort of philologist or scholar of words” (111). As Dowling writes elsewhere, Pater’s privileging of this figure entailed

the urging of written language—that is, language frozen in writing and divorced from living speech in the philological sense—as a literary medium. For to urge composing English “more as a learned language” is to conceive of the language as a written dialect, whose spoken form is insignificant or nonexistent. To recommend archaisms is to do the same, for the etymological weight, the “second intention” that Pater so prizes in such words, inheres in them only because of the lexicographical, which is to say, the written tradition. (125)

In short, then, “having taken over from stylistic philology without protest a notion of literary English as a dead language,” Pater takes distance from the discipline’s “other main assumption, the identification of linguistic reality with living speech” (137).

Dowling’s reading is indisputably useful, but ultimately it gives short shrift precisely to use. Dowling, that is, attributes to Pater’s project an abstraction not at all in keeping with the author’s acute sensitivity to language’s deployment as well as its structure. If this structure is registered in lexicography, the latter remains importantly distinct from, because only part of, “the written tradition” as it is taken up and transmitted, say, in schools. Despite Dowling’s conflation of the two (“the lexicographical, which is to say, the written tradition”), semantics and pragmatics are not strictly coextensive, since no dictionary can exhaust the possibilities of any language in use. Whether a language is dead or living, written or spoken, a boarding school subject or a *lingua franca*, its setting to work in use entails the eclipse of the dictionary, even when the latter proves indispensable.

That Pater knew this becomes clear in the very text from which Dowling quotes the recommendation “to write English more as a learned language”: the review essay “English Literature.” Here just after issuing the recommendation quoted by Dowling, Pater praises Cardinal Newman for exemplarily handling “all the perturbing influences of our century in a manner as classical, as idiomatic . . . as Steele’s.”⁵⁶ In this context, I think, “idiomatic” means not merely “distinctive” or “idiosyncratic,” but also, more technically, “established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from individual words” (*OED*). That a style could be both classical and idiomatic indicates that the classical (whether in its English or Latin forms) remains susceptible of use, and such susceptibility suggests that even if “living speech” falls away for Pater, as Dowling demonstrates it does, the ongoing use of language does not. On the contrary, adapting Tennyson’s concession that “A *use* in measured language lies,” I would argue that Pater privileges the use that resides in “dead or moribund” language. In other words, it was not simply the existence of “the written tradition” that mattered to Pater as he sought to render his English increasingly Latinate; equally important were the means of transmission by which this tradition was activated, though not exactly enlivened, in the scholastic and religious settings that recur in Pater’s late works. Far from lying dormant then, in the discipline of philology or in the dictionaries over which he pored (and which, for all their importance, it turns out, only ever got Pater so far, and never as far as the idiomatic), the language whose deadness Pater accepts is set to work pedagogically.

““One learns nothing from him ... but one becomes something”” (R 90). So Pater quotes Goethe on reading Winckelmann. The German poet thus offers one way of declining pedagogy in this dissertation’s sense. By “declining,” I mean primarily inflecting, as in grammar drills, but I also want to activate the word’s associations with diminution and even abandonment. For just as the figures that my chapters treat turn away from progressive educational models, Winckelmann, according to Goethe, abandons one kind of pedagogy, the knowledge-imparting kind that leads to learning, in favor of another: that which leads to one’s becoming “something.” I note that there is the slightest hint of diminution here, in the reader’s sliding toward the indeterminate and vaguely inanimate status of *something*. This sliding is idiomatic, of course, but it remains the case that one has not yet become *someone*.

Diminution and deanimation are also latent possibilities in Pater’s recourse to the mechanical. I have shown that even while the author distances himself from the modern application of “long, pedantic, mechanical discipline” (qtd. in Shuter 80), he repeatedly stages and even celebrates such discipline as it appears in a range of ancient forms, or in these forms’ residual survivals in modernity, of which the Latin class, celebrated in “Emerald Uthwart,” was the representative instance. Mechanical work was, after all, widely associated with teaching as well as trade, and with the teaching of ancient languages in particular—“dead Vocables,” as Thomas Carlyle’s Professor calls them, remembering that all his subjects, but first and foremost “his Greek and Latin were ‘mechanically’ taught,” to deanimating effect:

“My Teachers,” says he, “were hide-bound Pedants, without knowledge of man’s nature, or of boy’s; or of aught save their lexicons and quarterly account-books. Innumerable dead Vocables (no dead Language, for they themselves knew no Language) they crammed into us, and called it fostering the growth of mind. How can an inanimate, mechanical Gerund-grinder, the like of whom will, in a subsequent century, be manufactured at Nurnberg out of wood and leather, foster the growth of anything; much more of Mind, which grows, not like a vegetable (by having its roots littered with etymological compost), but like a spirit, by mysterious contact of Spirit; Thought kindling itself at the fire of living Thought? How shall *he* give kindling, in whose own inward man there is no live coal, but all is burnt out to a dead grammatical cinder? The Hinterschlag Professors knew syntax enough; and of the human soul thus much: that it had a faculty called Memory, and could be acted on through the muscular integument by appliance of birch-rods.”⁵⁷

Though plainly satirical, this moment in the chapter of *Sartor Resartus* called “Pedagogy” collates several commonplaces in the critique of “cram,” a critique that intensified, as we have seen, during Pater’s tenure at Oxford. Carlyle’s passage also hints at a contradiction latent in many versions of this critique. A mind, which is, according to the passage, a terrible thing to render inanimate, grows “not like a vegetable ... but like a spirit, by mysterious contact of Spirit.” But that the mind is said to grow at all means that it remains in some sense material, organic; this mind is bodily even if not directly accessible, as the Hinterschlag Professors suppose, “through the muscular integument.” Moreover, Carlyle effectively makes “dead grammatical cinders” indistinguishable from “etymological compost,” pointing up the organicity that always inheres in the trope of language death. In order to be compostable, even the most inanimate and mechanical language must have been alive once, and those who impart this

language must, in fact, somewhere within contain “live coal”—which phrase Carlyle invites readers to literalize almost to the point of incoherence, for though strictly speaking coal is organic, as “live” it is always on its way to burning out.⁵⁸ It follows that any language that might be said to be living is already going the way of lexicons, just as the distinction, tenuous from the first, between Language and Vocables is already in the process of coming undone.

This distinction is interestingly reminiscent of the one between words and labels introduced by Pater’s early biographer. Recall that in his rendering of Pater as a Hinterschlag Professor—and in this context one thinks also of Wilde’s question, posed just after Pater’s death: “Was he ever alive?”⁵⁹—Pater’s biographer found fault with the lexicon-loving author’s reliance on words that were “anything but living and social.” But *Marius* in fact everywhere attests to Pater’s interest in the social function of words, phrases, and rites whose status as “living” matters much less than their status as surviving. It is this latter status from which *Marius* will learn, and to which Pater will repeatedly direct his reader’s attention.

Beginning early in his career, as Robert Crawford has shown, Pater made the notion of “survival” bear considerable conceptual weight.⁶⁰ Derived from the work of anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, who originated what became known as the doctrine of survivals, and mediated, according to Crawford, by Pater’s friend Andrew Lang, this notion attempted to account for “the presence of the past in the present.”⁶¹ For Tylor and his followers, “survivals” named cultural practices and beliefs that remained operative long after they had lost their relevance, utility, or significance—indeed, often “in the very teeth of common sense”—as when “an idea, the meaning of which has perished for ages, may continue to exist simply because it has existed.”⁶² Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* thus associates survivals with superstitions, both historically (since superstitions lingered, in an exemplary fashion, without purpose or rational basis) and etymologically: “The very word ‘superstition,’ in what is perhaps its original sense of a ‘standing over’ from old times, itself expresses the notion of survival. But the term superstition now implies a reproach, and though this reproach may be often cast deservedly on fragments of a dead lower culture embedded in a living higher one, yet in many cases it would be harsh, and even untrue” (*PC* 64-65). The Tylorian anthropologist should therefore be curious rather than dismissive, and should treat such surviving fragments as “facts . . . to be worked as mines of historic knowledge” (*PC* 64).

Scholars have not been able to prove that Pater read Tylor, but the presence of “survivals” in *Marius* is marked and decisive from the first. Indeed, the novel begins, drily enough, with a brief disquisition on the unevenly distributed afterlife of a “religion of usages and sentiment rather than of facts and belief”:

While, in Rome, new religions had arisen with bewildering complexity around the dying old one, the earlier and simpler patriarchal religion, ‘the religion of Numa,’ as people loved to fancy, lingered on with little change amid the pastoral life, out of the habits and sentiment of which so much of it had grown. Glimpses of such a survival we may catch below the merely artificial attitudes of Latin pastoral poetry; in Tibullus especially, who has preserved for us many poetic details of old Roman religious usage.

At mihi contingat patrios celebrare Penates,
Reddereque antiquo menstrua thura Lari:

—he prays, with unaffected seriousness. (M 37)

A prayer—“Something liturgical,” as Pater’s narrator goes on to call it—thus sets the tone for the novel as a whole (M 37). And it matters that this prayer in the form of a lyric, attesting to the “survival” in the country of what in the city is already obsolete, also addresses a practice precisely: not an inward state but rather what it befalls its speaker (*mihi contingat*) to do. The lines from Tibullus quoted here bear on a usage that, like one of Tylor’s survivals, if not with quite the same longevity, continues to exist simply because it has existed. Pater’s point is that the Roman poet gives no theological reason whatsoever—and feels no need to give any such reason—for the burning of incense and the honoring of household gods, in keeping with a ritual calendar that also figures on the first page of Tylor’s chapter on “Survival in Culture.” There the anthropologist adduces Ovid’s *Fasti* to account for the still-circulated “saying that marriages are unlucky in May”: “Ovid mentions the vulgar Roman objection to marriages in May, which he not unreasonably explains by the occurrence in that month of the funeral rites of the Lemuralia” (M 63).

This is a striking if not philologically defensible point of comparison between Pater’s *Marius* and Tylor’s *Primitive Culture*. But of course there are important differences between the two works as well: in citing Tibullus, Pater’s narrator takes care to distinguish surfaces from depths, and to remark on tone and “attitudes” as well as content, whereas Tylor offers the better-known Ovid’s lines without commentary, solely and strictly as evidence of an ancient folk belief. These differences of course make disciplinary and generic sense: *Marius* is not an ethnography, after all, but rather a fictional study of *Sensations and Ideas*, and one that explicitly takes “sentiment[s] ... rather than ... facts” as its objects (M 37). But I would argue that the differences between Tylor’s text and Pater’s are both more complex and more consequential. For in addition to stopping short of the mining of historical fragments for facts in which Tylor’s method culminates, Pater’s deeply pedagogical deployment of survivals in *Marius* also reverses the terms of the Tylorian hierarchy. Tylor’s “fragments of a dead lower culture embedded in a living higher one” thus come to take precedence: the “dead” culture is repositioned above the “living” one, becoming the site from which the latter must learn. Touching on the present and befalling it (*contingans*), imposing “a year-long burden of forms” (M 38), giving direction and dictation (as both Flavian and Marcus Aurelius will in Pater’s novel), the past “perished for ages” stands over the present in more ways than one (PC 64).

The etymological plot begun in *Primitive Culture* thickens in ways the Latinist Pater would have appreciated, because the “original sense” of superstition was not, *pace* Tylor, “a ‘standing over’ from old times.” The English word is in fact derived from the Latin *superstes*, meaning most simply standing over, in a physical rather than temporal sense. *Superstes*’s “semantic motivation” is unknown, according to the *OED*, but “Cicero suggested ... that superstitious people (*superstitiosi*) were so called because they practiced excessive religious devotion in order that their children might survive (*superstites essent*), but this is probably a folk etymology. ... Classical Latin *superstes* was used,” the *OED* continues, “with reference to a soldier standing over the prostrate body of a defeated enemy, and it has also been suggested that from this use, classical Latin *superstitio* had the sense ‘superiority,’ and hence developed the senses ‘prophecy’ and ‘sorcery.’” In the case of superstition, then, as in that of “survival” (from the Latin *supervivo*, where the prefix “super” likewise indicates primarily “physical position above or on top of something”), uprightness belongs to the body that lives on, lording it over by

simply *standing* over the body of the vanquished or of the children who take the latter's place on the horizontal plane.

For his part, Pater's protagonist never graduates from this lower position in order to accede to an upright or victorious one.⁶³ "To the last, Marius is seeking."⁶⁴ He survives, to be sure, in transitive and intransitive senses: he outlives both parents, an early, life-threatening illness, and a plague that ravages whole towns as well as much of Rome itself. The plague also kills Flavian, Marius' beloved teacher and friend, and the scene of Flavian's death indeed offers Pater's protagonist the opportunity to become *superstes*: to stand over the body that he also watches over. (During Flavian's last night, "Marius lay down beside him," but the next morning finds "Marius standing by the dead, watching," and he struggles for a whole day in this "effort to watch by" his friend's corpse [*M* 101].) His vigil, though, gives way not to greater literary independence but to another humbling textual apprenticeship: having taken dictation from the charismatic, then the "almost abject" Flavian (*M* 101), Marius follows an imperial summons to Rome, where he becomes Marcus Aurelius' eager "*amanuensis*" (*M* 124). Here he also falls in with the Christian soldier Cornelius, ethically superior but still importantly comparable to Flavian in that he wields power over Marius with a "charm, rather physical than moral": "And wholly different as was this later friendship ... from the feverish attachment to Flavian, which had made him at times like an uneasy slave, still, like that, it was a reconciliation to the world of sense, the visible world" (*M* 166). So Pater's narrator characterizes Cornelius—somewhat uneasily indeed, since one friendship cannot be both "like" and "wholly different" from another. This contradiction suggests that, at this point in the narrative, Marius *has* been made slavish again after all: the language of servitude, "dominion," "fascination," and "sway" first associated with Flavian is thus transferred onto Cornelius in an almost psychoanalytic sense (*M* 64).⁶⁵ This is also to say that, having matured, Marius regresses to dependence, in another instance of *Bildung* become *Bindung*: "Again, as in his early days with Flavian, a vivid personal presence broke through the dreamy idealism, which had almost come to doubt of other men's reality, reassuringly, indeed, yet not without some sense of a constraining tyranny from without" (*M* 130).⁶⁶

Following a short-lived phase of verticality, our hero is thus effectively lowered again as he is set to work for two charismatic men: the pagan emperor *cum* "lecturer" whose meditations he compiles (*M* 121), and the soldier with whom he "[i]dentif[ies] himself" (*M* 289). Indeed it is as though his upright phase—Marius' brief stint as a *superstes*—were meant to underscore with its very brevity the importance of these returns to the baseline. Here he will remain until his last mechanical exercises and his martyrdom, for even at their most spiritual, the lessons that Marius learns in Rome tend toward something other than uplift. It's not that these lessons keep him in his place; he is not so much stationary as stationed time and again in places where the past's survival is also its standing over the present: the persistence of perpendicularity.

By this I mean that Pater makes Marius repeatedly encounter and increasingly cede authority to "a weighty tradition," "a remnant of right conduct" aligned with convention, derived from ritual, and positioned "over and above" the protagonist himself (*M* 178). By virtue of this position, the past's remnants or survivals become capable of correcting Marius' "own elaborately thought-out intellectual scheme," the scheme painstakingly outlined in the first two parts of Pater's novel (*M* 176). Part the Third opens with two chapters that stage a veritable if still pagan conversion: "Stoicism at Court" and "Second Thoughts." These especially dense chapters constitute the pedagogical centerpiece as well as the philosophical turning point in Pater's text. (I have already quoted from them while gesturing toward the possibility of a quarrel between

Marius and Mill.) With good reason, therefore, the first of these chapters presents a scene of instruction—one of many in the novel, but one that uniquely stays with Marius for the whole length of a lesson: a public lecture on stoicism given by Marcus Aurelius’ beloved teacher, Cornelius Fronto. Whereas Flavian’s teachings on style are delivered piecemeal across several chapters, and the novel elsewhere quotes an address by the emperor in its entirety and still elsewhere imitates Platonic dialogue, Fronto’s lecture is reported indirectly, filtered all the while through Marius’ consciousness. This filtering lets Pater’s narrator register the effects of instruction in a sustained way and with particular vividness: Marius’ mind wanders, but it does so along lines that the “Stoic professor” lays down (*M* 177), in a “style” that looks backward to “the authority of approved ancient models” with its “long, skillfully modulated sentences,” and forward to Pater’s own “Style” in that Fronto’s is also “a management, by which subtle, unexpected meaning was brought out of familiar terms, like flies from morsels of amber” (*M* 176). The speaker’s words themselves thus become repositories of past meanings, “brought out” again in the narrative present, just as the aged, surviving Fronto himself embodies another era.

“And it happened with Marius, as it will sometimes happen, that this general discourse to a general audience had the effect of an utterance adroitly designed for him” (*M* 176). But though seemingly “designed for him,” Fronto’s discourse in fact *displaces* Marius: it speaks to his current preoccupations but does so precisely by alienating him from “his own elaborately thought-out intellectual scheme.” Marius has just been deeply disturbed by the cruel spectacle of gladiatorial games (“the novel-reading of that age,” Pater’s narrator opines), which force him to confront the limits of Aurelius’ ethical system and of pagan morals more generally. It is therefore an implicitly proto-Christian answer to this system that Marius, led by Fronto, discovers in “the old morality” (*M* 176). Put another way, *Marius* presents Christianity itself as the second coming of this morality. This means that Pater’s protagonist’s learning is still learning from the past even when it comes into contact with “the future”: “Yes!,” Marius thinks as he considers the emperor’s indifference to the sufferings of the game’s victims: “what was needed was the heart that would make it impossible to witness all this; and the future would be with the forces that could beget a heart like that” (*M* 170).

Fronto’s lecture reminds Marius of resources for forging such a heart that have long since been available to him (and that remain available because, as we read later, in him “the boy-priest survived” [*M* 234]), leading him out of the “revolt against accustomed modes” that his intellectual quest had previously entailed (*M* 177). For by recalling precisely these modes—modes that themselves recall the conventions from which the “Conclusion” wanted to be free (*R* 120)—Pater’s protagonist rediscovers “how much the manner, because the heart itself, counts” (*M* 177). For “over and above . . . natural affection or self-love or fear,” “there is a remnant of right conduct, what he does, still more what he abstains from doing, not so much through his own free election, as from a deference, an ‘assent,’ entire, habitual, unconscious, to custom—to the actual habit or fashion of others, from whom he could not endure to break away” (*M* 178). These others become, a page later, those “whose faces averted from him, would be more than he could endure” (*M* 179), and Pater’s repeated emphasis on the unbearable nature of the separation that Marius here avoids tightens the bind between these others and the “observances, customs, usages” that Fronto claims are indispensable (*M* 178). It is as if, in other words, these usages *become* the others that they embody, the souls with whom they keep Marius in touch. For if this weren’t the case, it would be impossible to account for the sense of utter loneliness that overtakes Marius as he contemplates what it would mean “to break away.” The realization that the “revolt” implied by his “antinomianism” must entail such loneliness leads Marius to

regroup—if not to retreat outright, then at least to rethink his youthful strategy (*M* 177). One person’s “elaborately thought-out intellectual scheme” turns out to be insufficient; this is why Marius finds it necessary, following Fronto, to look to the past: to engage in an “assent entire, habitual, unconscious, to custom.”

“Entire, habitual, unconscious,” and mechanical: Pater reintroduces this last word in his next chapter, “Second Thoughts,” where he also crucially reintroduces the language of freedom and constraint. For here, again, under new Cyrenaic “masters” (*M* 186), Marius comes mechanically to assent to “some curtailment of his liberty” (*M* 188). Mechanicity inheres, after all, in the teaching methods of “the old Cyrenaics” (*M* 186). To repeat: “The authority they exercised was that of classic taste—an influence so subtle yet so real, as defining the loyalty of the scholar—or of some beautiful and venerable ritual, in which every observance is become ... almost mechanical” (*M* 188). To classically liberal tastes, of course—and no doubt to other, more contemporary tastes as well—there is something troublingly passive about this account of “deference,” which would appear to be uncritical at best and authoritarian at worst.⁶⁷ Critics have accordingly registered their discomfort both with the submissiveness that *Marius* seems at moments like these to advocate and, at the narrative level, with the heteronomy that the novel’s over-educated protagonist cannot seem to outgrow. Hence Eliot’s complaint, for instance, that “Marius merely *drifts* toward the Christian church if he can be said to have any motion at all,” which captures, though uncharitably, the extent to which Pater’s protagonist remains bound to others, without direction of his own (6; emphasis in original).

Benjamin Morgan suggestively recasts this tendency as “the novel’s unwillingness to say definitively whether Marius is thinking or being thought for.”⁶⁸ For Morgan, this unwillingness stems from Pater’s commitment to exposing the limits of autonomy in its political and aesthetic guises. Morgan’s reading tracks the language of sensuous “tyranny” that pervades *Marius*, among other texts, in order to show that Pater figures aesthetic experience as an apprenticeship in unfreedom that is salutary precisely because it is not immediately emancipating. Rather than detach us from the material world, aesthetic experience so defined demands that we attend precisely to our status as materially determined.

Pater’s fascination with the mechanical is thus of a piece with what Morgan calls the author’s “materialist ethics” (33), first announced in *The Renaissance* and elaborated throughout his career. Indeed, in another context, Raymond Williams notes that the mechanical often functioned as another name for the material, and *Marius* would seem to bear out this observation.⁶⁹ Pater’s gesture in “Second Thoughts” toward observances that have “become ... almost mechanical” would thus recall materialist philosophies both ancient and modern, both Roman and Victorian. Morgan notes that Lucretius’ Epicurean atomic theories were again in the air during the years preceding the publication of *Marius*, following the Roman poet’s rediscovery by scientists (32). But “Second Thoughts” reconsiders a Lucretian claim precisely. In the last chapter of *Marius*’ Part the Second, immediately before the conversion that I have been discussing, Marius grows disgusted at the gladiatorial games he attends and disillusioned with the ethos of Aurelius, who sits watching these games “impassably” (*M* 169). Though a far cry from “Nero’s living bonfires,” the spectacles reformed under Aurelius remain gruesome, Marius observes:

the gladiators were still there. Their bloody contests had, under the form of a popular amusement, the efficacy of a human sacrifice; as, indeed, the whole system of the public shows was understood to possess a religious import. Just at

this point, certainly, the judgment of Lucretius on pagan religion is without reproach—

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum. (*M* 169)

“Just at this point, certainly”: these words mark the limits even while they underscore the accuracy of the lapidary Lucretian verdict, according to which religion leads to “Such evil deeds” (qtd. in *M* 309). In the amphitheater, at the scene of “human sacrifice,” that “pagan religion” discloses its most dangerous potentials.

In other places and on second thought, however, Pater prompts a reassessment of this verdict. For Fronto teaches precisely that “there are observances, customs, usages” that Marius cannot do without, and in “Second Thoughts” these observances attach to “beautiful and venerable ritual.” These chapters do not simply break with materialism, of course (given that they record Marius’ realization that “he could not endure to break away”). But neither do they remain within a strictly atheist, Lucretian, or Epicurean frame. Instead they suggest that such mechanical philosophies require supplementation by another mechanicity: the observance of ritual. Thus whereas the title “Second Thoughts” might seem to promise a wholesale dismissal of pagan religion, the chapter itself performs a subtler shift: an approach to and appreciation of religion redefined as manner, observance, custom, and usage.

“Second Thoughts” recalls the tone-setting moment on *Marius*’ first page that I have already cited: the moment when Pater’s reader first encounters a “religion of usages and sentiment rather than of facts and belief” (*M* 37). Such encounters recur throughout the text: “Roman religion, as Marius knew, had, indeed, been always something to be done, rather than something to be thought, or believed, or loved; something to be done in minutely detailed manner, at a particular time and place, correctness in which had been a long matter of laborious learning with a whole school of ritualists” (*M* 137). Likewise are the evolving and syncretic rituals of the early Christians lovingly described as so many “proper action[s]” (*M* 248): even when Pater’s narrator emphasizes the new claim that the Christian “music of worship” makes on the mind, its new aspiration to the status of “fact” (*M* 248), Marius’ best attention remains reserved for the outward elements of this worship: gestures, “*vestimenti*” (*M* 249), “hymns, prayer, silence,” Latin choruses lovingly quoted, and other phrases worshipped (*M* 248). Throughout the novel, Pater’s narrator thus signals Marius’ adherence to the “school of ritualists” (*M* 137). And “Stoicism and Court” and “Second Thoughts” present the implications of this adherence.

That one neither can nor should aspire to break with the past is thus the old news that *Marius*’ two key chapters bear as they distill Pater’s effort to counter progress using the non-utilitarian resources of ritual. Ellis Hanson clarifies the stakes of Pater’s interest in these resources, highlighting the convergence of orthodoxy and radicalism in the author’s return to Rome: “At a time when ritualism was a major political battle . . . , a High Church faith was paradoxically both an earnest orthodoxy and a scandalous affront to Victorian Evangelicalism.” Hanson further notes the feminizing disdain with which “young men who, like Pater, sought out ritualistic churches” were treated by “disapproving Protestants.”⁷⁰ One need not appeal to biography to appreciate the role of ritual in *Marius*, but Hanson’s reference to Protestantism does provide a key context for the novel. For Protestantism is precisely the religion of “facts and belief” against which Pater positions the Roman *and* early Christian religions of “usages and sentiment” whose rituals the novel treats. For programmatically, with its would-be liturgy,

Marius contests “the Protestant doctrine that correct belief must be more highly valued than correct practice.”⁷¹

In recent decades, anthropologists have traced the legacies of this consequential doctrine, which they have described as instrumental to the consolidation of colonial rule, the determination of what counts as agency and who counts as a citizen, and the construction of “the moral narrative of modernity.”⁷² For Webb Keane, whose book *Christian Moderns* is particularly if improbably resonant with Pater’s concerns, this narrative insists that

progress is not only a matter of improvements in technology, economic well-being, or health but is also, and perhaps above all, about human emancipation and self-mastery. If in the past, humans were in thrall to illegitimate rulers, rigid traditions, and unreal fetishes, as they become modern they realize the true character of human agency. Conversely, those who seem to persist in displacing their own agency onto such rulers, traditions, or fetishes are out of step with the times, anachronistic premoderns or antimoderns.

What makes this a specifically Protestant strand is that the narrative tends, often only by implication, to link moral progress to practices of detachment from and reevaluation of materiality. (6)

Studying the “semiotic ideology” of Protestantism, Keane argues that as inward faith becomes privileged over outward, ritual performance—and “facts and belief” over all that Pater understands by “usages and sentiment”—the modern subject is increasingly “abstracted from material and social entanglements in the name of greater freedom” (76). This process of abstraction leads to educational philosophies like Mill’s, to “intellectual scheme[s]” like the one that *Marius* rethinks (*M* 176), to “antinomianism[s]” like the early Pater’s (*M* 177).

As the “Conclusion” indicates and Morgan emphasizes, the Paterian subject never *was* free from material entanglements; even in the early text, this subject is thoroughly enmeshed in the world to which he is susceptible and by which he is made. But the “Conclusion” *does* project a subject who is abstracted from what Keane calls “social entanglements,” freed from the encumbrances, in Pater’s words, of “what is only conventional” (*R* 120). The decisive, counter-progressive shift in Pater’s work thus inheres in his later attempt to affirm a subjectivity that is socially *and* materially entangled. With their radical recasting of “what is only conventional” as the past from which *Marius* cannot “endure to break away,” “Stoicism at Court” and “Second Thoughts” rehearse this shift (*M* 178). And it stands to reason that these chapters center on pedagogy, for the shift they effect—away from “antinomianism” and toward an acknowledgment of the claims of convention—implies a valorization of instruction, of transmission and tradition. This shift also accounts, again, for Pater’s effort to rehabilitate the “mere exercises of memory” that Mill went without. For such exercises encode the past not left behind; they enact the “assent” to custom that Fronto advocates (*M* 178) and enforce the “curtailment of ... liberty” that *Marius* learns to accept (*M* 188).

Pater privileges “exercises of memory,” then, because they register the social entanglements that he seeks to affirm, entanglements that progressive education—and, for Keane, Protestantism—would deny. *Marius*’ lesson is therefore the reader’s as well; Pater’s narrator provides readers with a version of the schooling that *Marius* receives. To say this is precisely not to claim, with Carolyn Williams, that, “Together, *Marius* and the [narrator’s]

nineteenth-century commentary engage in exercises of memory ... from their vastly different points of time.”⁷³ For Marius and Pater’s narrator could only remember “together” if their exercises were somehow to be synced despite the temporal distance that separates them. Williams argues that Pater’s typological understanding of history makes such a syncing-up imaginable, even inevitable: “While not assenting to Christianity on the level of doctrine or belief, Pater may be seen still to appropriate and to preserve its principles of organizing human time, on the level of narrative form.”⁷⁴ The Victorian present and the imperial Roman past become linked to the point of indissolubility, for the latter prefigures the former. Hence Williams’ suggestion that these two apparently “vastly different” historical moments become simultaneous in Pater’s text, that they occur or recur “together.”

But for all its “modernisms” (*M* 269), *Marius* is not Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Pater’s narrator does not, as in Joyce’s conceit, that is, recognizably grow, change, learn, or recollect “together” with his protagonist. In fact, the distance that divides the narrator from the character whose “mental pilgrimage” he recounts remains unbridgeable; the difference between the two, undeniable (*M* 110). That there can be no final rapprochement between the narrator’s London and Marius’ Rome is part of Pater’s point. Hence his narrator’s frequent prolepses and anachronisms. These mark the narrator’s separation from the narrated world of the past, his coming from a present in which rites need to be explained and dead vocables translated. Still, his coming from this present does not make him fully one with it; the narrator treats English, after all, “as a learned language,”⁷⁵ in keeping with Pater’s recommendation in “Style.” His erudition is evident at every turn, on show as scholarship become stylishness, as the means by which he is kept in touch with “ancient models” (*M* 176). The narrator’s disquisitions are, therefore, to the reader what Fronto’s discourse and the Cyrenaics’ teachings are to Marius: they place “over and above” the past that one might otherwise pretend to *be* above, and to have left behind. In this sense, to amend Williams’s formulation, it is the *reader* who, though always kept at a distance from Marius, engages in exercises with him; Pater’s narrator, for his part *administers* these exercises “one after another” (*M* 396).

I have noted the quotation-laden novel’s intimacy with the Marius who takes dictation. But crucially this intimacy never effaces the distinction between character and narrator:⁷⁶ by maintaining a separation between them, in fact, Pater installs a survival at the heart of his narrative, making it his novel’s very mode of delivery. If Marius and the narrator really were to become identified, then effectively historical difference would be denied;⁷⁷ the reader would not have survival, in other words, but simply oneness, identity. Similarly, if the novel’s nineteenth century and its Rome really were typologically identical or “effectively equivalent,” then there would be no way to account for the text’s interest in and staging of survivals.⁷⁸ But in fact, like Fronto or Carlyle’s mechanical teacher, Pater’s narrator *becomes* a survival while thematizing survivals. And it is, Pater suggests, as surviving that the past can best be studied: neither appropriated nor domesticated, but rather read, reread, recited, sometimes venerated, and otherwise valued precisely for its difference from the present that returns to it, as I have said, going over and along with it again.

Thus whereas Williams reads Pater’s turn away from “the level of doctrine or belief” as compensating for the effects of secularization defined as a *fait accompli*, I read this turn—and the attendant valorization in *Marius* of usages and rituals of various kinds—in light of recent critiques of secularism, which ask in what sense secularization can be said to have happened at all.⁷⁹ Indeed, *Marius* makes new sense when it is read alongside these critiques. Asad’s characterization of ritual as privileging practice over signification, for example, and Keane’s

account of the dematerializing “strand” of Protestantism and its “semiotic ideology” both resonate with Pater’s effort not only to foreground ritual, but to valorize what is deemed “out of step with the times” (6).

Such accounts help us to see that Pater’s valorization of anachronism—of the ritual, liturgical, and mechanical—leads him to reorder the civilizational hierarchies that he might appear merely to reinforce. Consider, for example, this apparently expansive moment in “Second Thoughts”:

The mere sense that one belongs to a system—an imperial system or organization—has, in itself, the expanding power of a great experience; as some have felt who have been admitted from narrower sects into the communion of the catholic church; or as the old Roman citizen felt. It is, we might fancy, what the coming into possession of a very widely spoken language might be, with a great literature, which is also the speech of the people we have to live among. (187)

With its temporal dissonance and the hint of obligation introduced by the odd “have to,” that last sentence begins to indicate how far Pater’s novel is from enacting the expansion that it here describes. For even while *Marius* takes pains to point out what might at first look like continuities between the Victorian present and the Roman past (“as some have felt . . . or as the old Roman citizen felt”), the text never in fact gives its reader to understand that the people and systems it imagines are those that he still lives among. Hence “we might fancy,” which underscores the counterfactual nature of the flight that “we have to” brings to an end. We “might fancy” only that which we will never directly experience, which will never be our “great experience,” and here, in a meditation on Marius’ “concession” precisely (*M* 188), Pater effectively concedes his reader’s relegation to a “cramping, narrowing” place not unlike the place of instruction in a language long since dead as speech (*M* 185).

But not all relegation is regrettable. This was already, implicitly the lesson of “Winckelmann,” with its affirmative handling of the art historian’s “limitation” (*R* 106). And that Pater distinguishes here between what Marius is able to experience and what modern readers can only fancy without hoping to assimilate does not necessarily mean that he leaves the latter at a loss. On the contrary, Pater keeps directing his readers to the resources that remain available as survivals. In *Marius*, even more than in Tylor,⁸⁰ these are “forms” (*M* 38), not contents; usages, not facts; customs, not beliefs—or beliefs that are only superstitions, not substantiated. They are the repositories of relations, of pasts. These may not be things we could take into our possession, but they remain, as Marius learns, things “to be done,” and means by which we might yet become something (*M* 137).

Each Mind Keeping

“What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to me? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure, and if so, what sort or degree of pleasure?” (*R* 3; emphasis in original). For the young Pater, these questions exemplified “the aim of the true student of aesthetics” (*R* 3). Such a student understood, as Pater wrote in these the Preface to his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, that “Beauty . . . is relative,” not abstract or absolute (*R* 3). The critic could not but begin with his own experience of a “song or picture”; his task was thus to produce an account of that experience, to analyze and

explain objects on the basis of it. In this sense, it's hard to think of a truer student of Pater's than Roland Barthes. The author of *The Pleasure of the Text* and the unapologetic *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* inherits and endlessly re-inflects the questions posed in Pater's Preface. Later in his career especially, Barthes gives himself permission—and, no doubt, enjoys the institutional permission—explicitly to tarry with the question of what an object means to *him*. He makes himself “the measure of . . . ‘knowledge’”: “So I resolved,” he writes, to take just one example, “to start my inquiry with no more than a few photographs, the ones I was sure existed *for me*.”⁸¹

And yet it's hard to imagine any place farther from the utopia that ends Barthes's *How to Live Together* than Pater's utopian version of ancient Sparta in “Lacedaemon,” a lecture to which I have already, repeatedly referred. The late Barthes thus continues to learn from the early Pater but would seem to share nothing with the later “aesthetic critic,” with the Pater who valorizes punishment and mechanical exercise. Reading the two writers' late utopias together, however, makes it possible to bring out the late Pater's specificity. To this end, and in order to assess what Pater may still have to teach us, I offer a concluding, comparative account of two sets of late lectures.

In the last of his lectures on living together, Barthes says that he has come to understand that “a utopia of idiorhythmic Living-Together is not a social utopia. Now, from Plato to Fourier,” Barthes continues, “all written utopias have been social: an attempt to fix upon the ideal organization of power.”⁸² Declining this attempt—and refusing the rigidity that the “attempt to fix upon” implies—Barthes claims instead simply to be “setting out some . . . principles of the idiorhythmic Good” (131). This is in keeping with the “protocol” of the lecture course as a whole: with programmatic provisionality, as Barthes has said from the first and repeats by way of conclusion, *How to Live Together* sets out principles, or rather strikes poses, adopting in place of decisiveness “the mobile posture of someone at work (not thinking of the end result)” (133). Far from “fetishiz[ing] the goal as a privileged place, to the detriment of other possible places,” Barthes lets the latter proliferate as he pursues “*Paideia*” defined as the “eccentric path of possibilities, stumbling among blocks of knowledge” (133). The worker, then, is also a stumbling student, himself grouped with “(athletes, orators, statues).” And this list of figures is, Barthes hastens to add, “not exhaustive” (133).

Pater's lectures on *Plato and Platonism*, including “Lacedaemon,” assemble figures like these as well, making a virtue of nearly Barthesian “mutability” as they gesture toward workers, artisans, students, athletes, orators, statues, and others (133). Unlike Barthes's “protocol,” though, Pater's seems nothing if not ends-driven. This may account for the comparative ease with which we assimilate and apply Barthes's model of multiplicity.⁸³ This social model, which isn't in fact, according to Barthes, either social or a model, makes almost no demands apart from the demand for “distance and respect, a relation that's in no way oppressive but at the same time where there's a real warmth of feeling”; it has, Barthes says repeatedly, plenty of rules but no regulations (119). And it's worth asking after this model's appeal at a time of economic deregulation and state withdrawal from social provision. I do not mean to equate Barthes's withdrawal (from social utopia) and the state's (from social provision). Instead, I want to ask about suggest that Pater's late work points to alternative paths and different relations, including demanding ones.

Today we know that one entailment of deregulation is coercive legislation and policing, and that market freedom has been wholly compatible with, for example, mass incarceration. In light of this compatibility, it may be worth pointing to one last moment in Barthes's lectures on living together. In a glaringly odd passage, Barthes wonders whether his own “idiorhythmic

fantasy,” his vision of “a distance permeated, irrigated by tender feeling,” might be “Perhaps, in its way, taking the differences in historical context and ideology into account, comparable to what Plato was getting at under the name of *Sophronistry*” (132). Here the lecturer is referring to the *sophronisterion* in Plato’s *Laws*: what his translators call a “house of correction” but is elsewhere rendered as a “reformatory” or “a place where people learn moderation.” This was to be a prison *cum* boarding school where “curable wrongdoers would undergo a process of reeducation” by means of nightly assemblies during which officials would admonish them.⁸⁴

Given Barthes’s methodological disclaimers, it would obviously be unfair—because against the stated spirit of the lectures—to read this reference to the *sophronisterion* as at all definitive. Still the reader is hard pressed to think of any set of “differences in historical context and ideology” that would suffice to make Plato’s vision comparable to Barthes’s own. Barthes, again, says early on that “the exact opposite of idiorrhymy” is the rhythm that defines places like “barracks, boarding schools” (9). And there can be no denying the oppressiveness of the relation in and by which, in the Platonic institution, sense is beaten into the inmate-students to be cured. This institutional oppressiveness recalls the memorably tyrannical mother who, in the primal situation of Barthes’s introduction, “walks at her own pace, unaware of the fact that her son’s rhythm is different,” wielding power “through disrhythmy, heterorrhymy”—except that the “*Sophronistry*” makes this mother look tame (9; cf. 35).

Returning to Pater, we can compare the residents of this *sophronisterion* to the prisoners to whom Pater refers in the “Conclusion,” when he writes of utter and ineluctable solitude as constitutive of experience: “Experience . . . is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world” (R 119). Pater here defines and universalizes the predicament of solipsism. We’ve neither heard nor made ourselves heard—neither seen nor been seen—through the prison wall that surrounds us. What matters most, for Pater, is that the confinement remains solitary, so that, perforce keeping its own private dream, the mind “can only conjecture,” not perceive, what is or must be outside it. In such a context, there can be no nightly, Platonic admonitions; or rather, admonitions can only be administered by the mind turned against itself—unless it benefits from the cure that Pater finally prescribes, a cure whose end is, the “Conclusion” says, “Not the fruit of experience but experience itself.” Thus the very thing that he has just confined to a “narrow chamber,” namely “experience,” Pater proceeds to render limitless in his manifesto’s turn from lament to exhortation: “our one chance is in expanding [life’s] interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time” (R 121). The youthful Pater’s answer to radical isolation involves expansion, not to say maximalist acquisitiveness on the part of the “individual mind.” In this sense, as in its attempt to graduate from “what is only conventional” (R 120), the “Conclusion” bears the trace of philosophical liberalism.⁸⁵

But it’s possible to hear another echo in the figure of “each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world”: because to keep is to “guard, defend, protect, preserve, [and] save,” as one does with a secret, *but also* to “preserve in being or operation; to maintain, retain, or continue to hold” as one does with time or a tune (*OED*). In other words, Pater’s solitary dream may also be a *rhythm*, and its keeping may therefore be the upholding of an idiorrhymic practice in Barthes’s sense. I have suggested that, for all its undeniable promise, such a practice might be limited by its relation to living together. For Barthes posits a kind of negative freedom—a freedom from imposition, impingement, or heterorrhymy—as a precondition for

the realization of “the idiorrhymic Good” (131). I’m less interested in asking whether we can do without a vision of this Good than in asking after Barthes’s desire to do without its others: without, again, heterorrhymy and all the rest. This desire is, of course, belied by the *sophronisterion* secreted in *How to Live Together*.

What would it mean to take these as given, to begin not with the solitary prisoner, “individual mind,” or Barthes’s independent *idios*, but rather with the boy dragged along, to Barthes’s scandalized dismay, by his mother, or another? What would it mean not to suspend the world outside Pater’s prisoner or conjure it away, but rather accept the social surround that both precedes and shapes “each mind”? Pater’s late work, of which I take “Lacedaemon” to be representative, offers answers to these questions as it turns and returns to the school. Recall the child dragged along by the bad mother in Barthes’s account. If for Barthes the imposition of rhythm begins at home, for Pater it really gets underway in school. According to Pater, the young child in Sparta

left his home, his tender nurses in those quiet old suburban houses early, for a public school, a schooling all the stricter as the years went on, to be followed, even so, by a peculiar kind of barrack-life, the temper of which, a sort of military monasticism (it must be repeated) would beset him to the end. Though in the gymnasia of Lacedaemon no idle by-standers, no—well! Platonic loungers after truth or what not—were permitted, yet we are told, *neither there nor in Sparta generally, neither there nor anywhere else, were the boys permitted to be alone*. If a certain love of reserve, of seclusion, characterized the Spartan citizen as such, it was perhaps the cicatrice of that wrench from a soft home into the imperative, inevitable gaze of his fellows, broad, searching, minute, his regret for, his desire to regain, moral and mental even more than physical ease. And his education continued late ... (PP 221; emphasis added)

Until age thirty at least, Pater will go on to specify. This passage appears near the beginning of Pater’s lecture on Spartan society, which centers on Spartan public schools. That phrase itself, “public school,” is, of course, like “suburban houses,” anachronistic, a superposition of the ancient educational system onto the abiding English one, which Pater, sounding old-school indeed, regards as continuing at the best of times the best traditions of its past, the traditions that Plato so admired. I single out this moment in Pater’s “Lacedaemon” mostly because of the stipulations that it takes to be primary: if the duration of the “military monasticism” into which the young student is thrown “must be repeated,” then the terms of this stipulation (which I’ve italicized) bear repeating as well, presumably, in case the reader failed to appreciate their forcefulness or extent the first time around: “*neither there nor in Sparta generally, neither there nor anywhere else, were the boys permitted to be alone*.”

The reader may well trip over the strangeness of the lack of logical contradiction between this italicized part of the sentence and the clauses that precede it. Pater’s presupposition here seems to be that, like whatever else would happen in gymnasia, exercise inherently, or at least ordinarily, entails taking turns. Pater appears to assume that accompanied exercise would typically entail one person’s standing by and looking on, and that simultaneous, synchronized workouts like those required by Spartan schoolmasters would have been difficult to coordinate, rather than automatic. The automatic thing would be for one boy or bystander to linger and Platonically to lounge for the duration of the other’s exercise. If this were not Pater’s

assumption, his wording here would be unmotivated; both the “Though” that opens the sentence and the “yet” that separates its two parts from one another would be inexplicable: the part about the prohibition on idling from the part about the ban on solitude. Togetherness without either turn-taking or truth-seeking, sociality without cease or caesura: these, then, are the consequences of the Spartans’ prohibition on solitude, which leaves no child behind and admits of no extraterritoriality. This is at once school without recess and punishment without reprieve; the admonition’s not nightly but rather all day, and Pater’s prisoners are now anything but solitary.

But no sooner do we learn about this ban than we read of a “love of reserve” that, Pater says, must be its result or residue later in life. More precisely, we encounter the scar, the “cicatrice,” left by the system of rules, both military and monastic “(it must be repeated),” by which Spartan sociality is enforced. And here the protection from or barrier to relation becomes the very medium of relation. “Cicatrice” is a Latinate word that grates not only against the Greek phrases and formulae that punctuate Pater’s lecture but also against the Germanic “wrench” in the immediate vicinity. “Cicatrice” is also, to state the obvious, a word that, in English, calls a lot of attention to itself; it’s like those words about which the author’s biographers complained: plucked from dictionaries and deposited directly into Pater’s prose, these words threatened, or maybe aspired, to upstage all surrounding ones. This is a good example of why Pater’s detractors called his style “insubordinate”: it wore down collective entities, both social and syntactical, for the sake of their individual members, who were therefore no longer members but rather so many mutineers. Again, “the unity of the book,” one wrote representatively, “is decomposed to give place to the independence of the page, . . . the page is decomposed to give place to the phrase, and the phrase to give place to the independence of the word.”⁸⁶ It’s as if the word “cicatrice,” then, were encoding some of the reserve or distance from the immediate world that it’s meant to name.⁸⁷

But the context of Pater’s lecture makes it clear that this distance is paradoxically the *product* of closeness: again, the scar that the latter leaves behind. For all its apparent lexical independence, then, the cicatrice is otherwise (both grammatically and semantically) altogether dependent on the social world that not only surrounds it but also creates it in the first place, cutting into a skin that we’re not given to imagine could remain unscathed. Wounds notwithstanding, this Paterian process comes closer to instantiating Laplanche’s “priority of the other” than the Lacanian cut of signification.⁸⁸ If Barthes wants to escape from the top-down imposition of a rhythm by power, the late Pater—for all his association with “retreat”—wants to think of ways to live together that might *follow, rather than flee, from* this imposition. For, again, the temper of the “barrack-life” into which the Spartan boy is thrown must “beset” him—violently and formatively—before it can give way to another arrangement,⁸⁹ one that no longer militates against but instead facilitates seclusion, or what remains of it: an old wound. This besetting is rhythmic, as is shown by the pride of place given to music in Pater’s Sparta, where dance is “the perfect flower of their correction” (*PP* 225), and music serves “everywhere, not to alleviate only but actually to promote and inform, to be the very substance of their so strenuous and taxing habit of life” (*PP* 200).

For this reason, Pater writes, “Those who in other places had lost their taste amid the facile splendours of a later day, might here go to school again” (*PP* 213), where “here” points both to Sparta and to the page itself, the text of the lecture that he is delivering. Pater’s account *itself* thus becomes an instrument of reeducation, and if this aesthetic state sounds unappealing relative to Barthes’s, it helps to remember once more the “Conclusion” to which an earlier Pater was led in his book on the Renaissance. Instructively, as I have worked to show, that text’s

liberal individualism is replaced in *Plato and Platonism* by a regimentation that's formative, rather than ruinous, of "each mind." Reserve thus remains available in Spartan schools, as the outcome, not the avoidance, of regimentation. Like Marius in a later age and the boys reciting Horace in "Emerald Uthwart"'s English public school still later, "Lacedaemon's students model all that ritual and repeated, material and mechanical exercise can enable, all it can entail that is not the repetition of the same. And here Pater shows us why we might yet go to school again, in a phrase.

¹ Hugh of St. Victor, *Hugh of St. Victor on the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De Sacramentis)*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers [1951], 2007), 157; 159.

² Simone Weil, "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God," trans. Emma Craufurd, in *The Simone Weil Reader*, ed. George A. Panichas (New York: David McKay, 1977), 50.

³ All phrases in this sentence are taken from Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), as follows: "To burn always . . . ," from the "Conclusion," 120; "She is older . . . ," from "Leonardo da Vinci" 70; "All art . . . ," from "The School of Giorgione," 124 (emphasis in original); "Failure is to form habits," from the "Conclusion," 120; "art for art's sake," from the "Conclusion," 121. Further citations from *The Renaissance* are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *R*.

⁴ First published in 1877, "The School of Giorgione" was included in the third edition of *The Renaissance* (1888). On the phrase "art for art's sake" as it first appears in Swinburne's *William Blake: A Critical Essay* (1868), see Beaumont's explanatory notes in *R* 179.

⁵ W. B. Yeats, Introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, 1892-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), v-xlii.

⁶ Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism* (London: Macmillan, 1901), 198. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *PP*.

⁷ Walter Pater, *Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 214-215. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *MS*.

⁸ Pater forswears "phrase-worship" in "Style." Walter Pater, "Style," in *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 1-36; 26. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *A*. But the writing procedure that Yeats identifies and imitates attests to the author's abiding intimacy with this practice. Webb Keane's *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) has helped me to recognize Pater's way of working as an effort to register—and to affirm—the "recalcitrance of semiotic form" in a context where "any [such] recalcitrance" is pejoratively recast as "resistance to human actions," as impeding progress (176). I am thinking, for instance, of the essay on epitaphs that opens "Emerald Uthwart" as well as of the more liturgical and mechanical forms that, with Keane's help, this chapter proceeds to discuss. See also this moment late in *Marius the Epicurean*: "Tristem neminem fecit—he repeated to himself; his old prayer shaping itself now almost as his epitaph." Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*, ed. Michael Levey (New York: Penguin, 1985), 293. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *M*. For "Emerald Uthwart"'s epitaphs, see *MS* 197-198.

⁹ Quoted in Linda Dowling, "The Fatal Book," in *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 104-174; 133. I have also learned from Dowling's perceptive account of "style as enactment" in Pater (129), although I am primarily interested in the constraint, rather than the "delay" (130), enacted in Pater's sentences.

¹⁰ Keane, *Christian Moderns*, 6.

¹¹ On the centrality of education in English liberalism, see especially Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), e.g. 199.

¹² John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography*, ed. John M. Robson (New York: Penguin, 1989), 44. Mill's *Autobiography* was first published in 1873.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 44-45. For more on Pater and Mill, see Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 79-80. Here Dowling shows that "Mill's electrifying sanction of both a rich and various individuality and a bold personal liberty against the crushing despotism of habit and the mass [*sic*] came to be incorporated in works barely mentioning his name," including Pater's *Renaissance* (79). This chapter focuses on the texts written after *The Renaissance*, in which habit becomes associated with something other than crushing despotism, and bold personal liberty is no longer Pater's priority.

¹⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education* trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 112.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁶ Giovanni Gentile, *La riforma dell'educazione: Discorsi ai maestri di Trieste* (Bari: Laterza, 1920), 167. My translation.

¹⁷ William F. Shuter argues that, "Appearances to the contrary, 'Emerald Uthwart' was less a defense of a traditional mode of education against the threat of change than an effort to impose the patina of antiquity on a relatively recent educational innovation." William F. Shuter, *Rereading Walter Pater* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 87. The innovation Shuter has in mind is Hellenization, and his reading of the story emphasizes its engagement with Greek and especially Homeric sources. Shuter shows that such sources had not, in fact, long formed part of the curriculum in English public schools. My emphasis has been on the role of Latin, rather than Greek, in "Emerald Uthwart": a role whose importance Shuter's reading understates, even while Shuter notes that actually existing public schools centered on Latin instruction. Shuter uncovers other anachronisms to substantiate his claim that Pater here imposes "dubious antiquity on recent educational innovations," but these do not, in my view, detract from the polemical force of his story (86). Not even the most naive or literal-minded reader would mistake the affect-laden "Emerald Uthwart" for a faithful or naturalistic recording of late Victorian pedagogical practices; the text renders the school as it might yet be, not what it really was.

¹⁸ Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 67.

¹⁹ Ellis Hanson, "Pater Dolorosa," in *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 180. To be clear, Hanson's account of Pater's "slouching" is much more nuanced than my quoting his phrase out of context, and while paraphrasing a reductive critical narrative, may suggest.

²⁰ Jacques Khalip, "Pater's Sadness," *Raritan* 20.2 (2000): 137.

²¹ This is Giles Whiteley's claim in his "Conclusion" to *Aestheticism and the Philosophy of Death: Walter Pater and Post-Hegelianism* (London: LEGENDA, 2010), 148.

²² The *locus classicus* is T. S. Eliot's "Arnold and Pater," *The Bookman* 72.1 (1930), 1-7. But see also, for instance, Katie Hext's claim that *Marius* fails to provide a "sustainable" model for the reconciliation of aesthetics and ethics, in *Walter Pater: Individualism and Aesthetic Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 175. Hext's conclusion attests to the continuing vitality of the "retreat hypothesis": "ultimately Pater is unable to meet modernity on its own terms; ... in the end he retreats to art to shut out reality" (185). One aim of this chapter is to recast this "inability to meet modernity on its own terms" as a refusal. On the liberal provenance of the claims made in Pater's "Conclusion" and throughout *The Renaissance*, see Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art*, 75-89.

²³ See, for instance, Regina Gagnier, "The Law of Progress and the Ironies of Individualism in the Nineteenth Century," *New Literary History* 31.2 (2000): 315-336, 326-330; Heather Love, "Walter Pater's Backward Modernism," in *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 53-71; and Benjamin Morgan, "Aesthetic Freedom: Walter Pater and the Politics of Autonomy," *ELH* 77 (2010): 731-756.

²⁴ Shuter, *Rereading Walter Pater*, 79. One of the main goals of Shuter's study is to complicate the distinction between the early and the late Pater by showing that the latter's agendas are already prefigured in the former's works. "Nor," conversely, Shuter writes, "was the young Brasenose Fellow who presumed to publish *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* under his own name quite as dismissive of tradition as is often supposed" (90). Subsequent citations from Shuter are given parenthetically in the text.

²⁵ Matthew Kaiser, "Marius at Oxford: Paterian Pedagogy and the Ethics of Seduction," in *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desire*, ed. Laurel Brake et al. (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 2002), 196.

²⁶ For other readings of Pater as proto-gay, see Khalip, "Pater's Sadness," and Love, "Walter Pater's Backward Modernism."

²⁷ Yeats's reading remains continuous with those of Pater's contemporaries. For after its first appearance Pater's book was seen either to pose a threat, in the opinion of detractors, or, for apologists, to merit praise precisely on account of its author's power to make readers accept him for master. Favorably reviewing *The Renaissance* shortly after its publication in 1873, John Morley, for one, claimed resoundingly, if perhaps protesting a bit too much: "It is assuredly good for us to possess such a school"—and this even if Pater's "doctrine" could matter only to an educated, or initiated, few. "John Morley on Pater," in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R. M. Seiler (New York: Routledge, 1980), 70. Another reviewer, writing in response, countered that, like other apologists, Morley merely repeated "the gospel according to Mr Pater," and thus made "an admirable" but untrustworthy because altogether uncritical "Ali to Mr Pater's Mohammed." See "Z: Modern Cyrenaicism, 'Examiner,'" in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, 73-78; 75. Here significantly, as the fact of Morley-Ali's adherence is meant to show, the heretic is also, just as importantly, the father of an institutional religion. So, too, for Morley, the philosophical rebel was also the purveyor of a doctrine and the founder of a school.

²⁸ This phrase tropes the famous claim made in Pater's "The School of Giorgione": "*All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*" (R 124; emphasis in original).

²⁹ Thomas Wright, *The Life of Walter Pater* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), vol. 2, 112.

³⁰ Edward Thomas, *Walter Pater: A Critical Study* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913), 213.

³¹ Raymond Williams, "Mechanical," in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, revised edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 202. Williams's entry emphasizes the word's complicated history and notes that it "was earlier in English than *machine*," although after the mid-eighteenth century it becomes inseparable from the latter (201).

³² Quoted in Stefano Evangelista, "Rome and the Romantic Heritage in Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*," in *Romans and Romantics*, ed. Timothy Saunders et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 320. Evangelista reads *Marius* as continuous with, not critical of, Rousseau's foundational text.

³³ Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Allan Bloom, 112.

³⁴ Mill, *Autobiography*, 45.

³⁵ Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, in *Selected Poems*, ed. Christopher Ricks (New York: Penguin, 2007), V.1-8, 100.

³⁶ Marius thinks after his first visit to the Christian Cecilia's house: "Here, it might be, was, if not the cure, yet the solace or anodyne of his great sorrows" (M 234).

³⁷ In *Marius*, Pater again activates this sense of "exercise" indirectly: "He felt there ... the genius, the unique power of Christianity: in exercise then, as it has been exercised ever since ..." (M 235). Here it is "the genius, the unique power" that are exercised, but the verb's proximity to "Christianity" makes its cultic meaning manifest.

³⁸ I am remembering the moment in Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," trans. Alan Bass, in *Limited, Inc.*, ed. Gerald Graff (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1977), 1-23, when Derrida refers to "a certain

conventionality intrinsic to what constitutes the speech act itself.” “‘Ritual,’” Derrida goes on to claim in terms that resonate with the concerns of this chapter (which, however, follows Pater in finding some rituals more ritual than others, and thus takes distance from Derrida’s more generalized definition), “is not a possible occurrence ... but rather, *as* iterability, a structural characteristic of every mark” (15).

³⁹ And to the extent we haven’t, this is because the other side or doubled valence of “mechanical” is, like the educative potential of ritual, already latent in “Winckelmann”—in other words, because that essay is more complicated than it has been taken to be, and not because *Marius* simply confirms our received sense of religion’s opiate-administering simplicity. See, again, Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art*, 79.

⁴⁰ I note that the “dark chambers” that here make up *Marius*’ mind recall the prisons into which Pater dooms the individual subjects of his “Conclusion.” I discuss these “solitary prisoners” and Pater’s move away from this model of subjectivity in the last section of this chapter. Pater famously framed *Marius* as a sort of retraction of his “Conclusion”—or rather as a substitute for his initial retraction, a second-order retraction that enabled him to restore his afterword after having suppressed it: “This brief ‘Conclusion’ was omitted in the second edition of this book, as I conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall. On the whole, I have thought it best to reprint it here [in the third edition] ... I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by it” (R 177). Importantly, *Marius* represents a processual working-through rather than a once-and-done recantation. For rather than beginning where the Pater of the “Conclusion” leaves off, *Marius* must retrace various phases, including a phase highly qualified as “hedonist” (M 119-120), before arriving at the broader understanding meant to signal his graduation from the solipsistic conclusions reached in *The Renaissance*.

