

**“A Secret Pleasure in Being Mastered”: Play, Power and the Morality of Art in
J.M. Barrie's *Sentimental Tommy* and *Tommy and Grizel*.**

Sarah Green

MA by Research

University of York

Department of English and Related Literatures

September 2012

Word Count: 29998

Abstract

This dissertation analyses J.M. Barrie's novels *Sentimental Tommy* (1896) and *Tommy and Grizel* (1900) in terms of their narrative explorations of the moral implications of art. In particular, it finds the novels preoccupied with the power relations between reader and text, and with the question of whether the playful pleasures of art can ever justify the moral problems created when its power relations are reproduced in social relationships.

The introduction identifies these concerns in the style of the novels through close reading. Chapter one establishes the thesis that, within these novels, art is defined as excess and inconsistency, producing some surprising correspondences to late Nineteenth-Century art theory. This 'art' is personified by the protagonist, Tommy, who is shown to have both learned and inherited his artistic disposition. Chapter two identifies a complementary personification, of social morality, in the character of Grizel, which enables their relationship symbolically to play out tensions between art and society. This chapter also finds that these tensions are conceived in the novels as a debate on the gendering of power within heterosexual erotic relationships, wherein the intruding power dynamics of art disturb normative gender roles.

Chapter three, conversely, examines a selection of Tommy's non-romantic relationships and finds them to reveal a model of human selfhood as innately inconsistent, though necessarily modified by social relations. As such, Barrie also, and equally, portrays art as potentially therapeutic, since it allows the expression of individualistic concerns. Finally, the conclusion proposes that this ambivalence towards the morality of art culminates, both in these novels and in Barrie's later work, in a symbolic and paradigmatic mother/eternal boy relationship. Acknowledgement of

the complexity of this symbolism, I propose, is of consequence, partly because it is precisely this aspect of Barrie's work that has survived and become significant within Western culture.

Contents

Introduction	5
Chapter One: The Artist	18
Chapter Two: Of Masterful Men	42
Grizel	47
Tommy	54
Chapter Three: Inconsistency and the Individual	67
Conclusion: Mother and Eternal Boy	85
Bibliography	95

Introduction

How if there were no centre at all, but just one alley after another, and the whole world a
labyrinth
without end or issue?

R.L. Stevenson, 'Crabbed Age and Youth', in *Virginibus Puerisque* (p. 112).

Sentimental Tommy (1896),¹ J.M. Barrie's third full-length novel, begins with the following sentence:

The celebrated Tommy first comes into view on a dirty London stair, and he was in sexless garments, which were all he had, and he was five, and so though we are looking at him, we must do it sideways, lest he sit down hurriedly to hide them (p. 1).

It is not a difficult sentence: the majority of adult readers will have no difficulty understanding it. It is, however, a complex one, and this complexity reveals much that is interesting about Barrie's style,² and the centrality of that style to his authorial vision.³

The sentence draws attention to the relationship between narrator, reader and

¹ J.M. Barrie, *Sentimental Tommy: The Story of His Boyhood* (London: Cassell, 1929; first published 1896). All subsequent references will be to this edition, hereafter 'ST', and will be given within the text.

² By 'style', I refer not to elements that constitute a text, such as idiom and metaphor, but to the way in which these elements are utilised. To illustrate: it is equally possible for the same idiom to be used in different styles - parody would be otherwise impossible - and for different idioms to be used in the same style. Within Barrie's work the latter can be particularly seen in the different idioms/metaphors etcetera used in the same style in his Thrums writing (*Auld Licht Idylls* [1888], *A Window in Thrums* [1889], *The Little Minister* [1891]) and his London writing (*My Lady Nicotine* [1890], *When a Man's Single* [1888], *The Little White Bird* [1902]).

subject matter, while concealing, for the time being at least, that between narrator and author. “We” creates a perspective shared between narrator and reader that must then be occupied, suggesting that both narrator and reader have a presence in the text and cannot remain anonymous; they exist, they interact, and thus they are susceptible to personality, to character and form. “We” presupposes an “I” and a “you”, and these words contain the embryo of selfhood.

However, rather than realising his narrator and reader as characters within the text, Barrie preserves the potential that their existence creates, by playing with the possible forms that a narrator/reader relationship might take, repeatedly refashioning their mutually dependant personalities as the sentence, and ultimately the novel, progresses. There are many ways for a narrator to address a reader, and each alters the assumptions that can be made about both; a certain reader entails a certain narrator, and *vice versa*.⁴ Furthermore each refashioning of the narrator/reader relationship also involves the reimagining of the subject matter (the *raison d'être* for any relationship between narrator and reader). Just as description creates anew, each narrator/reader recreates the subject matter through their manner of perceiving and describing it. For

³ In considering Barrie as having a conscious, unified authorial vision, I contradict the majority of post-1904 (that is, post-*Peter Pan*) criticism. Only in recent years has Barrie's work outside of *Peter Pan* again been considered seriously; for example, by Leonee Ormond (*J.M. Barrie* [Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press Scottish Writers Series, 1987; first published 1987]), R.D.S. Jack (*The Road to the Never Land: A Reassessment of J.M. Barrie's Dramatic Art* [Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1991] and *Myths and the Mythmaker: A Literary Account of J.M. Barrie's Formative Years* [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010]), Andrew Nash (*Kailyard and Scottish Literature* [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007]) and Jacqueline Rose (*The Case of Peter Pan; or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992; first published 1984]). For the neglect of Barrie in certain contexts, and his mythical reputation as a simplistic and child-like writer, see Jack, *Myths and the Mythmaker*, ch. 1.