⁴¹ Quoted in Shuter, *Rereading Walter Pater*, 80. Further citations from Shuter are given parenthetically in the text. For a study of the fate of the examination in Victorian literature and its broader role in British culture during the 1860s and 1870s, see Cathy Shuman, *Pedagogical Economies: The Examination and the Victorian Literary Man* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). Shuman attends to the ambivalence of the exam as well as to its prevalence; drawing on the work of educational historians, she notes that the exam’s effects were anything straightforwardly democratizing: “The mid-nineteenth-century craze for exams ... owed much, of course, to the huge network of bourgeois campaigns to reform and rationalize British institutions, from Parliament to the Church of England. Support for examinations, however, by no means equaled support for democracy ... Historians of Victorian education agree that, for the most part, examinations legitimated older class and gender hierarchies, rather than transforming them” (10). Thus although undoubtedly “there is some link between the growing power of the middle class in mid-nineteenth-century British culture and the examination revolution,” of which the reforms at Oxford were a part, “the extent and nature of this link” remains debatable: “Victorian educational reform was, after all, a thoroughly top-down phenomenon, which ‘came from traditionally dominant classes—the landed gentry and aristocracy, assisted by the specific expertise of representatives of the professional groupings linked traditionally with these classes.’ ... In fact, the Education Committee’s Balliol-bred reformers often saw state-supported education as a hedge against the inevitable extension of the franchise” (220).

⁴² “[P]rogress is such improvement as can be verified by statistics, just as education is such knowledge as can be tested by examinations”: these definitions, offered by a zealous reformist in W. H. Mallock’s satirical novel *The New Republic* (New York: Scribner, Welford, & Armstrong, 1878), 23, neatly attest to the exam’s close association with progressive reform.

⁴³ Here Pater continues even while he rewrites the “brain-building” in “The Child in the House.” He does something similar in *Marius*, quoting or pretending to quote a “German mystic” whom scholars have been unable to identify: “For such an orderly soul, as life proceeds, all sorts of delicate affinities establish themselves, between herself and the doors and passage-ways, the lights and shadows, of her outward dwelling-place, until she may seem incorporate with it—until at last, in the entire expressiveness of what is outward, there is for her, to speak properly, between outward and inward, no longer any distinction at all” (226).

⁴⁴ On provisionality in Paterian subjectivity and in *Marius* in particular, see Benjamin Morgan, *The Matter of Beauty: Materialism and the Self in Victorian Aesthetic Theory* (University of California, Berkeley, 2010), 28, and Ellis Hanson, “Pater Dolorosa,” 169-228. Hanson’s characterization of *Marius*’ “philosophical conversions” as “perpetual spiritual rehearsals” first made me see the character’s development as distinctively provisional (207).

⁴⁵ Walter Pater, "Introduction," in Charles Lancelot Shadwell, *The Purgatory of Dante Alighieri (Purgatorio I-XXVII): An Experiment in Literal Verse Translation* (London: Macmillan, 1892), xx.

⁴⁶ T. S. Eliot, "Arnold and Pater," 6. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text. Here is Eliot's comment in context: "*Marius* itself is incoherent; its form is a number of fresh starts; its content is a hodge-podge of the learning of the classical don, the impressions of the sensitive holiday visitor to Italy, and a prolonged flirtation with the liturgy." Compare this assessment from a review in American *Harper's*: "had *Marius* only fallen in love he would have been much less absorbed in himself ... there would not have been this long tale of a subjective and contemplative life to tell." Quoted in Gagnier, "The Law of Progress and the Ironies of Individualism in the Nineteenth Century," 328. And on impersonality, see Pater, "Style," in *Appreciations*, 1-36: "If the style be the man, in all the colour and intensity of a veritable apprehension, it will be in a real sense 'impersonal.'"

⁴⁷ Already in 1873, Morley wrote of Pater's "doctrine," favorably comparing it to those of Newman and Ruskin on grounds that "it escapes their cramping narrowness": "It is pregnant with intellectual play and expansion, and it is this intellectual play and expansion that we require, before the social changes craved by so many can fully ripen." See "John Morley on Pater," *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, 70.

⁴⁸ An emphasis on inwardness and affect characterizes many recent takes on Pater, including Khalip, "Pater's Sadness," 137; Love, "Walter Pater's Backward Modernism," 53-71; and Benjamin Morgan, "Aesthetic Freedom." Even while they stress feeling's susceptibility to various kinds of externalization—the forging of a subjectivity that is no less political for being "ruined," in Love's case (71); embodied ascesis, in Khalip's; or the ongoing labor of aesthetic production, in Morgan's—all of these critics ultimately privilege interiority in Paterian aesthetics. (See, for instance, Morgan's claim that "for Pater, aesthetic experience is the affective moment in which outward becomes inward, in which our experience of the physical world becomes identical with who we are." This claim follows the acknowledgment that Pater also "pushes the distinction between inward and outward to its breaking point," but it also implicitly reinstates this same distinction ["Aesthetic Autonomy" 739].) Without discounting Pater's everywhere apparent interest in forms of inwardness, I want to highlight another interest: an interest in the "machinelike exteriority, the outward turn, which is retained in the German word for learning by heart, *auswendig lernen*." Paul de Man, "Sign and Symbol in Hegel's *Aesthetics*," *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (1982): 773.

⁴⁹ Yeats, Introduction, ix.

⁵⁰ On Shakespeare and his adapters, see Richard Halpern, "Hamletmachines," in *Shakespeare among the Moderns* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 227-288; on Blake and Wordsworth, see Steven Goldsmith, "Strange Pulse" and "Wordsworth's Pulsation Machine, or the Half-Life of Mary Hutchinson: Interlude on 'She was a Phantom of delight,'" in *Blake's Agitation: Criticism and the Emotions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 226-267. Pater himself writes as well that Wordsworth "often works up mechanically through a poem" to "the few perfect lines, the phrase, the single word perhaps" that makes the poem worthwhile (*A* 41). Apropos of Tennyson's "sad mechanic exercise," Peter McDonald writes: "If 'mechanic' brings with it ideas of eighteenth-century regularity, these include the notion of poetry in the shadow of Pope, where couplets and diction alike were often held to work automatically, shuttling back and forth between rhymes and antitheses." Peter McDonald, "Alfred Tennyson: Memory and Hope," in *Sound Intentions: The Workings of Rhyme in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 170. Hugh Kenner's *The Counterfeiters: An Historical Comedy* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1973) suggestively reads Pope and Swift as belonging to the same historical moment as Joyce, a moment defined by the rise of rationalism and the proliferation of all manner of simulating machines. On Yeats's mechanical bird, see Daniel Tiffany, *Toy Medium: Materialism and Modern Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 17-21.

⁵¹ Raymond Williams, "Mechanical," 202.

⁵² William Wordsworth, "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems*, in *The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Gill (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 600, 604.

⁵³ Susan Sontag, "On Style," in *Essays of the 1960s & 70s*, ed. David Rieff (New York: Library of America, 2013), 32.

⁵⁴ According to Paul de Man, “the machine is like the grammar of the text when it is isolated from its rhetoric. . . . There can be no use of language which is not, within a certain perspective[,] thus radically formal, i.e., mechanical, no matter how deeply this aspect may be concealed by aesthetic, formalistic delusions.” “Excuses (*Confessions*),” in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 294. For a recent instance, indebted to Derrida, see Forrest Pyle, “What the Zeros Taught: Emily Dickinson, Event-Machine,” in *Art’s Undoing: In the Wake of a Radical Aestheticism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 105-142.

⁵⁵ Linda Dowling, “The Fatal Book,” 111. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

⁵⁶ Walter Pater, “English Literature: Four Books for Students of English Literature,” *Essays from ‘The Guardian’* (London: Macmillan, 1901), 16.

⁵⁷ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* (London: Ward Lock, 1910), 115-116.

⁵⁸ Williams notes that “mechanical” comes to be opposed to “organic” only after having been nearly synonymous with it (202).

⁵⁹ Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Vintage, 1988), 52.

⁶⁰ Robert Crawford, “Pater’s *Renaissance*, Andrew Lang, and Anthropological Romanticism,” *ELH* 53.4 (1986): 873-874. Crawford focuses on Pater’s essay on Wordsworth and on the essays collected in *The Renaissance*, rather than on *Marius*, my focus here. See also this reference to “survivals” in “Lacedaemon,” where the quotation marks together with the attribution of the term to anthropology show Pater’s awareness of his borrowing from the discipline, even if at the time the idea of “survivals” was in the air: “There was a third sort of regulation visits the lads of Lacedaemon were driven to pay to those country places, the vales, the uplands, when, to brace youthful stomachs and develop resource, they came at stated intervals as a kind of mendicants or thieves, feet and head uncovered through frost and heat, to steal their sustenance under penalties if detected—a ‘survival,’ as anthropologists would doubtless prove, pointing out collateral illustrations of the same, from a world of purely animal courage and keenness” (*PP* 206). Compare *Marius* 168, a similarly marked use of “survivals.”

⁶¹ Linda Dowling, “Walter Pater and Archaeology: The Reconciliation with Earth,” *Victorian Studies* 31.2 (1988): 215. For another discussion of the temporality of survivals, see Georges Didi-Huberman, “The Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology,” *Oxford Art Journal* 25.1 (2002): 59-70.

⁶² Edward B. Tylor, “Survival in Culture,” in *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Art, and Custom*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1871), 63-100; 63-64. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *PC*.

⁶³ On the place of uprightness, or “ascent,” in the discourses of both liberalism and imperialism, and for an inspiring account of an alternative ethos of unheroic sacrifice and abjection, see Leela Gandhi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900-1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

⁶⁴ See Levey, Introduction to Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*, 23.

⁶⁵ Matthew Potolsky emphasizes the role of “sway” in *Marius*, especially in the episodes involving Flavian, Marius’ teacher, whose “charismatic pedagogy” Potolsky takes mainly to counter that of Pater’s novel itself. See Matthew Potolsky, “Fear of Falling: Walter Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* as a Dangerous Influence,” *ELH* 65.3 (1998): 707. Although I find Potolsky’s reading mostly persuasive, I read Flavian’s relationship to *Marius* as more complicated than his account suggests. This relationship entails identification at least as much as it entails differentiation and “infection” (716).

⁶⁶ In “Fear of Falling,” Potolsky notes another way in which Pater seems to negate his protagonist’s advancement: “Despite [Marius’] renunciation of Flavian’s aestheticism, and despite his movement at the end of the novel toward an acceptance of Christianity, he dies of the very plague—‘broken out afresh’ at his return home . . .—that killed his

former teacher. Marius's intellectual development seems, in this respect, but an extended incubation period for the germ planted by Flavian's teaching" (716).

⁶⁷ Considering the "complicity between aestheticism and fascism" (147), for instance, Giles Whitely claims: "Pater's aestheticism, in both its old and new form, is entrenched in ideology and carries with it the seeds of dangerous ideas: repression of alterity, negation of the self and other and the Idea above all." Whitely, *Aestheticism and the Philosophy of Death*, 148.

⁶⁸ Morgan, *The Matter of Beauty*, 26. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

⁶⁹ Williams, "Mechanical," 202.

⁷⁰ Hanson, "Pater Dolorosa," 179.

⁷¹ Talal Asad, "Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual," *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 55-79; 58.

⁷² This last phrase is from Keane, *Christian Moderns*, 6 *et passim*. See also Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Especially suggestive in the context of my argument about Pater are Asad's and Mahmood's discussions of "docility" and the "docile agent."

⁷³ Carolyn Williams, "Historical Novelty and *Marius the Epicurean*," in *Transfigured World: Walter Pater's Aesthetic Historicism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 204.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁵ Pater, "English Literature," in *Essays from 'The Guardian'*, 115.

⁷⁶ Compare Morgan's assertion that "the novel fails to offer reliable distinctions between the narrator, Pater, and Marius." Morgan, *The Matter of Beauty*, 28.

⁷⁷ I do not mean to suggest here that *Marius* is straightforwardly historicist. On the contrary, my argument throughout this chapter concerns Pater's interest in forms and practices that complicate linear, progressive understandings of historical time. The sense that *some* historical difference obtains, however, is crucial to Pater's pedagogy. It matters, for instance, that the event of Protestantism divides the time in which Marius is set from Pater's present.

⁷⁸ On equivalence in Pater, see Sigi Jöttkandt, "Effectively Equivalent: Walter Pater, 'Sebastian von Storck,' and the Ethics of Metaphor," *Nineteenth Century Literature* 60.2 (2005): 193-197. Jöttkandt usefully distinguishes between equivalence and identity (193). Her argument that Pater's work tends toward the former, however, also entails making a case for metaphor as a "fundamentally ... 'theological' trope" (179), a case that resonates with Williams's typological reading of Pater.

⁷⁹ The critical archive on secularism is extensive. See the texts cited in note 71 above, and for a distillation of recent debates, see Gil Anidjar, "Secularism," *Critical Inquiry* 33.1 (2006), especially 64-66. For reflections on the relationship between the critique of secularism and literary studies, see Michael Warner, "Uncritical Reading," in *Polemic: Critical or Uncritical*, ed. Jane Gallop (New York: Routledge, 2004), 13-38, and Gauri Viswanathan, "Secularism in the Framework of Heterodoxy," *PMLA* 123.2 (2008): 466-476.

⁸⁰ Again, Pater does not uncritically deploy the notion of "survivals" but rather displaces the Tylorian emphasis on "fact"—whether he had read Tylor or not. Writing from a contemporary anthropological perspective, Asad makes the doctrine of survivals an example of Protestant-inspired "decoding" (recasting ritual as about symbol rather than social practice) (59); my reading exempts Pater from this charge, since it attends precisely to the author's investment in religion as practice.

⁸¹ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 8-9.

⁸² Roland Barthes, *How to Live Together: Novelistic Simulations of Some Everyday Spaces: Notes for a Lecture Course and Seminar at the Collège de France (1976-1977)*, ed. Claude Coste, trans. Kate Briggs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 130. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

⁸³ I had the opportunity to verify this ease at the seminar “Alone-Together: The Timing of Capital and Approximate Communities,” which I co-organized with Suzanne Li Puma at the 2014 American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting (New York University, March 21-23, 2014). Such relative ease is also illustrated by Pyle’s banishment of Pater from *Art’s Undoing*. According to Pyle, Pater’s aestheticism represents primarily “something to be *espoused*” (2; emphasis in original), and this, Pyle writes, in his only other comment on the author, renders Pater’s prose incompatible with radicality: “I do not find a *radical* aestheticism at work in the novels, stories, or essays of ... Walter Pater” (15). Barthes, for his part, fits readily—and, I should say, beautifully—into Pyle’s theory.

⁸⁴ Danielle Allen, “Plato’s Paradigm Shifts,” in *The World of Prometheus: The Politics of Punishing in Democratic Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 280.

⁸⁵ See, again, Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art*, 75-89.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Dowling, “The Fatal Book,” 133.

⁸⁷ This reserve is, incidentally, like the reprieve from determination that I located earlier, elsewhere in “Lacedaemon,” in that it, too, affords relief from a repetitive system of education but also turns out to be made possible by this same system.

⁸⁸ Jean Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness*, ed. John Fletcher (New York: Routledge, 1999), e.g. 74. I am especially interested in the convergence of embodiment and depersonalization in Laplanche’s theory of seduction. Laplanche’s critique of Lacan centers on the latter’s disembodied and general understanding of language, which Laplanche undertakes to re-situate in the concrete encounter between the infant and the adult as “individual unconscious.” Jean Laplanche, *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*, trans. David Macey (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 126. At the same time, Laplanche advances a critique of familialism that decouples adult persons and pre-given, especially parental, roles. In *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*, for instance, Laplanche writes, “The fact that a child is brought up by *parents*, or even by *its* parents, is, ultimately, a *contingency*, even if it is rooted in biology and human history, and not a universal fact which is necessary in itself. ... *Ultimately* ... it is possible to become a human being without having a family; it is not possible to do so without encountering an adult world” (124; emphases in original). I note in this connection that there are “nurses” in Pater’s Sparta but no mothers named, and more generally that it matters more to Pater *that there are teachers* than that these teachers be particular kinds of people, related to students in predetermined ways. I should also note that Laplanche’s sense of “seduction,” derived by “*going back over Freud*” (16), provides a useful corrective to the much less threatening version of seduction on offer in Kaiser, “Marius at Oxford.” Whereas Kaiser repeatedly links seduction to “reciprocity,” seduction in Laplanche’s sense rules out reciprocity by definition, because it entails an encounter with a radically non-reciprocal, an enigmatic and inassimilable, message: a “signifier designified,” as in shorn of meaning, but not for all that powerless “to signify *to*” the child, who, however, remains himself too poor in signifiers to respond (44).

⁸⁹ Compare Pater’s citation, in “Style,” of this moment in Flaubert’s correspondence: “I am reading over again the *Æneid*, certain verses of which I repeat to myself to satiety. There are phrases there which stay in one’s head, by which I find myself *beset*, as with those musical airs which are for ever returning, and cause you pain, you love them so much. I observe that I no longer laugh much, and am no longer depressed. I am ripe. You talk of my serenity, and envy me. It may well surprise you. Sick, irritated, the prey a thousand times a day of cruel pain, I continue my labour like a true working-man, who, with sleeves turned up, in the sweat of his brow, beats away at his anvil, never troubling himself whether it rains or blows, for hail or thunder. I was not like that formerly. The change has taken place naturally, though my will has counted for something in the matter” (*A* 28-29; emphasis added).

Chapter Two

Among *Fanciulli*: Poetry, Pedantry, and Pascoli's *Paedagogium*

Dolce vagito novo

“Tu sei antichissimo, o fanciullo!” [You are so very ancient, o little boy!] - Giovanni Pascoli¹

Well-beloved and widely assigned by generations of Italian schoolteachers, Giovanni Pascoli has also been read for decades as having preached the gospel of the Child.² He has been remembered, that is, chiefly as the author of little, onomatopoeic, and easy-to-remember lyrics, and of the essay and *ars poetica* *Il fanciullino*, which seeks to provide such lyrics with an aesthetic, historical, and even psychological justification. First published serially and in part in 1897, then brought out in book form in 1903, *Il fanciullino* pays homage to the small child who lives in all of us—the little, little boy, as we might render the essay's doubly diminutive title term—and argues that poetry derives its peculiar and lasting power from its ability to speak to this *puer aeternus*, in his language.³

Indeed, *Il fanciullino*'s commitment to this language is so firm and programmatic that the text openly enacts the poetic phenomena it describes. Written in dialogue form, Pascoli's essay lets the little, little boy speak in verse, in his own voice. Thus allowed to have his say, the *fanciullino* periodically interrupts the exposition, like an improbably eloquent infant demanding attention:

*Io poco voglio; pur, molto: accendere
io su le tombe mute la lampada
che irraggi e conforti
la veglia dei poveri morti.*

*Io tutto voglio; pur, nulla: aggiungere
un punto ai mondi della Via Lattea,
nel cielo infinito;
dar nuova dolcezza al vagito. (54; italics in original)*

[I want a little bit; or rather, a lot: to light
on the mute tombs the torch
that might light up and comfort
the vigil of the poor dead.

I want everything; or rather, nothing: to reach
A point on the worlds of the Milky Way,
in the infinite sky;
to give new sweetness to the cry.]

Here the *fanciullino*'s petulance, registered in the repetition of “Io ... voglio,” is unmistakable, but offset by the way in which he cannily, chiasmatically reframes what he wants as really nothing much: merely “poco,” to begin with; then even less, “pur, nulla.” In their oscillation between a

little and a lot, and all and nothing, these lines thus make a *fort/da* game of what the essay's longer prose passages claim is poetry's key tendency: the tendency to effect an adequation between need and desire, and world and mind, so that the reader comes to understand—or rather to feel—that the “little” that one can expect to receive is plenty, and conversely that the “nothing” that life seems to grant is, in fact, “infinite.”

Such insights would seem to be anything but childish; on the contrary, they would seem to be attainable only as the fruit of mature (if still naive and sentimental) philosophical reflection. But Pascoli's language makes these insights seem accessible even—perhaps especially—to the untutored. For rhyme here works to achieve neat resolution, and thus to discourage the kind of tarrying with complexity typically associated with negative capability: aligning “conforti” with “morti” and thus preemptively assuaging the reader's fears for the latter; and opening the infantile “vagito” up to the expansive “infinito” in a way that seems meant to cradle in advance the crying baby, said here effectively to be in the whole world's hands. This is a far cry, then, from the ego-annihilating expanse of Giacomo Leopardi's “L'infinito.” Moreover, despite the one instance of hyperbaton (“io su le tombe mute la lampada”) and the lightly paradoxical back and forth or *fort/da* already referred to (whereby “poco” becomes “molto,” and “tutto,” “nulla”), the lines above make few syntactic, lexical, or logical demands. Lines like these would thus appear to address a minimally educated reader, whereas much of Pascoli's prose in *Il fanciullino* is erudite indeed. They would seem to be so simple that even the simplest, or youngest, of readers would learn from them and very possibly learn them by heart—and this, on account of their sweetness as well as their being served light.⁴

For like the *stilnovisti* who, inaugurating the Italian vernacular lyric tradition, made sweetness their shared poetic principle, Pascoli—here acting as ventriloquist or medium for the little, little boy—elevates *dolcezza* to the point where it does more than help the medicine go down. Sweetness becomes instead the means by which the infant's cry is made new—which is to say, made newly audible as something other than a primal scream. Indeed, whereas Lacanians and certain Romantics alike might hear the infant's cry as announcing the human being's originary and irreparable misalignment with the world, or the desire always already in excess of any possible satisfaction, Pascoli picks up another signal altogether.⁵ For him, the *vagito* is so susceptible of sweetening that it comes to bear, of all things, the promise of satiation; in its poetic rendition, at least, it says that there will be enough. Rewritten by the *fanciullino*, or transposed into his sweeter register, the *vagito* can thus be heard to repeat at a distance the injunction to grown men delivered in Pascoli's preface to the *Primi poemetti*: “Uomini, insomma contentatevi del poco” [Men, in a word, be content with the little bit] (*Poesie* 170).

That such sweetened verse sometimes becomes cloying, just as its injunctions become cliché, matters less, for my purposes here, than that, with phrases like “*nuova dolcezza*,” this verse signals its participation in the very canon that *Il fanciullino*'s (self-)infantilizing argument forswears.⁶ I have emphasized the densely intertextual nature of the lines above—their gesturing toward Leopardi as well as the *dolce stil novo*, to say nothing of the “*istruzioni, preghiere, pratiche devote, stimoli efficaci*” [instructions, prayers, devotional practices, and efficacious incentives] to which they also indirectly point—less to recast the verses' simplicity as deceptive than to give a sense of Pascoli's intimacy with the lyric and liturgical traditions on which he draws and to which he adds even while simplifying.⁷ I have wanted to show that Pascoli sustains this intimacy with tradition even at his most *fanciullesco*.⁸ The poetics of the *fanciullino* thus

does not entail the kind of return to origins that pretends to bypass all that has come between the ostensible source—in Pascoli’s case, the moment of the *vagito* defined as prior to the acquisition of speech, a time and place of phylogenic as well as ontogenetic infancy—and the moment of the poetic utterance itself. Rather than seeking to shed the layers of literary history in order to channel the *vagito* in its primal purity, Pascoli foregrounds these layers, making a virtue of the poetic necessity of rendering the pre-verbal cry in writing.

So it turns out that the little, little boy is hyper-literate. This strange fact, related as it is to Pascoli’s everywhere-apparent erudition, has not escaped critics’ attention. Still, I would argue, Pascoli’s reception has tended to downplay the ways in which the poet’s erudition becomes the *fanciullino*’s own. Similarly, criticism of Pascoli’s work has tended to ignore the products of what I am calling his pedantry in favor of what it considers his more compelling and canon-worthy work.⁹ This has even, and improbably, meant aligning Pascoli’s Latin poems (which are nothing if not learned) with his famously accessible vernacular verse, in order to distinguish the former from mere academic “exercises.”¹⁰ Thus even critics who have read *Il fanciullino* against the grain, redefining its central figure as ambivalent or dead or nonexistent—or giving the letter, rather than the voice, pride of place—have not addressed the contexts of the little, little boy’s literacy.¹¹ That is, they have treated the letter in Pascoli’s essay, and the fact of the boy’s being lettered, as matters of language as such rather than as embedded in any kind of institutionality. Sidelining the polemics, pedagogical practices, and indeed poetics that emerged from within the specific institutionality of the school—and consigning Pascoli’s work on and among school children to a secondary and negligible place—these readings have insisted on the *fanciullino*’s blankness and purity.¹²

In what follows, I work to complicate this picture. I claim that Pascoli looks to the child not because the latter is blank or pure or prior to all forms of institutionality, but rather because he is educable in a particular sense: awaiting less the development of his individual faculties than an actualization of the collective past that has the potential to enable release from the present impasse. This form of educability becomes vividly apparent if we take the relatively minor *Paedagogium*, rather than *Il fanciullino*, to be emblematic of Pascoli’s project, whose implications this chapter sets out to consider. Before turning directly to *Paedagogium*, a short narrative poem written in Latin the year *Il fanciullino* was first published in full (1903), I situate the text in several critical and cultural contexts, past and present. First looking to an essay by Giorgio Agamben that takes Pascoli’s “Pensieri scolastici” as its point of departure, I then ask what “scholastic,” an adjective that Agamben elides, might have meant for the poet and his contemporaries, which also means asking why his work has elicited an ongoing scholastic response.¹³ I then read *Paedagogium* as a text that offers a number of implicit answers to these questions, answers that are surprising not least because of their distance from the *dolcezza* or straightforward sweetness that Pascoli’s readers, following the *fanciullino*, have been led to expect.

Va, pensiero

... the path in which he treads
Is choked with grammars.

- William Wordsworth¹⁴

With good reason, then, in light of *Il fanciullino*'s lesson, as this lesson has been understood and passed on, Pascoli has been regarded as the high priest of the Italian strain of what William Empson, following Wyndham Lewis, calls "child-cult." Empson characterizes this cult as pastoral's last redoubt in modernity and traces its emergence to modern, scientific rationality's becoming so widespread as "to seem narrow and unescapable."¹⁵ Child-cult, according to Empson, "depends on a feeling, whatever may have caused that in its turn, that no way of building up character, no intellectual system, can bring out all that is inherent in the human spirit, and therefore that there is more in the child than any man has been able to keep" (260-261). In Pascoli's case, as I have tried to show, this "more" is paradoxical in that it has to do with the capacity to make do with less, a capacity that atrophies, according to Pascoli, as the child matures and the inner *fanciullino* who survives him is forgotten, his voice drowned out by the adult world's demands. Empson's formulation nevertheless nicely captures what most readers have made of Pascoli's poetics of the *fanciullino*. By this account, the child is less the Wordsworthian "father of the man" than the latter's loser son, one whose lot is precisely *not* to get to "keep / [his] heritage."¹⁶ For, as Empson notes, the realization of the child's potentials, his "building up" and indeed *Bildung*, entail the relinquishment of at least some of "all that is inherent" in him. Education thus defined requires a squandering of inner riches and given possibilities that is also a veritable sacrifice: of "native poetry" if not of the child himself (260). ("I remember believing," Empson confides, "that I should have to die in order to grow up, and thinking the prospect very disagreeable" [268].)

Critics have thus tended to read Pascoli as mourning—or as commemorating in the effort to hold onto or regain—the "more" whose renunciation Empson locates at the origin of "child-cult." The poet has been seen to record and variously to respond to "the progressive and inevitable loss of [childish] capability through time."¹⁷ I have begun to argue, to the contrary, that Pascoli makes particular modes of building up and bringing out, to redeploy Empson's phrases, central to his poetics. This is not to say that he wholeheartedly embraces or imparts intact an already-extant "intellectual system." But he avails himself of—and, less willfully, betrays his location within—such a system in ways that the received critical narrative obscures even when it emphasizes Pascoli's investment in historical continuity.¹⁸ For there is a pedagogical specificity to the "system" that the poet's work indexes, one that the celebration of the *fanciullino* forgets even at its most sophisticated. The "system" in question is, I want to argue, a school system, attention to which lets us see Pascoli's child anew. Indeed, attention to this system shows us that the figure that we took to be a version of the small "Seer blest" addressed in Wordsworth's "Intimations" ode turns out to be much more like that English poet's infant prodigy, whose path is "choked with grammars."

Before considering the traces of the school system that are left in *Paedagogium* and elsewhere in Pascoli's work, I want to ask what happens—what is lost and what is gained—when these traces are ignored. This will also mean establishing the persistence of the critical account

according to which Pascoli assigns redemptive power—rather than, say, homework—to the child as such.¹⁹ That even the most astute followers of the *fanciullino* continue to see Pascoli as a “child-cult” leader—more concerned with the “more” that is lost with time’s passage than with the labor of “bringing out” what’s left—is illustrated by Agamben’s “Pascoli and the Thought of the Voice,” to which I now turn.

Agamben frames his essay as a meditation on one of Pascoli’s more startling claims: that “la lingua della poesia è sempre una lingua morta. Curioso a dirsi: una lingua morta che si usa a dare maggior vita al pensiero!” [the language of poetry is always a dead language. Strange to say: a dead language that is used to give greater life to thought!] (*Prose* 636; qtd. in *EP* 62; *CI* 62).²⁰ This claim—made, again, in a polemical piece by Pascoli called “Pensieri scolastici”—prompts Agamben to situate “Pascoli’s poetry in a dimension in which what is at issue is no longer simply his poetics but his dictation: the dictation of poetry, if we mean by this term (which we take from the vocabulary of medieval poetics, but which has never ceased to be familiar to the Italian poetic tradition) the experience of the originary event of speech itself” (*EP* 63; *CI* 62). Thus from the outset Agamben displaces Pascoli’s poetics—or rather, “no longer simply his poetics,” where “simply” signals that poetics has been demoted, recast as that which we have, or ought to have, graduated from. Perhaps taking his cue from Pascoli’s apparently dehistoricizing “always” (“la lingua della poesia è *sempre* una lingua morta”), Agamben seeks to divest poetic language of all worldly historical engagements and encumbrances, and to restore it—or show that Pascoli has already restored it—to a prior, indeed an “originary,” location.²¹

Proceeding in typically paratactic fashion—and with characteristic erudition—Agamben traces the outlines of this location by drawing on Paul and Augustine, connecting Pascoli’s “dead language” to the former’s reflections on *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues, and to the latter’s understanding of the *vocabulum emortuum*, or “dead word.” Each of these terms designates a word that has shed its semantic weight but is not for all that nonsensical. For, according to Agamben, it is crucial in both Augustine and Paul that the reader or listener retain a sense *that* the foreign or outmoded word *once signified*, or still signifies somewhere, in some other context. This sense prevents the reader or listener from dismissing or tuning out the alien word, the instance of *glossolalia* or example of a *vocabulum emortuum*, as mere sound. Whereas Paul cautions Christians against the “barbarous” incomprehension that results from such a word’s use—a speech situation in which words can be heard to signify without their being understood—Augustine, for his part, credits the dead word with the salutary potential to activate the soul’s curiosity and even incite its love, a love Agamben predicates “as will to know”: “The more the word is registered, without being fully so, the more the soul therefore desires to know that residue of knowledge” (qtd. in *EP* 63; *CI* 62). The *vocabulum emortuum* thus has a claim on the latent “desire to know” greater than that of the already-known word, on the one hand (for, Augustine maintains, the soul “does not love” the “syllables he already knows”), or, on the other, the nonsense word or mere sound or “voice”: for if the soul “knew only the existence of this voice and not *that it signified something*, the soul would have nothing to search for once it had perceived the sensible sound as best it could. But since the soul already knows that there is not only a voice but also a sign it wants to have perfect knowledge of it” (qtd. in *EP* 63-64; *CI* 62-63; emphasis added).

Passages like these indeed shed light on Pascoli’s “lingua morta,” even while they are clearly continuous with Agamben’s abiding interest “in the very fact that human beings speak,

that there is language and opening to sense beyond, before, or, rather *in* every determinate event of signification.”²² Augustine’s *vocabulum emortuum* constitutes, after all, an “event of signification” that highlights this basic fact with singular clarity: in order for the search for the dead word’s signification to begin, the fact “that it signified” must first be known or at least intuited. So this first step’s *status as a separate step* in the process of coming to know the dead word’s meaning—its being a precondition without which this process would never get underway—lets Agamben underscore “that there is.” Indeed, “that there is language” is, in the passage from Augustine that Agamben discusses, not merely a precondition; it is even a fact privileged over signification, over the semantic, which becomes little more than an afterthought, the mere “residue of knowledge.” One gets the sense, that is, that for Augustine as well as for Agamben the *process* of desiring to know matters much more than its end result, knowing itself. Thus Pascoli, recast as Augustine’s legatee, comes to teach a “lesson,” or an endless series of them, in this specific sense (*EP* 74): he seeks not to impart knowledge in a once-and-done way, but rather to awaken and keep alive the desire for lessons. Hence Pascoli’s “greater life for thought,” as Agamben understands it.

Critics since Gianfranco Contini, to whom Agamben dedicates his essay, have noted the paradoxical convergence of “pregrammatical” and “postgrammatical” elements in Pascoli’s poetry (*Poesie* lxix). This poetry privileges, on the one hand, words that are onomatopoeically imitative of nature—of birdsong, most famously—or outright “infantile,” and, on the other, learned constructions of various kinds: obscure ornithological terms; dialectal and sometimes even apparently idiolectal usages requiring glossaries; foreign-language phrases; Latinisms and, more radically, or reactionarily, entire texts written in Latin. Agamben works to show that both of these types of utterances can be defined as “dead” in Augustine’s desire-activating sense, since both “pre-” and “postgrammatical” structures stage “language’s departure from its semantic dimension and its return to the original sphere of the pure intention to signify [*di significato*] (not mere sound, but rather language and thought of the voice alone)” (*EP* 67). The “pre-grammatical” structures may seem to be devoid of, rather than on the way to, signification, but Agamben stresses their “writeable” nature. He argues, *contra* Contini, that onomatopoeia is not, in fact, “pregrammatical” but grammatical through and through, where the “*gramma*, the letter, which itself does not signify,” becomes “the cipher of an intention to signify that will be accomplished” (*EP* 69), but where this accomplishment, again, is secondary to the “desire to know” first stimulated by the cipher. “It is therefore not truly a matter of phono-symbolism,” Agamben continues, countering another commonplace in Pascoli criticism, “but rather a matter of a sphere so to speak beyond or before sound, a sphere that does not *symbolize* anything as much as it *indicates* a pure intention to signify, that is, the voice in its originary purity. This is an indication that has its place neither in mere sound nor in signification but rather, we might say, in pure *grammata*, in pure letters” (*EP* 67; emphases in original).

But what are “pure letters”? And what is “a pure intention to signify”? How could a signifying intention, however inspiring, ever attain purity, shedding all the baggage of the semantic and especially all ties to the pragmatic en route to language’s “original sphere”? Admittedly, all of this is, in Agamben’s account, implicitly aspirational, rather than accomplished: using the language of departure and return, Agamben foregrounds Pascoli’s movement toward prior “purity” rather than the poet’s fixed abode there. But the fact remains: Agamben’s is a “voice” in a vacuum, or at least one suspended in an “originary” state, all but

uncontaminated by the significance to which it nevertheless points. For, as Agamben repeats, Pascoli's poems everywhere engage in an indexical operation: they indicate more than they symbolize. But "Pascoli and the Thought of the Voice" treats indexicality as though it were a matter of pointing to *intention*—the "pure intention to signify"—rather than to *institutions* and other sites within the social world. In his desire to highlight the "desire to know," Agamben denies the importance of such sites—sites in which there is no "pure letter," because the letter is always and irretrievably—indeed, originarily—caught up in scenes of "intersubjective violence," in struggles for and negotiations with literacy.²³

Of course, Agamben's interest is first and foremost in Pascoli's disclosure of structural, rather than historical, "experience" (*EP* 74; *CI* 72). It is therefore unsurprising—on the contrary, it makes perfect disciplinary sense—that the philosopher, writing in a Heideggerian vein, sets aside questions relating to context and instead treats Pascoli's "thought of the voice" as though it were an instantiation or emanation of the "other breath" in "What are Poets For?": "The other breath is no longer solicitous for this or that objective thing; it is a breath for nothing."²⁴ Here "for nothing" opens slightly to accommodate the purpose that Agamben, following Pascoli, allows poetry to serve: that of giving "greater life to thought." My point, however, is that for Agamben this purpose does not and cannot constitute an "objective thing," since, in its capacity as "dictation" rather than mere "poetics," poetry has long since left all such things behind. In any case, here I have reverted to Jacques Derrida's notion of "the violence of the letter"—his insistence, in *Of Grammatology*, on writing as "intersubjective violence"—in order to suggest that there are resources available within philosophy for nuancing and correcting Agamben's account, even for taking his decontextualizing reading, so to speak, back to school.²⁵

To point out that Pascoli *was*, even in his verse, solicitous for objective things is thus not necessarily, reflexively to refuse philosophy, any more than it is to suggest, with soulless literal-mindedness, that Pascoli's work was fully determined by the "presente e pratico, ... reale e utile" [present and practical, ... real and useful] against which his "Pensieri scolastici" protest (*Prose* 636). It is instead to point out that something critical (in every sense) falls away from Pascoli's poetics when such solicitations are ignored or bypassed in the rush to "metaphysics" (*EP* 74). My next section further elaborates this claim by rereading "Pensieri scolastici." Whereas Agamben's rhetoric of purity tends effectively to keep the *fanciullino* in his place (even while Pascoli's little, little boy is redefined as "dead," kept alive only paradoxically, in his loss), rereading Pascoli's essay in another context makes it possible to follow this figure's movements and to see his setting to work as poetry itself is, to re-inflect Pascoli's definitional claim once more, "*used* to give greater life to thought."

Dust Called Erudite

Dunque, lo Stato pedagogo? [So, the pedagogue State?] – Giovanni Gentile²⁶

Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg has emphasized the peculiar centrality of the school in Italian political discourse and national life following unification.²⁷ Given its belated formation, Stewart-Steinberg shows, and its trailing behind northern European nations when it came to modernization—whether defined as revolution, Reformation, or industrialization—Italy imagined itself, during and arguably long after the last decades of the nineteenth century, as "a

state [still] in search of a nation” (PE 1). In this context, schools became the means by which a national character was to be built (PE 17), and the fact of historical belatedness made up for. At least, this was the idea: in the work of theorists and practitioners ranging from Francesco De Sanctis to Maria Montessori, pedagogical projects of various kinds came to represent the cures for what ailed Italians, for the “decadence” previously deemed, as in De Sanctis’s worried diagnosis, all but “incurable” (qtd. in PE 15). “For De Sanctis,” Stewart-Steinberg writes, “the school must provide a training in nationhood, just as the nation itself must function as a great school” (PE 17). Meanwhile, for Montessori, “Even when the focus was on the literal education of children, . . . the metonymic referent was in fact a nation composed only of children,” but children who were to be educated *out* of “perpetual infancy” (PE 3). A double movement in these educational theories thus put new pressure on “the literal education of children” while also *generalizing* education—to the extent of rendering it figurative, or metonymic, in Stewart-Steinberg’s gloss—so that it was seen to take place in all spheres of civic life, rather than simply in schools. Anticipating Gramsci’s redrawing of the boundaries of the classroom to encompass all “relations of hegemony”—his contention that “the educational relationship should not be restricted to the field of . . . strictly ‘scholastic’ relationships” but rather “exists throughout society as a whole and for every individual relative to other individuals”—the pedagogies that Stewart-Steinberg considers also had practical implications for generations of Italian youth (and not only Italian youth, since Montessori’s methods, at least, traveled far).²⁸

These were new schools, then, for the *nuova Italia*’s new national dispensation. This is also to say that the reformers’ projects positioned themselves against *old* schools, the institutions of classical education that came to be seen increasingly as outmoded relics of an obsolete past. This past, its critics contended, ought to have been left behind long ago, and was one that the newly modern nation would finally enable its citizens to outgrow, if only, paradoxically, in and through a process of national nursery-building. The reformers thus proposed progressive solutions to problems that they blamed the old schools for having worsened, if not caused: the problems of historical belatedness, on the one hand, and, on the other, of the bankruptcy or even nonexistence of national character. For, the reformers’ logic went, the old schools could not possibly have produced national subjects equipped for modernity or for participation in political life, when these schools sought first and foremost to ensure the maintenance of ossified tradition. This maintenance was achieved by means that would come to be associated with “instruction” over and against the “education” that was, in some influential reformers’ accounts, including Gentile’s, *Bildung*-inspired and thus northern European in its provenance, forward-looking and thus in touch with the times. True education in this vein promoted individual and collective progress, moving the young scholar, in Gentile’s words, “ever forward, ever farther, and making him in this way ever more a man.” By contrast, the “material, mechanical, spiritually worthless,” intellectually contentless, “fragmentary and inorganic” methods of instruction—figured as somehow both developmentally arresting and already dead—tended to impede the nation’s advancement as well as that of the child left behind.²⁹ Whatever their differences (and these were considerable, since they came from the right and the left alike), the reformers were thus united in defining classical education as a thing of the past and in making the old school—understood as a place good for nothing but “the learning by heart of Latin grammar and of philosophy and literature manuals”—the target of their critiques (PN 24). All agreed that this institution should give way to one better suited to the needs of the modern nation.

These reformist critiques were made that much more urgent by the fact that classical schools had enjoyed hegemonic status at the moment of the Italian state's formation. Far from being always already marginal, these schools had been seen as the best purveyors of culture to members of the administrative as well as learned professions—to those who would constitute the *classi dirigenti* and make the functioning of the new nation possible as well as to those who, in their dustier, doctoral way, would continue their educations and go on to keep the memory of the classical tradition alive (IC 19-20). As education was democratized, so, too, was instruction in Greek and Latin made into the means by which *all* educable social classes were to be elevated—with the result, in the reformers' view, that many were schooled in irrelevance, given unrealistic expectations, or otherwise ill equipped for modernity.

However, this schooling first had to prevail in order to have a chance to fail: indeed, a phase of relative stability for the classical school had preceded the reformers' perception of its disappointing results. High hopes for the old school—"alte speranze originarie" [high original hopes], as one critic calls them—had initially been circulated and taken seriously.³⁰ As Gaetano Bonetta notes, during the early years of the liberal regime, classical studies in elementary and secondary schools were thought to fulfill a crucial nation-building function, such that to these studies alone some public figures attributed the "facoltà di poter condurre in porto gli obiettivi educative di ordine culturale e politico necessari per lo sviluppo della nazione" [power to be able to bring to fruition the educational goals of a cultural and political nature that were necessary for the development of the nation] (IC 19). By means of study in Greek and Latin language and literature, as a starry-eyed 1879 *disegno di legge* projects, a national middle class could be consolidated; without this study, on the contrary, no "catena d'unione" [chain of union] capable of joining this class could be forged, "né si elevasse da tale studio per dire così un'atmosfera commune nella quale tutte respirino le menti della nazione" [nor would there be raised a common atmosphere in which all the minds of the nation could breathe, so to speak] (qtd. in IC 20).

But if during the years immediately following the founding of the nation, the classical school was seen to promise fresh air—indeed, to be the medium without which the minds of the nation would never breathe free and the Italian middle class would never be made—by the turn of the century the situation had changed, and reformers with various intellectual priorities and political allegiances had come to see the school as asphyxiating for its students and impeding of the progress of the newly united nation. Hopes had been dashed. The classical curriculum was confining; there was, indeed, one V. E. Orlando opined, no other way to express what it was: "Ora i sistemi attualmente vigenti hanno costretto (è la parola) dentro la scuola classica tutta una moltitudine, che sino a mezzo secolo fa non sentiva alcun bisogno di procurarsi un titolo di media cultura" [Now the systems currently in force have constrained (that's the word) within the classical school a whole multitude, which even a half century ago felt no need to obtain a degree in middle-brow culture] (634). Thus, for some opponents of the old school, it was precisely this institution's becoming-democratic that had led, by way of a "deplorabile e pernicioso affollamento" [deplorable and pernicious crowding] (635), elsewhere called "ipertrofia degenerativa" [degenerative hypertrophy] (632), to this school's decline.

For others, including those whose initiatives Stewart-Steinberg privileges, the old school's decline stemmed from its remaining stuck in its ways, committed to millennially old model of culture, and closed to the scientific and vocational alternatives that modernity both

opened up and made requisite, rather than elective. Whatever their differences, though, critics of the old school were united in their sense of this school's failure to deliver on its promises. They were also agreed on the disastrous consequences of such failure, seeing in it the "fallimento di una politica culturale italiana che era stata attivata per la 'costruzione della nazione'" [collapse of an Italian cultural politics that had been activated for the 'construction of the nation']. "I movimenti tellurici della politica italiana di fine secolo" [The movements of Italian politics at the end of the century], Bonetta sums up, "la comparsa di nuovi soggetti politici, hanno messo in luce la scarsa produttività ideologica del tradizionale classicismo, la sua scarsa tensione politica, giacché troppo affidamento si era fatto sulla diffusione di patrimoni culturali erroneamente ritenuti nazionali e che con tante difficoltà attecchivano nel 'senso comune' popolare. Occorreva in breve cambiare strada" [the appearance of new political subjects, shed light on the ideologically unproductive nature of traditional classicism and its scarce political force, since too much faith had been placed in the diffusion of a cultural patrimony erroneously held to be national, one that only with difficulty took root in the "common sense" of the people. It was necessary, in short, to change course] (IC 50). But if this sense that an impasse had been reached and that it was therefore time to change directions was widespread, it was by no means universally shared. The reformists were united not only in their recognition of a crisis in cultural politics, but also in their *opposition* to those for whom change to the old school's time-honored curriculum spelled disaster. A reformist consensus had emerged, then, but reformists still had a war to wage—a "lotta" [struggle] to pursue (Orlando 633)—given the antagonism that had by then hardened into an "antica e inevitabile antitesi tra conservatori e riformisti" [ancient and inevitable antithesis between conservatives and reformists] (Orlando 631). Thus even moderns were forced to admit that their quarrel with the ancients had become ancient.

First published in 1896 in *La rassegna scolastica*—a journal advertised as "dedicated to Primary and Secondary Schools"—Pascoli's "Pensieri scolastici" plainly emerges from within this embattled context.³¹ Indeed, from the first, the essay marks itself as part of a counteroffensive or rearguard action meant to defend the much-maligned old school: "Perché la guerra è contro le lingue morte, contro gli studi liberali in nome del presente e pratico, del reale e utile" [Because the war is against dead languages, against the liberal arts (and waged) in the name of the present and practical, of the real and useful].³² With hyperbole that verges on the hysterical, Pascoli all but declares that the sky is falling:³³ "Il lavoro di demolizione è cominciato: tolta una pietra, un'altra cadrà, una terza crollerà. Così si sfascerà la casa tra un nuvolo di quella polvere che chiamano erudita" [The work of demolition has begun: with one stone removed, another will fall, and a third will collapse. Thus the house will be smashed amid a cloud of that dust that they call erudite] (*Prose* 636). The joke here is on the reformers, because dust was, in their discourse, what attached to those in Pascoli's camp—the pedants who adhered to traditional methods—not to their own modern and progressive educational undertakings. That the reformers are here said to be the ones *producing* such dust—sending it up from the edifice that they're speedily destroying—means that their claim to be cleaning house is rendered suspect. At the very least, in Pascoli's image (and in keeping with the force of the distancing "chiamano," which suggests misattribution), the progressive educators are complicit in making the messes that they undertake to fix. For if it weren't for the demolition, erudite dusts long since

settled might still be there—Pascoli implicitly grants that libraries might still need airing out—but they would not constitute a cloud.

Such is life, though, the poet concedes. Or such, at least, is the place—the impasse—from which he begins, as he surveys a scholastic scene characterized by widespread discouragement on the part of teachers, caused by distrust or faithlessness (“diffidenza”) on the part of students and parents. The latter, Pascoli complains, do not believe in “the utility, never mind the necessity” of classical studies anymore, now that dead languages have fallen into disfavor, or rather come under attack (*Prose* 636). Worrying about the fate of poetry in this context—and here the poet makes the claim that Agamben analyzes, that “la lingua della poesia è sempre una lingua morta ... una lingua morta che si usa a dare maggior vita al pensiero!” [the language of poetry is always a dead language ... a dead language that is used to give greater life to thought]—Pascoli suggests that the assault on classical education and on dead languages more broadly is underwritten by an ideology of modern exceptionalism, a historical arrogance that he proceeds to deride in no uncertain terms: “Sembra a quasi tutti di vivere ... in un instante solenne dei millenni umani, in cui si debba avverare ciò che non si è veduto mai e né pensato; e in cui i dati dell’esperienza e della storia non valgono più nulla in faccia all’eccezione della nostra età” [It seems to almost everyone that he is living ... in a solemn moment in human history, one in which what was never before seen or thought of should be realized; and in which the facts of experience and of history do not count for anything anymore in the face of the exception of our age] (*Prose* 637). At such a juncture, to try to counter the ideology of progress by insisting on the past’s importance is to have lost the battle in advance. For “almost everyone” already knows to recognize such insistence as merely reactionary, and it is difficult, even for Pascoli, to imagine how, in a field thus set up, the “facts of history and of experience” could ever compete with the new and never-before-seen. To be for the latter is to breathe free in a rush of collective fate-determination and inter-generational rupture; to side with tradition, with “experience and history,” on the contrary, is to have to breathe in an atmosphere of dust, among pedant parents.

All of which makes it necessary to refuse the terms deployed by the enemies of the old school, but also leads Pascoli to dismiss the “solite ragioni così facilmente ribattute” [usual reasons so easily repeated] to defend tradition (*Prose* 638). In place of the standard defenses—the appeals to the moral authority of the classics or their character-building or citizen-forming function—“Pensieri scolastici” proposes a much bolder and broader set of arguments:

bisogna essere persuasi che i nostri studi hanno radice in un sentimento umano così primitivo e pertinace, e rispondono a una tale necessità intima del nostro essere, che per andar di tempo e per mutare di forme la società non potrà mai escludere dall’educazione de’ suoi novelli ‘migliori’ le lingue morte e le letterature antiche.

[one must be persuaded that our studies have their root in such a primitive and tenacious human sentiment, and respond to such an intimate necessity of our being, that despite the passing of time and the changing of its forms society will never be able to exclude dead languages and ancient literatures from the education of its ‘best’ children].

Crucially, Pascoli's wording here leaves open the possibility that these arguments are meant to have more strategic value than essential validity: that one "must be persuaded" of the old school's speaking to "primitive and tenacious" parts of us not because it actually *does* speak in this way, but rather because one has to believe *something* if one is to keep teaching Greek—and make the case for such teaching—"in the face of the exception of our age" and the widespread *diffidenza* to which faith in this exception leads. I note the potentially instrumental status of the reasons that Pascoli sets forth in order to correct Agamben's tendency to treat the poet's claims as though they always bore on the essential. Ultimately, however, I am less interested in distinguishing tactics from truth claims than in pointing to the *generalizing* movement that the above-quoted passage initiates.

This movement continues as Pascoli returns to but also revises his earlier claim that "the language of poetry is always a dead language":

Lingue morte! letterature antiche! Dov'è la lingua che non possa dirsi morta o morente? Ogni, non solo scrivente, ma parlante, tende a usare le parole del fondo comune in un modo suo proprio: una metafora è, per la sua parte, già la trasformazione d'una lingua. Comincia per uno e per pochi, poi per molti, infine per tutti, il trapasso ideologico per il quale una parola muore per un senso e nasce per un altro. ... Dove è il presente d'una lingua? πάντα ῥεῖ. Come si potrebbe fissare l'espressione del pensiero, specialmente nei bisogni intellettuali, per la durata d'almeno di una generazione, se pur nell'andare avanti non ci volgessimo tratto tratto indietro? (*Prose* 641)

[Dead languages! ancient literatures! Where is the language that cannot be called dead or dying? Not only each writer, but also each speaker, tends to use the words from the common fund in his very own way: a metaphor is, for its part, already the transformation of a language. It begins with one and with a few, then with many, and finally (ends) with everyone: the ideological transition (or trespass) by which a word dies to one sense and is born to another ... Where is the present of a language? πάντα ῥεῖ. How could the expression of a thought, especially in intellectual needs, be fixed even for the duration of a generation, if in going forward we didn't face backward from to time?]

Here it is not merely "the language of poetry," but rather language as such that is said—exasperatingly—to be "dead or dying." Pascoli figures linguistic change as so constant and unstoppable as to preclude any fixed linguistic "present," and implies that, since such a present is constitutively lacking, language must be always already past, and literature effectively "ancient" even at the moment when a word is first "born to" a new sense. This conclusion is striking not least because of the way in which it undoes the very opposition that "Pensieri scolastici" would seem to require in order to defend instruction in dead languages. For if all languages, ancient and modern, were really already dead and all literatures really already ancient, then there would be no need—or at least no pressing need—to preserve the *particular* dead languages and ancient literatures at the center of the classical school's curriculum. It's not clear, then, why Greek and Latin should continue to be privileged once they are defined as mere instances or illustrations of

a universal linguistic phenomenon. Wouldn't this make *all* instruction, conducted in whatever language, instruction in dead language, and thus render Pascoli's whole argument irrelevant, his breath wasted?

At the end of the passage that I have just quoted, Pascoli provides an implicit answer to these objections. That "ideological" change is unstoppable, the poet has concluded, means that all languages are "dead or dying" if you stop to think about it. And dead languages turn out to enable you to stop to think about it. Reverting to the would-be Heraclitean notion—also, interestingly, a cliché³⁴—that everything is in flux ("πάντα ῥεῖ," "panta rhei"), Pascoli in fact *arrests* the flow of his prose, thus performing in advance the "fixing of expression" that his next sentence will go on to address. For even while the text seems to take for granted a reader with good-enough Greek, the code and alphabetic switch here require that this reader engage in a mental adjustment and thus a slowing-down, however slight. This readerly gear shift, then, both precedes and makes possible the passage from flow to fixity by which Pascoli finally reinstates the specificity of the classical school's dead languages. No sooner has he summoned one of these ancient languages onto the scene than he has set it to work, in and as a backward turn that prepares the reader for the explicit defense of backward turns to follow. The Greek phrase lets the reader practice, if only briefly, one such turn himself.

Pascoli's "panta rhei" thus functions as a password thanks to which the requirements of logic are finessed and the strictures of argument are opened up. For there is no apparent reason why the last of the questions quoted above ("How could the expression of a thought ... be fixed even for the duration of a generation, if in going forward we didn't face backward from to time?") should follow the one before it ("Where is the present of a language?"). If language has no present, then it can *never* be fixed, for by definition it eludes all attempts at arrest. But on the other side of "panta rhei," again, such fixing suddenly seems both necessary and achievable. The backward turn (admittedly, named only in a conditional contrary to fact, a construction that seems to underscore the turn's precarious status in Pascoli's progressive present) thus becomes the instrument that makes fixing possible. Without it, Pascoli implies, there would only be Babel—only, that is, the very condition of presentless fluidity and unfixed expression that his argument has just seemed to declare universal.

So the Greek phrase descends like a *deus ex machina* to come to "our" rescue: to ensure that "intellectual needs" will still be met, if only provisionally, provided that the backward turns be allowed to continue. Perhaps Pascoli means here, by placing the two questions together and bridging them with Greek, that a "literally" dead language, one of the ancient languages, becomes an aid to thought because it is more dead than dying, and thus provides a relatively stable point of reference for speakers who must perforce deploy "dying," rather than dead, language in everyday speech. But if this is the idea, then Pascoli's *use* of dead language—his writing not only in "the language of poetry," but also in a well-wrought and hard-won neo-Latin of his own—works against such stabilization. For the poet's Latin corpus puts the dead language back into circulation, or keeps it in circulation (among the elite or hyper-literate). Even while singing the praises of dead languages, Pascoli thus prevents at least one of them from becoming veritably dead, destabilizing it, if only unwittingly, by adding, "in modo suo proprio," new usages to the old, by making new transformations with new metaphors. Here again, then, the argument of "Pensieri scolastici" is undone. But perhaps this, too, was Pascoli's point: if there can be no present in any language, then neither can there be a past that's truly dead and past.

That is, of course, unless the reformers have their way, and backward turns and thoughts enlivened by dead languages become extinct definitively in the ongoing, oddly dusty forward march.

Delicati Pueri

et dixit ad me vade [Then he said unto me, Depart] - Acts 22:21, Pascoli's *motto* for *Paedagogium* (Aiello 46)

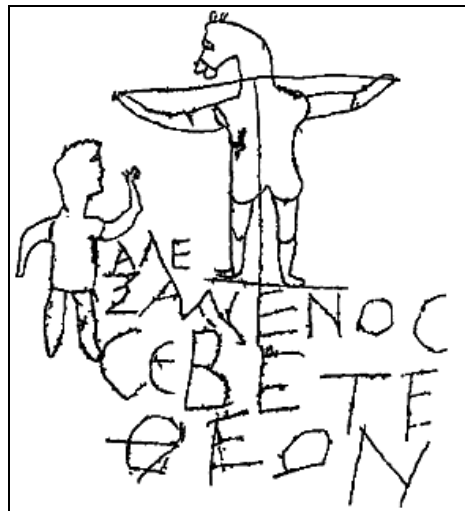
I have suggested that “Pensieri scolastici,” which everywhere *refers* to “the problem of the school,” also *registers* Pascoli's proximity to and engagement with this problem in the way the text oscillates between specifying and generalizing, literalizing and rendering figurative. I have argued, in other words, that the school makes its presence felt in Pascoli's essay not only at the level of *propositions*, by being repeatedly named and discussed, but also, and perhaps more interestingly, at the level of *pragmatics*, in the *use* the text makes of dead language.³⁵ I have highlighted this use's contradictory nature, which is in keeping with the contradictions inhering in the field that Pascoli's essay considered. These resulted in part, unsurprisingly, from the contested nature of this field, in which reformers were, for generations, pitted against classicists. But other contradictions were traceable to the competing demands placed on the school *within* each of the opposing camps. On each side of the new school/old school—or, to redeploy the vitalist terms of the progressive polemics, the living/dead—divide, the school was asked to do an awful lot of work. It was recruited to save not only its students, but also the nation as a whole, whether from the decay and centuries-old irrelevance against which the reformers fought or from the “demolition” of the past that the classicists feared would result from reform. The school, whether reformed or classical, was to be both itself and a model or miniaturization of the nation, and this even when the latter aim came into conflict with or forestalled the realization of the former. For there can be no complete citizen- or subject-formation, let alone any but a nominal graduation, when “the school of the nation” is always in session, and the teacher's work never done (*PE* 14). Or, as Pascoli would lament in another context but still apropos of making Italians, when it seems that “gli uomini fatti non ascoltano e non guardano più” [men who are already made do not listen and do not look anymore], and it therefore becomes imperative for men to be boys.³⁶

There is nothing new or unique about schools' being made to shelter broad collective aspirations, of course. As the crucibles in which subjects and citizens were to be forged, schools had long if not always borne the weight of such hopes and dreams. I would argue, however, following Stewart-Steinberg, that in the newly formed nation, and under the pressure of a modernity increasingly enshrined in institutions,³⁷ these aspirations became especially burdensome and pervasive. They thus came to inflect discourses like Pascoli's not merely in the substance of their symbolization but also in their manner of indication. I redeploy Agamben's distinction between symbolization and indication here deliberately, but whereas Agamben thinks that Pascoli's work indicates “a pure intention to signify, that is, the voice in its originary purity” (*EP* 67), I am working to show that the poet in fact points to another sphere, one altogether less pure and much more conflictual: the sphere of the school. In “Pensieri scolastici,” this means that the “dead language” cannot suffice unto itself, but must be shown to operate everywhere even while it retains crucial importance on its own, “literal” terms. Thus Pascoli's essay registers its

participation in the post-unification debates on education, in which the school had to be everywhere while also remaining a concrete and delimited space. The text does this in a mode of transposition or translation that I have characterized as indexical, because it signals without naming key features of the context in which it emerges.

A different kind of indexicality becomes central to the Latin poem *Paedagogium*, which points not only to the present of its production (though it does that, as I will show), but also to the remote past, which both remains and returns in the form of a trace. “Both remains and returns,” because crucially the past here returns without fully having gone away, or reappears without really having disappeared first; it reemerges after having been written off or sidelined rather than forcefully repressed. Before elaborating this paradoxical mode of return, however, I need to present the facts of the trace, the index in question. Pascoli’s poem takes as its inspiration an ancient graffito discovered during the course of excavations on the Palatine in 1856.

Paedagogium thus centers on an indexical record, or at least a document that combines indexical qualities with iconic and narrative ones.³⁸ For the graffito in question, unlike the majority of those uncovered along with it, does not simply use a proper name indexically to attest to the past presence of someone: Apollonius (116), Demetrius (98, 111), Marianus (150), Silvanus (137), or whomever. Nor is it simply a phallus (e.g. 131) or single figure (e.g. 133). Instead, combining image and text, the graffito tells a story—without thereby losing its indexical function, as I will emphasize. Two figures are shown: one a little, little boy standing beneath the other, seen from behind: a crucified animal-human hybrid with the head of a donkey and the body of a man. With his right arm raised (in the posture known as *iactare basia*, or throwing kisses), the boy prays, as the inscription beside and below him explains in “badly executed letters”: Αλεξαμενός σέβετε θεόν [Alexamenos sebete theon; Alexamenos worships God] (210-211).



A rendering of the Alexamenos graffito

Writing *Paedagogium*, Pascoli made it his mission to narrate how this graffito came to be. Collected in the *Poemata christiana*—which Pascoli had planned more neutrally to entitle *Carmina, Res Romanae*, or simply *Roma*—*Paedagogium* is one in a series of historical portraits meant to render the experience of early Christians living (and especially dying) under the Roman

empire. Beginning with the earliest conversions, the *Poemata* proceed to recount the founding of the first Christian communities, the persecutions, the decline of pagan religion, and the continuation of Christianity into the Middle Ages (Aiello 21). (These poems were projected as part of an even more sweeping cycle of Latin *poemetti*, which would trace all of Roman history from the city’s mythical origins to what Pascoli called its “fine non definitiva” [non-definitive end], with a slight but telling gesture toward the possibility of the eternal city’s living-on in later Latin [qtd. in Aiello 21].) Together with one other poem (*Pomponia*), *Paedagogium* represents the persecutions (Aiello 22). But strikingly, persecution here takes the unspectacular form of bullying: one small boy scrawls the figures in the graffito, and writes out the accompanying caption in an effort to humiliate—indeed, to out—Alexamenos.

Pascoli’s *poemetto* thus treats a victim and an aggressor: Alexamenos and the graffitist, named Kareius, both young captives housed in the imperial *paedagogium* named in the poem’s title, which refers not to an abstraction—not, that is, to pedagogy in the contemporary sense—but rather to “the place where boys of servile birth intended for pages were educated” (as well as to “the boys in” such a place and more generally “boys reared for vice,” also known as *delicati pueri*).³⁹ In keeping with his key characterization in Pascoli’s preparatory notes—“Alexamenos è così studioso!” [Alexamenos is so studious!] (qtd. in Aiello 24), an exclamation to which I will return—Pascoli’s protagonist is introduced as choosing homework over play: he prefers, he says, not to join in his schoolmates’ game but instead “versus ediscere” (32), to learn verses by heart, in order to be ready to recite them to a punishing “praeceptor” (55). The lines that he commits to memory are these, from the *Aeneid*, lines that themselves enjoin memory:

tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos. (VI.851-853; emphasis added)

[Roman, remember by your strength to rule
 Earth’s peoples—for your arts are to be these:
 To pacify, to impose the rule of law,
 To spare the conquered, battle down the proud.]⁴⁰

Only the three words italicized above are included in *Paedagogium*. But they suffice to trigger, or to test, the reader’s memory. The irony in Pascoli’s citation, like much else in his poem, is unsubtle: Alexamenos, who is to learn the lines above by heart, is not the Roman addressed by Virgil, but rather one of the subjected whom this magnanimous Roman spares as he rules over the peoples of the empire, building order and disarming the proud.

But the boys in his school do not spare the Chaldean-born, Greek-speaking Alexamenos.⁴¹ Instead they ridicule him for reciting prayers to Christ, and they proceed to beat him up. That is, they begin to beat him up, but they are interrupted by a caring “custos” who confines the lead bully, a “Gallum rebellem” [rebellious Gall], Kareius (74), to a narrow room where he almost literally does time. He does tenses. Put in solitary, Kareius pitches a fit that culminates, since a stylus is conveniently ready to hand, in his carving the blasphemous image and scrawling the rude caption that accompanies it (99).

So Pascoli stages the scene of writing that results in the Palatine graffito. And here, in another moment of unsubtle if endearing irony, *Paedagogium* gives the lie to the idea, attributable to Kareius if not stated by him, that the events it records, once past, are “nec iam reditura,” not to return now again. Anger’s giving way to the acceptance of punishment, and the fit’s to graffiti, make it possible for a remoter past to return, propelling the rest of the poem’s narrative, as Pascoli’s speaker announces:

Quidquid erat nuper, nihil est: effluxit: at adsunt
quae procul atque olim, nec iam reditura, fuerunt. (104-105)

[Whatever just now was, is nothing: it has vanished: but present are things that were long past and remote, that will not return now again.]⁴²

Strangely beautiful though they are, these densely adverbial and untranslatable lines read a bit like grammar exercises—and not merely because they’re written in the language of the classical grammar school. The convergence of “erat,” “est,” and “fuerunt”—the imperfect, present, and preterit tenses of *sum*, in both singular and plural forms, with the prefix-modified, present-tense “adsunt” added in for good measure—in just two lines cannot but recall drill sentences aimed at consolidating students’ command of Latin tenses, and of the conjugation of *sum* in particular. A far cry from Virgil’s, Pascoli’s belated Latin thus interpellates the reader not as a Roman but rather as a pupil. However much it may seek to give greater life to thought, the literally dead language here thus perforce participates in this reader’s instruction—where instruction, as in the Italian educational reformers’ critiques of it, names something other than education *tout court*. Only with great difficulty—that is, by learning the hard way—can one build on lines in which human agents have gone underground, lines that merely make “whatever” happen, as “quidquid” and “quae.”

But to say this is not to discount the lines’ importance for the poem as a whole—or the poem’s importance, for that matter. For what *Paedagogium* realizes not despite but rather because of what I have called Pascoli’s pedantry, and what these lines illustrate with particular vividness, is instruction’s capacity to render a reordering of tenses that is also a rearrangement of historical times. If the historical present—a tense typically thought to enliven the distant past, or to mark narrative moments of special importance—gives way to the preterit, just as the vernacular long since forged gives way to Latin, this is because, for Pascoli, as “Pensieri scolastici” already insists, that which is “olim” or remote is no less crucial than the much more recent “nuper.” Indeed, in *Paedagogium* the former persistently displaces the latter, forcing a revision of historians’ regular schedules that is also a repudiation of progressive time and its entailments, among them the idea of a self, or nation, that only faces the future, having finally shed the dead weight of the past.

The poem’s staging of this displacement is, I have claimed, neither mourning for nor melancholic attachment to the “more” that “there is in the child” according to Empson: that which, in “child-cult,” tragically exceeds what “any man has been able to keep.”⁴³ Instead, *Paedagogium* models the relationship to history that it also suggests can only be sustained within the institutional frame of the imperial boarding school—which is to say, following Empson, in the place of a particular kind of “building up” and “bringing out.” Out indeed: it is as if,

according to the logic of the *poemetto*, the return of the past—also the making of the mark that will, again, return and remain as past in the future—is only possible within the narrower frame within the frame that is the cell in which Kareius is confined. For the boy’s punishment is what brings about his conversion, which in turn leads to his joining Alexamenos in the martyrdom that will happen offstage, only hinted at in the poem itself. Confinement is, then, paradoxically what makes it possible for strictures to give way—for the impasse of the present to become something other than a dead end.⁴⁴ “La scuola deve abolire la prigione” [The school must abolish the prison], Pascoli proclaims elsewhere (qtd. in *Pascoli educatore* 66), improbably a prison abolitionist *ante litteram* and using the discourse of “abolition” (which in his time and place named measures to eliminate compulsory Greek instruction) against itself. And the school *does* abolish or at least overwrite the prison in *Paedagogium*—but not for long. For although Kareius’ inscription, coinciding with the return of the past, causes his anger to abate, and thus enables both a conversation with Alexamenos and a provisional release from punishment, the reader knows that worldly punishment is soon to follow, the boys being early Christians, and this being Rome.

In *Paedagogium*’s last lines, Kareius moves forward to accompany poor Alexamenos, the student formerly known as “puer ambitios[us]” (51), now singled out as “pestifer unus,” the only pestilential, as in Christian, student in the school (187). This charge then prompts the converted young Gaul’s correction, his “ecce alium”:

“Falleris: ecce alium” exclamat Kareius, et offert
se fratri, iunctaque manu *comitatur euntem*. (188-189; emphasis added)

[“You are wrong: here is another,” Kareius exclaims, and he goes to meet his brother, and having taken him by the hand accompanies the one going away.]

Thus *Paedagogium* concludes with a citation of the *Aeneid* (VI.863) that is also a vindication of learning by heart. For this citation aligns Pascoli’s speaker less with Aeneas, to whom the words belong in Virgil’s poem, than with Alexamenos, whose assigned “versus” (“tu regere imperio” and all the rest) are from just ten lines earlier in the *Aeneid*.⁴⁵ At the end of the relay that Pascoli has staged—a relay in which verses are passed first from the “praeceptor” to Alexamenos, then to Pascoli’s speaker as he approaches Kareius, converted following his punishment—the poem itself becomes “studious,” following the lead, but also taking the hand, of the little, little boy whose lines it has learned by heart. The pupil’s homework has thus become the poet’s heritage, handed down again for the reader to learn or to leave behind.

Studious Youth

... perché ciò che fu e quelli che furono pare sempre bello e paiono sempre buoni a quelli che sono. [... because that which was and those who were—it always seems beautiful, and they always seem good to those who are.]

– Pascoli (*Prose* 17)

In the becoming-heritage of homework, the latter remains itself and retains its integrity—or at least ineradicably leaves its trace—in the literary text that would transcend it. Homework,

the mere, mechanical scholastic exercise that is no less punishing for all its meagerness and mechanicity, thus also marks a limit to the transcendence for which Pascoli's patently redemptive poem would appear to strive, and toward which it would appear inexorably to lead. This, I would argue, is ultimately what distinguishes *Paedagogium* from the products of the Fascist *puericultura* that it might seem to anticipate. Whereas, as Barbara Spackman notes, styles of "Fascist Puerility" tend to spiritualize both the child and the nation,⁴⁶ *Paedagogium's* spiritualization—its undeniably religious commemoration of the martyrdom of two early Christian captive boys—is inseparable from, if in tension with, the poem's *materialization* as a text to be studied that also thematizes study. (Recall Gentile's characterization of instruction as "material, mechanical, [and] spiritually worthless," among other things [*La riforma* 186].) Latin forms that the reader has long since memorized are repeatedly recalled, and all but drilled, in a narrative that both stages and enacts memorization: stages in Alexamenos' "versus ediscere," and enacts in the poem's concluding words, "comitatur euntem."

If these means ensure that *Paedagogium* remains stubbornly material even in its reach for the transcendent, then Pascoli's adherence to the pre-national language of Rome amounts effectively to a resistance, if not a willful or robust one, to the still-young nation's effort to appropriate and thus domesticate, to back-date and thus effectively eternalize, its past. Far from being eternalized through spiritualization, as in the discourses of the Fascist regime, Italy is here implicitly *historicized*. For that the vernacular is *not* retrofitted to render *Roma* means that Pascoli's Italian reader is denied the satisfaction, or frustrated in the expectation, of finding himself mirrored in the remote, Roman past. *Paedagogium* thus linguistically preserves this past's difference from the national present, reminding Italians of what came before and remains distinct from the nation.

Pascoli's poem preserves the distinction between the tense of the past and that of the nation in other ways as well, not least by centering on a "studious" protagonist. (Remember the *incipit* in Pascoli's preparatory notes: "Alexamenos è così studioso!" And recall Alexamenos' opting out of child's play because of his commitment to "versus.") "Purtroppo, in Italia non studiano se non i professori (così ci chiamano)" [Unfortunately, in Italy no one studies except for the professors (so they call us)], Pascoli writes in his 1896 essay "La scuola classica" (*Prose* 138). Studiousness thus acquires, before *Paedagogium*, a specific—and a not-strictly-national—valence in Pascoli's work as it addresses itself to the poet's present. In this present, the "gioventù studiosa" comprised of those called professors, perhaps by the same unnamed speakers of the vernacular who call dust erudite—this "gioventù" is in every sense a minor collectivity (*Prose* 138). In his essays on education, Pascoli repeatedly imagines this collectivity's becoming-major, converting its current losses into gains in a utopian future. But Pascoli's is a future in which public schools will offer Sanskrit as well as Greek and Latin (*Prose* 144): future born from but also undone by the remote past—crucially, the pre-national past that the national present can neither fully subsume nor finally bring back to life. For, as "Pensieri scolastici" insists, there is no word that doesn't die even as it passes over into a new sense, and in this passage or "trapasso" gives greater life to thought (*Prose* 641).

Pascoli's approach in *Paedagogium* and in essays like "La scuola classica" and "Pensieri scolastici"—his programmatic preservation of the past's difference from the present and of the dead language's difference from the living—contrasts starkly with Gentile's effort to enlist Latinity in his nation-building project. This project was—symptomatically, given the national

context sketched above—first and foremost a pedagogical initiative, realized legislatively in the Riforma Gentile of 1923 but already conceptually delineated in the essay “L’unità della scuola media e la libertà degli studi.”⁴⁷ Published in 1902, Gentile’s essay represents a third way between progressive reform and classicist reaction, positions that I have so far characterized, following Orlando’s account of “ancient antithesis” (631), in dichotomous terms. “L’unità della scuola media,” that is, both decries the libertarian tendencies of progressive reform and implies a critique of classicism, even while it pledges allegiance to the classical school. For Gentile’s attack on the “material, mechanical,” and dead methods of instruction—the attack in *La riforma dell’educazione*, from which I have already, repeatedly quoted—is latent in the philosopher’s early text (*La riforma* 186).

“L’unità della scuola” takes pains first to equate language as such with the national language (“*Lingua*, la lingua nazionale,” Gentile writes reductively, thus perhaps not taking pains enough [23]), and then to render dead languages living—and subservient to the national language. Greek and Latin must absolutely be taught, according to Gentile, who thus opposes the “utilitarian” reformers whose democratizing and modernizing calls for increased vocational and scientific instruction he also derides (24-25). Gentile thus remains in this sense a classicist, but his differences from Pascoli here are instructive. For the reasons that Gentile gives for holding onto Latin and Greek are reasons of state, also by definition reasons of spirit, since it is the former that, in Gentile’s account, guarantees the autonomy and actualization of the latter. In any case, the philosopher, unlike the poet, has no patience for the discourses that declare ancient languages dead. If these languages are worth teaching—and they are, Gentile thinks—then they must be and remain alive and well:

Il latino è morto o vivo? Se l’italiano è una trasformazione del latino, questo è tanto vivo quanto l’italiano; giacché, morto il latino, mancherebbe all’italiano tutta la sostanza dell’esser suo, ed esso quindi sarebbe una morta astrazione: una trasformazione non inerente in alcun soggetto! E chi ricordi i contatti del latino classico col greco, e la grandissima influenza della sintassi (per non dire del lessico e della morfologia) di questo sulla sintassi di quello, e le originarie attinenze delle due lingue, e la grandissima influenza della letteratura greca sulla latina, può disgiungere il latino dal greco? Le due lingue venerande, lungi dall’esser morte, vivono e vivranno perenni nell’immortale spirito greco-italico, con la lingua nazionale e per la lingua nazionale; poiché l’essere che diviene non s’annulla nell’esser divenuto. (28)

[Is Latin dead or alive? If Italian is a transformation of Latin, then the latter is as living as Italian, because, if Latin were dead, then Italian would lack all of the substance of its being, and this would therefore be a dead abstraction: a transformation not inhering in any subject! And whoever remembers classical Latin’s contacts with Greek, and the enormous influence of the syntax (not to say the lexicon and morphology) of the latter on the former, and the originary relations between the two languages, and the enormous influence of Greek literature on Latin literature—can any such person distinguish Latin from Greek? The two languages deserving of our veneration, far from being dead, live and will

live forever in the immortal Greco-Italic spirit, with the national language and for the national language, since the being that becomes is not annulled in the being that it has become.]

Pascoli, too, in “La scuola classica,” makes the case for Latin’s inseparability from Greek (*Prose* 148), but he does so without ever suggesting that the ancient languages should be learned—let alone that they “live and will live forever”—for the sake of the vernacular, alongside but also, in Gentile’s more forceful second formulation, “for the national language.” This formulation in fact belies the Hegelian-sounding explanation that follows it, in that, even if the ancient languages are not altogether annulled in the process of their becoming-vernacular, the former are at the very least definitively rendered subservient to “the national language,” of which Gentile speaks proleptically, not to say wishfully—that is, as though there were one.⁴⁸ Gentile’s nationalist pedagogy *cum* progress narrative leaves no room for the possibility that these ancient bondsmen may yet overthrow their modern lords.⁴⁹ The future of Greek and Latin is, in “L’unità della scuola,” resolutely national. Rushing toward this future, Gentile bypasses and thus effectively rules out real life-and-death struggle, since the triumph of life—the victory, that is, of the living, national language—is guaranteed from the start.

That Pascoli, by contrast, carries with the negative, at least in his educational and Latin writings, should by now be clear.⁵⁰ These writings, as I have tried to show, stage the return of the remote past in various guises: as the Sanskrit to be taught in future, utopian classrooms in “La scuola classica” (*Prose* 144); as the more banal-seeming backward turn that lets the present stop to think in “Pensieri scolastici” (*Prose* 641); and, most strikingly, as the graffito that is already “procul atque olim,” long past and remote, at the moment of its first inscription in *Paedagogium* (105). In each of these cases, the past interrupts and unsettles the present even while enabling it. What separates Pascoli’s vision of Latinity from Gentile’s is thus, to begin with, the power that the poet attributes to the past: not only “not annulled,” the remote past acts on the present in ways that the latter cannot fully command, either at the level of (national) language or at that of (progressive) history. On its own terms—and in its own dead language—the past makes a claim on the present. This claim, for Pascoli, derives not from the past’s having paved the way for and thus come to belong to the nation that is the birthright of the students of the present, as in Gentile’s account, but rather from its *being different from the present and usable as such*.

Here again, then, as in Pascoli’s “Pensieri scolastici” (where the dead language is “used to give greater life to thought”), the use of dead language to serve pedagogical ends is crucial. But this use should be rigorously distinguished from the kind of appropriation or projection, underwritten by progress, in which Gentile’s account engages and for which it calls.⁵¹ In and through this process of appropriation, the “now” ultimately subsumes the “then” in which it recognizes itself, as in an ancestor. Gentilean pedagogy is thus presentist as well as progressive. Pascoli’s, on the other hand, emblemized by *Paedagogium*, places faith in the force of the past, channeled but not finally controlled by the preceptors and pedantic pupils of the present. Against Gentile’s philosophy of actualism, the poet thus envisions a form of actualization in which the remote past, “reditura” or to be returned again after all, preserves the possibility of the present’s—and the nation’s—differing from itself.

I adapt this non-actualist notion of “actualization” from Walter Benjamin, for whom *Vergegenwärtigung*, actualization or “making-things-present,” represents a corrective to homogenizing, positivist historicism and the self-aggrandizing and appropriative relationship to the past that it establishes. Benjamin protests in the “Paralimpomena” “On the Concept of History”—but also throughout his late work—against the “false aliveness of the past-made-present” that positivist history tends, in his view, to produce (401). Tantamount to “the elimination of every echo of a ‘lament’ from history,” this false aliveness is also “secured at the cost of completely eradicating every vestige of history’s original role as remembrance [*Eingedenken*]” (401). Rebecca Comay glosses this last term—which recurs in the “Theses on the Philosophy of History” and which is related, in ways I will consider, to *Vergegenwärtigung*—as follows:

Memory, *Eingedenken*—the ‘Ein-’ prefix signifying here in fact precisely the opposite of the unifying inwardness of a thought affirming its self-actualization as a culture returning to itself in the recollection of its own formation or *Bildung* (the opposite, in a word, of the Hegelian *Erinnerung* which it lexically recalls)—Benjamin’s *Eingedenken* is no longer strictly inward (*Ein-*) and no longer strictly thought (*-Denken*). It announces, rather a mindfulness or vigilance which refuses to take in (or be taken in by) a tradition authorizing itself as the continuity of an essential legacy, task or mission to be transmitted, developed or enacted. ... *Eingedenken* marks the impasse or “standstill” of thought as such: the “flow” of inference is interrupted ... In “blasting open” the continuum, *Eingedenken* inaugurates repetition as the return of that which strictly speaking never happened: it announces the redemption of a failed revolutionary opportunity at the moment of most pressing danger. “Hope in the past” ... Such repetition arrests the apparent continuity of inherited power relations by remembering precisely what official historiography had to repress.⁵²

Comay’s gloss recalls the terms with which I earlier characterized Pascoli’s “Pensieri scolastici,” and indirectly it brings the contrast between Gentilian reform and Pascolian classicism into further relief. The former inherits “Hegelian *Erinnerung*” as Comay defines it, even while it elides crucial episodes in the *Phenomenology* (again, the life-and-death struggle and the reversibility of lordship and bondage in which this struggle results). Gentile’s reform indeed centers on “the unifying inwardness of a thought affirming its self-actualization as a culture returning to itself in the recollection of its own formation or *Bildung*.” By contrast, Pascoli’s pedagogy—and indeed his *Paedagogium*—can be aligned, though not equated, with Benjamin’s *Eingedenken*.

This alignment might at first seem counter-intuitive, given Benjamin’s well-rehearsed suspicion of traditions other than those of “the oppressed” as well as his efforts to counter what Comay labels “the continuity of an essential legacy, task or mission to be transmitted, developed or enacted.”⁵³ How, one might wonder, could a poem written in the language of Rome and resurrecting the iconography of early Christianity—in the interest of continuing both—ever be heard to resonate with the Benjaminian understanding of remembrance and its rupturing effects? How could *Paedagogium*—or any text, for that matter, written in prize-winning,⁵⁴ latter-day

Latin—be seen to instantiate anything but the “continuity of inherited power relations”? I have suggested that these questions are difficult to answer unless Pascoli’s educational writings are taken into account, together with the broader polemical context that these writings register. Essays like “Pensieri scolastici” make Pascoli’s Latin writings legible as something more than a series of reactionary gestures. For, rearguard actions though they undoubtedly were, these writings indeed worked to interrupt “the ‘flow’ of inference” dictated by discourses of progress, including Gentile’s. They also sought to produce in the midst and in the place of this flux an “impasse or ‘standstill’” akin to Benjamin’s—again, in order simultaneously to produce the possibility of this standstill’s giving way to something else: an out.

But whereas, with his recourse to the language of explosives, Benjamin sometimes seems to privilege the events of blasting open and bursting apart at the expense of continuity, Pascoli’s is, as “Pensieri scolastici” makes clear, an arrest in the interest of ongoingness. Likewise, whereas Benjamin foregrounds the violence of historical repression, Pascoli seeks to counter the more banal processes that I have called sidelining and writing off: he wants to rescue from destruction not, in Comay’s words, what “official historiography had to repress,” but rather what this historiography has, in its accelerated forward movement, simply deemed useless. Thus my attempt to bring the poet into conversation with Benjamin needs to be amended, or qualified. Notwithstanding *Paedagogium*’s patent redemptiveness, the poem ultimately shares little with the Benjamin of divine violence, pure means, primal history, expiation, redemption, and final reckoning. Pascoli’s text can be illuminated, however, by the theorist’s writing in a more modest and even minimal mode—as when, in a sketch for the *Arcades Project*, he refers to—indeed, remembers—“Leopardi 13.”

“On the difference between empathy and actualization [*Vergegenwärtigung*]: jubilees, Leopardi 13.”⁵⁵ So Benjamin concludes a brief but highly suggestive note on “anecdotes,” which he opposes to newspapers. Benjamin takes anecdotes to be both pre-modern “technique[s] of nearness” and potentially insurgent instruments of *Vergegenwärtigung*, or means of activating the potentials latent in the past.⁵⁶ The anecdote, for him, thus “represents the strict antithesis to the sort of history which demands ‘empathy,’ which makes everything abstract,” to the history that he characterizes as homogenizing and positivist: a history that was also progressive through and through. In this context, Benjamin offers “Leopardi 13”—a vaguely affectionate if also somewhat sinister shorthand way to refer to the thirteenth of the poet’s essayistic *Pensieri*—as another alternative to progressive history. Without elaborating any specific claims about the Leopardian text, Benjamin implies that it, like “anecdotes” more generally, has the potential to model a non-progressive, non-empathetic, non-abstract way of relating to history—that it has the potential, to impart alternative “techniques of nearness” leading to alternative because not strictly self-actualizing forms of actualization: to *Vergegenwärtigung*, related as this term is to visualization and imagination as well as to realization and “making things present.”⁵⁷

Strikingly, given its placement in Benjamin’s note, Leopardi’s thirteenth *pensiero* itself is altogether lacking in anecdotal specificity. Rather than recording a concrete set of circumstances, that is, or telling a particular tale, the *pensiero* meditates on the observance of anniversaries, and it comes to center on certain unnamed “uomini sensibili” [sensitive men] for whom this observance is especially important, even sustaining.⁵⁸ Here Leopardi sums up, having made a study of his subject: “Ed ho notato, interrogando in tal proposito parecchi, che gli uomini sensibili, ed usati alla solitudine, o a conversare internamente, sogliono essere *studiosissimi* degli

anniversari, e vivere, per dir così, di rimembranze di tal genere, sempre riandando, e dicendo fra se: in un giorno dell'anno come il presente mi accadde questa o questa cosa" [And I have noted, questioning many men about this subject, that sensitive men, and men used to solitude, or to conversing internally, tend to be very respectful of anniversaries and to live, so to say, on remembrances of this kind, and always returning, and saying to themselves: on a day of the year like the present one, this or that thing happened to me] (11-12; emphasis added). The vagueness of this concluding sentence—in which the events commemorated by Leopardi's "sensitive men" are not even indirectly named, but merely indicated as "questa o questa cosa"—makes a collectivity out of otherwise solitary walkers, here significantly labeled "studiosissimi": very respectful, devout, observant, "obsessed," but also, of course, like Pascoli's Alexamenos, "so studious."⁵⁹ Were the events that these men remembered more specifically named, then the repeated and even rote action in which they engage would be less legible as action taken in common. Each of the men would commemorate his own loss or gain, without these losses or gains seeming to constitute something shared, as they do when they are leveled down to "this."⁶⁰ By means of this leveling, which is also an abstracting,⁶¹ the studios in "Leopardi 13" come to form a sort of community, since all of them remember this and that (a "this" that they thus have in common), but do so in a specific and shared fashion: "sempre riandando, e dicendo fra se" [always returning, and saying to themselves].

This inward saying—which faintly echoes the author's own saying, signaled here and elsewhere, repeatedly in the *pensiero* in the phrase "per dir così" [so to speak] and variations on it—may seem to be a far cry from Benjaminian *Eingedenken*, with its explosive force (11). The "uomini sensibili" merely repeat themselves, after all, in order to sustain themselves, in order "vivere, per dir così" [to live, so to speak] (11). And even if there is something audibly redemptive about the end result of their observance of anniversaries, whereby "è medicato in parte il tristo pensiero dell'annullamento di ciò che fu" [the sad thought of the annulment of what was is medicated in part], this redemptiveness would appear, in its very partiality ("medicato *in parte*," Leopardi writes), to stop short of Benjaminian total reckoning and thus to render the comparison inoperative (11). But, as I have suggested, "Leopardi 13" and Benjamin's citation of it mark a moment in which the theorist's thinking is importantly scaled down, without for all that being inconsequential.

Moreover, Comay's definition of Benjaminian *Eingedenken* lets us see this keyword's surprising intimacy with Leopardian poetics, and by extension Pascolian poetics as well. *Eingedenken* is, again, according to Comay, "no longer strictly inward (*Ein-*) and no longer strictly thought (*-Denken*). It announces, rather a mindfulness or vigilance which refuses to take in (or be taken in by) a tradition authorizing itself as the continuity of an essential legacy." Neither strictly inward nor strictly thought, the all but automated "riandando e dicendo" practiced by Leopardi's studios men remind Benjamin of the medicating potential of repetition. For under certain circumstances, "Leopardi 13" teaches, repeated action and rote saying can realize the return of the past, or at least bring about the recognition that the past's disappearance has not been an annulment. Thus here, on another scale and in another register altogether, Leopardi anticipates the lesson of *Paedagogium*. Both texts make the case for studiosness—effectively, for memorization as a mode of "mindfulness or vigilance"—which alone can preserve the possibility of the past's beneficent return, and the present's being medicable. Crucially, this possibility is *not* guaranteed in either Leopardi or Pascoli by a "tradition

authorizing itself as the continuity of an essential legacy.” Gentile’s Latinity represents one such tradition. Pascoli, for his part, provides a corrective to this tradition’s inwardness and appropriateness, in that *Paedagogium* indeed, in Comay’s terms, “refuses to take in (or be taken in by)” a tradition thus essentialized. The *poemetto* instead imagines a mode of actualization or *Vergegenwärtigung* that declines to subsume the past in the language of the present and the nation, but that both addresses and forges a collectivity all the same. *Paedagogium*, that is, addresses pupils, and it makes a match and a minor community of the boys become brothers, brought together by “whatever,”⁶² just as Leopardi’s “uomini sensibili,” these studious boys’ secular and vernacular forbears, ultimately share nothing more substantial than “this.”

I began this chapter by distinguishing between the sense of satiation in Pascoli’s *Il fanciullino* and the dissatisfaction expressed by Leopardi, among others. I conclude, by contrast, with a gesture toward the partial compatibility of the two poets’ projects. For in at least one of his moods or modes, in the thirteenth of the *Pensieri*, Leopardi imagines the maintenance, rather than the obliteration, of the memory of the past—and this by the “studiosissimi.” He imagines, that is, a provisional alternative to the ruin projected most spectacularly in “La ginestra”: an alternative that, I have shown, takes the form of rote “riandando,” rather than inward recollection. Pascoli, for his part, looks to—and, in his poem’s last line, joins by imitating—a studious child in order to counter the “lavoro di demolizione” [work of demolition] that he thought modernity had initiated: a work that took down the past together with the classical school that was this past’s repository (*Prose* 636).

The differences, though, between Leopardi’s “uomini sensibili” and Pascoli’s pedantic boys are as important, and as instructive, as the studiousness that these sets of figures have in common. Whereas Leopardi’s men are grown, Pascoli’s *pueri* are emphatically still growing (and thus not nearly as satisfied as *Il fanciullino* would suggest they should be). Likewise, whereas the former study in solitude, the latter live together. The reader’s only access to Pascoli’s boys is thus both collective and institutional; she encounters them only in the *collegio* in which they reside as captives (cf. Aiello 37). In the time that separates the *Pensieri* (first published posthumously in 1845, but compiled between 1831 and 1835, if not earlier) from *Paedagogium* (brought out, again, in 1903), the Italian state was founded, even if the Italian nation had not yet become full-fledged. And in this same time span, classical study underwent a phase of growth, followed by one of perceived decline, a period of democratization followed by one of what looked like divestment. It was in this latter context—a context of decline, divestment, and indeed *diffidenza*, in which the very survival of classical studies was felt to be under threat, and the old school barely able to parry the blows dealt by modernity (“La scuola classica” 148)—that Pascoli returned to without fully reviving the Roman imperial school, which he re-imagined as a last redoubt of what Benjamin would call “Hope in the past.”

“Youth,” Franco Moretti writes in another literary context but apropos of roughly the same historical phase, “relapses into ‘apprenticeship’ in the narrowest sense: *school*, replete with teachers and homework.”⁶³ According to Moretti, then, the eclipse of the European *Bildungsroman*, which had long worked through the personalization of social relations, coincided with the school’s becoming prevalent as one of several “social institutions [beginning] to appear as such,” without, that is, being embodied or “personalized” in characters (230). “In the

abstract and often uselessly painful tests enforced by the school,” Moretti continues, “the individualized socialization of Western modernity seems to collapse back into archaic initiation rituals” (233). Leopardi’s men “usati alla solitudine” still participate in the process of “individual socialization,” despite their distance from the heroes of full-scale *Bildungsromane*. Pascoli’s *pueri*, by contrast, attest to the “collapse” and “relapse” that Moretti locates at the turn of the century. But *Paedagogium*’s task was to turn this collapse to scholastic profit: to return to and re-imagine a school whose painful tests and archaic rituals, far from being useless, would again be put to use.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

¹ Giovanni Pascoli, *Il fanciullino*, in *Prose*, ed. Augusto Vicinelli, vol. 1, *Pensieri di varia umanità* (Milan: Mondadori, 1946), 17. Subsequent citations from this volume are given parenthetically in the text.

² Already in 1920, Benedetto Croce worried about the deleterious effects that would attend the introduction of Pascoli’s work (the carrier, Croce thought, of the worst of “le malsanie e i vizi nostri” [our sicknesses and our vices]) into Italian school curricula. See Benedetto Croce, *Giovanni Pascoli: Studio critico* (Bari: Laterza, 1920), 107. By 1959, however, the proud *maestra* and Pascoli partisan Lylia Loce-Mandes could declare the battle won: “Ora le poesie del Pascoli sono entrate felicemente nelle nostre scuole e ognuno vede che non ne è seguito quel finimondo che il filosofo temeva, e volesse il cielo che nulla di meno elevato e meno poetico vi fosse nei testi scolastici che non le poesie del Pascoli!” [Now Pascoli’s poems have happily entered our schools and everyone can see that the end of the world that the philosopher feared did not come about, and would that nothing less elevated and less poetic would appear in our scholastic texts than Pascoli’s poems!]. Lylia Loce-Mandes, *Pascoli educatore* (Rome: Ciranna, 1959), 118.

³ *Fanciullino* is a diminutive form of *fanciullo*, which derives from *fancello*, itself (*fan[ti]cello*) a diminutive form of *fante*. See *Garzanti etimologico: I grandi dizionari*, ed. Tullio de Mauro and Marco Mancini (Milan: Garzanti, 2000). For a translation of the *fanciullino* as the (genderless) “little child,” see Rosa Maria La Valva, *The Eternal Child: The Poetry and Poetics of Giovanni Pascoli* (Chapel Hill, NC: Annali d’italianistica, 1999). On the figure of the *puer aeternus* in Pascoli’s work, see, for instance, Elio Gioanola, “Puer aeternus,” in *Giovanni Pascoli: Sentimenti filiali di un parricida* (Milan: Jaca, 2000), 167-190. See also Croce’s lapidary dismissal of Pascoli’s art as encapsulated in the image of an “amplesso del poeta ut puer e del puer ut poeta” (*Giovanni Pascoli* 69).

⁴ Not for nothing does Gianfranco Contini begin his now-classic “Il linguaggio di Pascoli” this way: “All of my listeners know the work of Giovanni Pascoli by heart [*a memoria*].” See “Il linguaggio di Pascoli,” in Giovanni Pascoli, *Poesie*, vol. 1 (Milan: Mondadori, 1969), lxii. Further references to this volume are given parenthetically in the text, with the title *Poesie*.

⁵ For Lacan, the cry “already constitutes” a demand, and the demand by definition “bears on something other than the satisfactions it calls for,” which is also to say that it is both in excess of need and strictly unsatisfiable. See “The Signification of the Phallus,” in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink with H  lo  se Fink and Russell Grigg (New York: Norton: 2006), 580. By “certain Romantics,” I mean mainly Leopardians. Although the (Latin) word “vagito” appears nowhere in Leopardi’s *Zibaldone*, in passages like the following the text tunes into the “pianto” as signaling that infancy is anything but adequate to the world in *Il fanciullino*’s sense: “Cos   tosto come il bambino    nato, convien che la madre che in quel punto lo mette al mondo, lo consoli, accheti il suo pianto, e gli alleggerisca il peso di quell’esistenza che gli d  . E l’uno de’ principali uffizi de’ buoni genitori nella fanciullezza e nella prima giovent   de’ loro figliuoli, si    quello di consolarli, d’incoraggiarli alla vita; perciocch   i dolori e i mali e le passioni riescono in quell’et   molto pi   gravi, che non a quelli che per lunga esperienza, o solamente per esser pi   lungo tempo vissuti, sono assuefatti a patire. E in verit   conviene che il buon padre e la buona madre studiandosi di racconsolare i loro figliuoli, emendino alla meglio, ed alleggeriscano il danno che loro hanno fatto col procrearli. Per Dio! perch   dunque nasce l’uomo? e perch   genera? per poi racconsolar quelli che ha generati del medesimo essere stati generati?” [Thus as soon as the baby is born, it happens that the mother at the moment of placing him in

the world, consoles him, quiets his crying, and lightens the weight of the existence that she has given him. And one of the chief duties of good parents during the infancy and early youth of their children is that of consoling them, of encouraging them to live, since the pains and ills and passions they suffer are, during those ages, much more serious than those which long experience, or just a long time alive, assuages. And in truth it happens that the good father and the good mother, seeking to console their children, must make amends as best they can and lighten the damage that they have done by procreating. By God! Why, then, is man born? And why does he generate? In order to then console those that he has generated for the mere fact of having been generated?]. Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone di pensieri*, ed. Anna Maria Moroni, vol. 2 (Milan: Mondadori, 1972), 805 (13 August 1822).

⁶ *Il fanciullino* disparages the Italian poetic tradition, beginning with Dante, for lovesickness, among other faults.

⁷ The list of phrases quoted here is taken from Emilio Menegazzo, *Per i poveri morti* (Venice: Favero, 1940), 9. This text postdates Pascoli's essay by several decades but helps me all the same to locate places where the phrase "poveri morti," which appears in the lines from *Il fanciullino* that I have been reading, recurs in the Catholic mass and the minor literature of devotion that surrounds it. See, for instance, in addition to Menegazzo's text, the novena for souls in Purgatory: "O Gesù Redentore, per i molteplici dolori della tua agonia, passione e morte, abbi pietà di tutti i nostri poveri morti."

⁸ Here I am implicitly countering the surprisingly still-influential sexological account according to which Pascoli was, after his father's assassination, unable to sustain intimacy of any kind except with his sisters, to whom he therefore clung with incestuous and regressive persistence. See Adolfo Agostini, *La psicosessualità di Giovanni Pascoli* (Saluzzo: Minerva Medica, 1962). For more recent (and only slightly less pathologizing) rearticulations of this account, see Gioanola, *Giovanni Pascoli*, and Carlo Di Lieto, *Il romanzo familiare del Pascoli: Delitto, 'passione,' e delirio (il vero volto di un grande, sventurato poeta)* (Naples: Guida, 2008). And for a critique of the critical emphasis on Pascoli's "family romance," see Maria Truglio, *Beyond the Family Romance: The Legend of Pascoli* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

⁹ I choose this word because of its multiple valences: because a pedant is a plain schoolmaster as well as "A person who excessively reveres or parades academic learning ... one who is excessively concerned with accuracy over trifling details of knowledge, or who insists on strict adherence to formal rules or literal meaning" (*OED*). I also want to be more above-board than previous critics have tended to be about the fact that poor Pascoli sometimes cuts a farcical figure indeed, as I suggest in my reading of his "Pensieri scolastici" below.

¹⁰ According to Truglio, Pascoli's "turn to Latin ... reveals an agenda quite opposite to that of an alienating elitism. Linked to the retrieval of infancy, it is, paradoxically, another version of pre-grammaticality. ... Pascoli's linguistic use of Latin and thematic turn to the classics become, then, *not an exercise in erudition but ways in which he effects a turn backwards*. Like the privileging of children and even of birds and insects, these gestures allow Pascoli to delve into the 'prehistory of consciousness.'" *Beyond the Family Romance*, 63 (emphasis added). I follow Truglio in emphasizing backward turns but am less sure than she is, for reasons I will later spell out, that the poet's Latin texts are not so many exercises. I am also less confident than she appears to be that Pascoli's "agenda" is straightforwardly anti-elitist; although I go on to distinguish the poet's position from the anti-democratic educational theory of Giovanni Gentile, I also stress throughout this chapter his being formed by and remaining committed to scholastic institutions that were "elite" by almost any standard. See also proclamations like this one in "Pensieri scolastici," a text that I discuss at length below: "la società non potrà mai escludere dall'educazione de' suoi novelli 'migliori' le lingue morte e le letterature antiche." Here the scare quotes do not quite suffice to absolve Pascoli of elitism, even if they serve to distance him from those who would understand academic merit—the division between the good, the better, and the best of youth—to be attributable to essence, rather than, say, social contingency. See also, in this connection, Pier Paolo Pasolini's Gramscian conclusion: "la letteratura italiana è una letteratura d'élites intellettuali, la cui storia stilistica è una storia d'individui protetti, nell'*inventio*, da una *koinè* già 'per letteratura,' da una parte, e dall'altra da una condizione sociale preservante l'io della sua passione estetica a coltivare o le abnormità di tipo religioso o intimistico o l'*otium* classicheggiante e squisito" [Italian literature is a literature of intellectual elites, whose stylistic history is a history of individuals protected, in their *inventio*, by already 'literary' *koinè*, on the

one hand, and, on the other, by a social condition that tends to preserve the ‘I’ in its passion, allowing it to cultivate abnormalities of a religious or intimate type, or a classicizing and exquisite *otium*]. Pasolini, “Pascoli,” 273. As Pasolini concludes, with lapses into ancient languages that mark his own place within the culture he critiques, Pascoli is no exception to this rule, even if it is important to distinguish his positions—effectively democratic even in their “classicizing”—from the more openly elitist and avowedly “aristocratic” ones taken by Gentile and others. See for instance Gentile’s 1902 “L’unità della scuola media e la libertà degli studi,” in *La nuova scuola media*, ed. Hervé A. Cavallera, *Opere complete di Giovanni Gentile*, vol. XL (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1988), 1-39; 24; and V. E. Orlando’s slightly later “La riforma della scuola classica,” *Nuova Antologia* 119 (September-October 1905), 633.

¹¹ On the *fanciullino*’s ambivalent status, see Truglio, *Beyond the Family Romance*, 116; and for a reading of Pascoli’s figure as dead and nonexistent—and one that emphasizes writing rather than speech—see Giorgio Agamben, “Pascoli e il pensiero della voce,” in *Categorie italiane*; “Pascoli and the Thought of the Voice,” in *The End of the Poem*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 62-75. Subsequent citations from Agamben’s essay are given parenthetically in the text, with the abbreviation *CI* pointing to *Categorie italiane* and *EP* to *The End of the Poem*.

¹² Although Loce-Mandes’s *Pascoli educatore*, helpfully gathers quotations from the poet’s editorials on education and anthologies for schoolteachers, it does not offer a sustained reading of the place of the school in the poet’s work. Loce-Mandes’s chapter on the *fanciullino*, moreover, both rehearses the critical commonplaces and unaccountably—but, in my view, tellingly—sets the school aside.

¹³ My model here is John Guillory’s reading of Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” in “Mute Inglorious Miltons: Gray, Wordsworth, and the Vernacular Canon,” in *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 85-133, which locates traces of the school (especially in the form of the commonplace book, “at base an instrumentality of the early modern school” [89]) in Gray’s poem, while also asking what about the poem enabled it to “[establish] itself in the [modern] school system as a perfect poem for introducing schoolchildren to the study of English literature” (86). For another account of the process by which modern poetry has been “remade for consumption in the classroom,” see Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson’s Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). (The phrase I have just quoted is from 262, note 32.) One question that this chapter asks is whether it’s possible to imagine this remaking as something other than regrettable, to define it as something other than a dead end.

¹⁴ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), in *The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Gill (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), V.324-5, 442.

¹⁵ William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (New York: New Directions, 1974), 260. Further citations from *Some Versions of Pastoral* are given parenthetically in the text. For a distillation of Lewis’s denunciation of modernist “Child-cult” (to which Empson refers only in passing), see “A Brief Account of the Child-Cult,” in *Time and Western Man*, ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow, 1993), 51-52.

¹⁶ I refer here to the famous and even clichéd claim in Wordsworth’s “My heart leaps up when I behold” that “The Child is the father of the man,” and to one of many addresses to the infant “Seer blest” in the “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood”: “Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep / Thy heritage.” On “loser sons,” see Avital Ronell, *Loser Sons: Politics and Authority* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), and on Pascoli’s relationship to Wordsworth, see Truglio, *Beyond the Family Romance*, 58-61.

¹⁷ Truglio, *Beyond the Family Romance*, 65.

¹⁸ For one critical account that stresses Pascoli’s relationship to tradition, see Pasolini, “Pascoli,” in *Passione e ideologia* (Milan: Garzanti, [1960] 1973), 267-275, which concludes that an “obsession” with the maintenance of the same wins out over various innovative “tendencies” in Pascoli’s work. Pascoli thus ultimately fails, in Pasolini’s

view, to break with or open up “[la] lingua letteraria, nel suo momento centralistico e in definitiva ancora tradizionale” [literary language in its centralistic and definitely still traditional phase] (275).

¹⁹ One might relate this feature of Pascoli’s reception to the broader tendency in criticism and theory to value childhood (youth broadly defined, from infancy to adolescence) for its supposed capacity to disrupt or even destroy the claims of knowledge. See, for instance, Giorgio Agamben, “Infancy and History: An Essay on the Destruction of Experience,” trans. Liz Heron (New York: Verso, 1993), 13-72; Geoff Gilbert, “Boys: Manufacturing Inefficiency,” in *Before Modernism Was: Modern History and the Constituency of Writing* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 51-73; Avital Ronell, *Loser Sons*, especially chapter 6, “On the Unrelenting Creepiness of Childhood: Lyotard, Kid-Tested”; and section II of Christopher Fynsk, *Infant Figures: The Death of the ‘Infans’ and Other Scenes of Origin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 49-130, which centers on Maurice Blanchot’s definition of the *infans* as “that in us which has not yet begun to speak and never will speak.” See Blanchot’s *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 67. To suggest that these texts participate in a latter-day version of child-cult is perhaps to go too far—but perhaps not. For these critical accounts all endow the child (again, variously defined, as *infans*, adolescent, or in between) with the power—indeed, the negative capability—to save us from our adult selves, or at least to curb those selves’ cognitive pretensions. In any case, contrary to these accounts, I emphasize the fact that Pascoli’s child *will* speak—and read. In this sense, my chapter’s understanding of the child is closer to Kathryn Bond Stockton’s in “The Smart Child Is the Masochistic Child: Pedagogy, Pedophilia, and the Pleasures of Harm,” in *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 61-88, although I address the sexuality of Pascoli’s poetic children only indirectly. It matters, in my view, that Stockton’s child is from the first a pupil, rather than a pure blank slate or place of negativity, or experience of originary infancy or ontological priority, or whatever else. For the time being I bracket what is by now the *locus classicus* in queer theory—Lee Edelman’s *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004)—because I do not think that Pascoli’s child functions as a figure for futurity in Edelman’s sense. Instead, the *fanciullino* brings old news; as I have emphasized, he arrives from the past, always already “antichissimo.”

²⁰ Agamben slightly misquotes Pascoli here, and his translator follows him. I have restored Pascoli’s wording by quoting from the text in the collected *Prose*, and provided my own, more literal translation, while indicating where the quotation appears in Agamben’s essay in both Italian and English.

²¹ I should clarify that “origin” is a term of art for Agamben, who writes elsewhere of Indo-European: “It is an origin, but an origin that is not diachronically pushed back into the past; rather, it guarantees the synchronic coherence of the system.” “Project for a Review,” in *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (New York: Verso, 1993), 166. Especially given that Agamben thinks that Indo-European has the potential to become “a new infancy for Western culture,” he can be seen to set infancy to work in a similar way: not as a diachronic origin but rather as one that accompanies and structures every actual instance of speech. Since it is still “the synchronic coherence of the system” that is in question, though—again, language as such—the fact remains that this kind of origin is located outside and thus divested of history, even while it remains in its midst. For a related set of reflections on “*the actuality of the originary*,” addressing the key role of the originary in the Italian philosophical tradition more generally, see Roberto Esposito, *Living Thought: The Origins and Actuality of Italian Philosophy*, trans. Zakiya Hanafi (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 23 (emphasis in original).

²² Agamben, “Tradition of the Immemorial,” in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 104.

²³ Jacques Derrida, “The Violence of the Letter,” in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 101-140; 127.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, “What Are Poets For?” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 2001), 137.

²⁵ Although *Of Grammatology* is not typically read as concerned with concrete educational initiatives, it is worth noting that Derrida's critique of Claude Lévi-Strauss's "Writing Lesson" raises questions about the latter's implications for the ongoing "struggle against illiteracy" (132). Compare the way in which Derrida's discussion of dictation in "Che cos'è la poesia?" is in surprisingly close touch with the pedagogical practice of dictation, unlike Agamben's "Pascoli and the Thought of the Voice" and "The Dictation of Poetry," in *The End of the Poem*, 76-86, both of which treat dictation as a matter for poet-metaphysicians. See Jacques Derrida, "Che cos'è la poesia?" trans. Peggy Kamuf, in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 221-237.

²⁶ Gentile, "L'unità della scuola media e la libertà degli studi," 17.

²⁷ Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect: On Making Italians, 1860-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *PE*. I rely heavily on Stewart-Steinberg's study because of its synthetic nature as well as its literary and cultural sensitivity. Stewart-Steinberg's interest is, however, in the progressives' initiatives in all their variety, rather than in the classical school as such. For broader context and an account that focuses on the latter, I have looked to *L'istruzione classica (1860-1910)*, ed. Gaetano Bonetta and Gigliola Fioravanti (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1995), especially Bonetta's introductory essay, "L'istruzione classica nell'Italia liberale," 17-94, which I cite hereafter parenthetically, using the abbreviation *IC*.

²⁸ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 350.

²⁹ Giovanni Gentile, *La riforma dell'educazione: Discorsi ai maestri di Trieste* (Bari: Laterza, 1920): 186. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

³⁰ V. E. Orlando, "La riforma della scuola classica," *Nuova Antologia* 119 (September-October 1905): 635. Subsequent citations from Orlando's essay are given parenthetically in the text.

³¹ I quote from an advertisement for the journal published in the *Giornale della libreria, della tipografia, e delle arti ed industrie affini* IX (1896): 424. Here Pascoli is listed among notable frequent contributors to the *Rassegna*.

³² Rather than refer to the essay in its original context of publication, *La rassegna scolastica* 2.6 (16 December 1896): 122-124, I cite from the more widely available volume, Giovanni Pascoli, *Prose*, 636-644. Subsequent citations from this volume are given parenthetically in the text. It's worth noting, however, that the issue of *La rassegna scolastica* in which Pascoli's "Pensieri" first appeared distills the debates on education whose contours I sketched above: together with Pascoli's essay and another impassioned, backward-looking polemic by Gino Toscano, "Scuole normali e riforme ... impossibili!" (to which I will return below), a much soberer text appears: "Appunti sulla Scuola primaria," by G. Giansiracusa (130-132). This essay gives voice to precisely the kind of utilitarian view that Pascoli's "Pensieri scolastici" decries, indicating that the *Rassegna* made space for modernizing reformers as well as for their classicist opponents—in keeping with the journal's stated aim: to become a "palestra aperta ad ogni discussione" [an open arena for every discussion] and something of a representative microcosm. See the mission statement in the journal's inaugural issue, "Il nostro programma," *La rassegna scolastica* 1.1 (1 October 1895): 1.

³³ Pascoli's fears were to prove exaggerated, as is shown by the fact that classical education—instruction in Latin and Greek—is still relatively widespread in Italian secondary schools today. See Maurizio Bettini, "I classici come enciclopedia culturale e come antenati: L'insegnamento del latino nella scuola superiore," *California Italian Studies* 2.1 (2011), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3ps870vk#page-1>. See also Table 1 in Bonetta's Introduction to *L'istruzione classica*, 95, which shows that weekly hours devoted to Latin, having peaked in 1891, did not significantly decrease between 1894 and 1923, during which time even weekly hours dedicated to instruction in Greek remained steady.

³⁴ On the cliché as defense against catastrophe, see Anne Carson, “Variations on the Right to Remain Silent,” *A Public Space* 7 (2008): 179-187.

³⁵ Here I am relying on a distinction of Michael Silverstein’s. See “How Knowledge Begets Communication Begets Knowledge: Textuality and Contextuality in Knowing and Learning,” *Intercultural Communications Review* 5 (2006): 36.

³⁶ Quoted in Loce-Mandes, *Pascoli educatore*, 69. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

³⁷ Considering the broader European context at the turn of the century, but writing in a more literary historical vein, Franco Moretti treats the school’s increased prominence in literature and public life as emblematic of the “massive historical fact” of the “growth of institutions” during the period. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, trans. Alberto Sbragia (New York: Verso, 2000), 230. I return to Moretti’s arguments about how the school’s rise signals the demise of the classical *Bildungsroman* and the end of an era more broadly below.

³⁸ For background on the graffito, I have relied on *Graffiti del Palatino*, ed. Veikko Väänänen, *Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae*, vol. III, (Helsinki: Tilgmann, 1966), 209-212. Additional parenthetical references in the rest of the paragraph are to this volume. See also the opening pages of Orazio Aiello’s introduction to Giovanni Pascoli, *Paedagogium*, ed. Orazio Aiello (Palermo: Epos, 2001), also hereafter cited parenthetically, with line numbers, rather than page numbers, given to refer to the text of Pascoli’s poem and “Aiello,” followed by page numbers, used to refer to the editor’s introduction. On the indexicality of graffiti, see Rosalind Krauss, “The Latin Class,” in *Perpetual Inventory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 193-203. Although the Alexamenos graffito (as it is called) does not possess all of the “characteristics” of graffiti identified by Krauss, her understanding of graffiti is useful not only for its emphasis on indexicality, but also for the way in which it reads the temporality and stresses the violence of the graffitist’s gesture: “graffiti is a medium of marking which has precise, and unmistakable, characteristics. First, it is performative; it suspends representation in favor of action: I mark you, I cancel you, I dirty you. Second, it is violent; always an invasion of a space that is not the maker’s own, it takes illegitimate advantage of the surface of inscription, violating it, mauling it, scarring it. Third, it converts the present tense of the performative into the past tense of the index; it is the trace of an event, torn away from the present of the maker: ‘Kilroy was here,’ it reads. ... Even as the graphic lash of the graffiti strikes in the present, it registers itself as past, a mark whose violence dismembers the very idea of the image in the mirror, the whole body, Narcissus. Graffiti’s character (Barthes would say its *genius*) is to strike against *form*, insuring a field in which the only way the image of the body can survive is as part object” (200-201; first emphasis added). Clearly the Alexamenos graffito cannot be said to “suspend representation” or to “strike against *form*” in the way Krauss has in mind. Still it seems to me that Krauss’s language goes some way toward naming what is crucial about the graffito as it inspires Pascoli’s text: it arrives from the past.

³⁹ I cite from Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short’s *A Latin Dictionary*, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry%3Dpaedagogium>. The phrase *delicati pueri*, taken from another dictionary, appears in Aiello’s note on *Paedagogium*’s first line (127). Intriguingly, an essay calling for the creation of an institution called the *Paedagogium* had appeared in the same issue of *La rassegna scolastica* in which Pascoli’s “Pensieri scolastici” made its first appearance. In this essay, “Scuole normali e riforme ... impossibili!” Gino Toscano opposes the then-current configuration of higher education for women, arguing for a two-tiered alternative, in which the *Paedagogium* would be reserved for the best students only. Defining this elite institution, Toscano writes: “il nome [*Paedagogium*] e lo scopo dicono tutto. La Pedagogia teoretica e pratica dovrebbe essere la base di tutto l’insegnamento: l’*arte di fare scuola* lo scopo unico cui mirare costantemente” [the name and the aim say it all. Theoretical and practical Pedagogy should form the basis of all teaching: *the art of schooling* should be the aim kept constantly in view]. Gino Toscano, “Scuole normali e riforme ... impossibili!” *La rassegna scolastica* 2.6 (16 December 1896): 130; emphasis in original. I cite this moment in Toscano’s text not to suggest that it influenced Pascoli directly (though it seems likely that the latter would have come across the proposed *Paedagogium*), but in order to highlight the contrast between Toscano’s proposal and the *poemetto*’s return to an earlier version of the *paedagogium*. That Pascoli’s school is not, as its name

might at first suggest and as in Toscano's school that speaks for itself, a college for the training of teachers perhaps prompts readers to stop to think.

⁴⁰ Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Vintage Classics, 1990), 190.

⁴¹ Pascoli's pedantry colors all of *Paedagogium*, but it becomes particularly obvious when the poem's schoolboys argue not over this or that game or toy or bond of friendship or enmity, but over who has the best Greek. These boys "intended for pages" are, it becomes clear, pedants in the making. See lines 46-51.

⁴² All translations from *Paedagogium* are my own.

⁴³ William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (New York: New Directions, 1974), 260.

⁴⁴ On "impasses one passes through," see Stefania Pandolfo, *Impasse of the Angels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 170 (emphasis in original).

⁴⁵ Aiello emphasizes the importance of this citation but does not note its proximity to the verses that Alexamenos recites earlier in the *poemetto*.

⁴⁶ Barbara Spackman, "Fascist Puerility," *Qui Parle* 13.1 (2001): 13-28.

⁴⁷ Marco Berlanda argues that this text by Gentile lays the foundation for the philosopher's "later and [more] famous polemics" as well as for the 1923 Reform in *Gentile e l'ipoteca kantiana: Linee di formazione del primo attualismo (1893-1912)* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2007), 132.

⁴⁸ Here I want to underscore the especially vexed status of the "national language" in the Italian context, where the *questione della lingua* would remain embattled until well after 1902. For a later dispatch from this front, see Pasolini's 1964 essay "Nuove questioni linguistiche," which begins by declaring a fact Pasolini takes to be "well known" if not universally acknowledged: "*in Italia non esiste una vera e propria lingua nazionale*" [in Italy a true and proper national language does not exist]. Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Empirismo eretico* (Milan: Garzanti, 1977), 5 (emphasis in original).

⁴⁹ A progress narrative is implicit throughout Gentile's essay, detectable, for instance, in the way in which the spirit of Christianity is said "domina[re] oggi sulle civiltà antiche" [to dominate today ancient civilizations] (31). Gentile occasionally deploys the language of progress more explicitly as well, at moments that clue the reader into the concept's centrality to his schema, as when he defines "la vita dell'uomo" [the life of man] as "un continuo e progressivo formarsi dello spirito" [a continual and progressive forming of the spirit] (22). For the relevant moment in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), see Paragraphs 194 and 195 in "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage," where dependent self-consciousness, or the bondsman, having decisively "experienced the fear of death, the absolute Lord" (117), begins to acquire "wisdom" in and through work (118). Hegel here suggests that this wisdom remains inaccessible to the lord, who has not undergone the trial of "absolute negativity" or fully felt the fear of death (117).

⁵⁰ There is no denying that in later and more openly political works, the poet advanced nationalist and even imperialist projects, and produced progressive slogans to support these. See especially "La grande proletaria si è mossa," whose jingoistic progressivism might indeed seem to undermine my construction of Pascoli as a key figure in the counter-progressive pedagogical canon. But I would argue—returning to but also retooling Gentile's claim that the becoming being is not annulled in the being that it becomes—that there is no more need to take "La grande proletaria" as emblematic of Pascoli's poetics as a whole, than there is to conclude on the basis of an anomalously progressive text like *The Future of an Illusion* that Freudian psychoanalysis is anti-counter-progressive. See Giovanni Pascoli, "La grande proletaria si è mossa," in *Prose* 557-568, and Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, with Anna Freud et al., vol. 21, 1927-1931 (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), 5-56. Here again, I am

distinguishing my version of Pascoli from Truglio's; for a reading of the poet's late essay "L'era nuova" alongside *The Future of an Illusion* that aligns the latter text with the former, and with the Pascolian project more generally, see Truglio, *Beyond the Family Romance*, Chapter 5, "Remembering the Golden Age," 135-158.

⁵¹ Here D. W. Winnicott's distinction, drawn in "The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications," in *Playing and Reality* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 115-127, between object-relating and object use can help to clarify the difference between Gentile's vision of the school and Pascoli's. Gentile *relates* to Latin in Winnicott's sense, I want to claim, whereas Pascoli *uses* Latin. According to Winnicott, relating is primarily projective, whereas use can only take place after the object has become "real in the sense of being part of shared reality, not a bundle of projections" (118). Pascoli's Latin, to be sure, is not without projective elements. (Commentators note, for instance, that the imperial *paedagogium* is unmistakably modeled on the poet's own boarding school [Aiello 37].) But Pascoli's insistence on the deadness of the ancient language also represents, I would argue, a way of staying in touch with what Winnicott calls shared reality: a space that is communal in that it is not the subject's alone, and a site whose construction "presupposes destruction." See Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 470. Gentile's repeated assertions of Latin's aliveness, on the other hand, when read with Winnicott, start to sound a lot like attempts to avoid the "perception of the object as an external phenomenon, not as a projective entity, in fact recognition of it as an entity in its own right" (120). Winnicott continues: "after 'subject relates to object' comes 'subject destroys object (as it becomes external); and then may come 'object survives destruction by the subject.' *But there may or may not be survival.* ... It is important to note that it is not only that the subject destroys the object because the object is placed outside the area of omnipotent control. It is equally significant to state this the other way round and to say that it is the destruction of the object that places the object outside the area of the subject's omnipotent control. In these ways the object develops its own autonomy and life [or death? and compare Pascoli's 'greater life'], and (if it survives) contributes-in to the subject, *according to its own properties*" (120-121; second and third emphases added). Again, inasmuch as Gentile takes Latin's survival to be already assured in and through Italian ("the subject" in the passage quoted above indeed ["L'unità" 28]), he wards off the recognition of the object's autonomy and reality as well as of its mortality, of the fact that, in Winnicott's words, "there may or may not be survival." Pascoli's account, by contrast, depends on the acknowledgment of Latin's separateness from the vernacular, and the past's from the present, and it centers on the mortality that Gentile repeatedly denies. In this sense, the poet builds on a recognition of what Winnicott calls the "process of [the object's] becoming destroyed because real, becoming real because destroyed (being destructible and expendable)" (121). If the dead language or the edifice of the classical school weren't destructible, then there would be no need to protect them against the storm of progress, or to write essays like "Pensieri scolastici." For Gentile, by contrast, Latin lives forever, indestructible. "Survival," in Pascoli as in Winnicott, is thus inseparable from finitude, or what Winnicott names "the object's liability not to survive" (124); the object or language survives only when it might have died, which may also be to say only precariously and never as robustly as in Gentile's "L'unità della scuola media." I realize that, in my recourse to Winnicott's distinction, I have mapped Gentile and Pascoli onto a progressive developmental schema, one that renders the poet more mature than the philosopher, since the healthy infant or patient graduates from relating to use. Such relapses, if they're relapses, into progressivism may be inevitable, given the hold that progress has on thought. Even so, I hope to have shown that Pascoli complicates the notion of maturation by making it a matter of regression as much as of forward movement. So, too, does psychoanalysis, for that matter; see, for instance, Christopher Bollas, "Ordinary Regression to Dependence," in *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 256-274.

⁵² Rebecca Comay, "Benjamin's Endgame," in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy*, ed. Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (New York: Routledge, 1994), 266.

⁵³ On the "tradition of the oppressed," see Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 257.

⁵⁴ *Paedagogium* won the Amsterdam-based Certamen Hoefftianum in 1903 (Aiello 16).

⁵⁵ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 846; *Das Passagen-Werk*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*. Volume 5.1-2, ed. Rolf Tiedemann. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982), 1015.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* In this sense, Benjamin's understanding of *Vergegenwärtigung* can help us to see why the image in the Alexamenos graffito matters at least as much as the text, preceding and upstaging the latter in *Paedagogium's* scene of inscription (P 85-99). It matters that the graffito registers the past in a *visible* as well as *legible* form; it is as though, for both Benjamin and Pascoli, the past must have become first and foremost *an image* in order to have returned.

⁵⁸ Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri* (Milan: Garzanti, 1985), 11. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

⁵⁹ "Obsessed" is W. S. di Piero's translation of Leopardi's "studiosissimi." See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri*, trans. W. S. di Piero (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 47.

⁶⁰ My sense is that "Leopardi 13" plays with "this" in ways that resonate with Hegel's discussion of "Sense-Certainty: Or the 'This' and 'Meaning.'" Hegel takes sense-certainty, which at first "appears as the *richest* kind of knowledge" to be, in fact, "the most abstract and poorest" (*Phenomenology* 58). Given that any "this" is negatively defined, "neither This nor That, a *not-This*," Hegel shows, "the universal" is in fact the content of this and any other "this": "What we say is: 'This,' i.e., the *universal This* ... Of course, we do not *envisage* the universal This ... but we *utter* the universal; in other words, we do not strictly say ... what we mean to say" (*Phenomenology* 60). Leopardi's *pensiero* handles "this" less disparagingly than Hegel does, but still in ways that show the word's opening onto generality, if not universality. See also Esposito's discussion of the "nothing in common" in Leopardi's work in *Living Thought*, 117-129.

⁶¹ Here the relationship between "Leopardi 13" and Benjamin's note on anecdotes becomes more complicated, in ways a fuller consideration of the two texts would need to consider. For now I simply want to draw attention to the fact that a movement of abstraction accompanies the remediating function that the *pensiero* assigns to the observance of anniversaries. Even if, in practice, each instance of such observance is singular, Leopardi's meditation generalizes, and requires generalization in order to make its point about anniversaries' social as well as individual efficacy. (That the men "used to solitude" speak, if only to themselves, already indicates that theirs is a social condition.) This suggests that "Leopardi 13" does not simply illustrate—but also complicates—the note in which Benjamin refers to it, making the implicit case for one mode of abstraction.

⁶² Here I am referring back to my readings of two moments in the *poem*: (1) its conclusion, which has Kareius take Alexamenos by the hand, and which I also read as marking *the poem's own* approach to and alliance with Alexamenos, whose affinity for reciting verses, and specifically Virgilian verses, has been apparent from the start; (2) lines 104-105, where I earlier located the return of the past in and through Kaireus' doing time and tenses. ("Quidquid," which I translate as "whatever" above, opens line 104.) On the implications of *Paedagogium's* landing on the fraternal bond between the two boys, see Aiello, who charts a movement from *puer* to *frater* on the part of the poem (35). Aiello also synthesizes other critical takes on *Paedagogium's* version of fraternity, including Francesco Biondolillo's argument that fraternity has a specifically national valence for Pascoli, taking the place of, and papering over, more partisan class struggle in the poet's scheme of values (33-34).

⁶³ Moretti, *The Way of The World* 227; trans. modified, emphasis in original; *Il romanzo di formazione* (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 254. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text and refer to the English translation.

Chapter Three

“Copied Out Big”: Instruction in “Oxen of the Sun”

—Do you believe in the law of heredity?

—Are you drunk or what are you or what are you trying to say?

- James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*¹

Schoolboys for Schoolboys

“Steeled in the school of old Aquinas,” in the words of his own youthful boast,² James Joyce also returned to this old school time and again in his fiction. One of his Jesuit instructors is said to have taught the Greek word “epiphany” “as an aside in his Latin class,” and this lesson or digression would give rise to some of Joyce’s first formal experiments: the brief sketches called “Epiphanies.”³ These showings-forth are set in truant moments, for the most part, as are the “stories of childhood” that open *Dubliners*.⁴ But the schoolroom proper becomes the scene of some of the most memorable passages in Joyce’s subsequent works, works that also feature various other spaces made over in the schoolroom’s image. From the painful schooldays of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to the two catechisms of *Ulysses* and the “Nightlessons” offered in *Finnegans Wake*, scenes of instruction keep repeating themselves in Joyce’s texts.⁵ They do so, admittedly, with spectacular variations as Joyce experiments with a wide range of changeful narrators and protean narrative forms. But for all their changefulness, Joycean scenes of instruction retain a kind of coherence. Consistently, these scenes signal the author’s commitment to imagining and re-imagining the educational institutions whose monumentalizing treatment of texts like *Ulysses* Joyce also famously anticipates.

“I’ve put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I mean, and that’s the only way of insuring one’s immortality”:⁶ to readers from Virginia Woolf to Leo Bersani and beyond, this boast confirms both Joyce’s bad faith and his bad form. By this account, Joyce’s aspiration to greatness, his bid for academically secured immortality, prevents *Ulysses* from being, in Woolf’s often-quoted verdict, “first rate,” making it instead “underbred, not only in the obvious sense, but in the literary sense.”⁷ As countless more recent readers have complained, this bid also “spoils” the experience of reading Joyce’s book. Consider, for instance, this recent, representative confession from Daniel Mendelsohn: “what spoils *Ulysses* for me, each time, is the oppressive allusiveness, the wearily overdetermined referentiality, the heavy constructedness of it all. Reading the book is never pleasurable” because it is “like being on one of those Easter egg hunts you went on as a child—you constantly feel yourself being *managed*, being carefully steered in the direction of effortfully planted treats.”⁸ *Ulysses* is thus infantilizing as well as off-puttingly bookish; with its excessive, even “oppressive,” organization, Joyce’s novel *manages* when it ought to delight and move.

That Mendelsohn’s *management* is another name for what this dissertation calls *instruction* becomes clear as the reviewer’s account of reading *Ulysses* proceeds: “it’s as if Joyce were both the author of his book and the future comp lit grad student who’s trying to decipher it. Indeed, it’s small wonder that *Ulysses* has become the bible of academic lit departments; it seems to have been practically *written* for literary theorists. (*Dubliners*, by contrast, is a book for

‘ordinary readers’—a term I use admiringly.)”⁹ Ultimately, then, the reviewer’s real problem seems not to be that *Ulysses* usurps or attempts to fix its reader’s position, but that it leaves its ordinary reader in the lurch, abandoning this reader in favor of the theorists whom it fully—indeed, “effortfully”—intends to keep busy.¹⁰ The criticism that *Ulysses* itself calls “the speculation of schoolboys for schoolboys” thus continues apace, spurred by Joyce’s text (9.53).¹¹ But this critical enterprise fails altogether to speak to the scholastically uninitiated, or to those whose initiation came to an end with their graduation from formal schooling.

Here, however, it’s worth recalling Stephen’s pointed response to the charge of mere scholasticism leveled at him by a fellow reader in “Scylla and Charybdis”: “The schoolmen were schoolboys first” (9.56). Perhaps, in light of this response, it’s not really the case that Joyce only addresses certain hyper-literate readers while neglecting others. Perhaps instead he works to render *every* reader hyper-literate—to make all of his readers into students, if not out-and-out “comp lit grad students.” Perhaps, that is, despite his self-aggrandizing, Joyce wants *every* reader to have to consult the schemas that ruin the reviewer’s pleasure because he wagers that something happens in and through this process of consultation—that the frustrations this process entails are somehow formative. At least some of these frustrations derive from the *limitations* that the schemas put in place: calculating, inviting, or predetermining interpretations in advance, *Ulysses*’ schemas appear to deprive readers of a long-cherished liberty, undermining the freedom to reach conclusions uncoerced, to be self-taught.¹² Like Joyce’s lingering on minutiae—on what a much earlier review calls “so much that, . . . in its irrelevance, its flashes of deep significance succeeded by incoherent inanities, seems to be life itself”—the schemas fence us in; they contribute to “our sense of being in a bright and yet somehow strictly confined apartment rather than at large beneath the sky.”¹³

But there is another sense in which the schemas constitute what the same 1920 text calls a “limitation imposed” by Joyce. For referring to the schemas means remaining within, or at least returning repeatedly to, the institutions that effectively guarantee the author’s immortality, as predicted. Whether they employ editors, commentators, or professors, these institutions now pass on the sanctioned outlines of Homeric analogies and other Joycean conceits together with the text of *Ulysses* itself. Another cherished aesthetic freedom is thus curtailed, for the reader can no longer sustain her belief in being alone—and “at large”—with the literary work. On the contrary, she must keep company with countless professors, with critics crowded into a small apartment that thus becomes “strictly confined,” claustrophobic indeed.

In keeping with the possibility that these sources of confinement—the theorists summoned into being by, and possibly consubstantial with, *Ulysses*; the ongoing transmission of schemas; even the much-maligned “puzzles and enigmas”—might not “spoil” Joyce’s project but instead represent its pedagogical crux,¹⁴ this chapter takes a frontal approach to the novel’s “overdetermined referentiality” by looking at the most overdetermined and referential, and arguably the most “wearying,” of *Ulysses*’ eighteen episodes: “Oxen of the Sun.” Here, more than anywhere else in the novel, “enigmas and puzzles” proliferate—“They are numerous, complex, and perhaps too elaborately contrived”—and Joyce is at his showiest, making a spectacle of his overbearing erudition.¹⁵ There is thus no more direct route, no comparable royal road, to the “heavy constructedness” of *Ulysses*, to which Mendelsohn objects. But in my approach to this constructedness is head-on, I will also be approaching a text whose pedagogy is

backward even while it represents a feat of modernist experimentation, thus turning, like Bloom, “simultaneously in different directions” (15.1849).

Indeed, “Oxen” both continues and radicalizes the “retrogressive progression” of the previous episode, “Nausicaa”; the text is from the first so programmatically retrograde that it begins by returning to the ancient language and the repetitive form of the “incantation” (*BB* 147). At the same time, Joyce adulterates this form by combining incantatory repetition with a modern place name: “Deshil Holles Eamus. Deshil Holles Eamus. Deshil Holles Eamus” (14.1). So “Oxen” commences, reverting, in a sort of Latin “Let us go then,” to a language that long predates any modern’s mother tongue.¹⁶ And not for nothing, for although “Oxen” is set in the National Maternity Hospital in Holles Street—a place of protection for “proliferent mothers”—the episode is organized by a split between mothering and mouthing off, which is what its male characters do—criminally, if Joyce’s own framing and schematization of the episode are to be believed. “Am working hard at *Oxen of the Sun*, the idea being the crime committed against fecundity by sterilizing the act of coition,” Joyce wrote to Frank Budgen (*JJ* 475), and in the Linati Schema he named another crime: “frauds.” I will return to Joyce’s hard work and idea; first I want to continue to introduce the episode itself.

Early on, Joyce’s narrator announces a regression to the womb: “Before born babe bliss had. Within womb won he worship” (14.60). But this Anglo-Saxon alliteration begins after the narrator has taken pains to put the *natio*, or birth, back into the nation, in a comically Latinate recapitulation of received ideas, an account of what “the most in doctrine erudite ... constantly maintain”: namely, that “by no exterior splendour is the prosperity of a nation more efficaciously asserted than by the measure of how far forward may have progressed the tribute of its solicitude for that proliferant continuance which of evils the original if it be absent when fortunately present constitutes the certain sign of omnipollent nature’s incorrupted benefaction” (14.10-17). To ask, as one must, what is going on in a sentence like this one is also, infantilized, to cry for help.

Mercifully, then, textual aid is on offer in all manner of commentaries as well as in schemas. But I want to stay with “Oxen”’s *incipits* briefly before reaching for these other texts, to see what, if anything, can be made of “Oxen” without them, and then to illustrate what difference they make. Ostentatiously overwritten, absurdly Latinate, and grotesquely involuted in its syntax, as any ordinary reader would be quick to notice, the sentence that I have just quoted also slyly takes back what it purports “efficaciously” to assert. The most telling of several inversions makes the subject of a subordinate clause follow, rather than precede, the very verb that would announce sequence: far from registering “how far forward [the tribute] may have progressed,” the sentence, like “Oxen” as a whole, regresses. The tribute paid by the nation to its own “continuance” appears, then, from the first in the episode as not having progressed very far at all. Instead, this tribute—which in advance would render to the nation that which is the nation’s—interrupts the account that it would initiate, forcing the reader to circle back and to begin again, in order mentally to translate this English prose from Latin, or into Latin and back into English again. Unless, that is, the reader simply forges ahead:

it behooves every most just citizen to become the exhorator and admonisher of his semblables and to tremble lest what had in the past been by the nation excellently commenced might be in the future not with similar excellence accomplished if an

inveterate habit shall have gradually traduced the honorable by ancestors
transmitted customs ... (14.21-26)

Here Joyce's narrator relies on variation as well as inversion to complicate the passage from the past into the future, or rather to show how this passage already will have been complicated without anyone's willing it—indeed, despite injunctions to will the contrary. The syntactic parallel between “what had *in the past* been” and “what might be *in the future*” is only slightly off—but off enough suggest that the latter traduces the former; and the former, the latter. Derived from the Latin *traducere*, “to lead across, transfer, [or] degrade,” Joyce's “traduced” hints at the betrayal latent in every tradition, every transmission.¹⁷ But the verb “traduce” also gives the lie to the very fictions of production and reproduction that “every most just citizen” is enjoined to exhort. One prefix overwrites, or crosses out, another: in “Oxen,” the crosswise “tra-,” from trans-,” trumps the forward-looking “pro-,” setting progress as well as reproduction aside in favor of transformation sponsored by (of all things) tradition.

In what is indeed both a critique of “chrononormativity” and send-up of “reproductive futurism” *ante litteram*,¹⁸ Joyce thus suggests that, “Universally,” ancestors will have been betrayed (14.7), and similarity will have given way to difference.¹⁹ Likewise will “semblables” “tremble.” That those last two words share a central set of letters makes their differences from one another that much more striking in a passage ostensibly about the urgent need to forestall change as such, to guarantee the “continuance” thanks to which the nation might remain identical to itself—or, in the language of my epigraph, to enforce the “law of heredity” (*P* 168) thanks to which national “semblables” might retain their resemblance.²⁰

But if my reading so far sounds like it will set up a familiar celebration of “proliferant” difference, of plurality as conquering all by wearing away at singular institutions, here I need to begin again, because “Oxen” is not simply a study in the sort of “self-changingness that gives the slip to the rigidifying structures of the social order.”²¹ For although the episode enacts linguistic and subjective change at every turn, it does so by inhabiting—and calling on readers to inhabit—the very rigid structures and social orders that it satirizes, the same orders and structures whose endless alteration it stages. Joyce suggests, in fact, that such alteration *depends* on the institution that would seem only to dictate self-identity: the old school, whose techniques “Oxen” everywhere redeploys. Against progressive educators' insistence that we leave the past behind in the name of ease and independence, “Oxen” looks to outmoded scholastic forms and in this way strictly limits itself and its readers. Making constant demands, the episode sets readers to work and cultivates dependencies, in two senses: highlighting its own reliance on a range of textual sources, “Oxen” also forces us to consult schemas and commentaries, effectively to become schoolboys.

The strand in Joyce's reception that I have sketched deeply resents these supplementary texts and would cast them off as so many constraints, of a piece with the “puzzles and enigmas” that Joyce couldn't keep himself from “put[ting] in.” Hence, for instance, Woolf's aversion to Joyce's tricks and Mendelsohn's to “being *managed*.” Hence, too, the earlier, anonymous reviewer's characterization of *Ulysses* as a “strictly confined apartment” or the more recent complaint, no less representative, that “if you want to understand even half of [Joyce's novel] you have to lug a dictionary-sized user's guide around with it—unappealing when the book alone already weighs more than a small child.”²² This tradition of reception repeats progressive

education's demand that learning be made easy—a demand that Joyce both flagrantly violates and pointedly acknowledges. For although “Oxen” reverts to the old school's methods and preserves its constraints, the episode also gestures toward the free and easy education that it refuses. Buck Mulligan becomes this education's advocate. “Oxen”'s narrator, by contrast, becomes its counter-progressive opponent. Finding in Walter Pater a model of weight-bearing—of effortful, rather than easy transmission—Joyce contrasts Mulligan's understanding of aestheticism and development with his own arduous pedagogical project. “Oxen” thus affirms what Mulligan and many right-thinking readers of *Ulysses* would negate: the past that weighs heavily and that must be repeated, imitated, altered, laboriously copied out again.

His Swaddling Bands

Scenes of education in *A Portrait* and early in *Ulysses* set the stage for “Oxen”'s handling of “the studious” and its effort to enforce studiousness (14.1380). To begin again, then: Long before his arrival in the hospital in Holles Street, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus accompanies his father on a visit to some of his old haunts in Cork:

They passed into the anatomy theater where Mr Dedalus, the porter aiding him, searched the desks for his initials. Stephen remained in the background, depressed more than ever by the darkness and silence of the theatre and by the air it wore of jaded and formal study. On the desk he read the word *Foetus* cut several times in the dark stained wood. The sudden legend startled his blood: he seemed to feel the absent students of the college about him and to shrink from their company. A vision of their life, which his father's words had been powerless to evoke, sprang up before him out of the desk. A broad shouldered student with a moustache was cutting in the letters with a jack knife, seriously. Other students stood or sat near him laughing at his handiwork. One jogged his elbow. The big student turned on him, frowning. (P 62-63)

If this moment illustrates the uncanny in Freud's sense—entailing as the latter does the terrifying return of “intra-uterine” as well as infantile states (“The ‘Uncanny’” 244)—it also bears witness to the becoming-legend of merely “formal study.” “The sudden legend” that Stephen comes across is, after all, what such study here generates, what is born improbably from the anatomy theater's “darkness and silence.” These allow for the gestation not of a fleshly fetus, but of one that gives itself to be read: a “legend,” derived from the Latin gerundive denoting reading and defined as an inscription rather than a story per se—although the germ of a story does appear briefly as Stephen's vision takes shape. Prompted by the contingent encounter with a graffito—one that, incidentally, like the Alexamenos graffito in Pascoli's *Paedagogium*, both indexes the past and brings about its return—rather than by paternal reminiscence, Stephen's vision also momentarily sidelines the “father's words,” bereft as these are of evocative power.

What, then, has become of mothers? In this scene, their place is at once occupied and emptied out by male students. For the legend “*Foetus*” is what the spectral, menacing schoolboys leave behind.²³ This inscription, “cut several times,” both preserves and cancels the maternal function toward which it points. Someone has evidently studied conception, gestation, and birth,

but this same student, encouraged by peers, has also decontextualized and literalized—made mere letters of—these reproductive processes, turning them into the legend that causes Stephen to shudder. Narratively, this legend leads nowhere in *A Portrait*, but formally—as an aside and legend, giving itself to be read—it establishes a template for several scenes of instruction in *Ulysses*. In these scenes, Joyce locates “formal study” *to the side of reproduction*: in its vicinity, but in a discrete space, governed not by the evolutionary dictates of the future but by the discontinuous rhythms of the past.

I will show that these scenes of instruction culminate in “Oxen.” But they begin with “Nestor,” *Ulysses*’ second episode, set in the school where Stephen works as both a teacher and, in his own preferred self-designation, a “learner” (2.403). Here, during class, Stephen lets his thoughts wander as his students fail to learn Roman history and barely manage to recite lines from Milton’s *Lycidas*. After the lesson ends, a slow learner named Cyril Sargent stays behind, “showing an open copybook” to Stephen (2.123-124). “Ugly and futile,” Cyril needs help. He has been told to copy out again math problems whose solutions he does not understand. “Sitting at his side Stephen solved out the problem. He proves by algebra that Shakespeare’s ghost is Hamlet’s grandfather” (2.151-152). That last sentence echoes Buck Mulligan’s earlier promise of Stephen’s proof, which finally unfolds in the “most instructive discussion” in “Scylla and Charybdis,” centered, like so much of *Ulysses*, on the problem of paternity. But here in “Nestor” Stephen’s thoughts quickly abandon fathers and settle on Cyril’s dead mother, his own, and mother love more generally:

In long, shady strokes Sargent copied the data. Waiting always for a word of help his hand moved faithfully the unsteady symbols, a faint hue of shame flickering behind his dull skin. *Amor matris*: subjective and objective genitive. With her weak blood and whey-sour milk she had fed him and hid from sight of others his swaddling bands.

Like him was I, these sloping shoulders, this gracelessness. My childhood bends beside me. Too far for me to lay a hand there once or lightly. Mine is far and his secret as our eyes. Secrets, silent, stony sit in the dark palaces of both our hearts: secrets weary of their tyranny: tyrants willing to be dethroned.

The sum was done. (2.163-173)

“The sum was done” does something more than sum up this passage. Abruptly, it ends a process of identification that makes two sons, and two sets of sums, into one, as in the movement of Joyce’s (or Stephen’s) pronouns: “Mine is far and his secret as our eyes”; or as in Cyril’s becoming “My childhood.” But importantly this process begins by dividing a singular mother love into two: “*Amor matris*: subjective and objective genitive.” It’s typical of the overeducated Stephen to translate lived and carnal relations into grammatical terms. What matters most for my purposes is that his doing so here marks the scene of teaching as *missing* the mother who yet remains present, in attendance if only as a memory or a thought.

Like the legend “*Foetus*” in Cork, then, “*Amor matris*” effects the disappearance of the very figure that it conjures. The phrase names the dead mother in a dead language, but it also highlights this language’s particular amenability to formal analysis. (Recall Gramsci’s dictum: “analyses made by children can only be of dead things.”²⁴) For the phrase immediately triggers

Stephen's grammatical gloss—"subjective and objective genitive"—and this gloss just as immediately registers the formal study that Stephen has undergone. More than the Latin phrase itself, "subjective and objective genitive" sounds like it comes from another teacher or from a textbook. It thus encodes the past in a different way from the phrase that it accompanies, so that this phrase comes to point not only to two different kinds or valences of mother love, but also to the contexts in which this love, abstracted from any particular mother or child, becomes an object of study.

All the while, of course, Cyril continues to copy out his sums. Drawing attention to the *sum*, the "I am," latent in these sums, Barry McCrea has read "Nestor" as a tale of two modes of transmission, one genealogical, the other queer. McCrea stresses Stephen's—and *Ulysses*'—determination to graduate from the moment that I have been discussing, the scene of "repetitive, easy transmission, ... of perfect reproduction, of copying, of writing out again."²⁵ In a sentence that perhaps unwittingly enacts the pull of the repetitive processes that it would have Joyce abandon ("of perfect reproduction, of copying of writing out again"), McCrea aligns rote reproduction with Stephen's employer, the headmaster Deasy. Deasy, who has given Cyril the assignment that he completes under Stephen's distracted watch, engages in both copying and collecting. Both processes stand, according to McCrea, for "pointless accumulation," "offering no possibility of generation or transformation," only an endless repetition of the same. This repetition also realizes Deasy's dream of racial purity, which is also Stephen's nightmare, named famously in "Nestor" (2.377). McCrea argues that *Ulysses* and Stephen both move away from all of these related practices—copying, collecting, and reproducing—until they arrive finally at "Ithaca," which represents the culmination of the progressive process of graduation or growth that McCrea charts. By this account, Joyce's novel counter-intuitively comes home by running away; Stephen finds real family in affiliation rather than filiation, and "nongenetic genealogies," or queer intergenerational relations, "usurp paternity and marriage by offering a [new] grid on which to plot the protagonists' positions and changing but consistent identities across time (the sum of their *sums*, but not from a copybook)" (142). Bloom and Stephen are "not from a copybook," or perhaps more accurately no longer from one, because by the time they reach "Ithaca," they have broken free of the sums assigned to Cyril Sargent, forging a bond outside kinship and conjugality,²⁶ and a pair of identities that adds up to more than someone else's *sum*.

But in an important sense the catechism of "Ithaca" represents a continuation, rather than an overcoming, of the copying-out first imagined in "Nestor": for all its undeniable humor and its endless scope and creativity, as a protracted if patently impossible text for memorization, the catechism remains a copybook. It retains the form, if not the function, of the "treatise for instruction" (*OED*) whose answers are to be reproduced in a rote fashion, not adapted to suit the styles of individual worshippers, but repeated verbatim in the voice or under the sign of the impersonal *sum* of someone else. Moreover, "Ithaca" is nothing if not an exercise in "pointless accumulation": a piling-up of inconsequential details and incompatible perspectives that paper over, dilate, deflate, and defuse the narrative climax toward which Joyce's novel has been building from the first. All of these effects are, of course, closely related to McCrea's notion of "nongenetic genealogies"; Joyce's novel devises new narrative modes—including the dilation and deflation of "Ithaca"—in an attempt to produce what McCrea calls a new "grid" on which to plot extra-familial intimacies and non-teleological identities. My point, however, is that this grid *also* and ostentatiously results from the practices of "repetitive, easy transmission, ... of perfect

reproduction, of copying, of writing out again” that McCrea regards “Ithaca” as progressively leaving behind (113). Even while *Ulysses* seems increasingly to privilege spontaneous over learned and “deficient” over compliant forms—Molly’s “more than once cover[ing] a sheet of paper with signs and hieroglyphics which she stated were Greek and Irish and Hebrew characters” (17.676-678)—the distinction between copying and invention, repetition and transformation, never becomes definitive.

Neither, for that matter, does the difference between genealogical and queer relations, on which McCrea insists, finding in the latter proliferating alternatives to the former’s “perfect reproduction” of the same.²⁷ I have shown that “Oxen of the Sun” begins by enacting the impossibility of this very sameness, exposing the difference that inevitably overtakes the effort to sustain “semblables”: a difference made visible in language but besetting nations and populations as well.²⁸ And in this section, I have made a complementary if apparently inverse claim: that there is, in Joycean narrative, a repetition that is not strictly reproduction, but that remains inextricably connected to the reproductive functions that we have seen emblemized in *A Portrait*’s “*Foetus*” and analyzed in the “*Amor matris*” in “Nestor.”²⁹ If the introduction to “Oxen” teaches that there can never truly be sameness, then these earlier texts suggest that a certain sameness nevertheless persists, if, again, only in thought: the maternal bond, the fact of biological connection, “The one true thing in life” (2.143). “Universally,” “Oxen”’s narrator might add (14.7). I do not mean to argue, though, that these schoolroom scenes of same-sex intimacy simply assert what “Oxen,” with its over-emphatic, jingoistic opening, will go on effectively to deny. My interest is instead in how all three texts—*A Portrait*, “Nestor,” and “Oxen”—complicate the terms on which McCrea and others depend. Such scenes call for a reading that attends to the non-progressive persistence of the reproductive in *Ulysses*, and of the repetitive and copied-out in the queer. This is the reading that I propose to begin by reopening “Oxen.”

Labors of Pedagogy

Joyce meant for the phases of gestation and birth to organize the form of “Oxen of the Sun.” His aim in writing “Oxen” was, as he wrote to Frank Budgen and as almost all commentaries and critical readings of the episode begin by repeating, to map the “progression” of English prose styles onto “the natural stages of development in the embryo and the periods of faunal evolution in general,” in a series of strained parallels that only further strained credulity the further they extended, becoming so many Joycean stretch marks: “Bloom is the spermatozoon, the hospital the womb, the nurse the ovum, Stephen the embryo.” If the author often makes heavy weather of the Homeric analogies in *Ulysses* as a whole—and we have heard this complaint from Woolf and Mendelsohn—in “Oxen” he belabors his analogical procedure to the breaking point.

Leo Bersani raises this objection, among others, in his essay “Against *Ulysses*.” According to Bersani, the citations and send-ups that constitute “the Joycean intertext” at the basis of *Ulysses* “are neither subversive nor indifferent to the fact of cultural inheritance; rather, Joyce relocates the items of that inheritance with *Ulysses* as both their center and belated origin.”³⁰ “Oxen of the Sun,” for Bersani, stages this relocation—also a “reactionary”

reconsolidation of “cultural authority”—with particular shamelessness. Here the critic lays out some of the episode’s main conceits, which are worth going back over again:

The freakish anomalies of *Ulysses*, far from threatening the author’s control of his material, are the very sign of that control. Consider “Oxen of the Sun,” which may be the most difficult and the most accessible episode of the novel. Once we have identified all the referents in this virtuoso pastiche of prose styles from Sallust to modern slang, what else does the episode give us? How does its language enact its sense? While the narrator is engaging in this stylistic tour de force, several of the characters—including Bloom and Stephen—are sitting around drinking and talking in a maternity hospital, where Mrs. Purefoy is going through the final moments of a long, hard labor. With some help from a letter Joyce wrote to Frank Budgen as he was working on “Oxen of the Sun,” critics have proposed a series of parallels between the evolution of English prose and (1) biological gestation and birth, (2) the development of the embryonic artist’s prose style, (3) faunal evolution, and (4) Stephen’s rebirth as an artist. The episode may be the most extraordinary example in the history of literature of *meaning* unrelated to the experience of reading and to the work of writing. (172; emphasis added)

It’s strange that Bersani, elsewhere a champion of self-loss and of willed readerly as well as writerly poverty,³¹ here normatively equates “the experience of reading” with the production, or perhaps the consumption, of “sense,” and goes so far as to fault Joyce for failing to provide readers with a payoff in the form of graspable meaning: “What else does the episode give us?” (The question interestingly recalls McCrea’s understanding of profitlessness.) In this account, it is as if there could be nothing instructive about the episode’s leaving readers empty-handed, just as there could be nothing to be gained from its “imitative fallacies” (172), or from the difficulty that Bersani wants to expose as so much accessibility. For Bersani, this accessibility results from Joyce’s willing, not to say overweening, participation in the worst kinds of developmentalism, both biological and cultural: not merely complicit in the forward march of progress, *Ulysses*, whose politics Bersani takes “Oxen” to contain *in nuce*, orchestrates this march for future generations. The bookish book in fact bequeaths to its duped critics and readers all the heaviest baggage of the oppressive “cultural inheritance” that it not only leaves intact, unsubverted, but also actively preserves.

But this is still to remain wedded to the programmatic statements that Joyce made to Budgen, and thus to consolidate, if only unwittingly, the very authorial “control” whose exercise Bersani wants to protest. In fact, the letter to Budgen can be set aside—as can meaning, which gives way, in “Oxen,” as in Pater’s understanding of religion, to practice, to exercise, indeed, to what Bersani calls “the experience of reading.”³² But this experience becomes charged in more ways than one—intensified and weighted down—when “Oxen” interpellates its reader as pupil. This interpellation is more subtle but no less efficacious than the process by which Pascoli converts his reader into a student in his Latin class in *Paedagogium*, incorporating grammar drills into his verse. It’s just that, in “Oxen,” Latin, having surfaced in the *incipit* (“Deshil Holles Eamus”), then goes underground. As I have already suggested, the episode’s first, Latinate

paragraphs require readers to engage in a sort of *reverse translation*—or, minimally, to grasp that Joyce’s English sentences are being modeled after Sallust’s Latin periods. But even this minimal, provisional grasp presupposes some sense of what the original periods sound and feel like. Only armed with this sense—or with a commentary—is it possible to return to and begin to parse Joyce’s English.

The practice of reverse translation (recommended for the “making of latines” in the English-speaking world since Roger Ascham’s sixteenth-century teachers’ manual *The Scholemaster*) is already scholastic in its provenance.³³ But “Oxen” becomes increasingly scholastic—increasingly, counter-progressively pedagogical—as it proceeds, even while it also continues Joyce’s engagement with the questions of maternity that I discussed in my last section. The form that the latter engagement takes in “Oxen,” again, scandalizes Bersani, because it looks like a repudiation or degradation of the feminine as such: “While the narrator is engaging in [a] stylistic tour de force, several of the characters . . . are sitting around drinking and talking in a maternity hospital, where Mrs. Purefoy is going through the final moments of a long, hard labor.” But it will become clear that Joyce complicates the contrast that he sets up between male *otium*—“sitting around drinking and talking”—and female reproductive labor. For while Stephen may find “a refuge from his labours of pedagogy” in the Holles Street hospital (14.1214-1215), here Joyce’s pedagogical labor is intensified.

Critics have noted that, together with the many primary source texts, beginning with Sallust, whose styles it imitates, “Oxen” parodies the literary anthologies of Joyce’s day. “[I]ntended mainly for the use of young students” rather than adult readers,³⁴ these texts tended to make history into a matter of linear progression and organic development, with prose “specimens” leading from the fourteenth century to “the present day” or to the recent past in which the present was readily recognizable.³⁵ Even when the compilers of these anthologies prescribed “attentive toil” in reading,³⁶ their chronologically arranged selections unfolded more or less seamlessly: with only the names and birth and death dates of “the best English authors,” and the titles of these authors’ works, coming between selections. Although Joyce also consulted more explanatory and editorializing literary histories—notably George Saintsbury’s *A History of English Prose Rhythm*—he took the humbler extract-collections as models for “Oxen.”³⁷ These provided the episode with its scaffolding, and what results is a sort of abbreviated anthology of prose styles, one from which the informational signposts have been removed and above which a narrative and allegorical overlay has been added. Again, in Joyce’s own words: “Bloom is the spermatozoon, the hospital the womb, the nurse the ovum, Stephen the embryo.”

This, Joyce said, was his conceit. But as recent readings have emphasized, Joyce complicated this by using the tropes of progress and development against themselves, as in the episode’s introductory paragraphs, which undercut the continuity that they pretend to exhort and traduce the productivity that they would celebrate. Or as in the claim made to Budgen that the episode stages simple “progression” when, in fact, the chronology of its pastiches is deliberately disorganized. Indeed, Joyce substitutes a “profoundly anachronistic method” for the anthologists’ confidently forward-looking procedure,³⁸ and in this way ruins the succession of styles that he claimed to have recreated. For the chapter’s prose keeps getting ahead of itself. Conversely, having advanced in literary history, “Oxen” stylistically and even linguistically regresses again and again—most spectacularly when Latin punctuates the episode’s concluding “afterbirth,” made up mainly of slang and ersatz ad copy: “*Silentium!* Get a spurt on” (14.1457). Joyce

himself accounted for another kind of relapse in the text: “The double-thudding Anglo-Saxon motive recurs from time to time . . . to give the sense of the hoofs of oxen” (*JJ* 475).

This kind of repetition or backward-looking motive is in keeping with Stephen’s stated interest in recasting developmental advance as “retrogressive metamorphosis” (14.390). This interest, which Stephen shares with Joyce and even with Bloom, has of course not escaped critics’ attention. Still its pedagogical setting-to-work in “Oxen” has been missed. This is perhaps because the episode does not appear to thematize the school—at least not as explicitly as it thematizes sexuality and reproduction, on the one hand, and history, on the other. “Oxen” has fittingly become a focal point for scholars interested in Joyce’s handling of each of these themes.³⁹ Yet, as Hugh Kenner’s notes, “student-talk” makes up “Oxen”’s “chief material.”⁴⁰ More importantly still, the transposition and transcription of this talk into a series of painstakingly learned styles constitutes “Oxen”’s imposing method.

Imposing, I mean, both for Joyce—who claimed to be engaged in his own “long, hard labor” while writing the episode, which gave him more trouble and caused him more pain than any he had previously composed (*JJ* 476)—and, more importantly, for the reader. Harriet Shaw Weaver, one of the first readers to respond to “Oxen,” wrote to Joyce that “the reading of it is like being taken the rounds of hell.”⁴¹ Subsequent generations of readers, including Bersani, have concurred—that is, when they have not given in to the understandable temptation to bypass the episode altogether. For there is indeed something hellish, or punishing at the very least, about the experience of reading “Oxen,” which, for all its humor, impedes forward movement so forcefully as to constitute one big hindrance.

Sending us back to school very late in the day on which *Ulysses* takes place—it is already 10:00 pm—“Oxen” also blocks our path to “Circe” and its more pleasurable punishments, not with unbroken monotony, but rather taking us through circuitous, repetitious “rounds.”⁴² The episode thus makes the past perceptible as a dead weight. It makes the past, more precisely, into a pensum not finally shed by the present or assimilable to meaning.⁴³ A pensum—whose name derives not, as one might guess, from the Latin verb *pensare*, “to think,” but rather from *pendere*, to weigh—is a scholastic punishment that often takes the form of things copied out—paradigmatically, lines of poetry, but sometimes sums, as in “Nestor,” as we have seen.⁴⁴ Chris Ackerley gives a more capacious definition: “*pensums*: in the parlance of the Public School, the fagging, detentions, lines, and small senseless demands that so intrude upon time. It was Flaubert’s name,” Ackerley adds, “for the chore of writing *Madame Bovary*.”⁴⁵ It seems fitting, then, that in the opening scene of Flaubert’s novel, a Headmaster assigns two pensums: “Five hundred lines for the entire class,” and, for the “*new boy*” Charles Bovary, “the verb *ridiculus sum*” to be copied out twenty times.⁴⁶ Joyce reprises this scene of punishment explicitly in *A Portrait*, when the flustered Father Arnall singles out a student who wrongly claims that “the noun *mare*” (*P* 31) “has no plural,” then fumes: “Copy out your themes again the rest of you” (*P* 32). So, too, does “Oxen” revisit the bovine Bovary’s “*ridiculus sum*.”

And a ridiculous sum of styles is indeed the result, for the pastiches in “Oxen” keep exposing the absurdity of their models. This seems to suggest that Joyce is engaged less in copying out than in sending up, or even, in Andrew Gibson’s more activist formulation, in “writing back” (171)—less in reproducing, that is, than in traducing the authors whose prose he imitated. If Joyce, or his narrator in “Oxen,” undertakes to complete a pensum, then he doesn’t complete it well; instead, like a student doing impressions of his teachers throughout detention,

he remains defiant. Browne, he says, in so many words, is a bore, and Burke a mere windbag. Hence critical accounts that emphasize “Oxen”’s status as an “anti-anthology” (Gibson 173, 182) or “a mischievous imitation of a prose anthology, a subversive textbook smuggled between the covers of a fictional text” (Spoo 138-139). But such attention to Joyce’s subversions of chronology and textual authority has obscured the episode’s formal principles derived from the anthology and its procedures modeled on the pensum.⁴⁷

Taken together, these make it clear that “Oxen of the Sun” brings to term in advance what “Ithaca” will go on to abort: the possibility of “instruction” proposed and counter-proposed by Bloom and Stephen.⁴⁸ It matters that this bringing-to-term happens where and how it does: in the maternity hospital, and through the stylistic tour de force that so offends Bersani’s sensibilities. In this narrative context, the episode’s “technic”—“Embryonic Development,” again, according to the Linati Schema—serves ironically to underscore the utter sterility of the narrator’s discourse. What I earlier called this discourse’s tendency to traduce there where producing is loudly called for is also its manifest failure to reproduce itself, as each style keeps spilling over into other styles that are not its “semblables” (14.23).

Yet inasmuch as they are modeled on the styles of others, “Oxen”’s styles *do* reproduce. Or at least they gesture—for all their obvious and parodic imperfection—toward what McCrea calls “perfect reproduction” (113) Each paragraph in “Oxen” is, in this sense, the product of a process distinct from but crucially related to the reproduction that happens in Holles Street, “in the high sunbright wellbuilt fair home of mothers when, ostensibly far gone and reproductitive, it is come by her thereto to lie in, her term up” (14.68-70). Here the Joycean neologism “reproductitive” condenses the relation-in-distinction that I have been trying to describe. Not quite reproductive, but not quite not, “reproductitive” stops short of the episode’s would-be Anglo Saxon “double thudding” but engages in the same phonemic stuttering that will lead, in this same sentence, to “thereto to.” At the same time, “reproductitive” also does more than stutter, since it mimics the form of the *frequentative*, a verbal inflection that signals “the frequent repetition of an action” (*OED*).⁴⁹ In Latin, frequentatives rely on the addition of at –t or –it to a verb’s simple form, as when *canare* (to sing) becomes *cantare* (to keep singing); *dicere* (to say) becomes *dictare* (to dictate); or *agere* (to do or drive) becomes *agitare* (to put into motion, and here the frequentative is retained in the English “agitate”). The insertion of these same letters into “Oxen”’s Latinate English not only draws attention to the dead language latent in the living; descended from *A Portrait*’s “*Foetus*” and “Nestor”’s “*Amor matris*,” Joyce’s archaizing neologism also describes the work of Joycean instruction itself.

The iterative frequentative “reproductitive” indicates the way in which Joyce at once reinscribes his text within and removes it from the reproductive process that it thematizes.⁵⁰ Supplementing the reproductive—in the Derridean sense, both adding to and supplanting, both requiring and replacing it—the “reproductitive” organizes “Oxen”; it becomes the sign under which the episode unfolds. Ostensibly gathering to worship at the altar of biological reproduction, Joyce’s “studious” characters (14.1380)—and even more so his narrator and readers—thus end up engaging in another set of rituals: “archaic initiation rituals” strikingly like those staged in Pater’s Sparta and Pascoli’s *Paedagogium*.⁵¹ These pertain to the school rather than the maternity ward, and this makes their recurrence in “Oxen” that much more striking. For Joyce has the forward-looking medical institution—guarantor of the “reiteratedly procreating function ever irrevocably enjoined” by Genesis and the nation alike (14.31-32)—shelter the more

frequent and backward form of reiteration that inheres in the techniques of the old school. Such techniques, as I have emphasized, enjoin not increase and multiplication, but going back over what has gone before.

Midway through the episode, Bloom reflects on this distinction as he considers the schoolboy humor of the medical students in the maternity ward: “Singular, communed the guest with himself, . . . that the puerperal dormitory and the dissecting theatre should be the seminaries of such frivolity” (14.896-899). “Such frivolity” may be another name for the “crime . . . against fecundity” that Joyce said “Oxen” was to illustrate: “Am working hard at *Oxen of the Sun*, the idea being the crime committed against fecundity by sterilizing the act of coition” (*JJ* 475). For Bloom, the carousing students, led by Buck Mulligan, sterilize discourse as well as coition: “frivolity” names their waste of words and “mere acquisition of academic titles” (14.900). Meanwhile Joyce’s narrator slyly draws attention to the semen—in Latin, the seed—in the seminary. Thus do mere academic titles—and indeed the very title of the academy—become legible in their relation to and difference from reproduction. Rather than simply sterilizing, “Oxen” renders discourse “reproductitive.”

Embryo Philosophers

Given Joyce’s hard work and sustained if impious adherence to his stylistic sources, I have been arguing that “Oxen”’s “most conspicuous practice” is, in fact, copying out, not “writing back” (Gibson 171). If the gestalt of the text’s styles is defiant, as Gibson and others contend, their individual instances—the stylistic episodes within the narrative episode—remain undeniably derivative. To say this, though, is not to deny the inventiveness of the episode as a whole; it is instead to specify that this inventiveness remains inseparable from imitation, just as the narrative of “Oxen” is impossible to disentangle from its obtrusive stylistic presentation—even while the two, style and narrative substance, importantly never sync up. Far from being a mere, decorative overlay or distraction, though, the stylistic pastiches in “Oxen” constitute its defining feature and insinuate its argument. Countering the progressive stipulation that we should—together with the idea that we ever could—get out from under the past, Joyce insists that repeated and formative, frequent and “reproductitive” returns to it remain ineluctable.

Long since sustained by the old school and reenacted in “Oxen”’s styles, such returns are precisely what progressive education recasts as obsolete in order to leave behind. At the same time, the discourse of educational reform beginning with Rousseau and continuing well past Joyce’s day also recasts *itself* as reproductive. Time and again, reformers pretend to forswear the repetition of the past for the sake of fertility. For progressive educators, later called developmentalists,⁵² traditional education and the Latin class that is its emblem thus become sterilizing. Cultural contraceptives, these old institutions are held responsible for broad collective stagnation, for national failures to innovate. But they also stand accused more pointedly of what Joyce, framing “Oxen,” calls “crime[s] committed against fecundity” (*JJ* 475). Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Émile*, for instance, links bad education to declining birth rates, and John Dewey sees such education as evolutionarily redundant. For both thinkers and their reform-minded followers, the old school thus thwarts the procreation it should serve; it separates itself, and its students, from the reproduction with which it should coincide.

In these progressive educational theories, reproduction importantly refers not to the maintenance of the same, or to McCrea's "perfect reproduction" (113). Rather it names a process of continual improvement, whether social, as in Rousseau, or evolutionary or both, as in Dewey. Reproduction becomes the optimization rather than the mere preservation of life. Consider the logic of the impassioned defense of breastfeeding that opens *Émile*, where Rousseau argues that nursing lays the foundation for an education properly realigned with nature. Indeed, the author at times even gives readers to understand that breastfeeding suffices to constitute this education, capable on its own of bringing about thoroughgoing reform: "let mothers deign to nurse their children, morals will reform themselves, nature's sentiments will be awakened in every heart, the state will be re-peopled" (46). Repopulated, that is, by newly moral, newly natural, "lively and animated" men, women, and children. For Rousseau, reform, which begins at home, thus means innovation first and foremost. It also rules out repetition by definition, as *Émile* will proceed to explain, although a certain repetitiousness returns at the level of the sentence: in a context in which wet-nursing prevails, for instance, "Women have stopped being mothers; they will no longer be; they no longer want to be" (46). *Émile*'s first pages at first seem to advocate a return to a past state of affairs, to a time when women were mothers. Plainly, however, these pages instantiate what Derrida calls Rousseau's "archeoteleological concept of nature," according to which the return to origins and the achievement of destiny coincide.⁵³ And here *telos* trumps *arche*: "Thus from the correction of this single abuse," Rousseau writes, referring to mothers' reliance on wet nurses, "would soon result a general reform; nature would soon have reclaimed all her rights" (46; trans. modified). The "all" tips the reformer's hand: Rousseau has in mind the wholesale restoration of a nature not only prior to culture, but also after it. Fully reproductive, the nature that has "reclaimed all her rights" will have left culture and its props behind.

At the same time, though, Rousseau makes his *Émile* the purveyor of a system of acculturation wholly continuous with nature as origin and end. Addressed to mothers (37), the treatise proposes an educational method based on mother love—and this even though remarkably "Émile is an orphan" (52). Therefore no dead language, no scholastic abstraction—nothing like Joyce's "*Amor matris*: subjective and objective genitive"—can come between the pupil and his teacher, who "inherit[s] all [parental] rights" (52). This twist—that an orphan models the ideal reception of teaching as naturalized mother love—already complicates the philosopher's claims about breastfeeding. (Incidentally, it also lands him in gender trouble: "if the Author nature had wanted [children's first education] to belong to men, He would have given them milk with which to nurse children," Rousseau writes early on [37]. By contrast, Joyce lays stress on a certain "manliness" required to give birth in the first place: "All that surgical skill could do was done and the brave woman had manfully helped" [14.1312-1313]. Here "manfully" undermines, even while it underscores, the woman's relegation to the status of helpmeet or afterthought. Compare the "modicum of man's work" mentioned elsewhere in the episode [14.1414].) But these complications do not trouble Rousseau, determined as he is to re-imagine education as liberation. "All our practices are only subjection, impediment, and constraint" (42), he laments apropos of actually existing schools. These cannot but lead to "sad and sterile childhood[s]" (112). *Émile* is therefore without any of the cultural baggage in which "Oxen" revels: reverse translations, anthologies, pensums, academic titles. Instead, the treatise thoroughly integrates the nursery, the schoolroom, and the natural world, in the interest of fertilizing there where the old school sterilizes.

Joyce need not have had Rousseau's exhortations on breastfeeding in mind when he wrote "Oxen"—rather than, say, the exhortations of his contemporaries, ranging from advocates of racial purity to nationalists urging that Ireland be "repeopled" after the ravages of famine, emigration, and anticolonial struggle (Gibson 158).⁵⁴ For the Rousseauist legacy continued to be felt in Joyce's day, with biology supplanting nature as a gauge of the good in right-thinking educational theories as well as in theories of purity and population.⁵⁵ Dewey's *Democracy and Education* vividly attests to the ongoing subsumption of cultural transmission by reproduction in the discourse of educational reform. It also illustrates nature's replacement by biology in this progressive discourse. First published in 1916, the year of *A Portrait's* release, Dewey's text responds critically to Rousseau but seeks, like *Émile*, to refute theories that define "education as recapitulation and retrospection," as repetition and recall, as imitation.⁵⁶ Dewey argues that these theories rely on a faulty understanding of evolution: far from necessitating the "retraversal" of stages previously surpassed in phylogeny, individual development according to Dewey in fact benefits from increasingly "short-circuited growth," which streamlines ontogeny. For Dewey, progressive education takes its cue from such streamlining precisely; this makes it possible to eliminate unnecessary "retraversing," whereas conservative educational models deliberately retain such retraversing tendencies. These, Dewey thinks, lead to wasteful expenditures of energy—recall Ackerley's "fagging, detentions, lines, and small senseless demands that so intrude upon time"—for students whose growth is thereby stunted.⁵⁷

Dewey's appeal to embryonic development in this context is especially instructive when it is read alongside "Oxen"'s rendition of the same process. Here is Dewey:

Embryonic growth of the human infant preserves, without doubt, some of the traits of lower forms of life. But in no respect is it a strict traversing of past stages. If there were any strict 'law' of repetition, evolutionary development would clearly not have taken place. Each new generation would simply have repeated its predecessors' existence. Development, in short, has taken place by the entrance of short-cuts and alterations in the prior scheme of growth. And this suggests that the aim of education is to facilitate such short-circuited growth. The great advantage of immaturity, educationally speaking, is that it enables us to emancipate the young from the need of dwelling in an outgrown past. The business of education is rather to liberate the young from reviving and retraversing the past than to lead them to a recapitulation of it. ... A biologist has said: "The history of development in different animals ... offers to us ... a series of ingenious, determined, varied but more or less unsuccessful efforts to escape from the necessity of recapitulating and to substitute for the ancestral method a more direct method." Surely it would be foolish if education did not deliberately attempt to facilitate similar efforts in conscious experience so that they become increasingly successful. (85-86)

By a barely detectable sleight of hand, the philosopher concludes this passage by outbidding the evolutionary biology to which he appeals and on which he relies. "A biologist has said," Dewey admits, that animal development bears witness to many "more or less unsuccessful efforts to escape," to go without recapitulation after having outgrown it. But the stress here, in the

sentence Dewey quotes from the unnamed biologist, falls on failure, not success. This, for Dewey, is where progressive education, defined as emancipation, comes in: sponsoring “short-circuited growth,” such education looks to biology for inspiration. But it parts ways with natural science at a crucial juncture, for it spares students the labor of recapitulation, of repetition. In this way, it succeeds there where evolution falls short. The growing student’s efforts are “similar” to those of the developing animal, but “increasingly successful” and so less beholden to the repetitive rhythms of animal life. Progressive education thus improves even on human embryonic growth.

Note the repetition of “facilitate” in the passage quoted above: “the aim of education is to facilitate short-circuited growth,” and education worthy of the name (education that is not “foolish”) “facilitate[s] . . . efforts in conscious experience so that they become increasingly successful.” Ease marks the passage from the old school to the new. Dewey does not go so far as to suggest that progressive education will liberate students from *work as such* as well as from “reviving and retraversing the past”; but he clearly implies that a heavy burden is lifted when the latter processes go the way of ancestral methods. Meaning now accrues to the education thus streamlined, which becomes power-enhancing rather than penum-like, intrinsically rewarding rather than a long series of imposed chores: “We thus reach a technical definition of education: It is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience” (89-90).

If “Oxen” indeed seems to create “short-cuts and alterations in the prior scheme of growth” of English prose as it condenses whole epochs into mere paragraphs, these paragraphs are anything but facile. Laborious and long, as I have emphasized, they are instead modeled on a set of scholastic chores precisely: on the copying-out of past styles, styles liable to be felt as impositions, hindering rather than helping the reader to advance. In order to advance at all, the reader must be willing to relinquish—to lose, rather than gain in—meaning, as Bersani complains: “The episode may be the most extraordinary example in the history of literature of meaning unrelated to the experience of reading and to the work of writing” (172). But if we recognize that the work of writing and “experience of reading” alike in “Oxen” return to the old school’s rituals—which, *as* rituals, privilege practice over signification—then it becomes possible to reassess the text that programmatically puts us through motions without positing, as does Dewey, that a surplus of meaning will result.

“Oxen” creates—and satirically exaggerates—tension between the terms that progressive education works perfectly to reconcile. Joyce both points to and belabors the seam that Rousseau and Dewey both will away in their effort seamlessly to integrate language and sense, transmission and reproduction, culture and nature or biology. By assimilating copying-out to conjugality and reproductive heterosexuality, McCrea, too, integrates the last two sets of these terms implicitly: transmission and reproduction, culture and biology. This “queering” of Joyce thus surprisingly syncs up with the linear temporality of progressive reform. But Joyce himself insists on the divide between these terms. This divide, “Oxen” suggests, is insuperable but not for all that static or sterile. After all, it generates the text of “Oxen” itself, born from the relation-in-distinction, the contact and collision between the labor-intensive maternity ward and what Bloom calls the seminary of frivolity.

Briefly but tellingly, this frivolity—the assembled students’ carousing, “the general vacant hilarity” (14.799)—touches on “a discourse” reminiscent of Rousseau’s (14.797). And we

are indeed, in the loose chronology of “Oxen”’s styles, here in the mid-eighteenth century, precisely in the age of *Émile*, though the medical students’ debate now centers not on wet nursing but on the use of contraceptives. Against this use, one student advocates nakedness, just as *Émile* had advocated that babies be freed from swaddling clothes (43):

dame Nature, by the divine blessing, has implanted it in our heart and it has become a household word that *il y a deux choses* for which the innocence of our original garb, in other circumstances a breach of the properties, is the fittest nay, the only, garment. The first . . . , the first is a bath—But at this point a bell tinkling in the hall cut short a discourse which promised so bravely for the enrichment of our store of knowledge. (14.790-798)

The bell in the hall of the maternity ward announces a labor in progress, perhaps a complication during an offstage delivery. The event of childbirth therefore truncates the praise of “dame Nature,” as if to suggest that the student’s Rousseauist discourse can bring itself to name a bath, but can accommodate neither the unseemly act of sex nor the agonizing scene of “hard birth” (14.114). The brave new dream of “the enrichment of our store of knowledge” is thus, for Joyce, predicated on the denial of these facts of life: the facts of sexuality and labor (14.798).

Of course, the students’ “ribaldry” in “Oxen” (14.806) everywhere breaches “the properties” that govern sex. But, as I have already suggested, Joyce refutes Rousseau and Dewey even more forcefully through his handling of labor. For although, on the one hand, “Oxen,” too, avoids the agonizing scene of birth—although, again, we only hear about Mina Purefoy’s labor secondhand, while Bloom, Stephen, and others are, in Bersani’s words, “sitting around drinking and talking” (172)—on the other hand this labor is transposed as Joyce sets himself and his reader to work, agonizingly. By transposed I mean both altered and, in a sense, preserved: against the tendency shared by Rousseau and Dewey to *foreclose* labor, to make education a matter of freedom and facilitation, “Oxen” makes labor central to “the experience of reading” (“Against *Ulysses*” 172). Joyce thus shows that if reproduction and education, maternity and imposed style, share anything, it is their status as an “ordeal of . . . duress” (14.878).

This is not to suggest that for Joyce the two kinds of labor, maternal and textual, are the same. On the contrary, as I have repeated, in “Oxen,” the “reproductitive” is precisely not coextensive with the reproductive. The former is more frequently repeated, more repetitive. But both are laborious. Rendering the instruction that is an ordeal, Joyce contradicts the Deweyan and Rousseauist claim that hard labor in education is both obsolete and avoidable. To do this though, he needs a language not comprised of household words.

Manner of Oxenford

At a key moment in “Oxen,” Joyce invites readers to see the absurdity that marks attempts to deny the divide between education and reproduction. During a discussion of infant mortality’s causes and possible cures, the ever campy Buck Mulligan proposes to redecorate the “puerperal dormitory” so thoroughly as to make it into a school centered on “Kalipedia,” or the study of beauty:

Kalipedia, he prophesied, would soon be generally adopted and all the graces of life, genuinely good music, agreeable literature, light philosophy, instructive pictures, plastercast reproductions of the classical statues such as Venus and Apollo, artistic coloured photographs of prize babies, all these little attentions would enable ladies who were in a particular condition to pass the intervening months in a most enjoyable manner. (14.1251-1256)

The model for this new school would seem to be classical, or at least in keeping with a received understanding of Paterian classicism. Mulligan, however, presents his vision of a future academy full of “plastercast reproductions” and “prize babies” as the antidote to an unhealthy and under-reproductive modernity. Forward-thinking, not really backward-looking, “Kalipedia” serves first and foremost to remedy an age in need of airing out. Before his prophecy, Mulligan blames infant death and the deterioration of Irish stock on “the sanitary conditions in which our greylunged citizens contract adenoids, pulmonary complaints etc. by inhaling the bacteria which lurk in dust” (14.1243-1245):

These factors, he alleged, and the revolting spectacles offered by our streets, hideous publicity posters, religious ministers of all denominations, mutilated soldiers and sailors, exposed scorbutic cardrivers, the suspended carcasses of dead animals, paranoic bachelors and unfructified duennas - these, he said, were accountable for any and every fallingoff in the calibre of the race. (14.1245-1250)

Mulligan thus gives voice to a view that renders classicism and progress compatible. Calling for revival without recapitulation, optimization of “the race” rather than repetitive traffic with the dead and “suspended,” he is the Gentile to Stephen’s Pascoli. (Recall that in the latter’s educational writings, dust is associated with the progressive reformers, rather than with the old-school classicists called erudite.) In any case, the detritus of progressive discourses like Dewey’s reappears in Mulligan’s sanitizing speech, instructively. For to clear away “mutilated soldiers and sailors, . . . suspended carcasses of dead animals, paranoic bachelors and unfructified duennas” in order to create the conditions under which “prize babies” may become models—to do this, as Mulligan proposes, is to dictate “increasingly successful” fructification, freed from the ways of “the lower forms of life” (*Democracy and Education* 85).

Since these are the ways that *Ulysses* itself has followed at least since Bloom’s first appearance together with his cat and well-beloved “beasts and fowls” (4.1), this moment in “Oxen” constitutes a joke at Mulligan’s expense. “A onelegged sailor” appears in “Wandering Rocks” (10.7), prompting Father Conmee to think, “but not for long, of soldiers and sailors whose legs had been shot off by cannonballs” (10.12). The butcher shop in the earlier “Lestrygonians” is, of course, full of “the suspended carcasses of dead animals,” which themselves recall “the bloated carcass of a dog” that appears briefly in “Proteus” (3.286). Stephen, as that episode attests, is decidedly a “paranoic bachelor” as well as a melancholic one, and we gather in “Nausicaa” that the limping Gerty MacDowell may go on to become an “unfructified duenna” by choice: “Gerty wished to goodness they would take their squalling baby home out of that and not get on her nerves, no hour to be out, and the little brats of twins” (13.404-406). All of the “factors” that Mulligan blames for “fallingoff” and that “Kalipedia”

therefore pretends to leaves behind have thus figured elsewhere in the novel, whose earlier episodes Mulligan unwittingly recapitulates—ironically, given his call for an education-during-reproduction that would do away with redundancy. This is also, I am arguing, a call for the streamlining of education along Deweyan lines: its integration with reproduction and subsumption by evolution defined as advance, as a progressive process that, again, outbids even the evolution “desiderated by the late ingenious Mr Darwin” (14.858-859). In this sense, Mulligan’s prophecy for “Kalipedia” remains consistent with his own earlier “project” (14.701): “to set up a national fertilising farm” (14.685). The farm and the school alike maximize fertility. Both places make procreation into progress, into the efficient “short-circuited growth” that Dewey celebrates (85).

Of course, technologies of cultural, rather than biological, reproduction also appear in Mulligan’s fantasy hospital *cum* school. Here “prize babies” are shown, after all, in “artistic coloured photographs,” and Venus and Apollo appear as “plastercast reproductions.” As in the “light philosophy” to be assigned, the past is rendered weightless in Mulligan’s ideal maternal world. Everything in this world has been translated into commercialese, becoming graceful, “genuinely good,” “agreeable,” “light,” “most enjoyable.” This is education as facilitation indeed: even while mothers-to-be become students in Mulligan’s vision, they are spared the scholarly labors that Joyce’s readers undergo, to say nothing of Joyce’s own “labours of pedagogy” or Stephen’s (14.1214-1215). Labor has given way to ease for this lying-in under “Kalipedia,” during which history repeats itself as Muzak.

Mulligan, then, has awoken from Stephen’s nightmare, and the future he beholds in “Oxen” is all sweetness and light. We have seen, by contrast, that “Oxen” overall, despite its humor, puts up punishing resistance palpable as weight. Indeed, the language of weight fittingly recurs in critical responses to the episode. Christopher Ames, for instance, recasts Mendelsohn’s charge of “heavy constructedness” and “oppressive allusiveness” as praise, and writes that in “Oxen” Joyce develops “strategies for transforming the oppressive weight of literary tradition into a creative source” (391). Robert Spoo writes of the episode’s styles as exerting “pressure” (147).⁵⁸ In another context, Spoo notes that etymologically “nightmare” also has “the sense of incubus or crushing weight on the breast” (quoting Walter Skeat’s *Etymological Dictionary*, Spoo 101), and this observation brings Stephen’s well-worn definition—“History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake”—even closer to its possible Marxian source than it at first appears to be (2.42). I am referring to the famous claim made in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that “The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.”⁵⁹ With its “allwombing tomb” (3.402) and animating “dead breaths” (3.479), its several ghosts and risen corpses, and its frequent relapses into the Latin in “Oxen” and elsewhere,⁶⁰ *Ulysses* programmatically complicates the living/dead divide that structures Marx’s statement. And yet the lapidary line from *The Eighteenth Brumaire* already implies that the living of the present are, like those who came before them, in fact undead, because touched with deadness in their very brains, weighed down and impeded by the past.

Like Ames and Spoo, Joyce’s other critics have tended to suggest that *Ulysses* ultimately sheds this weight. They have also tended to see “Oxen” as the place in the novel where the burden of the past is both acknowledged and, progressively, cast off, with Joyce “registering the laughter of minds freeing themselves from historical bondage” (Gibson 169).⁶¹ This tendency is understandable, given the utopian energies that undeniably animate the novel, leading it to

“Circe” and beyond. But the optimistic account that results forgets the abiding nightmarishness of the Joycean text: a nightmarishness that, in “Hades,” becomes “So much dead weight” (6.127), and that, in “Oxen,” as I have shown, takes the form of stylistic and scholastic encumbrance.⁶²

It is striking that “Oxen” recalls Bloom’s Hadean reflections on the “Pomp of death” (6.126), given that the episode narrates a scene of birth. This fact further underscores the contrast between Mulligan’s ideal, classicizing academy for “Kalipedia,” and the old-school “seminar[y] of frivolity” that is “Oxen” itself (14.899). Whereas the former does away with dust, the “suspended carcasses of dead animals,” and all that it opposes to optimal fertility, “Oxen,” like “Hades,” lets such dead, ugly, and miscellaneous matter in, circulating cultural and material waste together with less-than-optimal affects like boredom and frustration. The contrast between these two types of schools is only further consolidated, interestingly, when Joyce reaches the era of aestheticism in the chronology of his episode’s prose styles. For precisely where we might expect a further send-up of Mulligan’s preciousness—in Joyce’s pastiche of Pater—we get another scene altogether instead: a “‘Nativity’ scene” that centers on a figurative, rather than a literal, birth (*BB* 126).

The Paterian paragraph is worth quoting in its entirety, not least because it discloses the painstaking nature, or what I have called the nightmarishness, of Joyce’s working process. Here the stranger and observer to whom the narrator refers is Bloom, who, “chewing the cud of reminiscence” (14.1041-1042), has just seen a certain *je ne sais quoi* in Stephen’s face. Recognition gives way to recollection, as Bloom realizes that he has seen Stephen once before. *Ecce puer*:

The stranger still regarded on the face before him a slow recession of that false calm there, imposed, as it seemed, by habit or some studied trick upon words so embittered as to accuse in their speaker an unhealthiness, a *flair*, for the cruder things of life. A scene disengages itself in the observer’s memory, evoked, it would seem, by a word of so natural a homeliness as if those days were really present there (as some thought) with their immediate pleasures. A shaven space of lawn one soft May evening, the wellremembered grove of lilacs at Roundtown, purple and white, fragrant slender spectators of the game but with much real interest in the pellets as they run slowly forward over the sward or collide and stop, one by its fellow, with a brief alert shock. And yonder about that grey urn where the water moves at times in thoughtful irrigation you saw another fragrant sisterhood, Floey, Atty, Tiny and their darker friend with I know not what of arresting in her pose then, Our Lady of the Cherries, a comely brace of them pendent from an ear, bringing out the foreign warmth of the skin so daintily against the cool ardent fruit. A lad of four or five in linseywoolsey (blossomtime but there will be cheer in the kindly hearth when ere long the bowls are gathered and hatched) is standing on the urn secured by that circle of girlish fond hands. He frowns a little just as this young man does now with a perhaps too conscious enjoyment of danger but must needs glance at whiles towards where his mother watches from the *piazzetta* giving upon the flower-close with a faint shadow of remoteness or of reproach (*alles Vergängliche*) in her glad look. (14.1356-1378)

“They were all together once in Eden,” Kenner paraphrases, “Bloom and a not yet unfaithful Molly, Stephen and a not yet spectral mother,” figured here in the pretentious German parenthetical “not as the wraith who haunts [Stephen’s] thoughts today, but as the Mater Gloriosa who summons Goethe’s errant Faust aloft.”⁶³ But the Eternal Feminine to which Kenner refers, following the citation from *Faust*, is present here only as a negative image, or faint echo, for “*alles Vergängliche*” means “everything transitory.” If the Goethean source text cancels this out as mere allegory, Joyce instead suggests, honoring the young Pater, that fleeting impressions, “moments as they pass,” may be all there is.⁶⁴ The “May evening” that Bloom recalls is, for instance, passing even while “wellremembered”: the involuntary memory prompted by Stephen’s expression never stays still but keeps shifting with the passage’s pronouns and tenses: “you saw . . . with I know not what of arresting in her pose.” Indeed, the pastiche as a whole is as appreciative as it is irreverent. Phrases like “thoughtful irrigation” bring out the laughable affectation always latent in Pater’s mannerisms, heightening the pathos in his pathetic fallacies. But Joyce also evinces a tolerance of, even a tenderness for, Pater’s stylistic tics: his arch hesitations and hedges; his archaisms, over the top though these may be “(as some thought)”; the grating of words derived from Anglo Saxon against longer Latinate ones, as recommended in Pater’s own “Style.”

That Joyce’s appreciation results from painstaking study is shown by the passages that he copied out from Pater in one of his Trieste notebooks, now in Buffalo.⁶⁵ Here Joyce occasionally transcribed single, striking phrases—“a marvellous tact of omission”—but more often extended descriptions of places and ceremonies, both pagan and catholic (5r).⁶⁶ All of the transcriptions are taken not from *The Renaissance* (1873), but rather from later works: *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) and the stories collected in *Imaginary Portraits* (1887). Dated between 1919 and 1920, years that included the composition of “Oxen,” the entries reveal that Joyce’s mining of sources for the episode also entails a textual apprenticeship comparable to Marius’ scribal service to Aurelius, whose prose he compiles and copies out.⁶⁷ Joyce’s selections from Pater are well curated, and his transcriptions remarkably accurate. Cross-outs and self-corrections are rare, and, though his ink runs low, Joyce’s handwriting remains consistent.

Some elements from his transcriptions make their way untransformed into the “Oxen” pastiche, as when “wellremembered roses” (4v; *M* 95 where Joyce has omitted the hyphen, rewriting Pater’s compound in his own fashion) become “the wellremembered grove of lilacs at Roundtown.” At other times, the influence of the copied-out passages remains clearly legible in the pastiches even after the transformation of the source texts, as when Joyce gets the idea for the Goethean shorthand or shibboleth “*alles Vergängliche*” from Pater’s looser adaptation of phrases from the same poet: “She was like clear sunny weather, with bluebells and the green leaves, between rainy days, and seemed to embody Die Ruh auf dem Gipfel, all the restful hours he had spent of late in the woodlands and on the hilltops” (6r; *IP* 148). Joyce transcribed several such passages about the weather, but almost all of these, like the passage I have just quoted, take pleasure in the formation of hybrids between the natural world and its human embodiments, or between landscapes and built environments, which everywhere frame “the unbuilt country” (6r; *IP* 10). Pater, it thus appears, is no Rousseau where nature is concerned; he nowhere envisions a nature existing apart from culture to which we could return. Various kinds of cultural and especially ritual props instead recur in Pater’s prose, inspiring Joyce’s “grey urn,” and assimilating the seasonal rhythms of agriculture into ceremonial calendars, as in the Joycean

apparition of “Our Lady of the Cherries” at “blossomtime.” “Our Lady,” Joyce copied, incidentally, “looked out no better than an unpretending nun” (6v; *IP* 127). So the Joycean Madonna has undergone a transformation, but one in keeping with the Paterian principles it exaggerates.

Consistently, Joyce’s selections assemble sacred and profane “remains,” which proliferate in the passages from Pater that Joyce copied out. Consider the “battlefield of mouldering human remains” whose “odour rose plainly above the plentiful clouds of incense” in one of the Oxford don’s *Imaginary Portraits* (6r; *IP* 69); or the “dead bodies . . . hastily buried during the plague” in *Marius*. Even natural objects become relics of a kind: signs of their own future absence or products of decay as much as of growth. The “secular trees themselves will hardly last another generation” (6r; *IP* 32); and, finally, the olive trees that appear in an extended *descriptio loci* from *Marius*, “fretted and twisted by the [“the” added by Joyce] combining forces of life and death, into every conceivable caprice of form” (6r; *M* 209).

My aim in dwelling on these transcriptions has been twofold. First, I have wanted to show that although Joyce pokes fun at Pater, he has clearly taken time and pains to learn his style intimately so as to imitate it, becoming docile, or teachable, as he does with respect to other stylistic sources, even while he proceeds to undermine their authority in his pastiches. Second, though, I have wanted to underscore the contrast between Mulligan’s aestheticist paradise, his school-sanitarium, and the version of aestheticism that Joyce’s narrator reprises as he picks up on Pater’s commitment to the “combining forces of life and death.” Far from being all sweetness and light, like Mulligan’s vision of Kalipedia, Pater’s prose as represented by the moments Joyce chose to copy makes room, even at its most precious, for “the eyes of needy children, of old ~~and~~ or weak people like children” (6r; *IP* 67); for “the uncouth pathos in” a captive’s “misshapen features” (7r; *M* 282); for “the dwindled body” of a king’s corpse (6r; *IP* 69). Indeed, in Joyce’s Pater, sovereigns and subjects alike keep being brought down, falling off, as Mulligan might say, objecting as he does to all “fallingsoff”: after Aurelius concludes a lecture in *Marius*, a plague descends on Rome, and wolves, “led by the carrion scent,” devour the bodies claimed by disease (5r; *M* 153). These are precisely the kinds of sights, scents, and descents banished from the republic of “Kalipedia”: again, “religious ministers of all denominations, mutilated soldiers and sailors, exposed scorbutic cardrivers, the suspended carcasses of dead animals.”⁶⁸ Buck Mulligan’s “most enjoyable manner” thus contrasts markedly with Pater’s mannerism; the latter, surprisingly, turns out to be truer to the life that includes death, to the life that interests both Bloom and Stephen.

This makes their coming-together under the sign of Pater—or rather, their coming together again, accompanied by the realization that they had already seen one another before—overdetermined rather than arbitrary, as it might at first appear to be. The Paterian context for their encounter, in other words, not only highlights the preoccupation with death and decay that Stephen and Bloom share; it also inscribes *recapitulation*, a defining feature of so much of *Ulysses*, into the novel’s central relationship. For just as Stephen’s frown in the narrative present repeats his expression from his childish past, so Joyce’s rendering of the past’s return is the product of his going back over Pater. *Pace* Dewey, then, neither Joyce nor his characters have been freed from “retraversing” “the outgrown past.”

To be sure, *all* of “Oxen”’s styles embody obsolesced pasts not left behind. But the past that Pater embodies is, elsewhere in *Ulysses*, expressly associated with pedagogy. Bloom’s

encounter with Stephen in the Holles Street Maternity Hospital follows two previous missed encounters: one in the newspaper office in “Aeolus” and another at the National Library in “Scylla and Charybdis.” Here, Mulligan sees Bloom and thinks that he is heavily cruising Stephen: “The wandering Jew, Buck Mulligan whispered . . . He looked upon you to lust after you. I fear thee, ancient mariner. O, Kinch, thou art in peril. Get thee a breechpad. // Manner of Oxenford” (9.1210-1212). That last phrase of course looks forward to “Oxen,” but it also refers to a whole late Victorian proto-gay subculture, one in which Pater figured as founder, not to say father.⁶⁹ If Wilde was by far the more out cult leader, the older Pater was no less central for being recessed; the latter’s name was much more strongly associated with the Platonic, academic “manner of Oxford,” although it was not as broadly notorious, as Wilde’s. The appearance of Pater’s manner in “Oxen” is thus a reappearance in this sense as well: Pater turns “Oxen,” effectively, into “Oxenford,” and his style makes the encounter between Bloom and Stephen in Holles Street a queer one again.

Before “Oxen,” Stephen has been told to cover his ass when Bloom’s around, but, as we have seen, it is his face that attracts Bloom’s attention and awakens his memory. Though no longer fresh, this face retains the expression Stephen wore as a four- or five-year-old eyeing his mother mischievously. By now, however, his mother has died, as has Bloom’s infant son. Hence Kenner’s characterization of the Pater pastiche as Edenic: Bloom saw Stephen in Roundtown before the fall whose consequence was the “recent loss” (14.1125) that colors Stephen’s thoughts of “*Amor matris*.” Bloom’s brief return to Roundtown thus becomes elegiac, keeping us in touch with this loss, rather than bidding us deny it, as would Mulligan.

Loss on both sides, Stephen’s of a mother, and Bloom’s of a son (14.1076), catalyzes—or negatively fertilizes—the relationship between the two that will unfold after “Oxen” ends.⁷⁰ This relationship remains pedagogical even while the “instruction” it promises is mutual, as in “Ithaca.” The pederastic model first proposed by Buck Mulligan in the library never goes away. But neither do the props and remains that Pater describes, in the encumbered descriptions that Joyce copies out, then recapitulates.

Grammar of the Bulls

To review, McCrea sees in Stephen’s bond with Bloom a kind of elective kinship that trumps kinship; this bond provides the primary example of the “nongenetic genealogies” in *Ulysses* that “usurp paternity and marriage by offering a grid on which to plot the protagonists’ positions and changing but consistent identities across time (the sum of their *sums*, but not from a copybook)” (142). But, risking literalism, I would counter that Joyce’s novel—which I earlier claimed remains a copybook in a figurative sense, in “Oxen” but also in “Ithaca”—was composed in copybooks. Today Joyce scholars use the term “copybooks” to refer generically to the notepads in which Joyce wrote out and rearranged his novel-in-progress, as opposed to the pre-compositional “notebooks.” But when it came to “Oxen,” Joyce wrote in copybooks in a more specific sense as well: notepads not unlike the one in which, under Stephen’s supervision, Cyril Sargeant copied out, without understanding, his sums. The episode’s later drafts, from February and March 1920, appear in school notepads that bear the label QUADERNO [NOTEBOOK] on their front covers and sets of tables on their back covers: an ORARIO DELLE

LEZIONI [SCHEDULE OF LESSONS] with blanks for filling in, and a TAVOLA PITAGORICA [PYTHAGOREAN TABLE] for multiplication.⁷¹

It would be both foolish and merely tendentious to ask these notebooks to do too much interpretive work; after all, these just happened to be the writing pads that Joyce had on hand in Trieste early in 1920. Then again, as if to refer back to this regular scholastic schedule, which it of course thoroughly complicates, “Oxen” repeatedly points to contexts of instruction, to Stephen’s schooldays, Bloom’s, and those of “the scholarly” assembled in Holles Street (14.705). Some of these scenes I have discussed; others come before the Roundtown recollection, which activates Bloom’s affection and marks the beginning of Stephen’s discipleship. Take the following account from one of the episode’s eighteenth-century pastiches. Here the students gathered, together with Bloom and Stephen, in the “Manse of Mothers” are carousing (14.455), and their conversation turns to the “Kerry cows that are to be butchered along of the plague” (14.546-547):

Mort aux vaches, says Frank then in the French language that had been indentured to a brandy shipper that has a winelodge in Bordeaux and he spoke French like a gentleman too. From a child this Frank had been a donought that his father, a headborough, who could ill keep him to school to learn his letters and the use of the globes, matriculated at the university to study the mechanics but he took the bit between his teeth like a raw colt and was more familiar with the justiciary and the parish beadle than with his volumes. One time he would be a playactor, then a sutler or a welsher, then nought would keep him from the bearpit and the cocking main, then he was for the ocean sea or to hoof it on the roads with the Romany folk, kidnapping a squire’s heir by favour or moonlight or fecking maid’s linen or choking chickens behind a hedge. He had been off as many times as a cat has lives and back again with naked pockets as many more to his father the headborough who shed a pint of tears as often as he saw him. What, says Mr Leopold with his hands across, that was earnest to know the drift of it, will they slaughter all? (14.551-567)

Here, at least, paternity has not yet been usurped, for Frank Costello keeps making sentimental journeys home, remaining unable to break free. To indenture is to “bind by indentures” or contracts, especially “as an apprentice or servant” (*OED*), and with its would-be period syntax, the first sentence of this passage inspired by Defoe makes it sound as though “the French language,” rather than Frank himself, “had been indentured to a brandy shipper.” What would it mean for a language to be indentured, apprenticed to someone? Such a language would be at once lent and borrowed, but also bound to its speaker, if only for a period of time—as was English to Joyce until *Finnegans Wake*, perhaps. For an indenture expires by definition.

But by definition an indenture also *duplicates*. This is, at least, the word’s earliest sense: “A deed between two or more parties with mutual covenants, executed in two or more copies, all having their tops or edges correspondingly indented or serrated for identification and security” (*OED*).⁷² Identification indeed: since the French is Frank’s at this moment in “Oxen,” the distinction between his apprenticeship and his language’s indenture may be a distinction without a difference. Or it may be that Frank makes his name in and through an identification with the

lingua franca that is French.⁷³ “And he spoke French like a gentleman too”: language learning both follows from and enables mobility in this truncated life story—and this despite Frank’s neglect of “his volumes,” his distaste for book learning in all its forms.

None of this seems to have anything at all to do, though, with the cows whose death sentence Frank repeats in French. Bloom’s sudden, incredulous, and characteristically humane question—“What . . . will they slaughter all?”—brings the strange surprising adventures of the Crusoe-like but never full-grown Frank, “donought” turned jack-of-all-trades, to an end. Returning the reader to the narrative present (filtered as it is through Defoe’s style) even while reminding him of a plot launched early in *Ulysses* (in “Nestor,” where Deasy’s explains to Stephen the premise of his open letter on cattle-farming and foot and mouth disease), Bloom’s protest indeed effects a shift from Frankish flights of fancy to the ordinary business of livestock-in-trade. Yet what with the hoofing it, choking chickens, and cats’ lives, animals have already invaded the passage that Bloom’s question punctuates.

The meandering passage that comes next looks to one animal in particular:

But one evening, says Mr Dixon, when the lord Harry was cleaning his royal pelt to go to dinner after winning a boatrace (he had spade oars for himself but the first rule of the course was that the others were to row with pitchforks) he discovered in himself a wonderful likeness to a bull and on picking up a blackthumbed chapbook that he kept in the pantry he found sure enough that he was a lefthanded descendant of the famous champion bull of the Romans, Bos Bovum, which is good bog Latin for boss of the show. After that, says Mr Vincent, the lord Harry put his head into a cow’s drinking trough in the presence of all his courtiers and pulling it out again told them all his new name. Then, with the water running off him, he got into an old smock and skirt that had belonged to his grandmother and bought a grammar of the bull’s language to study but he could never learn a word of it except the first personal pronoun which he copied out big and got off by heart and if ever he went out for a walk he filled his pockets with chalk to write it up on what took his fancy, the side of a rock or a teahouse table or a bale of cotton or a corkfloat. In short he and the bull of Ireland were soon as fast friends as an arse and a shirt. They were, says Mr Stephen, and the end was that the men of the island, seeing no help was toward as the ungrate women were all of one mind, made a wherry raft, loaded themselves and their bundles of chattels on shipboard, set all masts erect, manned the yards, sprang their luff, heaved to, spread three sheets in the wind, put her head between wind and water, weighed anchor, ported her helm, ran up the jolly Roger, gave three times three, let the bullgine run, pushed off in their bumboat and put to sea to recover the main of America. (14.622-646)

Here history repeats itself not as Muzak but as farce. This allegory rendered in the style of Swift, is constructed serially and collectively, with Mr. Vincent picking up where Mr. Dixon leaves off and the latter then passing his bovine baton to Stephen, in a scene of oral storytelling that contrasts markedly with the textuality of “Oxen” overall, and more specifically with the writing here thematized. The conversation is well underway by the time the above quotation begins. It

has been prompted by the suggestion that Irish cattle are exceptional: the same suggestion that is here both borne out and sent up. Harry (not “lord Harry”) Blamires fleshes out the context of this teeming, densely allusive passage as follows: “The first bull ‘sent to our island ...’ is presumably the papal bull of Hadrian IV ... which gave the country into Henry II’s hands. ... The bull becomes a symbol of the Irish Church ... The Lord Harry quarrels with farmer Nicholas, and it is plain that Henry VIII is now intended and ‘Nicholas’ stands for the papacy in general. Thus Henry discovers in himself ‘a wonderful likeness to a bull,’ pronounces himself *Bos Bovum*, lord of the show, boss of the bull, John Bull lord of the Irish and papal bulls” (*BB* 151). But this gloss leaves several key moments in the text unaddressed. Most notably, Blamires omits copying out big and learning by heart.

A hybrid formed from the English John Bull and Latin “papal bulls,” Henry or Harry runs rampant all over Ireland. Irishmen are driven out and turned into pirates by his collusion with church or “bull of Ireland” and his winning over the island’s “ungrate women.” But note his aspiration and failure to learn Latin, inspired by a felt kinship with a bull bearing a “bog Latin” title—for Harry believes in the law of heredity. In this phase of the students’ joke, the king’s reign comes to coincide with his becoming-schoolboy, after having first become woman: “he got into an old smock and skirt that had belonged to his grandmother and bought a grammar of the bull’s language to study but he could never learn a word of it except the first personal pronoun which he copied out big and got off by heart” (14.632-635). Feminization precedes and perhaps prepares one for the study that is really rote repetition and recall. Never mind that the pensum here is self-imposed; repetitive copying-out briefly, fancifully becomes the monarch’s way of exercising power.

With his inability to move past “the first personal pronoun,” Harry is quite literally “His Majesty the Ego.”⁷⁴ Except that Joyce doesn’t simply project, but also exposes Harry’s heroic, bullishly egoical pretensions. This exposure undermines the boss’s authority, to be sure. But it would be more accurate to say that his authority undermines *itself* as it translates itself into the language of bulls and schoolboys. For while Harry thinks he is becoming-champion, he is in fact becoming-bovine. He may make others row with pitchforks (which makes rowing easier, but gets one nowhere), but he himself writes with chalk, laying claim to anything and everything—“the side of a rock or a teahouse table or a bale of cotton or a cork-float”—in a medium that is as scholastic as it is water-soluble. Such manic acts of attempted appropriation do not add up to a lasting collection of objects, let alone a stable royal identity. On the contrary, Joyce’s parable presents identification as the impossibility of identity as it sets objects and exilic Irishmen alike afloat in the same sea in which “I” or “ego” proliferates. It is thus the manifest destiny of bulls to lose what they have claimed by copying out. But conversely, Joyce suggests, to copy out may not really be to make a claim at all.

Copied out, “I” and “ego” are less like “those big words” that, according to Stephen in “Nestor,” “make us so unhappy” (2.264) than they are already like Beckett’s monosyllables in *Texts for Nothing*, which enact the diminution they describe: “I won’t be afraid of the big words any more, they are not big.”⁷⁵ As an emblem for “Oxen”—and for *Ulysses* as a whole—the scene of the “first personal pronoun” “copied out big and got off by heart” thus provides a corrective to Bersani’s portrait of Joyce as an endlessly self-aggrandizing cultural authority, because here, for once in the anti-imperial *Ulysses*,⁷⁶ imperial authority is no sooner asserted than it is emptied out, erased, evacuated of all validity. The “I” standing for Henry VIII’s “Imperator” is no sooner

inscribed than it is—wishfully—washed away.

But that Joyce, too, copies Swift shows how far he is from imagining another mode altogether, a technique finally freed from bulls, bog Latin, bosses, and all the rest. These, in “Oxen,” form part of the history whose weight cannot simply be shed: the past that progress would have us bypass and thus deny, that progressive education would free us from “retraversing,” release us from laboriously copying out. In this sense, “Oxen” counters McCrea’s progress narrative, according to which Joyce would teach readers to outgrow—and to abandon—copying in all its forms. This narrative, I have suggested, unwittingly repeats the progressive educational ideal found in Dewey, for McCrea recasts kinship and reproduction as the pasts that need not be repeated, the pasts from which queer forms of life would graduate, in order to leave them behind. Counter-intuitively, progress thus names both (for McCrea) the overcoming of reproduction and (for Dewey) the ever more perfect realization of reproductive principles. I have tried to show, however, that this tension already marked Dewey’s educational theory, which pretended to improve on the biology it took as its model.

By attending to the relationship between reproduction and transmission in “Oxen,” I have been working toward another end as well, however. I have wanted to test Joyce’s text against Lee Edelman’s queer theory—or rather, to suggest that the former complicates the latter in advance. Edelman has recently turned from biological reproduction to cultural transmission, arguing that the banishment or foreclosure of the queer from both processes discloses their common logic: a logic of sameness, of sociality as identity.⁷⁷ According to this logic, queerness can only figure an annihilating threat to the social; by definition, for Edelman, the queer undoes social relations and radically undermines symbolic fictions by rending the stable unities on which such fictions depend, replacing their ones, in Edelman’s formulation, with zeroes. But Joyce lets us glimpse—indeed, if we go through the motions of “Oxen,” he compels us to see—a one that is not one, an identification without identity, a “first personal pronoun” that becomes evacuated not despite but *in and through* its encounter with the grammar of bulls. That it hardly matters whether this is taken to mean the language of papal bulls or that of bovine animals is Joyce’s outlandish claim. Far from liberating us from that which the discourse of progress and Edelman’s version of the social alike would have us leave behind, Joycean instruction thus keeps us in touch with what repeats in us, with what Dewey calls “the lower forms of life.” In “Oxen,” at Oxenford, these include not only Homeric oxen, but also Paterian “queerities” (14.528), beings at once stylish, scholastic, and sexually deviant, who turn out to be not as elevated or incorporeal as they might have seemed. Joyce shows that these “queerities” contradict “Kalipedia,” with its sublimations and fructifying stipulations.

Gathering those who are not strictly reproductive, Joyce’s episode is also queer if by “queer” we mean, with Edelman, at odds with identity. For at the very site of what looks like identity’s inscription, copying out big and learning by heart become means of doing something other than syncing up with the social and symbolic, or surrendering our drives as in Edelman’s definition of education as “compulsory and routinized sublimation” (169).⁷⁸ I have worked to show that “Oxen” toys with compulsion and traffics in routinized, repetitive forms ranging from the pensum to the regular schedule of LEZIONI printed on Joyce’s copybooks. But these forms do not lead, in “Oxen,” to sublimation. They yield instead something closer to identification as defined in heterodox psychoanalysis: not as a process of appropriation, but rather one of

alteration, in and through which we become ourselves only by imitating others—Joyce adds, laboriously.⁷⁹

In this sense, “Oxen” stages a sort of dress rehearsal for the dream that is “Circe”: there, as David Kurnick shows, identities become altogether detached from the acts that would define them in waking life. This results in “a hollowing out of character at the site of its supposed fastening.”⁸⁰ For Kurnick, “Circe”’s utopianism inheres precisely in this “hollowing out,” even while the episode’s pathos derives from the reader’s painful awareness of such unfastening’s social impossibility. “Oxen,” I have argued, makes a different site of identity’s supposed fastening into the place of its potential erasure, its perpetual (if still socially impossible) alteration. In the process, the episode reimagines the old school as the institution that might sponsor, rather than rule out, this practice of what “Circe” calls “self-pretence” (15.4412). Whereas the progressive school enjoins us to be ourselves and only ourselves—just as *Émile* is “entirely for himself” (39)—the old school makes alternatives available, even against all odds, in a dream that remains a nightmare. Requiring the very “retraversing of the past” that progressive education forswears but that “Oxen” enforces (*DE* 85), such instruction also requires the self “to traverse not itself” (15.2117).

This much Rousseau already knew: “The foundation of imitation among us comes from the desire always to be transported out of ourselves. If I succeed in my enterprise, *Émile* surely will not have this desire. We must, therefore, give up the apparent good which imitation can produce” (104). But what if the Rousseauist enterprise were doomed to fail, because this desire is intractable? What if imitation were prior to, even constitutive of, desire? Then the student could no longer be “entirely for himself” (39). He could no longer stand alone. Instead, like the “underbred” Joyce requiring his exegetes,⁸¹ or *Ulysses* leaning on its schemas, or the reader of “Oxen,” an anti-*Émile*, endlessly consulting commentaries without ever understanding clearly, he would remain dependent. To the last, when it came to progress, he would remain behind.

¹ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Dover, 1994), 168. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *P*.

² James Joyce, “The Holy Office,” in *The Poems in Verse and Prose*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares and Brendan Kennelly (London: Kyle Cathie Limited, 1992), 44.

³ Oliver St. John Gogarty, *As I Was Going Down Sackville Street* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1937), 295; quoted in Theodore Spencer’s Introduction to James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, ed. Spencer et al. (New York: New Directions, 1963), 7-18; 16.

⁴ Jeri Johnson, Introduction to James Joyce, *Dubliners*, ed. Jeri Johnson (New York: Oxford 2000), xiv. Further citations from *Dubliners* are given parenthetically in the text.

⁵ “Nestor” and “Ithaca” are, according to the Linati Schema, catechisms personal and impersonal, respectively.

⁶ Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 521. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *JJ*.

⁷ Virginia Woolf, *A Writer’s Diary, Being Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Leonard Woolf (New York: Harcourt, 1954), 48.

⁸ Daniel Mendelsohn, in Juliet Lapidos, “Overrated,” *Slate* (August 11, 2011), <http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2011/08/overrated.3.html>. The quotations in my next paragraph are also taken from this source; the emphases in both quotations are in the original.

⁹ For an opposing view that stresses *Ulysses*’ accessibility and even appeal to ordinary readers precisely, see Declan Kiberd, *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Life in Joyce’s Masterpiece* (New York: Norton, 2009). It will become clear that my view differs from Kiberd’s as well as Mendelsohn’s.

¹⁰ On *Ulysses*’ desertion of its reader, see Hugh Kenner, *Joyce’s Voices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), xii. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

¹¹ Here and throughout, I cite from James Joyce, *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler et al. (New York: Vintage, 1986), using episode and line numbers.

¹² For a counter-argument that finds in Joyce confirmation of the value of being self-taught precisely, see Patrick McGee, “Joyce’s Pedagogy: *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*,” in *Coping with Joyce: Essays from the Copenhagen Symposium*, ed. Morris Beja and Shari Benstock (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1989), 206-219.

¹³ “The Reader Critic: The World Moves (from the *London Times*),” *Little Review* 7.3 (1920): 93-94. For a more recent and affirming reading of “the meaningless ... as meaningless” in *Ulysses*, see Franco Moretti, “*Ulysses* and the Twentieth Century,” in *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to García Márquez*, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Verso, 1996), 163 (emphasis in original).

¹⁴ It may seem strange to locate this crux not in the text of *Ulysses* itself, but rather in the transfer from the text to its critical supplements and back again. But I am deliberately displacing the text’s central problem from its center. Compare Jean-Michel Rabaté’s claim that Joyce’s pedagogy aims at the creation of a collective readership and an “expanding archive.” *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 196. And for another account of Joyce as institution, see Jacques Derrida, “Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce,” trans. François Raffoul, *Derrida and Joyce: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Andrew J. Mitchell and Sam Slote (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), 41-86.

¹⁵ Harry Blamires, *The New Bloomsday Book: A Guide Through Ulysses*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge 1996), 146. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *BB*.

¹⁶ In “Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Nativism, Nationalism, and the Language Question in ‘Oxen of the Sun,’” *James Joyce Quarterly* 25.2/3 (1998): 349-371, Mary C. King cites a remarkable account of “how the repression of the Irish language and continuation of education through illegal hedge schools ‘led to the curious situation where a landlord would address a tenant in English, only to be answered in Greek or Latin’” (369, note 9). It does not follow, however, as King contends, that Latin “became symbolically, and even to a degree literally, a substitute mediated or displaced ‘mother’ tongue” (353)—unless, that is, the substitutions, mediations, displacements, and scare quotes here can be taken to make a mother tongue into something else altogether. A lingua franca, after all, is not learned at home. Stephen’s famous reflections on English as “acquired speech” in *A Portrait*, indicate Joyce’s interest in the possibilities of languages that are not native. The author’s Latin is, moreover, everywhere associated with church and school, marked as institutional rather than familial from the first and therefore distinct from the mother tongue by definition. “Oxen” heightens this distinction, I am arguing, by reverting to Latin in the context of the maternity ward.

¹⁷ On the tradition that betrays itself by definition, see Giorgio Agamben, “Tradition of the Immemorial,” in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), especially 105.

¹⁸ On “*chrononormativity*, or the use of time to organize individual human bodies toward maximum productivity,” see Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3 et passim; and on “reproductive futurism,” see Lee Edelman’s *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

¹⁹ For a different, anti-universalizing reading of the opening paragraphs of “Oxen,” see Andrew Gibson, “An Irish Bull in an English China Shop: ‘Oxen of the Sun,’” *Joyce’s Revenge: History, Politics, and Aesthetics in Ulysses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), especially 150-162. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text. Gibson reads the episode in light of English and Irish economic discourses and argues that in its first moments “Oxen” “proposes an increase in population as part of a drive away from the trauma of the Famine and its aftermath” (161), because against this backdrop, “In a famine-stricken or post-Famine Ireland, the central issue was a population decline presented as so drastic as to spell the end of a people” (158). This implies a differential handling of Irish and English claims to national “continuance,” as well as a determination, on Joyce’s part, to model “an Irish discourse [that has become] so self-confident that it can afford not to take itself very seriously at all” (162). I would claim instead that, as Joyce knew and “Oxen” illustrates, such an “Irish discourse” is no longer properly “itself.” Likewise, whereas Gibson concludes that the episode “is far less concerned to traduce Irish than English traditions” (171), I would underscore its effort to make traduction into a general principle, one that crosses the traditions that it betrays.

²⁰ In another context, Gilles Deleuze warns that “resemblance must not be understood as [only] an external correspondence. It proceeds less from one thing to another than from a thing to an Idea, since it is the Idea that comprises the relations and proportions that constitute internal essence. Interior and spiritual, resemblance is the measure of a claim” in the proprietary sense. Gilles Deleuze, “Plato and the Simulacrum,” trans. Rosalind Krauss, *October* 27 (1983): 48.

²¹ Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 58.

²² Sam Jordison, “Things Not to Do Before You Die,” *The Guardian* 15 September 2008, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/sep/15/originalwriting>. I am grateful to Marianne Kaletzky for bringing this text to my attention.

²³ “To leave nothing behind, not to survive yourself—how sad!” Joyce wrote of a childless household, like a good reproductive futurist (qtd. in *JJ* 204).

²⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, [1975] 2007), vol. 3, 1544; *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 38.

²⁵ Barry McCrea, *In the Company of Strangers: Family and Narrative in Dickens, Conan Doyle, Joyce, and Proust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 113. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

²⁶ For a reading of this bond that emphasizes Joyce’s interest in the relationship between guru and disciple—or “Stephen’s ... dream of ‘chelaship,’” which “takes the quest for paternity in a different direction”—see Srinivas Aravamudan, “Theosophistries,” in *Guru English: South Asian Religion in a Cosmopolitan Language* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 115-126, especially 119-120.

²⁷ I learned to question queer repudiations of kinship from Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

²⁸ In his early essay “The Study of Languages,” Joyce offers this account of the primacy of language as an instrument for registering historical change, which justifies, in part, my reading of the introductory paragraphs of “Oxen”: “in the history of words there is much that indicates the history of men, and in comparing the speech of today with that of years ago, we have a useful illustration of the effect of external influences on the very words of a

race.” James Joyce, “The Study of Languages,” in *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing* ed. Kevin Barry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 15.

²⁹ Rabaté’s suggests that the “*Foetus*” marks a moment when “the Real (in the Lacanian sense) of sexuality erupts.” *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism*, 94.

³⁰ Leo Bersani, “Against *Ulysses*,” in *The Culture of Redemption* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 169. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

³¹ See Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit, *Arts of Impoverishment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) and this earlier, provisional definition of the literary: “Writing may begin to operate as the activity we call literature when, by a particular kind of replicative insistence . . . it erodes its own statements and thereby blocks interpretation.” Leo Bersani, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 11. My reading attends to a “replicative insistence” at the heart of “Oxen of the Sun,” and I want to ask whether tools developed and deployed by Bersani elsewhere might be used to make something other than sense of “Oxen.” Here I am also thinking of Bersani’s characterization of Mallarmé, whose work, Bersani writes, is marked by “a certain unreadability which has much less to do with a hidden and profound sense than with the dissolution of sense in a voice which continuously refuses to adhere to its statements.” See *The Freudian Body*, 27. One way in which “Oxen” engages in this refusal is by instead adhering to the statements of others.

³² Scholars have taken pains to show that “Oxen” violates the principles that Joyce’s letter outlines. Robert Spoo pays particular attention to the anachronisms that periodically and programmatically throw off the pastiches’ sequence in “‘Oxen of the Sun,’ ‘Circe,’ and Beyond,” in *James Joyce and the Language of History: Dedalus’s Nightmare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 135-162. In “An Irish Bull in an English China Shop,” 180-181, Andrew Gibson discusses a related set of textual “contaminations.” For an earlier and still-authoritative version of the chronological organization that these two studies work to complicate, see Robert Janusko, *The Sources and Structures of James Joyce’s “Oxen”* (Epping: Bowker, 1983).

³³ Philip Kerr, “Reverse Translation,” in *Translation and Own-Language Activities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 75.

³⁴ William Peacock, Preface to *English Prose from Mandeville to Ruskin*, ed. William Peacock (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), v.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Andrew Lang, Preface to *An Anthology of English Prose (1332 to 1740)*, ed. Annie Barnett and Lucy Dale (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), vii.

³⁷ Humbler, that is, but not without immodest pretensions. Spoo notes that despite their apparent innocuousness, literary compilations like those on which Joyce drew while writing “Oxen” were in fact technologies of progressive history: “Far from merely offering a bouquet of best-beloved texts, the anthology embodied, cover to cover, a stirring image of history as progress” (138). Gibson similarly calls Peacock’s selections “nationalistic, militaristic, enthusiastically royalist, class-based, and antidemocratic” (175-176). For my part, I focus less on the content of passages selected than do these critics. While undoubtedly revealing, this focus leads them to downplay a crucial dimension of “Oxen”: what I call its ritual dimension, where process, or practice, is privileged over signification, and going through motions becomes more important than mastering particular contents. Here again, as in my discussion of Pater in Chapter One, I rely on Talal Asad’s discussion of ritual in “Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual,” in *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 55-79.

³⁸ Robert Spoo, “‘Oxen of the Sun,’ ‘Circe,’ and Beyond,” 146-147. See also, on “Oxen” as “anti-textbook,” Christopher Ames, “The Modernist Canon Narrative: Woolf’s *Between the Acts* and Joyce’s ‘Oxen of the Sun,’”

Twentieth Century Literature 37.4 (1991): 390-404; and as “anti-anthology,” Andrew Gibson, “An Irish Bull in an English China Shop,” 173, 182. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

³⁹ See, for instance, on sexuality and reproduction, Richard Brown, “Copulation without Population,” *James Joyce and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 63-78, and Mary Lowe-Evans, *Crimes Against Fecundity: James Joyce and Population Control* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1989); and, on history, Gibson and Spoo. More recent queer readings like McCrea’s and Kurnick’s, have tended to avoid the episode, perhaps owing to its apparent focus on reproductive, rather than obviously queer, forms of sexuality. Note also that the essays collected in Joseph Valente, ed., *Quare Joyce* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000) mention “Oxen” very rarely and only in passing.

⁴⁰ Kenner, *Joyce’s Voices*, 91.

⁴¹ Harriet Shaw Weaver, quoted in Maud Ellmann, “*Ulysses*: Changing into an Animal,” *Field Day Review* 2 (2006): 79. Compare the terms in which Woolf contrasts *Ulysses* as a whole, rather than “Oxen” specifically, with Proust’s masterpiece, which she loves: “Far otherwise is it with Ulysses; to which I bind myself like a martyr to a stake, and have thank god, now finished— My martyrdom is over.” Woolf to Roger Fry, 3 October 1922, in *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 2, ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautman (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 566.

⁴² On “Circe” as utopian telos and place of polymorphous perversion, see David Kurnick, “Joyce Unperformed,” in *Empty Houses: Theatrical Failure and the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 183-191.

⁴³ I borrow the “pensum” from Samuel Beckett, *The Unnameable*, in *Samuel Beckett: The Grove Centenary Edition*, Vol. 2 (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 304-305. Here, “the remnants of a pensum one day got by heart and long forgotten” figure the narrator’s predicament. The word also appears once in *Ulysses*, when, in “Circe,” Bloom sees in passing “youthful scholars grappling with their pensums” (15.919).

⁴⁴ But that the punishment is also a privilege Woolf suggests in *Jacob’s Room*. Here is “Miss Julia Hedge, the feminist,” who looks at Jacob across the library table: “When her books came she applied herself to her gigantic labours, but perceived through one of the nerves of her exasperated sensibility how composedly, unconcernedly, and with every consideration the male readers applied themselves to theirs. That young man for example. What had he got to do except copy out poetry? And she must study statistics.” *Jacob’s Room* (New York: Dover, [1922] 1998), 82.

⁴⁵ Chris Ackerley, *Demented Particulars: The Annotated Murphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 114.

⁴⁶ Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: Provincial Ways*, trans. Lydia Davis. New York: Viking, 2010), 5.

⁴⁷ Gibson reads “Oxen” as “an expression of deep recalcitrance, of a refusal to be governed. Recontextualization, mockery, treachery, adulteration, anachronism, ersatz, graffiti-work: these are some of the terms that are surely most relevant to what Joyce is doing in ‘Oxen’” (182; emphasis in original). But he then concedes tellingly: “yet if Joyce produces an anti-anthology, he knows that it can never altogether escape the form of the monument that is its determining condition” (182). My reading lays stress on this inescapability, making the fact of textual dependency central to “Oxen” rather than merely granting in this concessive way that dependency persists, as a “determining condition.” Yet, as I make clear below, I do not mean to argue that “Oxen” simply constitutes another monument. Here as in other chapters, I explore “docility” as an alternative to both subversiveness and simple submission, as a form of agency opening onto a range of possibilities. See Talal Asad’s comments in this connection: “I point to the etymology of ‘docile,’ that is, ‘teachable.’ So I’m interested in the ‘docile subject’ as someone who is *teachable* and therefore as someone who has the capacity to be taught.” Talal Asad, “The Trouble of Thinking,” interview with David Scott, *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and his Interlocutors*, David Scott, ed. Stanford, Stanford

University Press, 2006, 287. I am arguing that “Oxen” models this capacity even while it requires docility on the reader’s part—and even while it rebels in detention.

⁴⁸ “What counterproposals were alternately advanced, accepted, modified, declined, restated in other terms, ratified, reconfirmed?”

“To inaugurate a prearranged course of Italian instruction, place the residence of the instructed. To inaugurate a course of vocal instruction, place the residence of the instructress ...

“What rendered problematic for Bloom the realisation of these mutually selfexcluding propositions?”

“The irreparability of the past ...” (17.96--975)

⁴⁹ I note that the word “frequentative” itself appears in *Ulysses*, in “Ithaca” (17.382).

⁵⁰ My reading of “reproductitive” may strike some as an exercise in over-interpretation. Couldn’t this be, such readers might ask, a mere slip of the pen? And what’s in a slip of the pen? Not much usually, according to Sebastiano Timpanaro, who notes that philologists call the kind of scribal error that would give rise to “reproductitive” (if the neologism were, in fact, erroneous) “diphthography”: “that is, the mistaken repetition of part of a word, or ... of an entire word or of several consecutive words. In the case of copies of pre-existing writings, the error is very frequently produced at a moment in which the copyist or printer, on completing the transcription of a section of the text, looks back at the original and, instead of ‘taking up’ from the words he had reached, starts again at a point further back. In effect, this is a kind of retrospective *saut du même au même*. But it can be very easily happen, even when writing original texts, rather than transcriptions, that we commit errors of repetition, because our thoughts and their transmission do not always proceed at the same rate, and the writer can have the mistaken impression that he still has to write down something that he has in fact already written.” Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Freudian Slip: Psychoanalysis and Textual Criticism*, trans. Kate Soper (London: NLB, 1976), 143-144. But even facts of life like the inevitable misalignment between “our thoughts and their transmission” become susceptible of interpretation in “Oxen,” which from the first questions national “chrononormativity,” as I have shown.

⁵¹ Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, trans. Alberto Sbraglia (New York: Verso, 2000), 233.

⁵² J. E. Stone names Rousseau and Dewey as key proponents of developmentalism, broadly defined, which for Stone “refers to a broad doctrine that presumes ‘natural’ ontogenesis to be optimal”: “Stated broadly, developmentalism is the view of age-related social, emotional, and cognitive change that regards the optimal progression to be a fragile result of native tendencies emerging in a world congenial to their presumed wholesome nature. It emphasizes (a) the sufficiency of a natural inclination to learning, (b) the dangers of interference with native characteristics and proclivities, and (c) the desirability of learning experiences that emulate those thought to occur naturally. ... Man, his social contrivances, and indeed, civilization are seen as distinct from nature; and deliberate efforts to alter the course of child development are suspected of interfering with optimal developmental outcomes.” J. E. Stone, “Developmentalism: An Obscure but Pervasive Restriction on Educational Improvement,” *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 4.8 (1996): 1-30. Stone’s critique of developmentalist approaches assumes that “improvement” of a different kind is possible; it advocates techniques that are experimentally proven to be effective, rather than techniques that are traditional. In this sense, Stone’s argument differs from my own. Still, “Developmentalism” helpfully lays out the assumptions of Rousseauist and Deweyan views, while also vividly attesting to the afterlife of these canonical reformist accounts. For recent corroboration and contextualization of Stone’s study, see William Reville, “The Reason Why Modern Teaching Methods Don’t Work,” *Irish Times* March 2, 2015, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/the-reason-why-modern-teaching-methods-don-t-work-1.2115219>. And for a different account of the relationship between Rousseau and Dewey, more attentive to the differences than to the similarities between the two thinkers’ views, see William J. Reese, “The Origins of Progressive Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 41.1 (2001): 1-24.

⁵³ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 198.

⁵⁴ Joyce's Trieste library contained Rousseau's *Confessions* but not *Émile*. But this does not rule out the possibility of a relationship between "Oxen" and the latter work. Still it seems more plausible to propose that Joyce reworked—and transvalued—Rousseau's opening image of a man who, degraded by culture, "must be trained like a school horse" than to suggest that he revisited the defense of breastfeeding (37). For, as I have already suggested, "the studious" in Joyce's must be trained like school oxen. On "Oxen" and animals, see Maud Ellmann, "Ulysses: Changing into an Animal," and, for a gendered take on the same themes, Christine Froula, "Befriending Sacred Cows: Why the Sun God Spares Bloom and Stephen," in *Modernism's Body: Sex, Culture, and Joyce* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 127-136.

⁵⁵ On the processes by which reproduction was both "sexualized and biologized" in modernity, see Alys Eve Weinbaum, *Wayward Reproductions: Genealogies of Race and Nation in Transatlantic Modern Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 2.

⁵⁶ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: MacMillan [1916] 1957), 84. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text. For Rousseau's critique of imitation and recall, the context of his stipulation that "Émile will never learn anything by heart," see Book II in *Émile*, especially 104-113. As a consequence of this kind of education, Rousseau claims, for instance, "Most learned men are learned in the way of children. Vast erudition results less from a multitude of ideas than from a multitude of images. Dates, proper names, places, all objects isolated or devoid of ideas are retained solely by memory of signs; and rarely does one recall some one of these signs without at the same time seeing the page on the right- or left-hand side where it was read or the form in which it was seen for the first time" (112). The old school's pupils thus remain permanently beholden to its forms and signs, anything but independent, whereas "Natural man is entirely for himself," as is Émile (39).

⁵⁷ Compare Dewey's discussion of "Waste in Education" in *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907): "This question is not one of the waste of money or the waste of things. These matters count; but the primary waste is that of human life, the life of the children while they are at school, and afterward because of inadequate and perverted preparation" (77).

⁵⁸ Edmund Wilson, for his part, writes of "Oxen," "Eumaeus," and "Ithaca" as "colorless and tiresome" and concludes that all three episodes are "artistically absolutely indefensible," though leavened by "Circe" and "Penelope": "a hundred and sixty-one more or less deliberately tedious pages are too heavy a dead weight for even the brilliant flights of the other hundred and ninety-nine pages to carry." Edmund Wilson, "James Joyce" in *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930* (New York: Norton, 1931), 216-217.

⁵⁹ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, trans. Ben Fowkes, in *Surveys from Exile*, ed. David Fernbach (New York: Vintage, 1974), 146.

⁶⁰ Including notably in the preceding episode: "Throughout 'Nausicaa,'" King notes, "liturgical Latin stands in for and stimulates [Gerty MacDowell's] religio-erotic reveries." King, "Hermeneutics of Suspicion," 369.

⁶¹ Here again the movement back and forth between claims and concessions in Gibson's "An Irish Bull in an English China Shop" is telling: "What Joyce does, in effect, is to establish his passage in a relationship of correspondence to (and therefore dependence on) the English writer, and then work his way towards a freedom from it. He refuses the subservience of parody: its residual structure of fidelity to the master text ... Yet the tie of the betrayer to the object of his betrayal remains. The movement towards freedom is uncompleted" (178).

⁶² Spoo argues that, as the reader nears the end of *Ulysses*, “Stephen’s nightmare is gradually displaced by the rhetoric of myth, cycle, and symbol; and history itself is gradually translated into the heaven of symbolic potentialities” (137). In another context, Kurnick also emphasizes the novel’s utopian impulses. Here I follow a different set of readings. See, for instance, David Lloyd’s claim that Joyce graduates from subjective to objective genitive, with the latter pertaining to history: “The history of the subject ceases to be the developmental curve of the individual who comes by way of appropriating the world into possession of himself, but, objective genitive, the history in which the subject is suspended, the histories that jut into his presence with the force of unassimilated matter.” David Lloyd, “The Medieval Still: Postcolonial Temporalities in Joyce,” *Irish Times: Temporalities of Modernity* (Dublin: Field Day, 2008), 94. For Lloyd, the suspension lasts, and the matter of history remains not only not-yet-assimilated, but also inassimilable as such. For related arguments informing my own, see Roberto Harari’s discussion of the distinction between dream and nightmare in *How James Joyce Made His Name*, trans. Luke Thurston (New York: Other Press, 2002), 276-277; and Edelman’s only reference to Joyce in *No Future*, 97. It’s striking that Edelman only mentions Joyce once given his reliance on the notion of the *sinthome*, a Lacanian concept elaborated on the basis of a reading of Joyce in a seminar from 1975-1976. See Harari, *How James Joyce Made His Name* for a detailed reading of Lacan’s seminar.

⁶³ Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses* (Boston: G Allen & Unwin, 1980), 79.

⁶⁴ Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), 121.

⁶⁵ James Joyce, Trieste Notebook, James Joyce Collection, MS VIII.B.4v-7r, State University of New York, University at Buffalo Libraries. Further citations from these transcriptions are given parenthetically in the text. To my knowledge, these transcriptions have not been closely analyzed in previous studies of Joyce’s sources for “Oxen.” Recent studies have instead focused on the notesheets onto which Joyce copied shorter fragments of text from his many sources. For an overview these sources, see, again, Robert Janusko, *The Sources and Structures of James Joyce’s “Oxen”*; and for recent studies, see the following essays and notices in *Genetic Joyce Studies*: Sarah Davison, “Joyce’s Incorporation of Literary Sources in ‘Oxen of the Sun,’” *Genetic Joyce Studies* 9 (2009), http://www.antwerpjamesjoycecenter.com/GJS9/GJS9_SarahDavisonOxen.htm, and “Oxtail Soup: Dialects of English in the ‘Oxen of the Sun’ Episode in Joyce’s *Ulysses*,” *Genetic Joyce Studies* 14 (2014), http://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/GJS14/GJS14_Davison.htm; Gregory M. Dowling, “Joyce’s ‘Oxen of the Sun’ Notesheets: A Transcription and Sourcing of the Stylistic Entries,” *Genetic Joyce Studies* 2 (2002), <http://www.antwerpjamesjoycecenter.com/GJS2Oxen1.html>; and Chrissie van Mierlo, “‘Oxen of the Sun’ Notesheet 17: Commentary and Annotations with a New List of Sources, and Transcriptions; or Oxtail Soup: The Ingredients,” *Genetic Joyce Studies* 14 (2014), http://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/GJS14/GJS14_Van_Mierlo.htm.

⁶⁶ Joyce takes the phrase “a marvelous tact of omission” from Walter Pater, *Imaginary Portraits* (London: Macmillan, 1910), 6. Further citations from Pater are given parenthetically in the text together with page numbers in Joyce’s notebook, using the abbreviation *IP* to refer to this volume, and *M* to refer to Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*, ed. Michael Levey (New York: Penguin, 1985).

⁶⁷ I note that “Oxen” is vaguely reminiscent of Pater’s novel in its overall structure as well. Although the events in the episode’s narrative bear no relation whatsoever to *Marius*, Joyce’s sequentially arranged styles recall Pater’s Roman anti-hero’s passage through successive schools of thought. I am suggesting in my reading of Joyce’s transcription from Pater that the Irish author picks up on some of the many ways in which Marius’ passage is not progress.

⁶⁸ Here again, as in my reading of Pater, I am helped by Leela Gandhi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900-1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). See especially Chapter 2, “On Descent.”

⁶⁹ On this subculture, see Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); and on Pater's place in it, see especially chapter 3. See also James Eli Adams, "Gentleman, Dandy, Priest: Masks and Masculinity in Pater's Aestheticism," in *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 183-228.

⁷⁰ On the fertility of negativity, see Kathryn Bond Stockton, "Lost, or Exit Pursued by a Bear," in *Shakesqueer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. Madhavi Menon (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 421-428.

⁷¹ James Joyce, "Oxen" Copybooks, MS V.A.13-18, James Joyce Collection, The State University of New York, University at Buffalo Libraries.

⁷² The *OED* continues: "Originally both copies were written on one piece of parchment or paper, and then cut asunder in a serrated or sinuous line, so that when brought together again at any time, the two edges exactly tallied and showed that they were parts of one and the same original document: hence the expression 'pair of indentures.' Occasionally a word, sentence, or figure was engrossed on the space where they were divided, as in the space between a bank cheque and its counterfoil." Compare the title and story "Counterparts" in *Dubliners*, which establish a precedent for my reading of the "indenture" here. "Counterpart" was "originally a term for a legal document, itself a copy of the original; 'a duplicate or exact copy . . . ; figuratively, a person or thing so answering to another as to appear a duplicate or exact copy of it'" (*Dubliners* 232, quoting the *OED*). That "Counterparts" culminates with a scene of child-beating means that, at a distance, the story anticipates "Oxen"'s preoccupation with "semblables" who are in fact at odds.

⁷³ On identification with the lingua franca, see James Siegel, "The 'I' of a Lingua Franca," *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 13-37. And on English as a lingua franca in "Oxen," see Sarah Davison, "Oxtail Soup."

⁷⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud et al., vol. 9, 1906-1908 (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), 150.

⁷⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Texts for Nothing*, in *Samuel Beckett: The Grove Centenary Edition*, Volume 4 (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 297.

⁷⁶ See Vincent J. Cheng, "Imagining Futures: Nations, Narratives, Selves," in *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 219-248.

⁷⁷ Lee Edelman, "Against Survival: Queerness in a Time That's Out of Joint," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 62.2 (2011): 148-169. Citations are given parenthetically in the text.

⁷⁸ Phrases learned by heart and lines recited recur in *Dubliners*. These constitute a separate phase in the elaboration of Joycean instruction and warrant a separate study. Still, they are worth enumerating here for the light they shed on the second half of "copied out big and got off by heart," given that I have so far been focused on the first half of this formulation. The child narrator of the first, tone-setting text in *Dubliners*, "The Sisters," recalls of the recently deceased, long since disgraced Father Flynn: "Sometimes he used to put me through the responses of the Mass which he had made me learn by heart" (6). Earlier Flynn had "taught [him] to pronounce Latin properly" (5), but to adults in the boy's world these lessons look improper, and the intergenerational attachments that lead to them strike some as plainly "bad for children" (4). This sense of impropriety carries over into "An Encounter," which gestures toward things bad for children more overtly: "He gave me the impression that he was repeating something which he

had learned by heart ... He said that my friend was a very rough boy and asked did he get whipped often at school. I was going to reply indignantly that we were not National School boys to be *whipped* as he called it; but I remained silent. He began to speak on the subject of chastising boys” (16-17). (On this subject, see also Colleen Lamos, “James Joyce and the English Vice,” *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 29.1 [1995]: 19-31.) Then there are the inwardly repeated lines in “A Little Cloud” (54); the poem in memory of Parnell recited in “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” (103-105); and Gabriel Conroy’s worry that he will “make himself ridiculous by quoting poetry to them which they could not understand” in “The Dead” (141), a story, incidentally, about the foundering of resolutions not to “linger on the past” (160). Compare Stephen’s listening in on adult conversations in *A Portrait*: “Words which he did not understand he said over and over to himself till he had learnt them by heart: and through them he had glimpses of the real world about him” (*P* 43).

⁷⁹ See especially Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen’s reading of Freud against the Oedipal grain in *The Freudian Subject*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), on grounds that “the Oedipal hypothesis intervenes to protect the autarchy of the subject—or, in what amounts to the same thing, the propriety of its desire ...—in order to protect it against the possibility of an *alteration* (*which particularly does not mean alienation*) *constitutive of its most proper ‘being’*” (192; emphasis in original). Elsewhere in *The Freudian Subject*, Borch-Jacobsen writes of this ordinary alteration in terms that resonate even more with “Oxen”: the alterity that precedes and underwrites underwrites the subject lets us see “the constant priority of modeling. For it is ... recurrence itself that is primary: the congenital infantilism of the subject—the insuperable infantile obstacle—is such that the subject is no sooner itself than it is ‘behind’ with respect to its own origin” (116).

⁸⁰ Kurnick, “Joyce Unperformed,” in *Empty Houses*, 187.

⁸¹ Woolf, *A Writer’s Diary*, 48.

Chapter Four

Salò and the School of Abuse



Salò's courtyard, shown through backward binoculars

The Ends of *Salò*

“Conceived as a rite,” Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Salò, o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* [*Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*] (1975) ends with a ritual.¹ In an agonizingly drawn-out concluding sequence, the film’s four fascist libertines and their assistants torture, then massacre a whole host of young victims. But in the process, far from giving their desire free rein, the libertines adhere strictly to protocols long since established. These protocols—the *regolamenti* agreed upon in one of the film’s first scenes and regularly applied throughout—dictate careful choreography and the taking of regular turns, and they remain binding until the end. Throughout *Salò*, the camera registers these rules’ continued force with its formal precision and fixity: a stillness anomalous in Pasolini’s cinema that suffices to render the tableau of torture, like others that have come before, painterly. In the courtyard of the libertines’ villa, an aestheticized sacrifice thus unfolds, while its organizers alternately administer punishments and watch from above, on a throne, as the punishments unfold. One looks—and we look with him—through binoculars turned backward, emblems of the film about to end.

For *Salò* is nothing if not backward—“behindhand in progress” formally, sexually, politically, and, as I will show, pedagogically (*OED*). Backwardness inheres in Pasolini’s late staging of ritual tableaux and in his exhausted, retrograde attachment to Sodom and “sodomy” after the liberated sexual exuberance of his previous films. Backwardness characterizes his fascination with fascism, in his fixation on Sade, and his staging of all kinds of corporal punishments. One critic has recently gone so far as to claim that Pasolini’s film “costringe lo spettatore a indietreggiare nell’angoscia” [constrains the spectator to recoil (or to retreat, or move backward) in anguish], locating backwardness in the viewer’s very bodily response.² I will argue that, whether or not they take this literal form, such movements on the part of *Salò*’s viewer repeat the film’s own regression into the past. Signaling our participation the film-as-rite, this repetition also makes *Salò* into a place of instruction in this dissertation’s sense: unproductive, outmoded, and even “dead,” but efficacious as a means by which to counter progress, defined as force that levels while pretending to liberate us from the past.³

Thus whereas Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit might point to the libertines’ backward binoculars as an instance of the “saving frivolity,” the mercifully distracting aestheticization, by which they think Pasolini “creates a type of nonimitative recognition which is his distance from

Sade and sadistic violence,” I will contend on the contrary that they solicit a response that is indeed mimetic, and marked by “suffocating nearness.”⁴ For looking at the courtyard with the libertines, whose binoculars frame our view, means both sharing their diegetic perspective and effectively being beheld by the tableau that they arrange. Far from “saving” or distracting us, the film thus doubly implicates us with its gaze. *Salò* looks back at us, in other words, with the same backward lens that it trains on the past. Through this lens, we, too, look backward, and while the film lasts—while its school is in session—we remain behind.

But in which past, and to what end? Filming *Salò*, Pasolini claimed to have recoiled from a present whose bodies and pleasures disgusted him so thoroughly that he couldn’t go anywhere near them anymore—at least not on film.⁵ A detour was required, one that, in *Salò*, took the form of a return to two analogically related pasts:⁶ that of the Marquis de Sade’s *120 Days of Sodom* (written in 1785), which Pasolini’s film adapts, and that of the short-lived fascist Republic of Salò (declared in 1943 and ended in 1945), in which the film is set. The filmmaker occasionally went so far in deploring his present as to make this return to Salò seem like a matter of self-care, as when he claimed that “ai tempi della Repubblica di Salò il mondo era migliore, tanto che preferisco immergermi spiritualmente in quell’epoca piuttosto che nella nostra” [at the time of the Republic of Salò the world was better, so much so that I prefer to immerse myself spiritually in that epoch rather than in ours].⁷ There is therefore some truth to the film’s first spectators’ sense that Pasolini must have been symptomatically “fixated” on the fascist and Sadean pasts.⁸ The specter of regressive or developmentally arrested homosexuality haunts the film’s version of Sodom, as something more than a figment of phobic critics’ imaginations.

Indeed, Pasolini’s republic *redux* bears more than a passing resemblance to the “province” to which Freud alludes in an early letter discussing fixation: “If a later transcript is lacking the excitation is dealt with in accordance with the psychological laws in force in the earlier psychical period and along the paths open at that time. Thus an anachronism persists: in a certain province *fueros* [ancient laws or local sovereignties] are still in force, we are in the presence of ‘survivals.’”⁹ Such “survivals,” for the young Freud, who here borrows the term from the Victorian anthropology discussed in Chapter One, enable the psychic translation or metabolization of later events for which no corresponding “later transcript” is forthcoming. *Fueros* within, fixation attests to the subject’s need to govern psychic life by early, outdated means, to send excitations “along paths” whose signposts continue to fascinate in the present they make bearable by opposing.

To be sure, in *Salò*, we are still very much “in the presence of survivals.”¹⁰ But this does not make the film into a mere record of the director’s psychopathology, as detractors have claimed.¹¹ Nor are *Salò*’s backward movements undertaken for their own sake, or in the interest of escapism or what Pasolini in his nostalgic mode called spiritual immersion. Recoiling from the present beomes retreat pursued as strategy, and Pasolini’s late *indietreggiare* is thus not Pater’s “delicious recoil.”¹² *Salò* instead proceeds from—and regresses according to—a program, perhaps its own rendition of the “Programma di Verona” by which the late fascist republic, itself a survival, was established.¹³ For all its backwardness, Pasolini’s program does not simply submit to survivals; instead it sets them to work under the pressure of the present defined as progressive. Again, Pasolini blamed this present’s deadening and his own disgust on contemporary forms of power and said repeatedly that he had set out, with *Salò*, to expose this power at its purest. But if, like many recent readers of the film, we take the director at his word

here, it becomes difficult to account for the film's multiple and programmatic movements backward. Surely an exposé of "anarchic" capitalist power would have been much more successful if it had been made of newsreel footage, say, like Pasolini's own *La rabbia* (1963), or at least if it had been set in the present, as was his *Teorema* (1968). Surely it was easy, from the first, for *Salò*'s spectators to regard the film as if it were not about them at all. For *Salò* is first and foremost about fascist and Sadean power—that is, as about forms of power whose apparent remoteness from the present might have proven oddly *reassuring* to viewers who tended to relegate both fascism and Sade to pasts long since superseded. These same spectators might have tended to imagine sadistic sexual practices as confined to present worlds that they chose not to enter. Thus if, as Pasolini repeated, his film was to force spectators to recognize their own complicity in "anarchic," exploitative power,¹⁴ then it is not clear why the film itself placed so many obstacles in the way of recognition, why it provided, in effect, so many alibis, staging power in such highly spectacular and patently past forms when its avowed goal was to decry a type of power that was all too present and banal.¹⁵

As if to compensate for this puzzling, programmatic backwardness, recent readings have more often praised *Salò* for its "proleptic insight" than they have attended to the movements that I have been tracking under the sign of *indietreggiare*. That is, critics have in various ways insisted on *Salò*'s prescience, and defended the film on precisely these grounds. Whether it has been seen to predict "current methods of biopower" as exposed at Abu Ghraib or "the eclipse of desire" under neoliberalism; whether it has seemed to anticipate the rise of identity politics or the "actualized totality" of contemporary global capital, Pasolini's last film has, to a number of recent critics, consistently looked forward-looking.¹⁶ So much so that the film's pastness has been forgotten, and its pedagogy forfeited. *Salò*'s backward glances have been recast as so many prophecies, so many messages addressed to us, in our (living) language. Thus papered over, the film's backwardness has become all but impossible to learn from, or even to see.

But it is only by staying with *Salò*'s backwardness—by following its retrogressive movements—that one can learn its lesson. Likewise, it is only through a retracing of the film's steps that its force can be reestablished. Bypassing these steps and characterizing *Salò* as proleptic and diagnostic, most recent accounts have lost sight of the film's main ambitions. They have elided, most importantly, its aspiration to the condition of rite and cure—albeit the kind of cure that neither finally gets over nor fully gets away from the condition that it treats. This aspiration may seem to exceed—and in exceeding to break—the pedagogical frame into which, following Andrea Zanzotto, I have placed *Salò*.¹⁷ For, unlike the texts studied in the last three chapters, Pasolini's film draws on techniques—and especially on technologies of the image—that are neither straightforwardly reminiscent of the classroom nor entirely faithful to the textuality of Sade's "school for libertinage."¹⁸ Still, the film's didacticism remains undeniable, as does its diegetic interest in schooling. If the former is emblemized in the unprecedented "Essential Bibliography" that appears at the end of the film's credit sequence, assigning required reading, *Salò*'s diegetic interest in schooling, sustained throughout the film, reemerges in full force at the very end. For the sequence showing the courtyard massacre ends with a sort of finishing-school non sequitur: a dancing lesson, taught while tortures continue apace. And with this twofold pedagogy—visited on the viewer already interpellated as pupil at the outset, and staged in the film to the last, including in its final frame—purpose is reintroduced into a film from which it has appeared to have been banished. For that, alongside Bataille, theorist of

sacrifice, Brecht is in the background, advocating transmission, suggests that the end of *Salò* is not that of the world.¹⁹ Yet of course it *is* the end of the world for the *fanciulli* in the film, whom God has abandoned, as one victim laments (*PC* 2059).²⁰ *Salò* thus makes it imperative that we read sacrifice and survival, abandonment and transmission, Bataille and Brecht, together.

Rather than labeling the late Pasolini either prophetic or apocalyptic, either “saving” or simply pathological, I undertake this twofold reading, which alone, I suggest, responds to *Salò*’s specificity. The approach that I propose, as I move in what follows from text to image, makes it possible to recognize the “disquieting indistinction between the ill and its remedy” on which the film insists, and which its backwardness effects.²¹ For in *Salò*, what Jennifer Stone calls the director’s “pedagogic-therapeutic” intervention becomes both old school and “therapeutic” in a pointedly anachronistic sense.²² The cure that the film prescribes, that is, comes dangerously close to the condition that it aims to treat, just as its lessons become indistinguishable from a series of punishments. The remedy in question involves not merely the revisiting but the prolonged reinhabiting and processual retraversal of the stations at which victims suffer as they are led to their deaths: deaths enacted in the film spectacle become “*sacra rappresentazione*” (*PC* 2066).

Lands of Regret

We can find a model for this kind of remedy in a book that also bears on backwardness, by an author Pasolini read with interest and cited with approval: the anthropologist Ernesto De Martino. First published in 1961, De Martino’s *La terra del rimorso* [*The Land of Regret*] gathers a range of ethnographic and historical reflections on *tarantismo*, the set of ritual practices and traditional beliefs associated with the treatment of poisonous spider bites in Puglia, in southern Italy. Importantly, *La terra del rimorso* takes pains to remove these beliefs and practices from the medicalizing frameworks into which they had been placed by enlightened and developmentalist discourses. But neither does De Martino simply endorse supernatural explanations of the phenomena related to *tarantismo*. Instead, he reads the incidence and returns of malignant symptoms among the predominantly female *tarantate*—and especially these symptoms’ ritual cures—as ways of coping with the “*cattivo passato che torna e rigurgita e opprime col suo rigurgito*” [bad past that returns and overflows and oppresses with its overflowing].²³ Noting that “first bites” tend to coincide with periods of grief, loss, unrequited love, puberty, and other mundane metamorphoses, and that “*ri-morsi*” (regrets, but also re-bites), or returns of symptoms, tend to recur seasonally if not annually, as if to commemorate first bites, De Martino finds in *tarantismo* a repertoire of techniques for working through “moments of alienation” that are no less real for being irreducible to physiology or demonology.

Here is how the anthropologist concludes, summing up extensive collaborative fieldwork and archival research:

Noi oggi sappiamo che il “pungolo” non è l’assalto di un dèmone o di un dio, ma il cattivo passato che torna e che si ripropone alla scelta mondana riparatrice: e sappiamo anche che il simbolismo del “morso” nel tarantismo è momento alienato di un interiore rimordere che cerca se stesso, “una certa intestina gravezza e oppressione,” come già diceva il Serao, “l’orizzonte di una angoscia che è

sintomo cifrato di scelte incompiute e di conflitti operanti nell'inconscio," come diciamo oggi. Ma proprio perché sappiamo queste cose—e il mondo contemporaneo ci ha procurato sin troppo questa aspra scienza—il tarantismo stimola ancora una volta il nostro interesse e diventa argomento vivo di una polemica che ci riguarda da vicino. D'altra parte proprio perché mai come oggi le coscienze sono percosse dal cattivo passato individuale e collettivo, e proprio perché gli animi sono travagliati dalla ricerca di simboli operativi adeguati al nostro umanesimo e al nostro senso della storia ... il tarantismo non ci è indifferente, e quasi costringe a misurare con lui le insidiate potenze della nostra modernità. In questo senso se la Terra del Rimorso è la Puglia in quanto patria elettiva del tarantismo, i pellegrini che la visitarono nell'estate del '59 [De Martino stesso e l'*équipe*] provenivano da una più vasta terra cui in fondo spetta lo stesso nome, una terra estesa sino ai confini del mondo abitato dagli uomini ... (272-273)

Today we know that the “prick” of remorse is not the attack of a demon or of a god, but the bad past that returns and imposes itself again on the chosen worldly repairer. And we also know that the symbolism of the “bite” in tarantism represents the alienated moment of an interior re-biting that looks for itself, “a certain internal heaviness and oppression,” as [Francesco] Serao [author of the eighteenth-century treatise *Della tarantola*] used to say, “the horizon of an anguish that is the ciphered symptom of incomplete choices and of conflicts operating in the unconscious,” as we say today. But precisely because we know these things—and the contemporary world has procured for us too much of this bitter knowledge—tarantism activates our interest once again and becomes a live question that concerns us intimately. On the other hand, precisely because our consciousnesses have never been so buffeted by the individual and collective past as they are today, and precisely because our souls are beset by the search for operative symbols that might be adequate to our humanism and to our sense of history ... tarantism is not indifferent to us, but rather almost constrains us to measure with it the ensnared powers of our modernity. In this sense, if the Land of Regret is Puglia inasmuch as it is the elective fatherland of tarantism, the pilgrims who visited it in the summer of '59 [De Martino himself and his team] come from a vaster world that in the end awaits the same name, a land extended even to the limits of the world inhabited by men [*sic*] ...

What begins as a confident statement about the difference between “us” and those who still believe in gods, monsters, malignant spiders, and miracle cures thus ends with a virtual erasure of this very difference. Locating the modern researchers, tellingly renamed “pilgrims” at this point, in a land that is also one of regret (for it “awaits the same name” that has been given to the place of the *tarantate*), and then further widening the boundaries of this land so that it encompasses the whole inhabited world, De Martino all but undoes the distinction that he initially establishes between the backward and benighted *tarantate* and the modern, metropolitan men who have undertaken to observe them.

Yet on another level this distinction is preserved, or sublated, for it is the latter who stand to learn from the former.²⁴ Inasmuch as souls in “our modernity” are tasked with searching for efficacious symbols that remain operative in the realm of *tarantismo*, the remorseful Southerners have what their northern visitors badly need: rites, not to put an end to the return of the “bad past” (for such a return is structural, not historical), but to make that inevitable return both legible and livable. Moreover, measured against—or rather *with*, as De Martino more forcefully writes—*tarantismo*, “our humanism and our history” cannot remain the same; they cannot, that is, remain the properties of a collectivity that would still confidently claim to have superseded the past. For the past— “the bad past” both “individual and collective”—keeps returning to trouble the present that pretends to have outgrown it, and that thus denies it, or at least renders it “indifferent.” Note that, although De Martino does recast *tarantismo* as “live,” his later, litotic formulation stops short of updating *tarantismo*, making it *directly* relevant to “our modernity” or translating its rituals into our terms and thus eliding their past character. De Martino’s text thus models a way of relating to the past that resists its subsumption by the present. And in this way, *La terra del rimorso* can offer a corrective to readings of *Salò* that privilege foresight at the expense of backwardness. For the land of regret can, according to the logic of the passage quoted above, teach us about ourselves precisely because it is *not* “ours.” Even if this land may be, effectively, everywhere, it matters whether one visits it, pilgrim-like, or calls it home; there are, in other words, still ways of being closer to and farther from it. Thus the all but elided distinction between the *tarantate* and those who study them is reinstated after all, since without this difference there would be no possibility of learning; the (bad) present would be all there was, left without “operative symbols.”

This logic, shuttling as it does between the elision of and the insistence on difference, clearly resonates with that of Pasolini’s work in poetry and prose as well as cinema. And not for nothing.²⁵ The two figures shared an abiding preoccupation with Italy’s south and a broader interest in the psychic and ritual resources locatable in non-modern forms of life, and lost under the regime of progress. Both hoped that such resources might still be accessed and set to work to redress an ailing modernity. Pasolini, however, is typically said to have abandoned this belief by the time he made *Salò*. Thus critics have distinguished the anthropologist’s project from the filmmaker’s. As a result, they have not recognized *La terra del rimorso*’s potential to shed light on *Salò*. Although he notes that De Martino’s work was “fundamental” for Pasolini, Armando Maggi, for instance, sees the two figures as ultimately opposed. In fact, according to Maggi, “Pasolini misrepresents [De Martino’s] basic ideas,” reductively translating the latter’s complex and non-dichotomous understanding of history into a neat and naive division between “then” and “now”: De Martino’s emphases are thus “at odds with Pasolini’s belief in a sharp dichotomy between the ‘then’ of a premodern condition and the ‘now’ of post-history” (7). In modernity, Maggi further paraphrases De Martino, “[t]he new challenge . . . is to find new coping mechanisms, so to speak, not to mourn the irretrievable loss of magic and the sacred, as Pasolini instead reiterates” (8).

But Pasolini also said, again, that *Salò* was “conceived as a rite” and “a sort of *sacra rappresentazione*.” More importantly his late work everywhere attests to the uncanny persistence and the still-possible return of that which has been declared long gone. Indeed, the declaration that the beloved object—or, more often, the beloved world or form of life—has been lost comes to function consistently, for the late Pasolini, as a means by which this object, world, or form of

life is preserved. Commemoration becomes a kind of after-life support, in a process that is, in the end, less melancholic than it is mystagogic, since it seeks not the incorporation of the object but its setting to work in an instructional and initiatory context, a school that becomes “operative,” as I have shown, precisely by virtue of its backwardness. Pasolini’s understanding of the present’s detachment from the past is thus less “irredeemable”—and his take on its loss of the sacred is less “irretrievable”—than Maggi claims. For Pasolini, too, as for De Martino, it is matter of finding “new coping mechanisms,” drawing on old cures.

Elsewhere, Maggi identifies and valorizes the analogical operation, the “new form of temporal analogy” (312-313), that enables Pasolini to bring disparate historical moments to bear on one another, as in the “analogy” that transposes Sade to the fascist redoubt of Salò. And the very existence of such an operation already gives the lie to the notion that Pasolini believed only in a “sharp dichotomy” between “then” and “now.” For these terms are—and have to be, in order to be susceptible of analogy—multiple and heterogeneous, and although it’s true that Pasolini worried endlessly about the homogenizing market’s tendency to make the “now” of “neo-capitalism” more and more monocultural, it does not follow that he ever really reduced history to dichotomy. Nor, for that matter, does it follow that he ever declared any death over and done with, definitively.

A close examination of Pasolini’s 1975 “Abiura dalla *Trilogia della vita*” [Repudiation of the *Trilogy of Life*] reveals the extent to which survivals still structure the author’s last works. The “Abiura”’s arguments are often cited and well known. In it, Pasolini takes distance from the films in the trilogy comprised of *Il Decameron* (1971), *I racconti di Canterbury* (1972), and *Il fiore delle Mille e una notte* (1974) on grounds that they have been coopted by “potere integrante” [integrating power].²⁶ By centering on bodies and sex, these films, though lacking neither in sincerity nor in artistic necessity, have been “instrumentalized,” used to shore up the “consumerist power” that has taken over “la lotta progressista per la democratizzazione espressiva e per la liberalizzazione sessuale” [the progressive struggle for the democratization of expression and for sexual liberalization] (A 72). This power has, then, conceded a “una vasta (quanto falsa) tolleranza” [tolerance as vast as it is false], and the consequences have been catastrophic (A 72).

Pasolini goes on to announce that he will henceforth live and work in a world in which the pains and joys, bodies and pleasures, that could formerly be found in last redoubts of the real, in far-flung locations and past narrative universes have all given way to the “unreality” of mass mediated modernity. This modernity is so all-encompassing, so “integrating,” as to cover and cancel the past as well as the present: the bad case of “degeneration” that Pasolini diagnoses acquires a “valore retroattivo” [retroactive value], so that “il crollo del presente implica il crollo del passato” [the collapse of the present implies the collapse of the past], which past can no longer withstand modernity’s incursions (A 73). It *could* still do so during the years when Pasolini made the films in the *Trilogy*, but he now sees those years as marked by a denial that can no longer be sustained. It has taken him a while, he says, to accept the unreality of the present, which has become the only “reality,” but with the “Abiura” he makes public his final acceptance, his “adaptation.”

The terms of this acceptance and adaptation inscribe Pasolini in a collectivity from which he nonetheless instructively remains distinct, and they thus subtly qualify the evolution that they announce. Here is how the “Abiura” ends:

Tutti si sono adattati o attraverso il non voler accorgersi di niente o attraverso la più inerte sdrammatizzazione.

Ma devo ammettere che anche l'essersi accorti o l'aver drammatizzato non preserva affatto dall'adattamento o dall'accettazione. Dunque io mi sto adattando alla degradazione e sto accettando l'inaccettabile. Manovro per risistemare la mia vita. Sto dimenticando com'erano *prima* le cose. Le amate facce di ieri cominciano a ingiallire. Mi è davanti - pian piano senza più alternative - il presente. Riadatto il mio impegno ad una maggiore leggibilità (*Salò?*). (A 75-76; emphasis in original)

[Everyone has adapted either by not wanting to realize anything or by means of the most inert dedramatization.

But I must admit that even having realized or having dramatized does not really protect one from adaptation or acceptance. Therefore I am adapting to degradation and am accepting the unacceptable. I am maneuvering to rearrange my life. I am forgetting the way things were *before*. The beloved faces of yesterday begin to yellow. Before me—little by little without any more alternatives—is the present. I re-adapt my commitment to a greater legibility (*Salò?*.)]

Pasolini's language in these paragraphs is loudly deliberative even while it is affect-laden: the verb *manovrare*, calling as it does the Gramscian *guerra manovrata* or “war of maneuver” to memory, and the calculating notion of *risistemare*, rearranging or resystematizing, one's life grate against the “beloved faces of yesterday” that are now faded. It becomes difficult to decide whether accepting the unacceptable is here a matter of pathos (or, in Pasolini's terms, dramatization) or one of resignation. Which suggests, of course, that it is both; the “Abiura” depicts an “integrated” world in which all passion is spent, but it does so passionately rather than dispassionately, as when the author considers the present that he sees—“little by little without any more alternatives”—before him, where this phrase postpones the inevitable.

To postpone the inevitable is to do something other than simply accept it, and in this sense the phrase “pian piano senza più alternative,” dilatory even while it ushers in the end, is emblematic of the “Abiura” as a whole. For plainly the text protests too much, encircling the faces, bodies, organs, and pleasures that it pretends to leave behind, and remembering the forms of life that it claims to forget—indeed, loving what it claims to hate: “ormai odio i corpi e gli organi sessuali” [by now I hate bodies and sex organs].²⁷ This is also to say that the text uses the evolutionary rhetoric of “adaptation” against itself. Without the ambivalences and survivals that I have been bringing out, this rhetoric would simply serve another progress narrative, whereas Pasolini's avowed goal is to counter such narratives, whether they are told by those who continue to believe in the “progressive struggle” for sexual liberation, or by the director's critics on the Left, who charge that he ignores the hard-won victories of the post-war period. According to Pasolini, such charges *themselves* ignore the fact of widespread degradation and the destruction

of forms of life—the fact, that is, that by any standard other than modernity’s own, declines lead advances as history’s forward march continues apace. Progress, by this account, is a lie.

There is admittedly an edge here missing from De Martino’s much more sober if not quite resigned analysis of what ails “our modernity.” But this does not mean that the two analyses finally part ways. On the contrary, Pasolini’s pathos-fueled “Abiura” *enacts* the return of the “bad past” that De Martino traces through the Puglia of the *tarantate*, only then to locate it in the North as well. Pasolini insists that he does not regret having made the *Trilogy of Life*. But this refused repentance should be distinguished from regret or “re-morse” as De Martino defines it, emphasizing the etymon, as the symptom of the past’s persistence. Although the “Abiura” would seem to give up once and for all on the belief in any such persistence, the text everywhere betrays an ongoing attachment to all that it forswears. To say this is to acknowledge the extent to which his repudiating text, like his late poetry, looks to “schemi letterari collaudati” [time-tested literary schemas], drawing on what Anne-Lise François calls poetry’s peculiar “power to conjure and linger with what it claims not to mean and not to have.”²⁸ Doing this, the “Abiura” does something more than what it both purports and seems to do: repudiate, resign, renounce, and relinquish. The text also, as I have said, sustains the past that it would leave behind. In this sense, *tarantata*-like, it shows signs of the social sickness that De Martino diagnosed. This was also the sickness that *Salò* was to cure, not by putting an end to the bad past’s returns in the present, but rather through efficacious images capable of giving ritual and educative form to these returns at their most unbearable.

Bibliografia essenziale

Roland Barthes	'Sade, Fourier, Lovola' Editions du Seuil
Maurice Blanchot	'Lautréamont et Sade' Editions de Minuit In Italia Dedalo Libri
Simone De Beauvoir	'Faut-il brûler Sade' Editions Gaimard
Pierre Klossowski	'Sade mon prochain. Le philosophe sclérot.'
	Editions du Seuil In Italia SugarCo Edizioni
Philippe Sollers	'L'écriture et l'expérience des limites'
	Editions du Seuil

Alcuni brani dei testi di Roland Barthes e Pierre Klossowski sono citati nel film.

“Bibliografia essenziale”

Reading *Salò*

But before these images, there are words: first the words of the “Abiura,” which we have been reading cosely, then those that make up the “Bibliografia essenziale” [Essential Bibliography] with which *Salò* begins. Both texts point backward: the “Abiura” looks to the past that is renounced but not for all that left behind, and the bibliography gestures toward a set of reflections on Sade’s legacy that precede and presumably underwrite the film’s own. But how, more specifically, do the two texts relate to one another? What, if anything, do Pasolini’s repudiations have to do with his citations? And what do the latter reveal about the film’s pedagogy overall?

To adapt to the lie of progress without lapsing into a retelling of it is, to repeat, the “Abiura”’s burden. Recall this text’s last declaration, followed but not undone by a parenthetical

question: “Riadatto il mio impegno ad una maggiore leggibilità (*Salò?*)” [I re-adapt my commitment to a greater legibility (*Salò?*)] (A 76). In light of the close reading—indeed, the *lectio difficilior*—undertaken in my last section, this sentence bears rereading. If, that is, the “Abiura” preserves what it pretends to give up, and keeps all that it pronounces dead, in fact, on afterlife support, then the essay’s concluding claim can likewise be seen to hold fast to the illegibility that it would seem to foreswear for the sake of adaptation. This statement can be taken to mean not that Pasolini intends to commit himself to the legible as such, or pledges to *make his texts and films more legible* so that they become continuous with the status quo, but rather that he aims to *adapt to the regime of the legible*. The latter goal might mean precisely not producing texts that are readily legible by the public demanding legibility; allowing for an ongoing if re-conceived commitment to illegibility, it might lead instead to texts that present themselves as *differently illegible* in a context now wholly governed by the order of the legible, in something like Roland Barthes’s sense: “this circle, in which ‘everything holds together’ is that of the readerly [*lisible*].”²⁹ Barthes deploys military language throughout his discussion of the “readerly,” whose “meaning is a force” (156). Like the “integrating power” that Pasolini decried (A 71), the readerly or legible, for Barthes, is both totalizing by definition and a regime of consumption; it seeks both to ward off and to destroy the inassimilable illogic that opposes it.

Petrolio, Pasolini’s last, unfinished fictional project, offers one model of illegibility, one that precedes and contrasts markedly with the “adaptation” announced in the “Abiura” and enacted in *Salò*. Sprawling and radically experimental, Pasolini’s novel explicitly presents itself as a threat to the readerly order: as what Barthes calls “a scandal, the extenuation, by hemorrhage, of readerliness” (105).³⁰ *Petrolio*’s narrator goes so far as to claim that his account “appartiene per sua natura all’ordine dell’‘illegibile’” [belongs by its nature to the order of the “illegible”], signaling the book’s programmatic—and, in an avant-garde sense, its progressive—assault on readerly norms and expectations.³¹ *Salò* proceeds from a different and more complicated understanding of legibility: rather than *exploding* narrative conventions (which govern the readerly or legible for Barthes), the film *exploits* these conventions. It accedes to—in the “Abiura”’s terms, accepts—the narrativity that *Petrolio* flagrantly rejects, telling the story of characters gathered to tell stories, like the members of the Boccaccian *brigata*. *Salò* is continuous in this sense with the *Trilogy of Life*, whose films, including the *Decameron*, are all adapted from narrative classics.³²

The late Pasolini thus ultimately shares less with the Barthesian critic—who would counter the readerly order with the value of the writerly—than with the author imagined by Pierre Klossowski’s in a section of *Sade My Neighbor* on “How the Sadist Experience Renders Unreadable the Conventional Form of Communication”: “Sade seems to represent his reader as someone he must continually keep gasping with the promise of yet another shock. Yet what the reader is seeking in the end at the expense of his reading is a sort of lapse of attention at a moment when the whole text wants sustained attention, a lapse of the thought pursued so laboriously.”³³ “A lapse of the thought,” or in any case the discourse, “pursued so laboriously” is also what *Salò* seeks, in the end: the culminating courtyard scene and its aftermath effectively produce just such a lapse. For when the loquacious libertines—the four men who throughout the film, in Pasolini’s phrase, have done “niente che scrivere Regolamenti e regolarmente applicarli” [nothing but write Regulations and regularly apply them]—when these men fall silent, their discourse is overridden, and their thought, such as it is, gives way almost entirely to gesture (*PC*

2066). Here *Salò* works to produce a kind of trance, though not, as I have noted, one that keeps the spectator safe from harm. Again, the camera's stasis compels us to recognize in the regularity of the libertines' courtyard setup—and, at another level, in the director's careful arrangement of this setup—an aestheticization that is not a protective cover, since it is the very form that violence takes in *Salò*'s godforsaken republic.

Silence contributes the trance effect as much as this stasis: just before the tortures begin, the stories recounted by the film's *narratrici* cease, as does the *virtuosa*'s previously constant piano accompaniment. For a time, the silence is broken only by the sound of planes and the Duke's compliment to an assistant, the erect Umberto, "Bravo, eri pronto" [Bravo, you were ready] (*PC* 2059). The screams in the courtyard are inaudible; the victims, seen and not heard. And when music and poetry return—a chorus overlaid with a reading of Pound, "from the *Cantos*," for a program called "L'angolo della poesia" [Poetry Corner] (*PC* 2060)—they only apparently reintroduce dynamism and discourse onto the scene. For our trance continues—deepens, even. A movement from Carl Orff's *Carmina burana*, "Veris leta facies," begins, its small choir welcoming the return of spring. Meanwhile the Bishop throws a tantrum in the courtyard; now *he* is seen and not heard. After his rage subsides, he and the two other libertines in the courtyard dance the can-can.

Back indoors, the curly-haired Claudio, a new guard on duty turns the radio's dial, interrupting Orff's small chorus, which has been making music about music. "Cytharizat canticò /dulcis" [With her cithara / sweet], they sing, cut off just as they are about to name Philomena, the mythical figure who, raped and badly injured by Tereus, has her tongue cut out lest she tell what her aggressor has done. Later, avenged, Philomena becomes a nightingale. As *Salò* winds down, her "plaintive anthem fades" indeed,³⁴ but only to begin again in another key: the choral praise of the nightingale manqué yields to static, followed by an instrumental version of what sounds like a standard but is in fact "Son tanto triste,"³⁵ the song that played, in the same instrumental version, during the film's opening credits. Suddenly the sullen Claudio seems pleased—excited, even—to have found the tune. He and his *compagno* eye each other in a series of quick shot/reverse shot alternations that stand out in a sequence and film otherwise reliant on long takes and all but lacking in such back and forth, suggestive as it is of reciprocity.³⁶

"Sai ballare?" [Do you know how to dance?], the now-smiling Claudio asks (*PC* 2060). His *compagno* says no, at which point the boys agree to give it a try, guns down. Still at first, the camera begins to follow their back and forth, which is awkward but not nearly as arrhythmic as the libertines' can-can. The boys' wordlessness gives way to small talk as the heartfelt music on the radio verges on the maudlin. "Come si chiama la tua ragazza?" [What's your girlfriend's name?], the *compagno* asks Claudio. "Margherita," he responds, and then there is a fade to white: the end (*PC* 2060). Everything in *Salò*—all of the libertines' discourse—has built toward the climax of the courtyard massacre. But then, in this way, the film concludes with a whimper, not a bang. Or rather, the bang that is the massacre—already muffled, since it's inaudible—is followed by a series of whimpers: the dancing lesson, the girlfriend's name, the *tristezza* offered in the song's title, somehow both tragically and comically inadequate to the spectacle of torture that viewers have just been made to witness. Inconsequence wins out over torture and killing, as if, despite these punishments, or perhaps because of them, the divertissement must go on.³⁷

Concluding with this non sequitur, with this triviality after torture, Pasolini would appear to offer anything but the legibility that his "Abiura" had promised. Indeed, *Salò* refuses in the

end to grant viewers satisfaction in the form of significance; it withholds the meaning that Barthes makes central to the regime of the readerly. Still the film's final suspension of the legible—unlike, say, *Petrolio*'s—follows ongoing traffic with legibility's rules and regulations. A far cry from *Petrolio*'s acts of demolition, its frontal attacks on the norms of storytelling, *Salò*'s approach is instead in keeping with Sade's procedure as theorized by Klossowski, who claims that the Sadean text stages “the irruption of nonlanguage in language,” or, to rephrase, the irruption of the illegible in and only in the medium of the legible. *Sade My Neighbor* also calls this process “the foreclosure of language by itself” (42), and the figure of foreclosure makes it clear that language, in Sade, is not finally or fully broken apart (as the earlier “irruption” might at first suggest), but rather continually repaired. For Klossowski, that is, Sade's language is no sooner opened than it is closed up again, recontained, reintegrated; this language is reinstated paradoxically in and through its breakage:³⁸ “the logically structured language with which Sade expresses himself becomes for him the terrain of outrage, as it is the terrain of norms” (40). And it is crucial that for Klossowski Sade's terrain remains that of norms as well as outrage, even while his texts heap crime upon crime. Sade thus “never transgresses [the] laws [of language] except in the gesture whereby he reproduces them *in their transgression*” (40; emphasis in original).

Returning once again to the “Abiura”'s final turn to *Salò* makes it possible to recognize in Klossowski's “conventional form of communication” the mode of legibility that Pasolini thought had become “greater” with time. For the context of legibility in which *Salò* sought to intervene was indeed, for Pasolini, one in which all transgressions served in the end to reproduce the laws that they would have violated. Such is the effect of what Pasolini repeatedly names repressive or false tolerance, which he characterizes as the recontainment of every effort to that venture outside norms, and the automatic conversion of disobedience into its opposite, as in the poet's remorseful address to the younger generation: “obbedisti disobbedendo!” [you obeyed disobeying!].³⁹ This “false tolerance” was, then, a form of foreclosure.

But according to Klossowski, “‘Foreclosure’ means that something remains outside” (41). Thus dialectically the very negation of the outside becomes an affirmation of its continued existence. Indeed, there would be no need to foreclose that which did not threaten from without—in Sade's case, “the act to be done,” Klossowski writes (41); in Pasolini's, past and lost forms of life. “Something remains outside” in *Salò* as well, then, but this something cannot be accessed directly, as it still could in the *Trilogia*, as the “Abiura” insists. Any belief in such direct access implies a denial of foreclosure's extent. Instead the outside in Pasolini's film, as in Klossowski's text, can only be “produced within thought,” that is within foreclosure (42). Another name for this outside might be: illegibility. And I am suggesting that legibility, in the “Abiura” as it sets the stage for *Salò*, is another name for foreclosure.

It matters, therefore, that *Salò* inserts itself at the outset into a textual, rather than a filmic, conversation: the film opens as though it were a book, but it opens backwardly as though it were a scholarly monograph on Sade about to end. Posing as studious or enjoining viewers to become studious, Pasolini shows his papers to the source-police preemptively, in advance rather than at the conclusion of his film *cum* study. I am referring to the “Bibliografia essenziale” again, the text appended onto *Salò*'s credit sequence, but as something other than an afterthought. Listing five philosophical works including *Sade My Neighbor*, the film thus seems to say, seductively or forbiddingly, or both: “Read me.” Or perhaps, more tauntingly: “Read me, if you're up to it, if

you can.” Or, yet again, more specifically: “Read me as part of a heady and ongoing, if not an infinite, conversation. Read me alongside Barthes, Blanchot, de Beauvoir, Klossowski, and Sollers.”⁴⁰ In any case, it’s clear that by means of the bibliography *Salò* offers itself up as one more text to be read—as a film that arises from an engagement with texts and that perhaps even aspires to the condition of text, the condition of legibility.

How, then, should we read *Salò*’s “Read me”? This injunction might at first look merely pedantic or pretentious. But the bibliography constitutes a “gesto unico” [unique gesture] (*PC* 2042), a move “more radical,” in the eyes of one astute online reviewer, than *Salò*’s showing “extremes of violence.”⁴¹ Assigning required reading, the bibliography hails the viewer as student and thus discloses the film’s pedagogical nature from the first. It does so deceptively, however. For, again, the bibliography’s command is also a misdirection. Like the schemas that Joyce put in place ostensibly to help readers to make sense of *Ulysses* but in that very sense-making miss the point of episodes like “Oxen of the Sun,” *Salò*’s bibliography constitutes an integral part of the film’s pedagogy, but one that only gets viewers so far, or leads them astray. The “essential” text at the end of the opening credits all but promises definitive insight into the film’s meaning. But any viewer docile—or dumb—enough to follow the bibliography’s leads eventually realizes that the somewhat sadistic joke is on him.⁴² For no definitive insight is forthcoming. No amount of tarrying with the thinkers listed sheds lasting light on the film’s enigmatic ending, for instance. There are moments of lucidity, moments when these texts really do help the viewer-turned-reader to appreciate the stakes of *Salò*, as in the passage in Klossowski that I have just considered. In the main, though, the works that the film assigns under the heading “essential” relate obliquely if at all to the film itself; so many distractions, they place obstacles in the way of, rather than aiding, understanding.

Yet the viewer learns startlingly midway through the film that Pasolini’s sadists have *read their Klossowski*. The Bishop drops the philosopher’s name, identifying the source of a phrase the Duke has quoted, then a guard exclaims, “Evviva, evviva” (*PC* 2042). The cheers are for someone else, just appearing onscreen but still the sequence of lines is telling; the cheers might as well have been for Klossowski. This moment confirms that *Salò* actively interprets, rather than merely illustrating, the postwar French reception of Sade.⁴³ *Salò* repositions this reception in time, backdating texts like Klossowski’s so that they become diegetically available—recognizable in the form of sound bites, even—*during* the war. Such texts thus become immanent to the world that produces the violence pictured in the film, and, as Kris Ravetto has emphasized, this immanence entails a loss of epistemological privilege. According to the logic of *Salò*, that is, Klossowski’s study cannot lay claim to a perspective outside, or special purchase on, the Sadean, Salonian world to which it is shown to be immanent. Nor can *Sade My Neighbor* pose a real threat to the old regimes whose persistence *Salò* stages. On the contrary, the leaders of these regimes *eat Klossowski up*, learn him by heart; quoted knowingly by the libertines, *Sade My Neighbor* is shown to be nothing if not digestible, repeatable. Structured by the “foreclosure” that it diagnoses, Klossowski’s text can indicate but not figure what “remains outside” (41); *Sade My Neighbor* remains limited by the legible.

Thus the texts that *Salò*’s bibliography seems to endorse the film proceeds to undermine, or at least to render continuous with the libertine world pictured. If the bibliography makes the film appear to say, “Read me,” then the film as ultimately issues a different set of instructions. “Read me with caution,” it says, or, perhaps, “Read me the way I teach you to read these

philosophical texts, as immanent to the world that I am showing and as performing what I set out to describe.” But the film does not stop with such warnings, such cautionary instructions *for* legibility; it also, more ambitiously sets out the mark the limits *of* legibility. For it is crucially by means of the image—the film image that, in *Salò* unlike anywhere else in Pasolini’s cinema, becomes both icy and incandescent, both polished and painstaking—that *Salò* interrupts and exceeds the legible, thus doing what the texts in the bibliography cannot do either on their own or collectively.⁴⁴ It is by means of the image, finally, that the film delivers an imperative that is not to read.

Rending *Salò*

The language of exceeding that I have just introduced may seem to smuggle in a progressive schema (whereby *y* exceeds and in exceeding outgrows *x*), and thus implicitly to renege on this dissertation’s claims for the counter-progressive. But since, in psychoanalysis and art history alike, the imaginary *precedes* the symbolic or linguistic, what looks like progress here is, in fact, a form of regression: from word to image (or from *y* to *x*).⁴⁵ But this regression should, like all of the other backward movements discussed in this chapter, be understood not as a full and final leaving behind (of *y*). As the preceding section argued, the legible in *Salò* is indeed “essential,” indispensable. The moment of reading, like the regime of readerliness that it registers, cannot be bypassed, but rather must be traversed. This is, in fact, one of the “Abiura”’s lessons, borne out in *Salò*. Texts—Sade’s novel, the French philosophers’ treatises, the libertines’ *Regolamenti*—make the film as rite imaginable. But they do not suffice to make *Salò*’s images efficacious.

In his discussion of “The Image as Rend and the Death of God Incarnate”—more, I would argue, than in his work on Pasolini—Georges Didi-Huberman elaborates a theory that can help us to account for the visual specificity of *Salò*, for the “efficacy” of its images (161 *et passim*). He begins by resisting the conflation of visibility and legibility that he takes to be the error of art history in the iconographic tradition. To counter this conflation, or “closure” (3), Didi-Huberman proposes not openness—defined, say, as an expansion or rearrangement of the legible to make room for the visible—but rather a more radical exposure to the wounding or “rending” power of the image: a power that troubles the claims of legibility at their foundations. Throughout his discussion, Didi-Huberman draws on and explicates Freud’s understanding of the symptom, which, for him, “*pulverizes the identification of symbols* in order to disperse them” and thus “*requires that the symbolized be thought with its disappearance*, with its being torn to pieces, with its incessantly repeated rending” (180-181, emphases in original). It is not enough, in other words, for Didi-Huberman, to attend to what is knowable and legible in images, to what in them is susceptible of logical and linguistic translation, of symbolization. To do this alone is to ignore the place or procedure that Didi-Huberman calls “rending.” The vaguely glamorizing language of dispersal, disappearance, pulverization, and incessant tearing in Didi-Huberman’s account might seem to bespeak an obscurantist fetishization of the unknown and unknowable. But Didi-Huberman in fact sees himself as continuing the Freudian tradition, in which the symptom’s disruption of “the identification of symbols” stimulates, rather than blocking, the work of interpretation and thus the pursuit of knowledge.⁴⁶

Still, according to Didi-Huberman, “the world of images has never been constituted to the sole end of behaving properly to facilitate the self-constitution of a history or a knowledge.” On the contrary, “Quite a few images ... behave like the enigma in Freud’s discussion of the work of figurability” (183), a work paradoxically enabled by an inability “or rend”:

So we understand that the incapacity or rend functions as the very motor of something that will be between a desire and a constraint—the constraining desire to figure. To figure despite everything, thus to force, thus to rend. And in this constraining movement, *the rend opens the figure*, in all of this verb’s many senses. It becomes something like the very principle and energy—incited by the effect of the rending, namely the absence—of the work of figurability. (153-154; emphasis in original)

“To figure despite everything, thus to force, thus to rend”: it is easy to miss the circularity of this formulation, which I repeat here because of its key terms’ surprising applicability to *Salò*. (For indeed, Pasolini’s final work of figuration, “despite everything” a film about the past that the “Abiura” had renounced, is forced in more ways than one: it belabors its points, and, as I will show, it traffics in the compulsion that it everywhere thematizes. Finally, *Salò* “rends” in that it leads inexorably to the tearing of flesh in the courtyard, and, non sequiturs notwithstanding, to the ruin that is the end of the victims’ world.) “To figure despite [the rend], thus to force, thus to rend”: rewritten to bring out its circularity, Didi-Huberman’s the sentence has the advantage of revealing the *homeopathic* nature of the process that he traces. If the rend becomes “the very principle and energy” of “the effect of ... rending,” in other words, then rending becomes the cure for rending, in a way that recalls De Martino’s *tarantate*, who cannot be cured of their first bites’ returned symptoms without undergoing the experience of *rimorso*—that is, without being bitten again. There is not, therefore, in Didi-Huberman’s account, a repair that follows rending; instead, more rending is the only form that such repair can be imagined to take.

It is not easy, of course, to imagine rending taking any form at all, or becoming any kind of figure, given that the rend, which Didi-Huberman makes his governing figure, would seem by definition to unmake rather than make, to disfigure rather than figure. Yet Didi-Huberman undertakes precisely to think figuration and disfiguration together, to recognize the latter as one mode of the former, in images as well as in the dream-work. To this end, Didi-Huberman turns to images that historically “laid claim to cult status” through a set of “exceptional” procedures (188). These procedures made imitation serve the ends of incarnation rather than mere representation; they effected what Didi-Huberman calls a “symptomization” of visual art’s celebrated capacity for imitation, such that the image did not merely redouble the world (in a process whose secularizing implications the canonical art historical narrative underscores), but instead became an extension of “the flesh of the divine Word”:

Saint Francis of Assisi *imitated* Christ, not through the appearance of his body, but through the symptomatic disfiguration that his body agreed to receive or to incorporate. Our hypothesis, in its most extreme form, would consist quite simply in presupposing that Christian visual art sought *also* to imitate the body of Christ in the same terms that a given saint might have: in other words by imitating,

beyond the *appearances* of the body, the *process* or ‘virtue’ of opening effected once and for all in the flesh of the divine Word. (186; emphases in original)

This is not to say, however, that paintings somehow receive—or rather give themselves—the stigmata. In the counter-tradition that Didi-Huberman considers, “opening” also takes place in less literal ways—by means of gestures of various kinds, processes marked *as* processes by those undertaking them. Thus Fra Angelico “reenacts” “a *gesture of unction*” when he splashes paint onto a wall, punctuating figurative paintings with non-figurative passages (202-203; emphasis in original). And thus Donatello learns from the makers of *bóti*, or death masks for the still-living Florentine nobility, that sculpture is a matter of casting as much as of truth to life—of process, in the language of the passage that I have just quoted, as much as of appearance (e.g. 226). Thus, in a final and especially vivid vernacular example, the maker of a painting honoring St. Veronica sets aside his brush, preferring to render the saint’s cloth *with cloth* rather than realistically.

Didi-Huberman makes it clear that these processes, too, like the setting to work of the *rend* in dreams, are homeopathic in his characterization of these images’ “vocation” (186): “*to carry death* within them, to proceed to something like a perpetual ‘putting to death’—a sacrifice, then—to the end of managing religiously the common desire for the death of death” (220; emphasis in original). According to Didi-Huberman, “the death of death” is what canonical art history, too, hopes to effect with its parade of victorious and secularizing imitators of life, and with its obliging images that do not confound what we can narrate and know. By contrast, carrying death within it, “The Image as *Rend*” can be said—contradictorily, as Didi-Huberman acknowledges—to keep death alive precisely in and through the “putting to death” that is the work of the image.

I have noted that, like this kind of image, *Salò* “laid claim to cult status,” that it was “conceived as a rite.”⁴⁷ Apart from this connection, though, Didi-Huberman’s archive, centering as it does on Italian Renaissance painting, may at first seem remote from and altogether unrelated to the visual vocabulary of *Salò*. But Pasolini’s long-term love affair with the Italian old masters is well documented: he impersonated Giotto in his *Decameron*, having cited Masaccio as a key influence early in his career, and having gone on to pay visual tribute to Mantegna (famously, in *Mamma Roma* [1962]), Pontormo (in *La ricotta* [1963]), and Piero della Francesca (in *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* [1964]), among others.⁴⁸ It’s not at all clear that *Salò* discontinues this love affair, even if critics have emphasized that here *mise en scène* takes the place of such diegetic and compositional acts of homage.⁴⁹ Consider, too, Pasolini’s suggestion that *Salò* was “una specie di *sacra rappresentazione*” [a sort of *sacra rappresentazione*] (*PC* 2066). Crucially, this suggestion points backward in time: to a time before fascism, before Marx, whose understanding of commodification the director invokes in the same interview (*PC* 2065), and before Sade, whose novel he adapts. The *sacra rappresentazione* points to a theatrical tradition, combining lay and liturgical elements, traceable to fifteenth-century Tuscany. It positions us, in other words, precisely in the Florence of Fra Angelico, that birthplace of perspectival vision where, dialectically, Didi-Huberman locates resources for thinking the image otherwise.⁵⁰

“Here fascination becomes exasperated, reverses itself,” Didi-Huberman writes (228). Indeed. *Salò* relies on, rather than resisting, the fascination of Fascism, which Susan Sontag famously denounced,⁵¹ and it does so in order that this fascination might reverse itself, if only provisionally, and never finally. But according to the logic of the film, such a reversal cannot be

effected by disavowal—or in acts of mere denunciation. It is not enough either to deny or to expose, Sontag-like, the erotic afterlife of sometime sovereigns. If this had been enough, in Pasolini's view, then he would not have felt compelled to resurrect Silling or reenact fascist rites. The reversal of fascination—rapt attention's giving way to something else—required instead a prolonged, painful return to the place that the nation wanted to leave behind. But this is old news by now in the context of this chapter's argument. It is the sacredness of this place—the place not left behind, which improbably becomes the site of Pasolini's *sacra rappresentazione*—that remains to be defined.

With this task in particular, Didi-Huberman can help. For two scenes in *Salò* refer back to the tradition considered in “The Image as Rend.” Among the countless paintings hung throughout in the Salonian villains' villa—most of these paintings Futurist, Cubist, or otherwise obviously modernist—one is given pride of place, and it is significantly *not* a work like the others. The image is not, that is, the work aligned with any late modern avant-garde, but rather one by an early modern artist whom Francesco Galluzzi identifies as a mediocre imitator of Raphael's *Madonna di Foligno*.⁵² In the villa's main hall, where the libertines lay their scene when what Sade calls “school” is in session, there is a small recessed altar, atop which sits a crude painting of a haloed Madonna and her Child, framed by columns and an arch, itself flanked by a pair of *putti*. This painting is visible in the background only once during the first part of the inaugural “Circle of Manias,” presided over by Signora Vaccari (who was, incidentally, born in a school and whose first story concerns one Professor Gentile). The *narratrice* has been regaling the congregation with an account of her very first john's “*ansia religiosa*” [religious fervor] (*PC* 2039). A pupil has already disappointed the Bishop, who has therefore failed to get off. Now another victim masturbates the President ineptly, seeing which Signora Vaccari breaks off her story, declaring that something must be done. Prompted by this declaration or by something else, a young curly-haired girl, shown frontally at first, looking dazed, suddenly runs to the nearest window and tries to jump out. But guards stop her, and we see her struggling as they carry her away—but only for several seconds, since it is mealtime, and after a dissolve the struggle is succeeded by the first of several banquet scenes.



Our Lady of Salò (1)



Our Lady of Salò (2)

Lunch is eventful. Victims working as waitresses are (in the film's language) sodomized, as is the eager and ever idiotic Durcet. The Duke and the President philosophize, and one of the *narratrici* can be heard to reminisce about having once been a pig (*PC* 2039). Everyone sings a partisan song out of nowhere, after which a mannequin is brought in and the masturbation lesson promised by Signora Vaccari is finally given, to the delight of libertines, storytellers, and soldiers alike. At this point the viewer has all but forgotten about the escape, or suicide, attempt that has immediately preceded the meal. But the film provides an aggressive reminder, enacting the return of the diegetic "bad past." Back in the main hall, the whole group is shown: libertines and storytellers, victims and soldiers, all gathered again silently around the altar, which now has its wings closed. After the Duke gives a sign, these wings, which are painted to look like curtains, open to reveal the would-be escapee, now dead. Someone gasps, "O Dio" [O God].⁵³ Two later shots show that the girl's throat has been cut, and though other victims continue to stare, Signora Vaccari resumes her storytelling after Durcet finishes another joke. Just like that, the Madonna has become part of the backdrop again—only more prominently, since the *narratrice* positions herself immediately before the painting, and then steps aside to reveal the girl flat on her back who has become this painting's extension (with the Madonna's foreshortened foot seeming to share the girl's space, and the child in the painting seeming to look down at her), or its refutation (since the villa is already an inferno, and it is not clear that this godforsaken victim will be saved).



Our Lady of Salò (3), Before the Unveiling



Our Lady of Salò (4), After the Unveiling



The Victim



Our Lady of Salò (4), "Un altro racconto"



Our Lady of Salò (5), "Un altro racconto"

There are several ways to understand the girl's placement before the altar and painting; even if we limit ourselves to diegetic explanations, it is possible to imagine a range of reasons for the girl's placement before the altar. Having been killed in an off-screen execution, the victim is unveiled—theatrically, with the wings of the altarpiece like curtains parting—perhaps to make her fate that much more frightening, her punishment that much more exemplary. Her dead body, dramatically revealed, would thus teach the other pupils a lesson in conduct, following the lesson in sexual technique that has just ended. Alternatively, we might regard this as just one among many instances of punishment's aestheticization in the film, a foretaste of the exquisite tortures to be staged in the courtyard scene. After all, it has long since been clear that all the victims are headed for the same place; they are, the Duke announces when they arrive at the villa, in a phrase lifted directly from Sade, “già morti” [already dead] (*PC* 2036), and this means it hardly matters whether this or that punishment given to this or that one of them is more or less frightening or exemplary. The wooden curtains part, by this second account, so that the libertines may better appreciate, and make their victims appreciate, their own tableau-staging work.

After the girl's unveiling, she remains on the scene, seeming to protrude from—or, again, to give the lie to—the image above her. And here, too, it is possible to arrive at diegetic explanations for her placement before the image: the libertines might want to capitalize, say, on the religious nature of the painting, to convert its cult value to *shock* value, again the better to frighten the *fanciulli*. But here an extra-diegetic considerations prove more compelling. For the Madonna marks one place—and, I would argue, the privileged place—where *Salò* reflects on the at times malignant power of images, and on its own status as image.⁵⁴ I do not mean to suggest that the scene veritably assigns agency to the painting, or hints that the Madonna in the image *caused* the girl to be killed, as if with an evil eye. The victim has her back to the painting before she tries to flee, which means that it cannot be seeing the Madonna head-on that inspires her attempted escape. But the fact remains that the painting watches over her abortive flight. Shown only fleetingly for the first time when this flight begins, the image then returns—and stays—to watch over the girl's dead body, even while this dead body disappears then reappears from view, is alternately covered and uncovered by Signora Vaccari's dress. Now you see her; now you don't: the victim's intermittent visibility instantiates the return of the bad past that *Salò* stages. For the viewer, each reappearance thus becomes a brief experience of what De Martino calls *ri-morso*: a re-bite.

But the single, static image of the Madonna presides over these reappearances. The painting's sustained presence onscreen thus contrasts with the dead girl's disappearances and returns. Likewise do the painting's persistence and literal centrality in the scenes both before and after lunch contrast with the girl's changed state: the Madonna watches over, without seeming to protect, the girl both while she is alive and after she's dead. The “immobility” of this image, like that of the *Salò* thus draws attention to the painted image, makes it critical in Didi-Huberman's sense. Indeed, although Pasolini had nothing like the art historian's archive and erudition available to him, these scenes prove that *Salò* does know something about the capacities of the images that the art historian calls critical: capacities, again, “to carry death within them, to proceed to something like a perpetual ‘putting to death’—a sacrifice, then—to the end of managing religiously the common desire for the death of death” (220; emphasis in original).

To be clear, the painting of the Madonna carries death within it not just because of the stillness that it introduces, *punctum*-like, into the flow of *Salò*'s moving pictures,⁵⁵ and not just

because all such images of the infant Christ also hint at his mortality.⁵⁶ This painting also and more pointedly bears death because it first announces, and then commemorates, a sacrifice: the young girl's. "La meglio gioventù, la va sotto terra" [The best of youth goes underground], sing those assembled in the banquet hall, minutes before the victim's body is disclosed, and their rendition of song, with its urgent present tense, might more or less coincide with the slitting of the girl's throat off-screen (*PC* 2040). By the time the girl is back *onscreen*, she has been immobilized and entered into a tableau. She has become a *memento mori*, and the orgy has become the wake it already implicitly was, since most of those assembled there were, again, "already dead" when it began (*PC* 2036). The victim thus belongs to the image before which her body is arranged, and it is by means of her arrangement that the film initiates the putting to death that is its work. Or rather, more precisely, it is by means of the girl's becoming-tableau that the film links its own putting-to-death with the tradition of critical images.

To read *Salò*'s engagement with art history as strictly, or even chiefly, a critique of avant-garde aesthetics—that is, as the critique that it *also* is—is to miss this crucial engagement with the tradition of an earlier modernity.⁵⁷ Likewise to read the film as a record of the making of "bare life" before the letter is to ignore the extent of its aesthetic and cultic self-consciousness. For, though brief, the girl's life is not bare in Agamben's sense. Whereas the latter's *homo sacer* can be "killed but not sacrificed,"⁵⁸ *Salò* takes pains to render this killing sacrificial: with the hymnal rendition of the partisan song, and even more so with the Christological comparison implied by the girl's placement at the foot of the altar.⁵⁹

If this still seems to be a far cry from the Fra Angelico whose paint-splattering becomes, according to Didi-Huberman, a "*gesture of unction*" that is also a spilling of blood, and who favors "reenactment" over representation, then it may help to return to the first scenes of *Salò*. These scenes show first the four friends agreeing to the pact and *regolamenti* that bind them, then the steps that they take to recruit personnel for the realization of their plan. Pasolini's critics have emphasized the ruthlessness of this recruitment process. They have, however, paid much less attention to the ways in which, in these opening sequences, the film stages—indeed, reenacts—its own making. For the libertines' selection of the *fanciulli* is also the director's presiding over a casting call. Following the finalizing of the contract *cum* pact, there are the non-professional actors on whom Pasolini relied, in keeping with neorealist tradition. And there are also the stringent requirements of the aesthetically exacting Duke, who takes Signora Maggi to task for procuring and proposing a girl who, though very beautiful, has damaged teeth (*PC* 2035). In these scenes, then, the viewer is made to participate in a version of the process by which the film itself came to be produced. This version is parodic, to be sure, but no less crucial or ritual, I am suggesting, for all that.⁶⁰ These early moments in "Antinferno" slyly signal—and convey more than most of the statements that he made to interviewers manage to—Pasolini's awareness of his own complicity, of his film's trafficking in the coercion that it represents. In requiring that the spectator undergo again the process of his film's production, and experience this process as a repetition of the dying days of a regime ostensibly long gone, these scenes suggest that *Salò* (1943-1945) was already *Salò* (1975)—and more disturbingly still, that *Salò* is still *Salò*.

But, as I have worked to show, in the film the Fascist regime's last redoubt (neither "last" nor really long gone, it turns out) also becomes a repository for the kinds of images whose history begins long before that of Mussolini's puppet state. *Salò* thus insists that the viewer turn back yet

again, giving into a fascination that is not with Fascism alone—and that is still less only with what came “after” the regime whose end the director kept questioning throughout the “miracle” that was the Italian post-war economic boom. Whether we name “what came after” neo-fascism, neo-capitalism, consumerism, commodification, or repressive tolerance, as did Pasolini; or, with recent critics, call it neo-conservatism, neoliberalism, multiculturalism, biopolitics, bare life, or the twilight of paternity, we miss the preceding tradition that *Salò* addresses. Without conflating this tradition with the Fascist one,⁶¹ the film insists that they be thought—and seen—together, as the sources of a fascination still to be reversed. If the malignancy this fascination had yet to be exhausted, *Salò* sought to convert this malignancy into its own power to repair by rending.⁶²

All That Behind

Closely related to *Salò*'s backward fascination with fascism is the film's blatant but often-denied erotics: blatant because central in so many scenes, but denied first and perhaps most influentially by the director himself, who claimed preemptively that sex in *Salò* was nothing but a “metafora del potere” [metaphor for power] (*PC* 2063).⁶³ Claims like these set the stage for the ostensibly politicizing but effectively pacifying readings of the film that have predominated in its recent critical reception. Such readings forget what *Salò*'s first viewers were quick and correct to notice: that Pasolini everywhere “sodomiticamente” [sodomitically] evinces a fixation on sex (*PC* 2036), in particular in more regressive forms that criticism has wanted to leave behind. And this fascination gives the lie to the director's allegorizing cover story. I do not mean to claim that *Salò* is simply pornographic. I do, however, want to counter what I take to be a critical consensus that the film *couldn't be less so*. Alessia Ricciardi distills this consensus when she updates Pasolini's cover story as follows:

Sexual acts in *Salò* are brutal assaults involving no foreplay and no undressing, aimed at the humiliation of naked, defenseless, and otherwise inert bodies, which look almost as though they are waiting for the gas chamber. ... The victims for the most part are hard to recognize from one scene to the next, because of the director's explicit aim of avoiding any sentimental or erotic identification by viewers with the prisoners, which would have rendered the film unendurable or suspect. The camera thus generally eschews closeups [*sic*] of the characters in favor of long and medium shots. ... Neither sadism nor masochism are conduits to pleasure in *Salò*. One might say of Pasolini's masterpiece what Stephen Eisenman says about the photos taken at Abu Ghraib, that “notwithstanding the superficial S/M scenarios there is no erotic delectation or titillation in the pictures from Abu Ghraib, nothing sexy about them.”⁶⁴

But there *is*, alas, something sexy about *Salò*, even if the film seeks to do much more than arouse. This is also to say that the film *is* “suspect,” and so are we. This is Pasolini's point in *Salò*, but the point has been dulled and domesticated by progressive pieties. These seek to protect us both from the “bad past” with which we're faced in the film, and with the fact of our fascination, which *Salò* makes palpable. Liberal aversion leads critics to close their eyes before

the film, to ignore the shots—and even the entire scenes—that would transfix and thus compel us to register the film’s interpellation bodily.

It’s true that there is precious little masochism on display in what pass for “S/M scenarios” in the film. It does not follow, though, that *Salò* comprehensively bars *viewers* from enjoying the victims’ plight. For the lives in the villa, *pace* Ricciardi, are far from bare. In the film’s first part, “Antinferno”—whose scenes include significant amounts of undressing—victims’ faces and bodies are expressly remarked on as beautiful and healthy rather than emaciated as “gas chambers” would imply. These victims’ sexual appetites remain intact as well: the abduction and increasing abjection of the *fanciulli* do not prevent them from getting together in configurations of various kinds. Their coupling is cut short, to be sure: finding a blonde boy in bed with their “Abyssinian maid,” the libertines summarily execute both of them. (Earlier, the maid and the boy memorably cruise each other. And although it *can* be hard to recognize *Salò*’s victims from one scene to the next, there is no forgetting these two, and they are by no means the only unforgettable ones.) But it matters that the humiliations to which they are subjected do not fully or finally kill the victims’ libidos. It matters, as well, that *Salò* presents these boys and girls as repeatedly engaged in forms of erotic play, however abortive. For this play—by which those who have been pronounced “already dead” show signs of life (*PC* 2036)—proves that the victims are not in fact as “inert” as progressive, desexualizing readings of *Salò* would claim.

One set of sex acts in particular warrants close scrutiny, not least because it violates the rule—indeed, the restraining order—that Ricciardi sees as operative in the film, whereby such acts become so many “brutal assaults involving no foreplay” and “aimed at the humiliation of ... inert bodies.” Admittedly, the acts in question are exceptional in that they pair a libertine not with a victim, but rather with one of the men whom Sade calls “fuckers,” and whom Pasolini makes into soldiers, torturers, and overall executive assistants. In the second of the film’s two wedding scenes, one fairly good-looking “fucker” helps assiduously. Guido is his name, and he is on hand to help the Bishop to officiate, in what becomes a moment of retrospectively self-referential play—and deadly serious acknowledgment of complicity—on the director’s part. For like someone out of the rituals in *Edipo re* (1967)—in fact, like the priest in that film played by Pasolini himself—the Bishop wears a highly elaborate headpiece. Rams’ horns adorn his shoulders, and he chants in what sounds like a made-up language, while the other libertines march in, each beaming, arm in arm with a miserable-looking male victim. *Salò* is thus evidently a province in which gay marriage has been legalized.

Here foreplay takes the form of what gay male pornography names “ass play.” The camera frames—in close-up, no less—the Bishop’s briefs covered by the gauzy red gown that he wears in his capacity as pagan priest, while, having approached the Bishop from behind, Guido freely fondles his boss’s ass. Then there is a quick cut. The film has thus far trained viewers to expect nothing to follow from fondling in general, for it has never allowed anything resembling a “sex scene” to unfold. Hand job, instead, has been heaped upon hand job, and one person followed by another has taken it, as we say, up the ass—but always interruptively. The cut that concludes *Salò*’s second wedding startles, however, not by introducing other, “inert” bodies onto the screen, but by opening onto coupling that is conventional if *contra natura*, in what is significantly “the only scene in which the ‘private lives’ of the individual libertines [are] adumbrated.”⁶⁵ These private lives, as it happens, are hot and heavy, at least on this particular wedding night. Here is Gary Indiana’s rendering of the scene, helpful in that it stays close to the

panting intensity and the quickened pace of this moment in *Salò*: “Cut to: the Bishop’s bedroom, the Bishop’s bed, in the dark, the Bishop’s fucker fucking him very energetically ... In a frenzy of fucking the hitched bodies roll off the bed, where they continue fucking on the carpet. Someone comes. They stand. Kiss passionately” (82-83). After the cut, the camera is nearer to the action, as it was just before, when the sex was just getting started. First, the Bishop and his fucker are framed in close-up, from the side; then, as they roll to the left, they’re framed from behind and farther back. The sheets and blanket fall away to reveal more of the fucker, his admirable ass; then climax, we’re close to them again, prompted to admire the flesh on the fucker’s back. Together with the striptease that, in Pasolini’s hands, this “frenzy of fucking” soon enough becomes (the sheets and blanket fall away to good, or evil, effect), this back and forth—the camera’s carefully planned dance, its oscillation between nearness and medium distance—suffice to indicate that, far from being “stigmatised,” as Ricciardi claims, voyeurism on the viewer’s part is encouraged, even enforced.



Officiating



Getting the Idea



Going for It



Close Up



Wedding Night (1)



Wedding Night (2)



Wedding Night (3)



Wedding Night (4)

In thus unexpectedly following up on the fond ass-fondling that the camera has shown seconds before, Pasolini also revisits and furthers his own past projects. For the anomalous sex scene between Guido and the Bishop not only counters the interruptions to various instances of coitus in *Salò*. This scene also undoes the elisions and obstructions that mark the approaches to “sodomy” elsewhere in his oeuvre—in *Teorema*, for instance, or the later *I racconti di Canterbury*. Whereas the director’s other films leave us to imagine or let us glimpse gay male sex only hesitantly, in images that are all “brief, blurry,” and relatively “unrewarding,”⁶⁶ *Salò* discloses fully, insisting on the sight of sodomy, followed but not for all that domesticated by the post-coital kissing and veritably tender talk that come after “someone comes.” This talk both bespeaks consent and projects willingness well into the future: “Lei non ha che da chiedere” [You only have to ask], Guido says, politely, to the Bishop; and then, looking down, “Io e l’amico siamo sempre pronti” [My friend and I are always ready] (*PC* 2057). Since in *Salò* the word “amico” is otherwise reserved for the libertines, who use it to refer to each other, his dick becomes dignified indeed.

Thus *Salò* is, in *Salò*, not solely a place of humiliation. The moment of mutual satisfaction in the midst of the “Circle of Blood”—and of consent in the midst of the film’s constant coercions—matters not because it renders the other sex acts shown any less diegetically demeaning, or casts any doubt on the cruelty of what Ricciardi calls the film’s “brutal assaults.” Instead the scene that I have been discussing matters because it prevents us from seeing *Salò*’s bodies as *altogether* “inert,” and instead allows us to recognize the film’s undeniable—if also, by Ricciardi’s standards, highly “suspect”—investment in our pleasure, laced thought this may be with discomfort and even disgust. If we look closely at and linger on the moments that Guido shares with the Bishop—rather than assume, in keeping with progressive pieties, that sex in the

film holds no intrinsic visual interest but simply allegorizes and anticipates—we begin to learn the lesson recessed in what at first looks like another “lateral divertissement” or a mere anomaly.⁶⁷ For in light of the foreplay, sex, and “normal love” shown here,⁶⁸ it becomes inconceivable that Pasolini *didn't* want his film to provide the “conduits to pleasure” that Ricciardi refuses to see. But these contribute to, rather than detracting from, the film’s pedagogic power. Absent the recognition that our pleasure compels—the recognition that we, too, become fixated by fascists and their “fuckers”—we would remain all but unimplicated, and the film would be endurable indeed. For we could honestly say: this coprophagy, that backward bludgeoning—this fascist sodomite, that libertine priest—have nothing to do with us. To take pleasure in scenes like the one that I have just described is, by contrast to feel one’s fascination as complicity. I am arguing that *Salò* sees this complicity through to the end.

But the validity of this commitment to “fixation,” to backwardness in both its political and its sexual forms, has proven difficult to see—and not only for critics like Ricciardi. On the contrary, Pasolini himself prepared the way for progressive and desexualizing readings of *Salò* with his assertion that bodies and sex in his film stood metaphorically for operations of power. This assertion seeks to make the film’s most repellent images palatable; it even effectively invites viewers to *look past* these images rather than at them, for these images, no longer efficacious on their own, become vehicles representing real-world tenors. The claim that sex in *Salò* is a “metaphor for power” installs allegorical distance there where the film itself insists on intimacy.⁶⁹

For another set of viewers, of course, this intimacy has been all too visible, and *Salò*’s sexualization has been impossible to ignore. But precisely these features have made the film reprehensible. Strikingly, even theorists of sexuality have therefore called on viewers to leave *Salò* behind, have assumed that its bad past *could* be left behind. For instance, in December 1975, shortly after *Salò*’s premiere, an interview with Michel Foucault appeared in the journal *Cinématographe*. In it the philosopher considered several just-released films—chief among them *Salò* and Liliana Cavani’s *Il portiere di notte* (1974)—that seemed to announce a cinematic and perhaps public renewal of fascination with fascism. Having bemoaned the poverty of imagination in these films (“Are we unable to think the intensity of the present except as the end of the world in a concentration camp?”), Foucault proceeded to object to the “sacralization” of Sade that he saw in *Salò*’s last scene in particular:

You know that I am not for Sade’s absolute sacralization. After all, I would be willing to admit that Sade formulated an eroticism proper to the disciplinary society: a regulated, anatomical, hierarchical society whose time is carefully distributed, its spaces partitioned, characterized by obedience and surveillance.

It’s time to leave all that behind, and Sade’s eroticism with it. We must invest with the body, with its elements, surfaces, volumes, and thicknesses, a nondisciplinary eroticism—that of a body in a volatile and diffused state, with its chance encounters and unplanned pleasures. It bothers me that in recent films certain elements are being used to resuscitate through the theme of Nazism an erotics of the disciplinary type. Perhaps it was Sade’s. Too bad for the literary

deification of Sade, too bad for Sade: he bores us. He's a disciplinarian, a sergeant of sex, an accountant of the ass and its equivalents.⁷⁰

Foucault would later complicate his own sequential model by looking to sovereignty's survival after its ostensible eclipse, its living-on in the era of discipline, and discipline's living-on into the age of governmentality.⁷¹ It is therefore ironic as well as poignant that he here insists with the assurance of being on the present's side: "It's time to leave all that behind." Against this insistence, *Salò* brings the bad old news of all that is *not* abandoned when eras are declared ended, and old erotic phases and fixations are thought to be, or ought to be, outgrown.⁷² Indeed, we might go farther and say that the film points up, before the fact, the wishfulness of Foucault's thinking here, the utopianism of his search for a "nondisciplinary eroticism." *Salò* thus lets us see the progressivism that implicitly underwrites theories of sex inspired by Foucault's call for reinvented, reinvested bodies and pleasures.

Leo Bersani, for instance, famously places complicity at the center of his account of gay male sexuality in essays like "Is the Rectum a Grave?"⁷³ This text takes pains to position its understanding of sex *against* the "pastoralizing impulse" that Bersani detects in his contemporaries' accounts (*IRG* 22)—accounts not of "the ass and its equivalents," but of sex's radical potential to establish communal solidarities. Seeking to correct what he takes to be the idealization operative in such accounts, Bersani offers instead a theory of gay male sex that sees it as *working through* the very real ruthlessness—the violence, that is—in which it traffics, in order to become a paradoxically "hygienic practice of nonviolence" (*IRG* 30). In this practice, rigorously pursued, being penetrated by the other becomes a form of "self-debasement" (*IRG* 27) or "self-dismissal" (*IRG* 30), in and through which gay men give up their entitlements as bearers of "proud subjectivity" (*IRG* 29), coming to practice instead a receptivity and a willingness to relinquish the self capable of cleansing this self of other-directed violent drives. Hence "hygienic." Masochism of a particular kind becomes an answer to sadistic urges; the care of the self through the arrangement of its "shattering" can, in time, stem this self's impingements on the world.

By taking insistent if intermittent pleasure in precisely such impingements—and offering no perspective whatsoever from which the shattering of the self in sex could be seen to lead to its salutary weakening—Pasolini's last film makes it possible to see that "pastoralization," or something like it, lingers in Bersani's quest for cleanliness. Bersani hopes that intimacy with and even careful contamination by male power can—by means of what he calls an "arduous representational discipline"—be made to yield a nonviolent and thus all but uncontaminated result (*IRG* 15). *Salò* offers instead contamination all the way down, since the film's intimacy with the libertines is not finally purgative, but rather repetitive and ineluctable. Imagining a "republic" whose ruling elite do anything but "*abdicate power*" when they take it up the ass (*IRG* 19; emphasis in original), *Salò* also addresses a reality in which disciplinarians are still at large, and in which the relinquishment of old attachments is always incomplete. For, as this dissertation has repeated, to relinquish is also to hand—and not merely to stand—down. One does not therefore get rid of such attachments or the forms of violence they entail by saying it's high time to leave them all behind.

This is not to suggest that we can do without the Foucauldian quest or those that follow from it, but rather to ask after this quest's unspoken investments and unseen complicities. Likewise, in

no sense does this chapter seek to recast Pasolini's *Salò* as a place where we should or would want to stay. But it does aim to cast some doubt on two related claims: first, the claim made with confidence by Pasolini's critics that no one ever *could* want to stay there; and second, the argument put forward by Foucault in an altogether sympathetic way, but an ultimately wishful one: that we no longer *have* to stay in the Sadean city or anyplace like it at all.

Schools of Abuse

This circuitous path through Foucault and Bersani thus leads, improbably, back to school. For *Salò*'s lesson was not that its viewers simply lived in the "bad past" represented by the film's Republic of *Salò*, but rather that they did not get to leave that past and place behind by deciding that, in keeping with progress, it was time to do so. It was not, in other words, for Pasolini, a question of simply conflating the past with the present; this past needed to be marked as past, emphatically, repeatedly. But pastness did not make for a matter of indifference, to borrow a phrase of De Martino's: "tarantism is not indifferent to us." Indeed, *Salò* is not indifferent to us, but to say this is not to say the film is ours, that it belongs to us. On the contrary, *Salò* teaches viewers what the *tarantate* taught the anthropologist: that the "cattivo passato che torna e rigurgita e opprime col suo rigurgito" [bad past that returns and overflows and oppresses with its overflowing] becomes more, not less, oppressive the more it is disavowed (13).

But there are ways of trying to manage the bad past's returns, even in such contexts of denial. The ways that De Martino finds involve ritual writhing and exorcism in the chapel of St. Paul, also known in Puglia as, of all things, "my Saint Paul of the spiders" (31).⁷⁴ For Pasolini, managing the fascist past's recalcitrant survival means *stage* managing it, turning it into a series of pageants punctuated by meals, marriage rites, and masturbation classes, all building toward a denouement in the form of a massacre. That the culminating massacre in *Salò* calls to memory certain scenes of martyrdom underscores that the film had been "conceived as a rite."⁷⁵ Reading the film and the "Abiura" alongside *La terra del rimorso*, however, helps us to see that this is a contradiction in terms, for a rite cannot, strictly speaking, be conceived, at least not if it is to be socially efficacious. Traditionally, "For ritual to function and operate it must first of all present itself and be perceived as legitimate, with stereotyped symbols serving precisely to show that the agent does not act in his own name and on his own authority, but in his capacity as a delegate. ... Ritual symbolism is," by this account, "not effective on its own but only in so far as it represents ... the delegation."⁷⁶ There was, of course, no such delegation in Pasolini's case; or rather, the director himself did the delegating. He appointed first some libertines (in the early "Antinferno"), then a high priest (in *Salò*'s second wedding) to take his place, but he did so without the ability to facilitate the transformation of movie-going into veritable or even virtual ritual practice. In this sense, there is a qualitative difference between the rituals observed by De Martino and those imagined by his younger admirer: whereas the *tarantate* studied by the anthropologist had long sought help in a communal context, even the most ardent among the filmgoers addressed by Pasolini attended a film "conceived as a rite" by its director alone. Still, for the duration of the film, filmgoers indeed witness and undergo rite after rite.

That the old school had long since set out to provide ritual forms for the past as it survived in the present is shown in Walter Ong's now-classic, not to say old-school, essay "Latin Language Study as Renaissance Puberty Rite." Ong argues that early modern Latin instruction

“involved a survival, or an echo, devious and vague but unmistakably real, of what anthropologists, treating more primitive peoples, call puberty rites”—where the very notion of cultural “survival” counters, if only subtly, the progressive taxonomy that categorizes some peoples as inherently “more primitive” than others.⁷⁷ Ong writes of the ritual practices in question, which “are essentially didactic”: “Over all these presides the belief that ... youths must be made by their preceptors to assimilate their lessons the hard way” (106). In the early modern European context, according to Ong—also the context of the “*sacra rappresentazione*” to which Pasolini refers—this “belief” took hold with particular force in grammar schools, for the process of vernacularization enabled these schools to become as “marginal” as the bush into which initiates on other continents might be sent. Latin’s death as a spoken language meant, in other words, that schools could seal themselves off—linguistically, but also ritually—from the world of living languages. Or, as Ong paraphrases his “basic conclusion”: “when Latin, in which learning was encoded, became by the time of the Renaissance a ‘dead’ language—a language which, however widely used, was divorced from family life—initiation into the language of learning became more than ever a *rite de passage*” (122).

I have suggested that *Salò* stages a rite that is not only one of passage, because of its reliance on a sacrificial logic, one familiar to viewers of Pasolini’s earlier films ranging from *Accattone* (1961) at least to *Medea* (1969). Ong’s terms are thus not immediately applicable to Pasolini’s last film. Still, they help to shed light on the double movement that this chapter has undertaken to describe: a movement backward that is also an approach and address to spectators as students of a certain kind, in a particular school of abuse.⁷⁸ For Ong, Latin’s becoming a thing of the past and removal from the home make its retrofitting as scholastic ritual possible. Likewise, Pasolini conceives his rite by looking backward, to a dying “fascism at bay,”⁷⁹ filtered through pointedly dated forms, including the sacrifice and *sacra rappresentazione*.

Meanwhile, *Salò* also belabors the pedagogical structure of its Sadean source to the last, and this leads surprisingly to what may, in fact, be a Latin class. At the end of the courtyard scene that concludes the film, Pasolini’s screenplay delivers this death sentence: “*tutti i ragazzi vengono seviziati e massacrati*” [*all the children are tortured and massacred*] (PC 2060). But then the short exchange that follows between two *ragazzi* gives the lie to the totalizing *tutti*, indicating that for at least some of the young people gathered in the villa, the Sadean proceedings have indeed represented a *rite de passage*. Again, one male libertine-in-training asks another, while they dance, as if to deny or cover the fact of their dancing: “Come si chiama la tua ragazza?” [What’s your girlfriend’s name?]. And the answer to this question, “Margherita,” is the film’s last word. Predictably, this word has been heard to refer to a range of sources and has opened onto various interpretations. Since the proper name, “Margherita” is also a common noun, the name of a flower, critics have seen it as a sign of commonness precisely. For some, this ordinariness makes *Salò*’s ending strangely hopeful, and the boys’ exchange “a small tsunami of tenderness” in the midst of brutal violence.⁸⁰ For others, the commonness of “Margherita” has seemed to be instead a banality that makes Pasolini’s message that much bleaker *because* it’s about life going on in the post-war period, as in Maggi’s account. Maggi writes that Maurizio, Claudio’s *compagno*, who is learning to dance when the film ends, “will marry the girlfriend he certainly has back home,” that is, Margherita, whose name, Maggi thinks, signifies “a memory, the mother, the family lair.” This boy, then, “will return to his family ... The two young guards

dancing together celebrate a new beginning. *Salò* ends with a beginning. We could call it ‘the birth of a nation’” (338).

This harrowing conclusion honors the urgency of Pasolini’s last film, while also sharing in the logic of his late polemics, which refused the distinction between pre- and post-war nations, claiming that the latter was indeed born from, and therefore still guilty of, the ravages of the fascist past, which wasn’t, therefore, even past. But, given that the film ends with the enigmatic image of the two boys dancing, in the last of *Salò*’s many rituals, it’s not at all clear that Maurizio “certainly has” Margherita “back home,” let alone that he “will marry” her, as Maggi suggests, “when the hell in *Salò* is over.” (*Is the hell over?*) It’s not clear, in other words, that the film gets ahead of itself in this way, or asks us to get ahead of it in order to learn its lesson.

“Margherita” may instead point in another backward direction: not to “the family lair,” but rather to Ong’s grammar school, which serves to “incorporate youth into the tribe rather than the family” (106). The name may thus extend rather than discontinue the instruction that *Salò* has all along administered; it may remain within the “special ‘marginal environment’” of the old old school in which nearly the whole film has unfolded and that it has worked painstakingly to recreate (106). Especially because the Latin of Orff’s *Carmina burana* has just sounded, before the final, instrumental “Son tanto triste,” “Margherita” echoes *margarita*, Latin for pearl, as in the “pearl salads” that, as Barbara Spackman notes, following Marx, late in the empire “the ancient Romans were given to eating ... during their orgies”;⁸¹ or as in the injunction, “neque mittatis margaritas vestras ante porcos ne forte conculcent eas pedibus suis et conversi dirumpant vos” [neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you] (Matthew 7:6). Giovanni Gentile, for his part, put the inverse injunction into the mouths of his critics: “Gli studi, dicono altri, oggi devono essere democratici! Come dire: *mittite margaritas ...*”⁸² [Studies, others say, today must be democratic! As if to say: cast your pearls ...]. So—democratically, after all, perhaps—Pasolini casts his pearl before us, having given that which is sacred to fascists.

Salò thus makes Sade’s “School for Libertinage” into a school whose pageants and paintings, whose brutal but transfixing corporal punishments, and finally whose last, “lateral divertissements”⁸³ give ritual form to the persistence and return of the past that Pasolini’s contemporaries and ours claim to have left behind: the “bad past,” both “individual and collective,” both sexual and national, that is denied and thus rendered formless by discourses of progress. These, with their rush to be rid of the old, would have us bypass the experience of *rimorso* by which alone, according to De Martino, we might be treated for first bites’ returned symptoms. In *tarantismo* and *Salò* alike, by contrast, such remorse is ineluctable. And it is as an impossible, remorseful ritual that yet aspires to the condition of an efficacious cure that *Salò* still operates most powerfully. “Ci riguarda da vicino” indeed, in De Martino’s words (273)—it concerns us intimately, and looks at us up close—because the land of regret remains a place that we would abandon, that we pretend to have left behind. This place’s claim on us is what *Salò* would have us learn the hard way.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Italian are my own.

¹ Gideon Bachmann, “Pasolini on de Sade: An Interview during the Filming of ‘The 120 Days of Sodom,’” *Film Quarterly* 29.2 (1975-1976): 42.

² Massimo Recalcati, *Il complesso di Telemaco: Genitori e figli dopo il tramonto del padre* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2013), 23.

³ This sentence reworks the litany of charges against “instruction” found in Giovanni Gentile, *La riforma dell’educazione: Discorsi ai maestri di Trieste* (Bari: Laterza, 1920), 186.

⁴ Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit in “Merde Alors” *October* 13 (1980), 22-35; 31; Joan Copjec, “What Zapruder Saw,” in *Imagine There’s No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 203.

⁵ See Roberto Chiesi, “Una nuova gioventù di spettatori e conniventi: Immagini della giovinezza nell’ultimo Pasolini,” in *Fratello selvaggio: Pier Paolo Pasolini fra gioventù e nova gioventù*, ed. Gian Maria Annovi (Massa: Transeuropa, 2013), 125.

⁶ On “temporal analogy,” see Armando Maggi, *The Resurrection of the Body: Pier Paolo Pasolini from St. Paul to Sade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 312-313.

⁷ Quoted in Uberto Paolo Quintavalle, *Giornate di Sodoma: Ritratto di Pasolini e del suo ultimo film* (Milan: Sugarco, 1976), 32.

⁸ Here are two representative claims in Quintavalle, *Giornate di Sodoma*: “Venne colpito da uno di quei giovani che non erano probabilmente per lui entità spirituali autonome quanto emblemi di un’immagine di vita e di giovinezza che egli si era *fissato* fosse quanto di più appetibile esistesse sulla terra” (14; emphasis added). “In genere, nell’arco di tanti anni, il comportamento erotico dell’individuo si evolve, si trasforma. Nel caso di Pasolini pare essere rimasto *fisso*, congelato in quello che originariamente doveva essere un modulo colmo di entusiasmo, trasformatosi in seguito in una tetra liturgia dall’immutabile svolgimento” (22; emphasis added). In suggesting that the charge of fixation should be taken seriously rather than dismissed reflexively as homophobic, I am also countering another thesis advanced by Bersani and Dutoit in “Merde Alors”: that *Salò* displays “Pasolini’s refusal to be *fixed*—better, to be transfixed—by his subject” (29; emphasis added). Against this claim’s reliance on the figure of an artist who does not get caught up in, and thus trains *us* not to get caught up in the acts he depicts, I argue that Pasolini *did* get caught up in these acts, and that we do, too. Indeed, I will show that a commitment to becoming-transfixed is one source of *Salò*’s power.

⁹ Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 6 December, 1896, in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 208. Masson notes that *fueros* refer to “ancient Spanish law[s] still in effect in some particular city or province, guaranteeing that region’s immemorial privileges” (215).

¹⁰ My quarrel here is with Georges Didi-Huberman, *Come le lucciole: Una politica delle sopravvivenze*, trans. Chiara Tartarini (Milan: Bollati Bolinghieri, 2009), which locates “the death and disappearance of survivals” in Pasolini’s last works.

¹¹ Quintavalle’s memoir *Giornate di Sodoma* condenses the public and critical response that reduces the film to the status of a document of individual madness, even while it provides valuable insight into the process of the film’s production. For a more recent account of Pasolini’s dismissive pathologization, see Carla Benedetti, “Il ‘capolavoro’ di Pasolini,” in Benedetti and Giovanni Giovannetti, *Frocio e basta* (Milan: Effigie, 2012).

¹² This phrase appears Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), 118. See also Heather Love’s discussion of “delicious recoil” in *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 58-63. I am deeply indebted to Love’s study, which analyzes “backwardness” of various kinds in marginal modernisms and queer

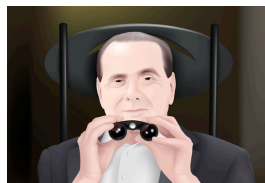
politics. I distinguish my goals from Love's in two main ways. First, whereas *Feeling Backward* privileges instances of "weak refusal," I look to, and value, *Salò* as a text in which backwardness and strong, even vociferous, refusal coexist. Secondly, despite my emphasis on affects like "regret" below, I am ultimately less interested in feeling as such than in its setting to work. *Salò*'s didacticism, which I take to be an instance of this setting to work, promises, or at least hopes, that something will follow from feeling backward, something that is neither more of the same feeling nor simply a more inclusive "model of political subjectivity," by which such feeling might be accommodated (71). This is not a matter of fully and finally leaving feeling behind—graduating from it in order to accede to thought, or affectless political calculation. But neither is it a matter of staying with affect (however transformatively, as in Love's study). I am thinking here of the crucial shift from repudiation to "adaptation" that takes place at the end of Pasolini's "Abiura della *Trilogia della vita*," discussed below; see also Rei Terada's brief discussion of this text in "Living A Ruined Life: De Quincey Beyond the Worst," *European Romantic Review* 20.2 (2009): 184.

¹³ I am grateful to Dan Blanton for this suggestion. For the text of the charter signed in Verona, see "The Manifesto of Verona (1943)," trans. Maria G. Stampino and Jeffrey T. Schnapp, in *A Primer of Italian Fascism*, ed. Jeffrey T. Schnapp et al. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 198-204.

¹⁴ Pasolini, "Il sesso come metafora del potere," in *Per il cinema*, vol. 2, ed. Walter Siti (Milan: Mondadori, 2000), 2065-2066. All citations of *Salò*'s screenplay refer to this volume. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *PC*, with page numbers referring to this same volume.

¹⁵ "It is here," Slavoj Žižek writes, referring to the "banality of evil," "that Pasolini ... is wrong." *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* (New York: Verso, 2005), 76.

¹⁶ I refer here to four recent readings, all of which, to my mind, value *Salò* for its ostensibly prophetic or "proleptic" qualities: Alessia Ricciardi, "Rethinking *Salò* after Abu Ghraib" *Postmodern Culture* 21.3 (2011), doi: 10.1353/pmc.2011.0024 (from which the phrase "proleptic insight" is also taken); Massimo Recalcati, *Il complesso di Telemaco: Genitori e figli dopo il tramonto del padre*, 23-29; Kriss Ravetto, "Salò: A Fatal Strategy," in *The Unmaking of Fascist Aesthetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 97-147; and Rei Terada, "Pasolini's Acceptance," in *The Ruins of Law*, ed. Klaus Mladek and George Edmundson (Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming). (The phrase "the eclipse of desire" is taken not directly from Recalcati's book, but rather from "L'eclisse dei desideri," *Forme contemporanee del totalitarismo*, ed. Massimo Recalcati [Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2007], 61-82.) Other attempts to render *Salò* forward-looking are numerous, and range, for instance, from Copjec's argument, in "What Zapruder Saw," that the film anticipates the end of "the autonomy of the citizen-subject" brought about by a newly "perverse relation to the law" (229), to Gary Indiana's claim that the film is "a metaphor of feudalism as reinvented by the multinational corporation, the military *coup d'état*, and the mediation of all reality by the symbolic" in the late twentieth century. See Gary Indiana, *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom* (London: BFI, 2000), 90. Consider, as well, the image by Dutch political cartoonist Mathijs Hendrix showing Silvio Berlusconi on the libertines' throne from the courtyard massacre scene, wielding with a smile the binoculars that *Salò*'s villains use to view the tortures taking place below. See <http://mathijshendrix.wordpress.com/tag/salo/>.



¹⁷ Andrea Zanzotto, "Per una pedagogia," *Nuovi argomenti* 49 (1976): 47-51. See also Roberto Chiesi, "Una nuova gioventù di spettatori e conniventi: Immagini della giovinezza nell'ultimo Pasolini," 132-135.

¹⁸ Sade's *The 120 Days of Sodom*, in *The 120 Days of Sodom and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Austryn Wainhouse and Richard Seaver (New York: Grove Press, 1966) also calls itself "The Romance of the School for Libertinage" (255).

¹⁹ Here again, I am countering Didi-Huberman's *Come le lucciole: Una politica delle sopravvivenze*. In the interview "Il sesso come metafora del potere" [Sex as a Metaphor for Power], Pasolini mentions both Bataille and Brecht as sources for *Salò*. Or rather, he mentions Brecht—noting that, though he was never much of a Brechtian, he went through a Brechtian phase during the time just before *Salò* was conceived—and he refers to Bataille's *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, but without naming Bataille's name (PC 2063). Pasolini does not refer to any specific works by Brecht, but I am inferring from the context of the interview as well as from *Salò* itself that he had in mind the author of *Lehrstücke*, or learning-plays, as well as the originator of epic theater, with its roots in medieval mystery plays. Here Brecht's name therefore serves as a shorthand for a didacticism that is at odds with the apocalyptic imagination, since it presupposes life going on and works to train future generations. Note also that, while he was at work on *Salò*, Pasolini was also bringing out a "trattatello pedagogico" [little pedagogical treatise] whose installments were gathered under the title *Gennariello*. See Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Lettere luterane* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), 19-67.

²⁰ On the end of the world in the late Pasolini, see Maggi, *The Resurrection of the Body*, especially 3, 9. And on the end of the world as happening, in fact, every few millennia, see Pasolini's own *Gennariello*, 42.

²¹ Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, "Mimetic Efficacy," trans. Douglas Brick, in *The Emotional Tie: Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 113.

²² Jennifer Stone, "Pasolini, Zanzotto, and the Question of Pedagogy," *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Patrick Rumble and Bart Testa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 40-55. Stone notes that Pasolini made a career of "positing his own irrelevance as a pedagogic-therapeutic act." In the end, Stone's essay assimilates Pasolinian pedagogy to familiar models of progressive education. It's true that statements in favor of progressive-sounding educative freedom can be found in Pasolini's writings. See, for instance Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Le mie proposte su scuola e Tv," in *Lettere luterane*, 177. But such statements should be read alongside the others that insist that one must not accept progressive pieties but rather learn to be "progressive in another way, inventing another way of being free." "Due modeste proposte per eliminare la criminalità in Italia," in *Lettere luterane*, 168.

²³ Ernesto De Martino, *La terra del rimorso: Contributo a una storia religiosa del Sud* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1961), 13. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

²⁴ This is already, then, the shift or "next stage" that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak locates in the "trajectory of the subaltern": "Not to study the subaltern, but to learn." See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular," *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 440. Spivak's approach is more resolutely secular than De Martino's and Pasolini's, but the mission statements near the end of her essay reveal a desire to be close to "the traditional healer" that rhymes with the Italians' (441).

²⁵ For a fuller consideration of Pasolini's relationship to De Martino, though one that does not address *La terra del rimorso* specifically, see Tomaso Subini, *La necessità di morire: Il cinema di Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Rome: Ente dello Spettacolo, 2007), 26-34.

²⁶ Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Abiura dalla *Trilogia della vita*," in *Lettere luterane*, 71-76; 71. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation A.

²⁷ "Indeed, we know that in the love scene a rejecting self may point to its denied excitement, leading the other [in this case, the reader] to sense that what is wanted is transportation to the zone of excitement." Christopher Bollas, *Hysteria* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 98. In citing this truth apparently widely acknowledged by practicing psychoanalysts ("Indeed, we know"), I do not mean crudely to diagnose Pasolini or his text as hysterical. I want instead, first and foremost, to recall the psychoanalytic sense and "scene" in which negation may also signal affirmation. (This may seem obvious. But I would argue that many of Pasolini's readers have yet to receive this memo; these include readers as sophisticated as Georges Didi-Huberman, who reads the "no" in Pasolini's "L'articolo delle lucciole" straight, as it were, in what becomes the primal scene of *Come le lucciole*.) Secondly, I

want to ask in an experimental spirit what difference a new—if also backward—clinical category, like Bollas’s hysteria, might make to a reading of the late Pasolini, who has so often reflexively been labeled “perverse.” According to Bollas, the pervert trusts in his ability to find—as in *realize*—the kind of sex that he compulsively seeks, whereas the hysteric’s “erotisation of the past” is born of mother love always already lost. That Pasolini sought—and, on film, sold—the sex that got him killed is undeniable. What interests me, though, is the way in which the “Abiura” makes sexuality a matter of relating to that which is irretrievably gone.

²⁸ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Trasumanar e organizzar*, (Milan: Garzanti, [1971] 1976), 66; Anne-Lise François, “‘The feel of not to feel it,’ or The Pleasures of Enduring Form,” in *A Companion to Romantic Poetry*, ed. Charles Mahoney (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 462.

²⁹ Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 156. Quotations from *S/Z* in this paragraph and the next are given parenthetically in the text.

³⁰ On the place of the “project” in Pasolini’s late work, and for an account that makes *Petrolio*, rather than *Salò*, definitive of the late Pasolini’s legacy, see Carla Benedetti, *Pasolini contro Calvino: Per una letteratura impura* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1998).

³¹ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Petrolio* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992), 48.

³² I do not mean to ignore the important distinctions between Sade’s narrative method in *The 120 Days of Sodom* and that of the narrative classics that inspired the films in the *Trilogy* (the *Decameron*, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, and the *Arabian Nights*). I would argue, however, that Pasolini brings Sade’s text closer to the three earlier classics than it might have been on its own. Pasolini chooses, for example, to foreground the (relatively more filmable) storytelling of the *narratrici* at the expense of the Sadean narrator’s disquisitions, and this makes *Salò* resemble Boccaccio’s *Decameron* more than Sade’s original novel does. Both Sade’s text and Boccaccio’s rely on narrative labor divided according to days. Boccaccio thus continues to haunt the film, despite the much more vivid presence of Dante, whose infernal principle of organization Pasolini roughly imitated in dividing his film into an “Antinferno” followed by three circles: “The Circle of Manias,” “The Circle of Shit,” and “The Circle of Blood.”

³³ Klossowski, *Sade My Neighbor*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 39. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

³⁴ John Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale,” in *Keats’s Poetry and Prose*, ed. Jeffrey N. Cox (New York: Norton, 2009), 460 line 75. Note the contrast between the buried reference to Philomela in *Salò*’s last scene and one of last lines from Pound cited: “Small birds sing in chorus [Uccelletti cinguettano in coro]” (*Cantos* 728, *PC* 2060). An elimination dance, or song, of sorts is happening here, leading from a chorus of small birds in Pound to one in Orff (Philomela) to none in Pasolini (for since Philomela is unnamed, it’s as if the metamorphosis that is her reward were reversed, and her punishment imposed again).

³⁵ Indiana is not alone in misidentifying this song as the standard “These Foolish Things.” See *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom*, 6, 88.

³⁶ A shot/reverse shot alternation is also used in the standoff between the President and Signora Vaccari, the first of *Salò*’s storytellers. Early in the “Circle of Manias,” the former interrupts the narrative in progress to insist that Signora Vaccari be more detailed in recounting her sexual exploits and encounters. At first nonplussed, the *narratrice* soon acknowledges that she has omitted too many particulars—but only after she has challenged the President, in a rare instance of disrespect for the libertines’ authority. Signora Vaccari’s backing down brings the shot/reverse shot alternation to an end, as momentary mutual disagreement gives way to obedience again.

³⁷ Bersani and Dutoit discuss *Salò*’s reliance on “the lateral divertissements of dance, music and painting,” which form the basis of their ultimately optimistic account of the film, to which I have already referred. According to Bersani and Dutoit, *Salò* models an “easy and radically frivolous turning away from torture and murder,” a turning

away exemplified by the two boys' dancing as well as by Durcet's jokes, delivered in the midst of brutal punishments. See Bersani and Dutoit, "Merde Alors," 29. And for an opposite take on these jokes, one that sees them as the target of some of the film's most excoriating attacks, see Ricciardi's "Rethinking *Salò* after Abu Ghraib."

³⁸ "'Foreclosure' means that something remains outside. That which remains outside is, once again, the act to be done. The less it is perpetrated the more it raps on the door—the door of literary vacuity. The blows struck on the door are Sade's words, which, if they now reverberate within literature, remain nonetheless blows struck from without. The outside is what of itself dispenses with any commentary. What gives Sade's text its disturbing originality is that through him this outrage comes to be commented on as something produced within thought" (41-42). Here Klossowski's images hardly cohere, but further elaborate "foreclosure" as a corrective to "irruption." If the latter implies eventfulness—the temporality of the once and done—foreclosure belongs to another temporality, one of ongoingness and endurance. For the "blows struck on the door" are necessarily repeated. This is the time within which *Salò* situates itself as well.

³⁹ Pasolini, *Trasumanar e organizzar*, 121.

⁴⁰ There are noteworthy omissions: postwar European philosophical texts that treat Sade's work and legacy influentially but are left off of Pasolini's bibliography, whether pointedly or for more mundane reasons to do with access to publications or translations. It is difficult *not* to read as pointed Pasolini's withholding of Bataille, whose writings on Sade include "The Use Value of D.A.F. de Sade," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 91-102, and the more lucid "Sade" chapter in *Literature and Evil* (1957), trans. Alastair Hamilton (London: Marion Boyars, 1973), 105-125. (See also note 19 above, for a discussion of Pasolini's refusal or failure to name Bataille's name even while explicitly citing his book on Gilles de Rais as a source for *Salò*.) Jacques Lacan's "Kant with Sade" (1963), trans. James B. Swenson, *October* 51 (1989): 55-71, is perhaps more Pasolinian than any of the texts listed at the opening of *Salò*. And conversely: there is already something Lacanian about the performance of aggressive and even impossible erudition that is the "Essential Bibliography." Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (first published in Italian translation in 1966) also includes an "Excursus" on the Marquis that pairs his work with Kant's.

⁴¹ "Salo [*sic*] or the 120 Days of Sodom," *Jim's Reviews* (blog), August 26, 2008 <http://jclarkmedia.com/pasolini/pasolini25.html>

⁴² I was one such viewer and fell into the trap, or down the rabbit hole, that is the "Essential Bibliography," where I then wandered for several weeks. There are, to be sure, here and there, pleasures of the text to be had while living with Barthes and others. But these, I now think, have little if anything to do with the pleasures afforded by Pasolini's film, which handles Sade very differently from any of the five figures who decide collectively, in different ways, not to burn him. I hoped and truly thought at first that I had found a clever solution to the problems posed by the film: simply by being docile, I'd outsmart other readers of *Salò*, arrive at the punch line they'd missed. The fantasy, to disclose fully and reverse Pasolini's formulation ("obbedisti disobbedendo!"), was that I would disobey (other critics) by obeying (the author). As I read on, however, always thinking that the punch line would be on the next page, only to find that it kept eluding me, that I realized: I was the butt, not the teller, of this bad joke. I had been lured by the bibliography into thinking that essences or answers were locatable, when really they would always elude capture.

⁴³ Ravetto makes a similar point: "More than simply adopt or recite some of these philosophical readings of Sade, Pasolini responds to these works: he questions their ability to read our understanding of, or coming to terms with, fascism through Sade. Even as he engages certain aspects of these postwar interpretations of Sade, he challenges their use of Sade as a critical model." Kris Ravetto, "*Salò*: A Fatal Strategy," 106.

⁴⁴ Pasolini says that he wants *Salò* to be “a formally perfect film” and contrasts his perfectionist approach to his earlier messy, “magmatic” procedure in “Pasolini on de Sade: An Interview during the Filming of ‘The 120 Days of Sodom,’” 43.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, Bollas, *Hysteria*, 111-112; and, in the art historical context, Aby Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, trans. Michael P. Steinberg (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 8, and Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 149. Further citations from Didi-Huberman’s book are given parenthetically in the text.

⁴⁶ On the “critical image” as an aid to art historical understanding, see, for instance, Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images*, 188.

⁴⁷ Bachmann, “Pasolini on de Sade,” 42.

⁴⁸ See also Andrea Mirabile, *Scrivere la pittura: La “funzione Longhi” nella letteratura italiana* (Ravenna: Longo, 2009), 69-84, for a discussion of Pasolini’s career-long engagement with the work of art historian Roberto Longhi, whose lectures at the University of Bologna famously inspired the director’s “folgorazione figurativa” [flash of figurative inspiration].

⁴⁹ Francesco Galluzzi writes: “La pittura, riferimento costante dell’occhio cinematografico pasoliniano, è presente in maniera massiccia anche in questo film [*Salò*]. Ma più che come modello di composizione delle inquadrature (che restano comunque bellissime, di una gelida eleganza anche—soprattutto—nelle scene più pervase dall’orrore), la sua è una presenza diretta, testuale e scenografica” [Painting, a constant point of reference for Pasolini’s cinematic eye, is present everywhere in this film. But more than as a model for the composition of shots (that are beautiful, composed with a gelid elegance even—especially—in the scenes most pervaded by horror), its presence is direct, textual, and scenographic]. Francesco Galluzzi, *Pasolini e la pittura* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1994), 143. Galluzzi has in mind the modernist works by Legér and others that decorate the libertine villa, and he makes convincing and even powerful claims about the effects of distortion on these works (several of which are enlarged beyond recognition in *Salò*) and about the more general “vanificazione” or rendering-futile of avant-garde aesthetics that the film thus stages through its *mise en scène* (143). I am arguing, though, that the “gelid,” often oddly static, tableau-like compositions that make up so much of *Salò* are not less but rather *more* painterly than the much messier frames that constitute Pasolini’s earlier films up to and including those in the *Trilogia della vita*.

⁵⁰ Didi-Huberman’s study models a counter-progressive approach to history that this dissertation tries to imitate. Indeed, *Confronting Images* at one point imagines “a history that would proceed dialectically and give *counter-subjects*—to use a musical term—to the great mimetic theme of figurative representation” (187). Elsewhere the author describes his way of approaching Renaissance Florence: “Here history makes meaning only by making a kind of *meaning imbroglio*. In other words an inextricable braid of anachronisms and open conflicts, a dialectic without synthesis of what is invented or ‘advances’ and what lasts or ‘regresses.’ All this traversed by the insistent play of the symptom” (218). The reader will have gathered that Didi-Huberman’s reading of the Freudian symptom, to which this passage reverts, has also been instructive for me; here I will cite only one more set of relevant sentences: “There is nothing in [the symptom] that disappears to make way for something else that will follow it or mark it with the triumph of a progress. There is only the troubled play of advance and regression all at once; there is only mute permanence and unexpected accident at the same time” (178).

⁵¹ I refer to “Fascinating Fascism,” first published in 1975. Susan Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism,” in *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York: Picador, 2002), 73-105. See also Pasolini’s own admission (later obscured both by critics and by the director’s own rewriting of sex as “a metaphor for power”): “Obviously I am fascinated by these sadistic orgies in themselves.” Bachmann, “Pasolini on de Sade,” 40.

⁵² Galluzzi, *Pasolini e la pittura*, 144, n. 164. I disagree, however, with Galluzzi’s claim that this image is downgraded to the status of a mere thing, even if this may be true of the other, more modern paintings throughout

the film. On the contrary, I believe that the power of this painting is enhanced, underscored; the reading that follows will clarify how and why.

⁵³ This line is not in the film's screenplay. But for the group's return to the altar, see *PC* 2040.

⁵⁴ Needless to say, this image is not in *Sade*. Indeed, in making the transition from text to image, this section of my chapter also seeks to mark the place where Pasolini's film takes leave of—without thereby transcending—its literary source as well as of the scholarly apparatus that is the “Essential Bibliography.” For a reflection on the status of the still image in cinema, see Raymond Bellour, “The Pensive Spectator,” trans. Lynne Kirby, in *The Cinematic*, ed. David Company (London: Whitechapel, 2007), 119-123, which addresses film's engagement with photographic stills rather than with paintings, but does so in terms that resonate with this chapter's: “the presence of a photo on the screen gives rise to a very particular trouble. Without ceasing to advance its own rhythm, the film seems to freeze, to suspend itself, *inspiring the spectator a recoil from the image that goes hand in hand with a growing fascination*. ... Creating another distance, another time, the photo permits me to reflect on the cinema” (10, emphasis added). See also Pasolini's own characterization of Longhi's art history lectures as the primal scene of his cinema: “Il cinema *agiva*, sia pure in quanto mera proiezione di fotografie” [Cinema was active, if only as a mere projection of photographs]. Quoted in Mirabile, *Scrivere la pittura*, 77 (emphasis in original). Here the “fotografie” referred to are slides of paintings by Masolino and Masaccio.

⁵⁵ On the cinematic origins and implications of Barthes's *punctum*, see Neil Badmington, “*Punctum Saliens*: Barthes, Mourning, Film, Photography,” *Paragraph* 35.3 (2012): 303-319. Here again a theory of the relationship between photography and film helps me to make sense of the painting as another kind of still image in *Salò*.

⁵⁶ See Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), which considers the “humanation” of Christ (related to what Didi-Huberman tracks under the sign of “incarnation”) as this is figured and foregrounded in a range of Renaissance contexts.

⁵⁷ My quarrel in this paragraph is mainly with Ricciardi, “Rethinking *Salò* after Abu Ghraib.”

⁵⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Kevin Atell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 85.

⁵⁹ Maggi's reading emphasizes the Marian dimension of this image, so that Mary becomes one (absent) mother among many others in *Salò*. See Maggi, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 108-109.

⁶⁰ I am relying here again on the Asadian account according to which ritual privileges practice over signification. See Talal Asad, “Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual,” *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 55-79. Galluzzi offers a concise and eloquent description of *Salò*'s assault on signification, its “processo terroristico di privazione del senso” [terroristic process of depriving (us) of sense] in *Pasolini e la pittura*, 143.

⁶¹ It is not simply the case that the history of Fascism takes the place of the life of Christ that an artist like Fra Agelico, in Didi-Huberman's account, would have undertaken to imitate. Crucially, if confoundingly, the latter persists in the midst of the former, so that while reenacting Salonian violence in and through the production of his film, Pasolini is also engaged in remaking *Il vangelo secondo Matteo*, if at a distance. Here again I am thinking of the victim's anguished question just before the courtyard massacre begins: “Dio, dio, perché ci hai abbandonati?” [God, God, why have you abandoned us?] (*PC* 2059).

⁶² There is, I think, a tacit attribution of malignant power to *Salò*'s images whenever a critic withholds these, in print or in public. See, for instance, Ricciardi's “Rethinking *Salò* after Abu Ghraib”; and note that the lecture on which this essay was based, “*Salò* for the Present,” Department of Italian, Columbia University, April 1, 2008, was also unaccompanied by images. Other scholars have been known to refuse to see Pasolini's last film on principle—lest, it seems, they themselves be harmed by the images to which they would thus be exposed.

⁶³ In *Binding Violence* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), Moira Fradinger reads Sade's *The 120 Days of Sodom* as a parable of political origins (one that, in particular, addresses "the primordial question of membership" [105]), and in doing so calls for a critical desexualization of Sade, a displacement of "sexual practice" from its place of primacy: "perhaps the true meaning of Sadean perversion is not its extraordinary 'sexual practice,' but its extralegal 'power practice.' In other words, extending the field of reference of perversion from the sexual to the political allows us to consider the structure organizing individual perversion as the translation of a historically situated objective political structure into the realm of private experience" (165). This approach to Sade might seem to authorize an analogous approach to his adapter, Pasolini. But although I find Fradinger's analysis convincing, I stay with sex in Sade and in Pasolini's adaptation not least because *The 120 Days of Sodom* sexualizes itself, broadcasting early on its aspiring to the condition of an "anthology" *cum* masturbation aid. "Many of the extravagances you are about to see illustrated will doubtless displease you, yes, I am well aware of it," Sade's narrator warns, "but there are amongst them a few which will warm you to the point of costing you some fuck, and that, reader, is all we ask of you; if we have not said everything, analyzed everything, tax us not with partiality, for you cannot expect us to have guessed what suits you best. Rather, it is up to you to take what you please and leave the rest alone, another reader will do the same, and little by little, everyone will find himself satisfied" (254).

⁶⁴ Ricciardi, "Rethinking *Salò* after Abu Ghraib." For an opposing view and an exception to what I am characterizing as a desexualizing rule in Pasolini criticism, see John David Rhodes, "Watchable Bodies: *Salò*'s Young Non-Actors," *Screen* 53.4 (2012): 453-458.

⁶⁵ Indiana, *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom*, 85.

⁶⁶ In "Visual Pleasure in 1959," *October* 81 (1997): 34-58, D. A. Miller asks: "Would not a 'liberal' aversion therapy—one that had renounced the brutality of electric shocks—be exactly this: a practice of merely visual reinforcements in which, whenever the patient were to see the 'right' image, he would see it *well*, long and clearly enough to sustain any interest his eye might take in it, while the 'wrong' image would always also be, in the same terms, a *bad* image, brief, blurry, unrewarding?" (41). To suggest, as I do here, that *Salò* reverses the terms of this mainstream therapeutics by making the good-enough image of sex an image of sodomy is again to risk lapsing into a progress narrative about an increasing capacity or willingness on Pasolini's part to affirm same-sex sex. But my effort here, as in my reading of the "Abiura," is to think affirmation and negation together.

⁶⁷ Bersani and Dutoit, "Merde Alors," 21.

⁶⁸ Indiana, *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom*, 83

⁶⁹ Here again my reading is indebted to Copjec, "What Zapruder Saw," and runs counter to Bersani and Dutoit, "Merde Alors."

⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, "Sade: Sargeant of Sex," interview with G. Dupont, trans. John Johnston, in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 226-227, emphasis added. Foucault's last phrase calls *Salò*'s famous "ass contest" to memory. This scene, however, illustrates less that Sadean sex is straightforwardly "hierarchical" in the (disciplinary) sense that Foucault seems to have in mind, than that there is something surprisingly utilitarian about the setup of the "school for libertinage." In *Pornography, the Theory: What Utilitarianism Did to Action* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), Frances Ferguson reads Sade alongside Bentham and discovers that the two figures share much more than one would have expected, including chiefly a commitment to making actions perceptible in order to facilitate evaluations of their relative value. Thus, according to Ferguson, Benthamite social structures served to "create perceptibility for purely social productions—hierarchy, rank order, and social evaluation," where each of these is crucially made, not given. "It was," Ferguson continues, "the modern rediscovery of the force of such social formations that made pornography a newly available representational form in the eighteenth century and that converted talk about sex into the rationalized representation of pornography. From Sade's writings on, pornography is as distinct from sex as rationalized social structures are distinct from individual reason. Pornography does not merely recommend particular sexual experiences, as if to have

its actors say, ‘Try this, you’ll like it.’ It also, as is most intensely clear in Sade’s writings, arranges its participants. It takes what is visible and gives it explicit value by ranking everything into good, better, best, or, in Sade’s case, strong, stronger, strongest and sexy, sexier, sexiest” (15; and on the difference between Ferguson’s Bentham and the figure at the center of Foucault’s account of discipline, see especially 18-19). Likewise, in *Salò*, all asses need to be made equivalent before one can be deemed best; while they are choosing among asses, the libertines discuss the importance of keeping the contestants’ faces hidden, so that they can deliver impartial judgments (*PC* 2054). This suggests that Pasolini was a cannier student of Sade than he might at first appear to be.

⁷¹ See the lectures in *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), e.g. 8, 107. Judith Butler considers these passages, among others, in the context of contemporary political predicaments in “Indefinite Detention,” in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004). See especially 53-54, where these predicaments are read in terms of “the power of anachronism” when and where law is suspended, or overwritten by executive power. In such times and places, Butler argues, “*the historical time that we thought was past turns out to structure the contemporary field with a persistence that gives the lie to history as chronology*” (54; emphasis in original). I hope that the relevance of this last sentence to the broader claims of this chapter is obvious. For the most part, I have avoided reading *Salò* as predicting sovereignty’s recent reemergence, as does Ricciardi, because I have wanted to attend to the backwardness of the film rather than what has been labeled its proleptic power. I would argue, though, that attending to what Butler here calls persistence need not mean attributing such prescience to the film. That Butler helps us to make current sense of Pasolini need not mean, in other words, that the latter was ahead of his time, except, as I have argued, inasmuch as he was willfully behind it.

⁷² Compare Bataille’s claim that Sade’s work “contains the bad news of a conciliation between the living and that which kills them, Good and Evil, and, we might almost say, between the loudest cry and silence.” “Sade,” in *Literature and Evil*, 109.

⁷³ Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?” in *Is the Rectum a Grave? and Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 3-30. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, using the abbreviation *IRG*. On complicity, see also Bersani’s *Homos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); and for a later reassessment of the arguments advanced in “Is the Rectum a Grave?” including its arguments for the radical potential of masochism, see “Sociality and Sexuality,” in *Is the Rectum a Grave? and Other Essays* 102-119.

⁷⁴ De Martino is particularly interested in the fact that St. Paul, who loudly decried pagan rites, comes to host these very rites in his chapel—and to become so closely associated with *tarantismo* as to bear this affectionate name.

⁷⁵ Bachmann, “Pasolini on de Sade,” 42.

⁷⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, “Authorized Language: The Social Conditions for the Effectiveness of Ritual Discourse,” in *Language and Symbolic Power*, edited by John B. Thompson, translated by Gino Raymond Matthew Adamson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 115. For an opposed account, centering on an attempt to make the image efficacious “in the aftermath of culture” and in the absence of social sanctioning, see Stefania Pandolfo, “The Passion of Ilyas,” in *Knots of the Soul* (forthcoming).

⁷⁷ Walter Ong, “Latin Language Study as Renaissance Puberty Rite,” *Studies in Philology* 56.2 (1959): 104. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text. So, too, does Ong’s observation that “Renaissance educators did not, on the whole, abate the ferocity of medieval or ancient school punishment” undermine the teleology that associates modernity, early or otherwise, with true tolerance (111), even if Ong appears uncritically to adopt this teleology elsewhere (122).

⁷⁸ This phrase is taken from one of Ong’s sources: Stephen Gosson’s 1579 pamphlet *The Schoole of Abuse, Conteyning a pleasaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters and such like Caterpillers of a commonwealth ...in The Schoole of Abuse and A Short Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse*, ed. Edward Arber (Westminster: A. Constable and Co., 1902). I have emphasized *Salò*’s theatricality as well as its recourse to poetry,

music, visual art, and all manner of other aesthetic practices condemned by Gosson. (“For as Poetrie and Piping are Cosen germans: so piping, and playing are of great affinity, and all three chayned in linkes of abuse” [28].) I therefore echo the title of the pamphlet in my own chapter title not to suggest that Pasolini advances an anti-aesthetic agenda, but rather to refer to another aspect of Gosson’s text: the way in which it both *is*, or at least purports to be, a “school of abuse,” and labels as “schools of abuse” the institutions that it critiques. The pamphlet thus engages, and avowedly, in a version of the traffic with complicity, or the “homeopathy,” that, I have argued, also characterizes *Salò*. See, for instance, admissions like the following, made in Gosson’s dedicatory note, which makes being ill a precondition of becoming a “good Phisition” (17): “Hee that hath bin shooke with a fierce ague, giueth good counsel to his friends when he is wel: ... and I perswade my selfe, that seeing the abuses which I reueale, trying them thorowly to my hurt, and bearing the stench of them hyet in my owne nose; I may best make the frame, found the schoole, and reade the first lecture of all my selfe, too warne euery man to auoyde the perill” (16-17).

⁷⁹ Gilles Deleuze stresses the fact that “Pasolini presents, not even fascism *in vivo*, but fascism at bay, shut away in the little town” of *Salò*. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 175.

⁸⁰ Fabián Cevallos, ed., *Pasolini: Salò: Mistero, crudeltà e follia: Una testimonianza fotografica* (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2005), 12.

⁸¹ Barbara Spackman, *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 65.

⁸² Giovanni Gentile, “L’unità della scuola media e la libertà degli studi,” *La nuova scuola media*, ed. Hervé A. Cavallera, *Opere complete di Giovanni Gentile*, vol. XL (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1988), 24.

⁸³ Bersani and Dutoit, “Merde Alors,” 29.

Coda

Claro's Enigmas



Breaking the Frame

The preceding pages have traced a series of attempts to counter progress from within the European frame. Pater's Roman usages, Pascoli's dead languages, Joyce's dead weights, and the late Pasolini's ritual regrets all become means of correcting European modernity's rush to be rid of what impeded its own forward movement. But these means all originate in Europe, or are imagined to originate there by those who would counter-progressively set them to work. For all his celebration of Sanskrit, for instance, Pascoli looks to the archives and artifacts of ancient Rome both in his essays on education and in *Paedagogium*. Joyce gives up on "Guru English" for the duration of "Oxen of the Sun,"¹ and, following his filmic forays into Africa, India, and the Middle East, Pasolini returns to the Italy that he had left behind in order to direct *Salò*. Thus even if most of the authors whose works I have analyzed depart from Europe at other key moments in their careers, in their capacity as counter-progressive pedagogues, they remain provincial—provincial, that is, precisely in their Europeanness.²

Throughout this dissertation, I have also stressed authors' efforts to undermine discourses of purity, from Pater's stylistic Euphuism to Pasolini's erotics of contamination and complicity. By way of conclusion, I will acknowledge explicitly that these efforts only extend so far. For despite their interest in radical *temporal* alterity—in the remote past that survives or returns in various forms—the *spatial* scope of the works that I have considered is strictly limited. Pascoli's Alexamenos is Chaldean, and an Eritrean "serva negra" [black servant] plays a briefly resistant role in *Salò*.³ But these narrative details barely register given the programmatic narrowness of the texts in my counter-progressive canon—given what I have called, adapting Wordsworth, the prisons into which they doom themselves.

These prisons entrap characters and readers alike, so that the latter, too, come to occupy the "cramping, narrowing" place that is Marius' mind;⁴ the little cell where Kaireus does time and punishing tenses in *Paedagogium*; the sealed-off hospital ward in "Oxen"; and the enclosed Sadean villa in *Salò*. I have stressed that such narrowing fulfills a crucial pedagogical function across these spaces, furthering the counter-progressive effort to dwell in and on the obstructions that progressive pedagogy willfully denies. According to the logic of this effort, to allow for breathing free would be to participate in the progressive denial of the past, to further the founding pernicious fiction of liberal humanist pedagogy. I have argued instead that the obstructions throughout the texts I have treated—the sources of constraint and unfreedom readers

experience, variously identified with conventions upheld, verses recited, old prose styles copied out, and ostensibly deposed regimes—serve as powerful and even politically salutary correctives to the ideology of progress. But I have not yet explicitly marked the limits of the counter-progressive strategies that I have located, or asked whether a certain *political* narrowness—again, a provincialism—might follow from a commitment to remaining behind in a close, confined place or “angoletto morto.”⁵ To this end, and with the aim of breaking the frame within which I have stayed so far, I turn by way of conclusion to the Brazilian-born director Glauber Rocha.

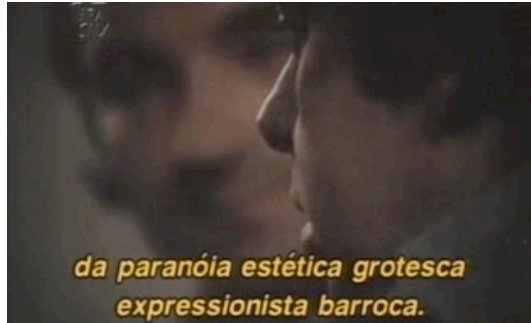
Like Pasolini, Rocha made a film conceived as a “ritual fact.”⁶ *Claro* (1975) and *Salò* thus have an aim and an abiding interest in common; ritual organizes both films, and Rocha acknowledged his debts to the Italian director. But Rocha also criticized Pasolini’s approach to filmmaking, characterizing it as “still fundamentally paternalist,” “colonial and patriarchal.”⁷ In *Claro*, a film combining narrative and documentary elements and made during his unofficial exile,⁸ Rocha imagined an alternative approach; he sought not merely to reproduce conditions that restricted freedom, but also to imagine a break with these conditions: precisely the kind of break that *Salò*, with its “pure interiority,” renders unimaginable.⁹ To ask after the implications of this double movement, this dialectic of imprisonment and release, is thus also to disclose the limits of the counter-progressive poetics that I have followed until now. I take *Claro* to represent at once the continuation and the end of this tradition, but I do so provisionally, not least because this dissertation has concerned itself with deaths that are by no means definitive, with ends that are not once and done. I cannot therefore rule out the possibility that the impulse to go back to the old school might emerge in other places and at other times, in other aesthetic works and to other political ends than those I have specified.¹⁰ Still, significantly *Claro* marks the point at which the repeated, pedagogical retraversal of the past comes to require a supplement, one that neither Rome nor the old school that transmits the ancient city’s traditions can provide. Rocha’s film shares Pasolini’s commitment to retraversal—a commitment that I have argued was also Pater’s, Pascoli’s, and Joyce’s—and thus remains counter-progressive in its pedagogy. But at the same time, *Claro* exceeds the literary and cinematic counter-tradition that I have so far examined. Aspiring—like *Marius*, *Paedagogium*, “Oxen,” and *Salò*—to the condition of instruction, Rocha’s film also teaches that “in order for the problem to change,” instruction must become barbarous—cacophonous and collective—as well as backward.¹¹

This lesson does not simply follow from Rocha’s status as an exile or from his film’s thematization of that condition.¹² Nor is it only a product of *Claro*’s mixing of languages (Italian, Portuguese, French, and English). After all, *Ulysses*, too, engages in language-mixing—“barbarism” in its oldest sense, according to the *OED*.¹³ And Joyce, too, famously, considered himself an exile. Pascoli’s pages in training all come from the provinces, as do Pasolini’s captive youths and even, for that matter, Pater’s *Marius*. A concern with displacement thus recurs in all of the works that I have studied so far, all of which also feature foreign languages. In these ways and in many others, counter-progressive pedagogy remains rich and strange, retains unspent potential. I would be lacking in the courage of my convictions, then, were I to end this dissertation by lapsing into a progress narrative, one according to which a saving final figure, Rocha, would supersede those who came before him with his political maturity and aesthetic sophistication—as though we could leave the other figures behind. This is not, to reiterate, the story that I am about to tell. What sets *Claro* apart is neither its multilingualism nor its

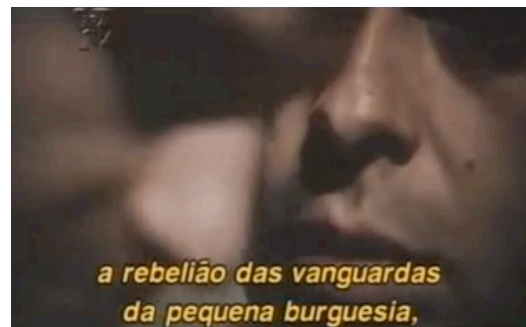
meditation on exile. It is instead what I have already called the *cacophony* by mean of which Rocha rules out copying out. Visual as well as auditory, *Claro*'s cacophony produces and sustains a counter-movement within the retraversal of the Roman past in which the film nevertheless engages, an intermittent but insistent interruption of the pilgrimage that Rocha nevertheless makes. This pilgrimage thus becomes at the same time the passage to another place, and Rocha *counters counter-progress*, though not with progress.

Arguably more trying to watch even than *Salò*, *Claro* offers none of that film's gruesome spectacles of torture and coerced sex but also none of its "lateral divertissements."¹⁴ Instead Rocha stages scene after long, narratively pointless scene of screaming, with characters' voices raised in competition. He presents, and sometimes himself delivers, speech after undeniably pretentious speech. The title *Claro* promises lucidity and literal light: if not enlightenment, then both explication and affirmation—indeed, a set of variations on Joycean themes: both Stephen Dedalus' *claritas* and Molly Bloom's "Yes."¹⁵ For in Portuguese as in Spanish, *claro* often signals emphatic agreement, introducing or abbreviating an "of course": *claro que sim*. Beautifully yoked to the unknown and unknowable in *Claro enigma*, the oxymoronic title of a volume by the Brazilian modernist poet Oswald Drummond de Andrade,¹⁶ the word as redeployed by Rocha floats free of any object or action that it might predicate. This is confusing, given that Rocha's film is clear as mud, nothing if not obscure—and this despite both the false promise of its title, and the director's claim "ter feito um filme sem ambiguidades" [to have made a film without ambiguities], prompted by a desire "ver claro nas contradições da sociedade capitalista de nosso tempo" [to see clearly the contradictions of the capitalist society of our time].¹⁷

Like Pater's Marius on his deathbed, *Claro* "suffer[s] the faces and voices" of others "to come and go,"¹⁸ without connecting these faces and voices to one another. Nor does the film ask the viewer to forge any such connection, or suggest that its own ambiguities could be explained, its enigmas clarified. A poncho-wearing, French-speaking woman (Juliet Berto) appears in most of the film's scenes, but we never learn who she is or what she's after. She cannot and will not offer us guidance. Rocha's camerawork contributes further to *Claro*'s obscurity, abetting its programmatic plotlessness. More often than not, the film's frames are crowded, whether with cropped faces and limbs shot in close-up or with worshippers or tourists shown farther away, congregated in Vatican Square or gathered near the Forum. The ruins in the many location shots of the ancient city alternate with the kitschy objects that recur in the film's interiors. And *Claro* even features a single *vanitas*-like still life, in which meat sits atop a Roman capital. All of these assorted persons and things obstruct our view, so that we do not, in fact, see clearly.



Faces and Voices (1)



Faces and Voices (2)



The Crowded Frame (1): Bodies



The Crowded Frame (2): Capital with Dead Meat



The Crowded Frame (3): Playing Dead

Nor, *pace* Rocha, do we see only the contradictions of “our time.” On the contrary, *Claro* registers the layering of times and histories for which Rome’s architecture is famous, as an emblem of both civilization and its discontents. The remnants of dead, European pasts everywhere pile up *Claro*. These combine with both the other miscellaneous dead things that find their way into the frame and with the repeated phrases and rote gestures that recur in the diegesis to make the film into a veritable document of deadness, a far cry indeed from the products of the “germe vivo de Cinema Nôvo” [living spirit of Cinema Novo] repeatedly summoned in what is still Rocha’s most widely read work: the manifesto for that movement, first presented in Genoa in 1965, “Uma estética da fome” [An Aesthetics of Hunger].¹⁹ Here the filmmaker calls for a Latin American cinema capable of opposing the Eurocentric global film industry. The latter, Rocha writes, remains fully committed to “a mentira e ... a exploração” [untruth and exploitation] (170; 14). Accepting rather than denying its colonial situation in order to become fully anticolonial, the engaged cinema that Rocha envisions, born from the “política da fome” [politics of hunger], would undertake both to demystify and to arm: both to “*dar ao público a consciência de sua própria miséria*” [make the public aware of its misery] and to seek “[a] liberdade da América Latina” [freedom for Latin America] (170; 14; emphasis in original; trans. modified).

Still, there is something counter-progressive about the logic on which Rocha’s text depends:

A América Latina, inegavelmente, permanece colônia, e o que diferencia o colonialismo de ontem do atual é apenas a forma aprimorada do colonizador: e, além dos colonizadores de fato, as formas sutis daqueles que também sobre nós armam futuros botes. O problema internacional da A[mérica] L[atina] é ainda um pouco de mudança de colonizadores, sendo que uma libertação possível estará sempre em função de uma nova dependência.

[Undeniably, Latin America remains a colony, and what distinguishes yesterday’s colonialism from today’s is merely the more refined forms employed by the contemporary colonizer. Meanwhile, those who are preparing future domination try to replace these with even more subtle forms. The problem facing Latin America in international terms is still that of merely exchanging colonizers, so

that any possible liberation will always be a function of a new dependency.] (166, 13; trans modified)

Reminiscent of Pasolini's insistence, in *Salò* and other texts that my last chapter engaged, that fascism survived the war, these claims are also comparable to the more recent Afro-pessimist demonstration of the persistence of both blackness and antiblackness in the face of discourses of post-raciality.²⁰ Channeling Fanon at several later moments in his manifesto and appealing to the language of the "*symptom*" (165, 13; emphasis in original) and the "*unconscious*" early on (166, 13; emphasis in original, trans. modified), Rocha's argument recalls, in addition, the psychoanalytic attribution of lasting power to "mnemonic residues." If, in Freud, these continue decisively to operate long after the end of the events that first laid them down, Fanon shows that such events cannot even be said truthfully to "end" in the colonial context, where "traumatisms" remain diffuse.²¹ In "Uma estética da fome," Rocha makes a comparable suggestion even while gesturing toward the cinematic means by which neo-colonial traumatisms might be worked through. Having noted these analogies, however, I simply want to underscore Rocha's refusal of progress narratives in the passage I have cited: a refusal implied by the assertion that throughout Latin America a certain colonialism perdures, "permanece."

Rocha delivers this verdict in a present tense that powerfully denies the relegation of the colonial situation to the past of the post-colony. But the moment in his manifesto that I have just quoted builds toward an equally powerful future tense, one whose placement in a grammatically subordinate clause does little, in fact, to attenuate its threat of permanent subordination. *As long as* change for Latin America takes the form of a mere exchange of masters (where the Portuguese, "um pouco de mudança," makes the change even more of a non-event than mere exchange would be), liberation *will entail* another dependency. So Rocha claims, though in terms that make the advent of real liberation even less assured—terms that render the threat of ongoing dependency that much more threatening because not strictly conditional. The director says not quite, "*if* we don't stop thinking of change as exchange, *then* we'll always be dependent," but rather something like: "the problem *is* that change still means exchange, *it being the case* that we'll always be dependent." Though apparently slight, the distinction, both linguistic and logical, is in fact highly significant—because Cinema Novo's project, as articulated in Rocha's manifesto, becomes an attempt to alter that future tense, to imagine a way out of the impasse that "o problema internacional" here designates: a liberation that would do away with dependency.

By the time Rocha made *Claro*, things had changed in ways that made such a liberating exit from dependency seem unachievable, a dependent future tense irrevocable, and an impasse permanent. One monologue in the film, in fact, bears witness to this very disillusionment: it begins with a former communist's memories of the time when he thought he could change the world, and ends with his attempt to name "un sentimento che permane, una sensazione che non finisce" [a feeling that remains, a sensation that doesn't end]. The next speaker's monologue records a similar sensation: "La rivoluzione continuava, e io non c'entravo più" [The revolution continued, and I wasn't part of it anymore]. And a third speaker complains in the next monologue in similar terms: "Io manco [*sic*] una spontaneità che io ho *avuto* prima" [I lack a spontaneity that I *did* have before]. Here again, youthful energy gives way to exhaustion. This speaker will go on to insist that his lost spontaneity "è una cosa che io *può* [*sic*] ritrovare in me, una cosa che esiste ancora in me, una cosa che credo tornando qua, credo che, che può avere

[sic] veramente ancora in me” [is something that I *can* regain in myself, something that still exists in me, something that I think, returning here, I think, that can really be in me].²² He learned this, he says, from a child. And there is something vaguely childish about the awkwardness of his ungrammatical Italian. Like many others in *Claro*’s cast, and like Rocha himself, this speaker is evidently still learning the language. But though his speech may be childish, it is anything but spontaneous. On the contrary, it is nothing if not rehearsed—forced, even. The repetitiousness of his lines belies the spontaneity that they extoll, and their halting delivery suggests that the loss of what Rocha’s manifesto had called “living spirit” is more final than this speaker would allow.

What had become, then, of Rocha’s revolution, of Cinema Novo’s spontaneity? During the years that had intervened between “Uma estética da fome” and *Claro*, Brazil’s military dictatorship, which had already begun with the 1964 coup that overthrew President João Goulart, became increasingly repressive. A sweeping decree issued in 1968 consolidated executive powers and eroded all kinds of constitutional protections. The Act allowed for the closure of Congress at the President’s discretion; heightened government censorship of the arts and journalism; outlawed public demonstrations not pre-approved by police; and suspended habeas corpus. These and the Act’s other provisions created the atmosphere that led to Rocha’s departure from Brazil in 1971. Meanwhile, military governments continued to emerge—or, more often, to reemerge—in other Latin American countries, including Uruguay and Chile, which both witnessed coups in 1973. More generally, both in the Americas and in Europe, where Rocha spent his part of his exile, the early 1970s were marked by economic crisis and signs of the political retrenchment that would lead to neoliberalization.

These multiple political shifts are registered in Rocha’s cinematic trajectory, which proceeds, or counter-progresses, from clarity to opacity. Rocha transitions, that is, from a popular style in keeping with Cinema Novo’s legibly liberationist aims to a style foregrounding difficulty and blockage, one better suited, Rocha thought, to an era of entrenched dictatorships and ascendant markets. (Compare Pasolini’s “Abiura dalla *Trilogia della vita*.”) In such an era, dependencies come to seem ineluctable, and old solidarities, desires, and aspirations are driven underground. Indeed, following the international success of his first neorealist-inspired films, Rocha abandoned “critical realism,” as James Phillips explains, “in favor of an [increasingly] underground cinema”: “The agony of hunger passes over [from the rhetoric of the manifesto and from diegesis] into the cinematic image itself, convulsing it in *Land in Anguish (Terra em transe)* (1967) before overseeing its disintegration in the final provocations ... of *The Age of Earth (A idade da terra)* (1980).”²³ *Claro* comes between these two films, and its images take part intermittently in both of the processes that Phillips identifies: both convulsion and disintegration.

But *Claro* engages in another set of processes as well, and more importantly: processes that make the film’s return to Rome, to ritual, and to school counter-progressive. I have called the processes guiding Rocha’s diegesis pilgrimage, and I have hinted at some other, formal ways in which the film does *not*, in fact, fall apart, convulse itself, or disintegrate, but rather repeats itself, stages returns. There is, first and most obviously, the repetitiousness of *Claro*’s monologues. But then there is the serial organization of these monologues that makes one come after, and echo, another. Consider, too, the film’s overall structure: *Claro* begins in Rome, then swerves away from the city for a seaside interlude. But Rocha’s camera returns to the place it has

thus left behind; his film enacts the return to Rome that it thematizes. A moment late in *Claro* miniaturizes—indeed, recapitulates—this return at another scale, at the level of the single take: during a circular pan, a fade to white washes out the rooftops of Rome, but only briefly. These rooftops no sooner fade out than they return, as Rocha restores the shot to its initial saturation. Now you see Rome; now you don't; then again, you do. The joke is on the spectator, but Rocha's fake-out fade-out is also deeply serious. For the shot attests to Rome's permanence in the face of our desire for the end of the *imperium*—a desire that *Claro* also, paradoxically, works to produce. Here, though, the film suggests that the city may indeed be eternal if its erasure—in Phillips's terms, its disintegration—is so short-lived. At the very least, Rome must be reckoned with, and not denied. This is the lesson of the shot, which compels us to return to the place that returns.



Rome Fading



Rome Returned

What kind of lesson is this? Strikingly, one possible answer Phillips offers is “classical.” To be sure, though, Phillips uses this as a term of art. Considering the director's career as a whole, Phillips argues that “Rocha's work is classical not because it recalls the ‘perfection’ of classical art”—on the contrary, turning underdevelopment to aesthetic profit, it does no such thing—“but because it recreates the anarchic conditions in which,” according to Hannah Arendt, “the Greek cities differentiated themselves from the despotism of their Persian and Egyptian neighbors. In this anarchy, the Greek is a citizen and not a subject, a means to the ruler's ends” (108). But attending to *Claro* has already made it possible to see that, though changeable, cacophonous, and crowded, the film is not, in fact, “anarchic”: repetition governs Rocha's film, both in its diegesis and at the level of the image. Note, too, that Phillips concludes by reinstating a version of the very distinction that he seeks to overturn. For whereas he affirms

“indeterminacy” (102) and “undecideability” (108), he in fact decides in advance on the difference between Greeks, on the one hand, and Persians and Egyptians, on the other. The latter are, we know, only “means to the ruler’s ends,” whereas “anarchic conditions” allow for the elaboration of Greek freedom, the realization of Greek self-definition and neighborly differentiation.

But this is effectively to deny the barbarous even while defending the “anarchic.” The barbarous, of course, originally names that which is “not Greek,” and later what is “not Greek nor Latin; hence not classical or pure” (*OED*). Notwithstanding the distance Phillips takes from the standards of formal perfection, his account of Rocha’s films comes to privilege purity after all, in its privileging of politics in the “Greek” sense: Rocha’s “is a pure cinema to the extent that it is a political cinema,” Phillips claims, elsewhere defining “political” in an Arendtian sense as entailing “the suspension of instrumental rationality” (90). The political, for Phillips, participates in the movement typically but, he writes, only “improperly understood as the affair of aestheticism,” in an inversion whose implication is clear but, by virtue of that very clarity, not borne out in *Claro* (90): it is politics, “properly” understood, that models the open-endedness and the freedom from instrumentality that the aesthetic, in aestheticism, wrongly claims for itself alone. Rocha’s “pure cinema” would thus constitute a corrective to the aestheticist “refusal to engage in political struggles” (90) and to “the academicism of cinematographic discourse” (92). At once becoming political and revealing cinema’s “essential politicality” (92), Rocha’s films would undermine the attempt to delimit a separate aesthetic space, in a sustained critique of both aesthetic and political autonomy (100).

Except that, by this account, Rocha never really amends his early liberationist position, never recognizes the ineluctability of dependency. Dependency instead attaches to the Persians and Egyptians of the world, the barbarians. Rocha, for his part, according to Phillips, turns the wretched of the earth into so many Greeks. To repeat: “Rocha’s work . . . recreates the anarchic conditions in which the Greek cities differentiated themselves from the despotism of their Persian and Egyptian neighbors. In this anarchy, the Greek is a citizen and not a subject, a means to the ruler’s ends” (108). But matters in *Claro* are, as I have said, considerably more complicated, much less clearly “differentiated.” For the film evinces an undeniable if not quite Salonian fascination with the figure of the despot. As in *Salò*, this figure becomes closely associated with the figure of the director: “his majesty Eisenstein!” as Berto ironically proclaims.²⁴ But whereas the director-as-despot only lurked *behind* Pasolini’s images—in the casting call evoked by the libertines’ painstaking selection of the beautiful *fanciulli*, or in the figure of the Bishop who officiates the gay wedding and recalls the priest played by Pasolini himself in *Edipo re*—Rocha makes his own voice audible and his own body visible. Moreover, he makes his own directorial despotism manifest, rather than latent like Pasolini’s.

Claro begins, in fact, with a long outdoor sequence at the end of which Rocha kicks Berto while she’s down, repeatedly. The kicks are playful, but troubling still: Rocha’s gestures signal the force and even the coerciveness of the directions he gives, even as they also expose him to the gaze of both the diegetic and the viewing publics.²⁵ The sequence also literalizes what I have called the perpendicularity that recurs in all of the counter-progressive pedagogical projects I have considered, beginning with Pater’s, which aligned the teacher with the *superstes* and the pupil with his prostrate counterpart. Upright, Rocha stands over the horizontal Berto. The latter keeps returning to this position after rolling over, and being dragged along, at times pulled

up so that parts of her body form diagonals within the frame. The sequence thus insists visually on the perpendicular formed by the two bodies, Berto's and Rocha's. Framed by an unsteady handheld camera against the backdrop of the Colosseum, the director's repeated kicks draw the assembled tourists' attention, as if to underscore the fact that the spectacle now unfolds outside the ancient amphitheater, not within it. And Rocha seems to warn *Claro's* spectators at the outset that his film will entail a certain violence, someone's submission, however provisional it may be.



Rocha and Berto, Kicked While She's Down (1)



Rocha and Berto, Kicked While She's Down (2)



Rocha and Berto, Kicked While She's Down (3)

At other moments, though, Rocha seems to critique violence and submission precisely as he looks to empires both present and past. An anomalous, English-language exchange between a black woman and a white man introduces the Vietnam War. “You killed my people,” the woman screams; “you killed *me!*” Elsewhere a shot of the Piazza del Campidoglio centered on the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius,²⁶ locates—or more accurately fixes: *fixa*— the heart of

imperialism both past and present in Rome. Here Rocha repeats imperial names even while he mangles chronology: “El centro, il centro dell’imperialismo, Augusto Otavio ... resultado della conquista imperialista de Roma sul Terco Mundo, Augusto Otavio, Cesar Augusto, imperialismo democrático, a sede do imperialismo, fixado aqui” [The center, the center of imperialism, Augustus Octavian, result of Rome’s imperialist conquest of the Third World, Augustus Octavian, Caesar Augustus, democratic imperialism, the seat of imperialism, located here]. And before a cut, Rocha captions the image on which his own camera has remained fixed, after having been mobile throughout the film’s first, long sequence: “esta imagem, a última imagem do occidente, la ultima immagine dell’occidente” [this image, the last image of the West, the last image of the West]. The claim or would-be demonstration that the Roman empire never ended thus comes up against the sudden proclamation that this empire’s fall is imminent. But here again the repetitiousness of the words spoken in the film, this time by Rocha, gives the lie to his concluding, conclusive label. The image will, in fact, not be the West’s “last” in any sense. On the contrary, *Claro* will go on to attest to the persistence of old structures architectural and authoritarian.²⁷



The Last Image of the West

In a much longer sequence more obviously reminiscent of *Salò*, for instance, a wealthy man in drag played by Carmelo Bene eats gelato and smokes while delivering a lecture about later emperors. Bene’s character addresses the unnamed young woman played by Berto, whose poncho looks even more incongruous indoors than on the streets of Rome. Recounting the formation of militias during the reign of Septimus Severus, Bene refers in passing to the “libertinaggio, [l’]evoluzione, diciamo così, sadiana della polizia” [libertinage, the Sadean evolution, let’s say, of the police]. His speech continues:

Settimio Severo allarga la porta, fa del Ministero degli Interni ... Fa del Ministero degli Interni la legione ... Tante legioni, mia cara, tante, erano tante ... Ecco, Pertinace, l’imperatore che segue, è vero, Settimio Severo fa lo stesso. Poi un’imperatore sciagurato, il Caracalla, morboso, eccetera. Insomma, il fatto importante fino ad arrivare agli stoici, cioè agli Antonini—gli Antonini che col cristianesimo insomma, debellano il potere, cioè scardinano il potere, però volontariamente. La decadenza è bella.

[Septimus Severus opened the door, he made the Ministry of the Interior ... He made the Ministry of the Interior into a legion ... Many legions, my dear, many. There were many. ... Now, Pertinax the emperor who follows Septimus Severus, right, does the same. Then a wicked emperor, Caracalla, morbid, and so on. Basically, the important fact until you arrive at the Stoics, that is the Antonines—the Antonines who with Christianity, basically destroy power, that is they break power apart, but voluntarily. Decadence is beautiful.]

This last sentiment is one that Bene has already expressed. In fact, the sentence—“La decadenza è bella,” which easily could have appeared in *Salò*'s screenplay, as a line to be spoken by one of that film's libertines—is one that he repeats verbatim. After a cut here, Bene, is shown standing, bottle in hand. The cut suggests that we may have been spared more of his monologue, but it still shows no signs of abating: “Poi bisogna ... bisognerà aspettare secoli perché venga un duce, un *dux*. *Aezio*, Ezio, il rivale di Attila, Attila. Ezio è il primo duce” [Then you have to ... you'll have to wait centuries for a *duce* to come, a *dux*. Aetius, Aetius, Atilla's rival, Atilla. Aetius was the first *duce*]. Bene's translation of *duce* into *dux* and back again points up his character's nostalgia for the fascist past as well as the remoter Roman world. In his speech as in the discourse of the regime, ancient Rome presages and provides the sanction for fascism; Mussolini represents the second coming of Aetius.

To be sure, this is hardly a history lesson. Bene gets his facts wrong: Pertinax was not Septimus Severus' successor, for instance, but his predecessor. But the scene retains a pedagogical form inasmuch as Berto, seen and not heard throughout the long monologue, models the receptiveness of the pupil, if not the attentiveness of the good-enough one. In this sense, she stands in for the film's spectator as well. Like her, *Claro*'s viewer can hardly be expected simply and uninterruptedly to pay attention to Bene's tirade. For one thing, the *mise en scène* is as distracting, though not nearly as beautiful, as anything in *Salò*. There are mirrors prominently featured in the drag queen's decked-out apartment reminiscent of those in the Salonian libertines' villa, and statues and paintings that are no less visually obtrusive for being obviously cheap. Then there are the sources of distraction within the monologue itself: frequent self-interruptions, drinking from the bottle, ice cream, opera. The distractions multiply as the scene proceeds: Bene's voice, now intoning “Italia a me!” [Italy for me!] repeatedly, competes with “Casta diva,” which starts playing loudly midway through the scene. Bene's performance becomes ever more grotesque.

Meanwhile, Berto stands beside him, moving a small, imitation gold statuette of a *putto* in circles: first this way, then that; then this way again, then that. She keeps at this for several minutes before speaking. Still seen and not heard, she continues to move the statue mechanically even after Bene has collapsed from drunkenness. Then when *her* monologue finally begins, she keeps up the circular motions, moving her own body instead of the statuette. Her speech is elusive rather than demagogic, apocalyptic rather than nostalgic. She speaks of annihilation, of ends without beginnings, and of irretrievable pasts. She speaks of not knowing anymore, of not having words adequate to account for anything, of language that is no longer language. She is not, therefore, simply *imitating* the triumphalist speech that she and we have just been made to sit through. Nor is it ever clear what she is doing in the same apartment with Bene to begin with. I am not therefore claiming that the apartment sequence constitutes a straightforward scene of

instruction or stages a simple transfer of knowledge. But, reminding us of the relation between rote and rotation, her circling both during and after Bene's speech suggests that perhaps she has learned something, if not what Bene's diva intended, after all. And perhaps we have learned something as well.

But what? Simply that repeated gestures can help us to survive educational ordeals? By this account, Berto's movements would be the gestural equivalent of doodling: means of keeping her body occupied, or ways of trying to protect her mind from the numbness that Bene's lecture would otherwise induce. Yet this does not seem quite right—if only because Berto's gestures during the lecture are enthusiastically performed, not perfunctory. She's either complying with someone's orders, whether Rocha's or Bene's or both, or acting voluntarily, like the Antonines to whom Bene refers: "scardinano il potere, però volontariamente." But that we have seen Berto kicked repeatedly by Rocha makes the latter, voluntary alternative less plausible. In that early scene, too, her movements had been circular: she had rolled, or been made to roll, on the ground. From this we can infer that the motions weren't voluntary to begin with, even if they may be now. Her circular movements bear—or maybe they just *are*—the trace of the kicks that she has received.

The setup is highly, even exaggeratedly, gendered both in the apartment and outside the Colosseum. Rocha would thus seem to participate in the same paternalism and patriarchalism of which he accuses Pasolini.²⁸ At the same time, however, Berto's is the view—and the monologue—that the film would affirm. Her speech on world-ending, the failures of language, and the fate of the past—a speech that distills so many of *Claro's* concerns—both responds to and continues in another, more lyrical register Rocha's earlier, voiceover call for the fall of Rome. This fact does not exempt Rocha from the kind critique he aimed at Pasolini, of course, but it does coexist enigmatically with the coercion that *Claro's* first scene registers and to which Berto's later gestures indirectly refer. It is as though the kicking scene outside the Colosseum showed not so much degradation, but *delegation*—as though Berto became in that inaugural scene Rocha's representative as well as ours. It is as though he, too, had been kicked while down—or hungry—and this kept him circling, repeating himself and the past.



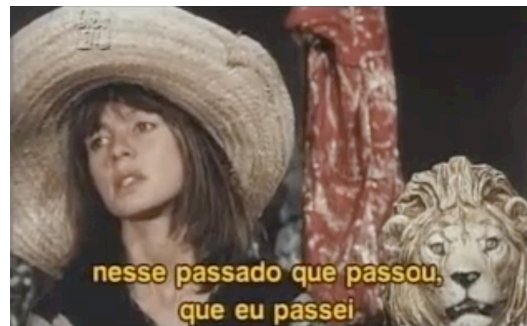
Reminiscing



Hitting the Bottle



Casta Diva



Berto, Mid-Monologue

Like the progressive educators and liberal critics whom I have considered throughout this study—like Rousseau, Mill, Gentile, Dewey, and most recent readers of *Salò—Claro*'s critics consistently give voice to a desire for “the exteriority of mastery and servitude or of liberty and non-liberty.”²⁹ These critics write, in other words, as though there could be a definitive separation between freedom and constraint, liberation and dependency, spontaneity and repetition. Most representatively, Phillips claims, again: “Rocha’s work ... recreates the anarchic conditions in which the Greek cities differentiated themselves from the despotism of their Persian and Egyptian neighbors. In this anarchy, the Greek is a citizen and not a subject, a means to the ruler’s ends” (108). The wish expressed here is for a hard and fast distinction, for a sustainable difference between citizens and subjects, such that the former would no longer have to be the latter. Rocha’s cinema, for Phillips, trains us to be citizens by producing the anarchy

that lets us know that we are not mere “means to [any] ruler’s ends.” But to say this is to ignore the director’s abiding fascination with ruler-figures precisely, a fascination that marks *Terra em transe* as much as *Claro*. More importantly, it is to fail altogether to undertake the motions that the latter film assigns. These motions entail not, as Phillips would claim, *sorting-out* amid anarchy, but rather two kinds of *circling*: one that leads back to Rome, and another that leads Berto to move the *putto* statuette, then her own body, repeatedly this way, then that, after she has been thus moved by Rocha.

Far from privileging spontaneity, this first moment in the film marks “the priority of the other.”³⁰ Borrowing this phrase from Jean Laplanche, I have used it to characterize the counter-progressive pedagogical project, a project that, I have argued, takes this priority as given, makes it into the primacy of the preceptor—as if the other whom the infant encountered in its first contacts with the adult world provided the model for the later others who are teachers. Recall Flavian in Pater’s *Marius*; the punishing *praeceptor* in Pascoli’s *Paedagogium*; the hardworking, heavily demanding narrator of “Oxen”; or *Salò*’s libertines. Rocha inherits these figures’ pedagogical function. Lording it over by simply standing over Berto, initiating her repetitive, rote movements, Rocha likewise lords it over *us* by lecturing to us, even while presenting “the last image of the West.” He does this programmatically, however, and *Claro* also illustrates the transformation—and negation—that such instruction can sponsor. For Berto’s monologue repeats Rocha’s with a difference: lyrically, again, she sets his kicks to work even while, moving in circles, she seems still to reel from them.

In this sense, she resembles Pascoli’s *pueri*, who find an exit in the very impasse of their scholastic punishment, or Pater’s Spartan schoolboys in “Lacadaemon,” whose social cicatrices become the very sites of their “reserve.”³¹ She exemplifies, in other words, the counter-progressive determination to locate ways out even in what look like the most imprisoning of situations—indeed, to imagine those ways out as immanent to scenes of imprisonment, and freedom as arising only from within constraints. More immediately, though, she resembles the piazza “nata all’epoca del fascismo” [born during the fascist period] shown late in *Claro*. This public square becomes a site of solidarity for “tutta la popolazione, per intero” [all the population, entirely], but only *after* it has been marked—produced even—by the regime, which had razed the buildings in the neighborhood to create room for tourists. A resident explains to Berto: “sulla situazione d’emarginazione si è creata una struttura sociale tutta particolare, però anche molto forte, molto combattiva” [on the basis of the situation of marginalization, a social structure was created, a special structure but one that was also very strong, very combative].

Though particular,³² the combat is collective and communist, and *Claro* builds unequivocally toward an affirmation of it. In the climactic and cacophonous scenes that follow the account of the formation of local solidarities that I have just quoted, Rocha shows rallies, red flags everywhere, proletarian protestors united in struggle. But these do not quite constitute scenes of anarchy, if only because *Claro* prepares for them by pointing to the “emarginazione”—the attempt at forceful relocation and minoritization—from which the collective struggle results. The condition of being a means to rulers’ ends thus precedes and even constitutes the precondition for struggle, and the latter retains the memory of the former. Without apologizing for the regimes that necessitate such rebellions,³³ Rocha indicates the possibilities for thought and action that they unwittingly bring into being. Staging their return repeatedly, he shows throughout *Claro* that such regimes must be reckoned with, like Rome itself.

The capacity for this reckoning constitutes the counter-progressive legacy, what the pedagogical projects that I have studied all leave behind: a process rather than a property. Pater might call this process “something to be done,” underscoring its status as a task always to be accomplished over again.³⁴ Pascoli might teach us to recognize it as homework repeatedly assigned. Joyce would no doubt urge us, in the end, to “try it on,” or copy it out big.³⁵ And Pasolini would seek, paradoxically, to preserve this process in and through its repudiation, its abjuration. Each of these authors *would* thus have prepared us, after all, to revisit Rome with Rocha, to see *Claro* without understanding clearly. What they could not have prepared us for, though, because they could only barely glimpse, is the decline and fall that Rocha’s film projects, the ruin for which it stands, as a last image that is not the West’s.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

¹ See Srinivas Aravamudan, “Theosophistries,” in *Guru English: South Asian Religion in a Cosmopolitan Language* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 115-126.

² Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Introduction: The Idea of Provincializing Europe” and chapter 1, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History,” in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3-46.

³ See Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Per il cinema*, vol. 2, ed. Walter Siti (Milan: Mondadori, 2000), 2057. The part of the “serva negra” is played by an Italian-born actress of Eritrean descent, Ines Pellegrini, who had memorably played Zemurrud in Pasolini’s *Il fiore delle Mille e una notte*.

⁴ Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*, ed. Michael Levey (New York: Penguin, 1985), 185.

⁵ Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 2, ed. Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), 1317.

⁶ Quoted in Bertrand Ficamos, “Glauber Rocha’s *Claro*, or the Tragic Legibility of Chaos,” in *Cinematic Rome*, ed. Richard Wigley (Leicester: Troubador, 2008), 137. No DVD of *Claro* exists, and I have been unable to track down the film except in an online version, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GRHOTMBbCY>. This fact points to one important difference between Rocha and Pasolini, one that I hope readers will keep in mind even while I proceed to emphasize the continuities between the two directors’ projects: their radically different standings within world cinema. Whereas an entire critical industry guarantees the circulation and institutional survival of Pasolini’s corpus, significant parts of Rocha’s still survive only precariously. This makes work on Rocha’s films more challenging, despite his considerable reputation in and beyond Brazil. For a while, the online version was gone; it reappeared just in time, fortunately, but had it not, I could not have written this coda, not having downloaded a copy of Rocha’s film after my initial viewing two years ago. To borrow one of Rocha’s own formulations, this marks one way in which colonialism still perdures.

⁷ Monica Dall’Asta and Maria Rita Nepomuceno, “Glauber Rocha con e contra Pasolini,” *Bianco e nero* 571 (2011): 21. Nepomuceno and Dall’Asta quote a letter from Rocha that, they write, characterizes *Claro* as “explicitly Pasolinian”: “Cristo arriva a Roma circondato dagli operai ... Cieco. Luce che acceca. Chiaro.” [Christ arrives in Rome surrounded by workers ... Blind. Light that’s blinding. Clearly.] (28, n. 4). Nepomuceno and Dall’Asta see both these remarks and *Claro* itself as referring back to *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (1964). I am not convinced by Rocha’s framing of the film as allegory, though, and locate the “Pasolinian” element of *Claro* elsewhere. See also Rocha’s short texts on Pasolini, “Un intellettuale europeo” and “Amor di maschio,” trans. Nepomuceno, *Bianco e nero* 571 (2011): 30-35. In both of these texts, appreciation is laced with criticism of the tendencies in Pasolini’s life and work that Rocha considers colonial.

⁸ Rocha’s exile was voluntary and preemptive. But in 2014, a Brazilian truth commission reportedly found that military officials had, in fact, identified the filmmaker as a target for assassination. See “Brazilian Dictatorship

Wanted to Get Rid of Filmmaker Glauber Rocha,” *Telesur* (August 18, 2014), <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Brazilian-dictatorship-wanted-to-get-rid-of-filmmaker-Glauber-Rocha-20140818-0009.html>.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 175. For another account of *Salò*'s closure, see Rei Terada, “Pasolini’s Acceptance,” in *The Ruins of Law*, ed. Klaus Mladek and George Edmondson (Duke University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁰ I am grateful to Paco Brito for proposing Roberto Bolaño’s *The Savage Detectives*, trans. Natasha Wimmer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007) as a possibility, and to Althea Wasow for introducing me to Paul Beatty’s astonishing novel *The Sellout* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015). Bolaño’s book both begins and ends with poetry lessons, and Beatty’s protagonist, who introduces backward reforms into local schools, also has a particular affinity for “rote” (106).

¹¹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 220. Joyce, of course, also approaches barbarism in “Oxen”: that episode’s “afterbirth” paragraphs, for instance, open onto slang and the language of advertising while also recounting students’ release from the maternity ward in which “Oxen” has taken place. Joyce thus stages an apparent explosion of linguistic norms as the end and undoing of the “embryonic development” unfolded in “Oxen” as a whole. In my reading of the episode, however, I stressed that this explosion is both operative all along and nowhere finalized. The episode’s “afterbirth” thus continues what I called the docile adherence to stylistic sources that complicates Joyce’s celebrated performance of defiance. For the norms of advertising and argot remain just that: norms. I take this to be one upshot of “Oxen”’s “afterbirth.” Similarly, I take the “first personal pronoun ... copied out big” at another moment in “Oxen” to mark the emptying out of authority at the very site of its inscription. Although, according to the logic of this passage, there is no inscription that cannot be invalidated, there is also no site, no elsewhere or outside in Joyce’s Ireland, that not has not already been inscribed. *Claro*’s brand of barbarism differs from Joyce’s in this sense, then: for all its insistence on the inescapability of empire and authority, Rocha’s film keeps inviting spectators to imagine the “decomposition” of both: “la destruction totale, definitive” [total, definitive destruction]. Relatedly, *Claro* keeps gesturing toward the “Third World” that it cannot show. Another, simpler difference follows from the different mediums in which Joyce and Rocha work. For film affords possibilities for cacophony (deliberately unrealized or at least understated in the “legible” *Salò*) that, with their simultaneity of sight and multiple sounds, far exceed what even Joyce could deliver. In another context, Roland Barthes distinguishes between true cacophony and what he calls “cacography”: “the writing of noise, of impure communication; but this noise is not confused, massive, unnameable; it is a clear noise made up of connections, not superpositions” Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 132. *Claro*, by contrast, uses superpositions to produce noise that is indeed confused.

¹² For a reading of the film that emphasizes exile, see Moura, “Glauber Rocha et l’image-exil dans *Claro*.”

¹³ “The use of words or expressions not in accordance with the classical standard of a language, especially such as are of foreign origin; [*originally*] the mixing of foreign words or phrases in Latin or Greek; *hence*, rudeness or unpolished condition of language” (*OED*).

¹⁴ Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit in “Merde Alors” *October* 13 (1980): 29.

¹⁵ For Stephen’s *claritas*, see James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Dover, 1994), 154-155; and for Molly’s “Yes,” *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler et al. (New York: Vintage, 1986), 18.1609.

¹⁶ Carlos Drummond de Andrade, *Claro enigma: Poesia* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1951).

¹⁷ I cite from a Portuguese translation of the interview with Rocha originally in *Paese sera* (July 23, 1975), excerpted at http://www.tempoglauber.com.br/f_claro.html.

¹⁸ Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*, 296.

¹⁹ Glauber Rocha, “Uma estética da fome,” *Revista Civilização Brasileira* 3 (1965): 170; “The [sic] Aesthetics of Hunger,” trans. Burnes Hollyman and Randal Johnson, in *Twenty-Five Years of the New Latin American Cinema*, ed. Michael Chanan (London: BFI, 1983), 13. Note that the English translation is abridged and otherwise inaccurate. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text, with page numbers from the Portuguese text followed by those in the English. Compare this “germe vivo” to the “living word” emphasized in Hudson Moura’s account of the movement in “Glauber Rocha et l’image-exil dans *Claro*,” *Cinémas* 15.1 (2004): 86.

²⁰ I am thinking in particular of Jared Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

²¹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 130. Fanon quotes phrase “mnemonic residues” from Freud on page 111 of the same text. See also Rocha’s tribute to “pai Fanon” [father Fanon] in “Amor di maschio,” 33.

²² Here and below, I transcribe the film’s monologues, doing my best to reproduce both errors and the mixing of languages, although the latter, in particular, has not always been easy to render precisely.

²³ James Phillips, “Glauber Rocha: Hunger and Garbage,” *Cinematic Thinking: Philosophical Approaches to the New Cinema*, ed. James Phillips (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 93; 92. Further citations are given parenthetically in the text.

²⁴ And when her interlocutor names “maestro Rossellini,” she makes the sign of the cross, as if some directors were not only despotic but also divine.

²⁵ For an account of *Claro* as autobiography and a reading of the film that emphasizes Rocha’s “vulnerable politics,” see José Gatti, “Impersonations of Glauber Rocha by Glauber Rocha,” in *The Cinema of Me: The Self and Subjectivity in First-Person Documentary*, ed. Alisa Lebow (London: Wallflower Press, 2012).

²⁶ Moura misidentifies the statue, claiming that it is of Augustus Octavian, the emperor Rocha will go on to name in the voiceover that captions this shot. Moura, “Glauber Rocha et l’image-exil dans *Claro*,” 92. This slip perhaps illustrates the surprising power of Rocha’s monologue; for all its apparent incoherence, the repetitive voiceover prompts the critic to repeat, rather than interrogate, its phrases.

²⁷ Thus whereas Gatti argues that *Claro* points up “the uselessness of a certain political cinema based on the repetition of empty directives,” I would counter that the film in fact engages in this repetition precisely. What else but an “empty directive” is it when Rocha instructs spectators to behold “the last image of the West” in a frame that neither ends his film nor effects the decline and fall of what *Claro* calls “democratic imperialism”? See Gatti, “Impersonations of Glauber Rocha by Glauber Rocha.”

²⁸ See, again, Dall’Asta and Nepomuceno, “Glauber Rocha con e contra Pasolini,” 21

²⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 168.

³⁰ For an argument that emphasizes the place of spontaneity in Rocha’s work, see Phillips, “Glauber Rocha: Hunger and Garbage,” 102, 106, 108. Again, the phrase “priority of the other” is used several times in Jean Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness*, ed. John Fletcher (New York: Routledge, 1999), e.g. 74.

³¹ Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism* (London: Macmillan, 1901), 221.

³² Although he does not engage with *Claro* specifically, Gilles Deleuze offers a still-resonant account of Rocha's turn away from the position staked out in texts like "Uma estética da fome." Early on, Deleuze writes, Rocha could sustain his belief in "a united or unified people." Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 220. But this belief gave way to a sense of the irreducible plurality—and particularity—of peoples. For "modern political cinema," as forged by Rocha and others, proceeds from the recognition that "*the people are missing*" (216). Missing, that is, constitutively: not only in the making, awaiting "invention" (217), the people are *always* multiple and heterogeneous. It follows that no amount of "awareness" will bring about the collective oneness that classical cinema both presupposes and enacts (218). It is not enough, then, to become conscious, where, as in classical cinema, this marks the first step toward belonging to a people moving forward; for those in the third world made into "perpetual minorities," such narratives of advance become untenable (217): "there is no longer a 'general line,' that is, of evolution from the Old to the New, or of revolution which produces a leap from one to the other" (218).

It is, Deleuze writes, in the context of this discrediting of progress narratives that Rocha radically complicates his youthful stance: "The death-knell for becoming conscious was precisely the consciousness that there were no people, but always several peoples, an infinity of peoples, who remained to be united, or should note be united, in order for the problem to change" (220). That the people "should not be united" means that no single voice or language, no one "speech act" or "collective utterance," will ever suffice (222). Hence what I have called the cacophony in *Claro*: a barbarism that goes beyond the mere blending or misuse of languages, one that ruins in advance the attempt finally to differentiate, say, Greeks from Persians, Romans from Brazilians, or ancients from moderns.

Indeed, *Claro* does not end with the image of assembled crowds, but rather with a series of dissolves that superimpose faces, bodies, headlines, murals, centerfolds, Ho Chi Minh. Note that here, too, a ruler remains amid what might appear to be anarchy. Yet even under the sign of Ho Chi Minh, these fragments will not be united, although they may share a frame, vie for attention, coexist incommensurably.

To be sure, unanimity was never the counter-progressive pedagogue's aspiration. The old school as imagined by this teacher was always a repository of difference, and its use in scenes of instruction always enabled the present to alter itself. Still, in their commitment to constraint, in their remaining within Latinity, in their acute sense of the immanence of exits—in all of these ways, the works that I study in previous chapters all foreclose the possibility that, as Deleuze writes, the problem will change.

³³ In another context, Judith Butler distinguishes between the idea "that violence can be understood to bring the human into being" and the claim "that colonization is a precondition for humanization." The latter claim characterizes apologies for colonialism, whereas the former underwrites Fanon's anticolonial stance. See "Violence, Nonviolence: Sartre on Fanon," in *Senses of the Subject* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 171-198; 184. I am suggesting that *Claro* makes the former, not the later, kind of claim. But on Rocha's controversial late-career praise for leading figures in the Brazilian military government, see Serge Daney, "La mort de Glauber Rocha," *Ciné journal*, vol. 1. (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1998), 54-60; and, in more detail, Carlos Lopes, "Glauber Rocha e a ditadura," *O Martelo* 22, <http://omartelo.com/omartelo22/materia1.html>.

³⁴ Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*, 137.

³⁵ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 14.1591.

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