⁴ This conceptualization of an artwork as creating its audience is more common in film theory than literary criticism. For example, feminist film theory has usefully pointed out the way in which much cinema, through the types of pleasure that it generates, manufactures a masculinized viewer (see Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* 1, 3 [Autumn, 1975], 6-18). Furthermore though understanding of this relationship has become more nuanced, film theory has retained this sense of creative power-play between reader and audience, and the gender-play inherent in it (see Gaylyn Studlar, *In the Realm of Pleasure: Von Sternberg, Dietrich, and the Masochist Aesthetic* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988] and Barbara Mennel, *The Representation of Masochism and Queer Desire in Film and Literature* [Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007]).

instance, a narrator beginning with 'once upon a time' entails a reader with a certain set of anticipations, which then influence the way in which the subject matter is both narrated and read, as it must be shaped either within or against them.⁵ Barrie's style therefore engages not only in the creation of narrator and reader as inconsistent personalities, but in the inevitable instability of the subject matter that such a narrator and reader engage in creating.

It follows that the closer any character is scrutinised by this unstable narrator/reader, the more susceptible that character will be to instability and change. *Sentimental Tommy* begins with a narrator and reader overtly observing a character. Before the opening sentence, the novel presents a title and subtitle, "Sentimental Tommy: The Story of His Boyhood". There is reference to genre, as the subtitle suggests that we are to expect a *bildungsroman*, a novel depicting a child's growth to maturity in the manner of Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850). The only disruption of this anticipation is the word "sentimental" which, though not entirely undermining the expectation of *bildungsroman*, sits uneasily with the genre, suggesting that Tommy is always-already 'sentimental' (a word with negative connotations in the late nineteenth-century, see chapter one below) and does not grow out of it. The reader constructed by this title is therefore a suspicious *bildungsroman* reader, anticipating perhaps a first-person introspective narrator (the boy grown older and wiser in reassurance of the success to result from the novel's trials) yet uncertain how such a narrator can be reconciled with the given title. Such a reader would be expecting the unexpected, anticipating the undermining of their anticipations.

Upon the non-appearance of the *bildungsroman*, then, readers so constituted may experience (un- or semi-consciously) both disappointment and gratification

⁵ Although the creation of, and play with, readerly anticipation is by no means limited to the play of genre, these modes of play are perhaps the easiest to identify and talk about as they are more easily quantifiable than, say, anticipation based on social norms.

simultaneously, being confirmed in their anticipation of disappointment (though the actual experience of this depends upon the reader's *becoming* the reader expected by the text). This is an important dynamic in Barrie's work, as it aims to give two kinds of pleasure at once. In *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), Roland Barthes writes of the different qualities of pleasure (contentment) and bliss (rapture, *jouissance*) within a text. Pleasure, for Barthes, is that which gratifies, contents and fixes, while bliss is created through disappointment, deferral, inconsistency; that which breaks with the culturally expected rather than satisfying it, thus causing a type of exquisite dissolution and destruction both of culture and of self.⁶ From the very beginning, *Sentimental Tommy* is established as both a text of pleasure and a text of bliss, promising both satisfaction and fulfilment, and the ecstasy of dissolution and loss. Both of these are then perpetuated in the multiplicity of identity of both reader and narrator, allowing the reader to experience many poses of personality, and thus simultaneous fixity and inconsistency, fulfilment and dissolution.⁷

However, in order to experience this, a reader must consent to be *the* reader; to play, at least for the moment of reading, at being the reader desired by the text, and created in relation to the narrator: a textual tyranny that Barthes does not acknowledge. The text desires to dominate the reader, but as the reader is not wholly of the text he/she cannot avoid existing beyond it, with the option to cease reading. Readers must therefore *allow* the text to tyrannise and seduce, must be complicit in their own seduction if pleasure is to be gained (the narrator may be thought of as the style in

⁶ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975, originally published as *Le Plaisir du Texte*, 1973). Barthes acknowledges (p. 19) that this distinction is confused by the applicability of the word 'pleasure' to both the reader's enjoyment of the text, and to a subsection of this enjoyment, of which 'bliss' is also one. I here refer to his distinction between "the text of pleasure" and "the text of bliss" (p. 14), though the two combined can be said to make up "the pleasure of the text".

⁷ The connection between Barthes and Barrie, though in a different context, has been made by Carol Mavor in *Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J.M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Marcel Proust, and D.W. Winnicott*. (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

which this seduction is effected). The reader must not be exactly passive, must be changing and manoeuvring all the time, yet must give their selves up to the text and surrender to the imaginative roles prescribed for them. It is to this teachable reader only that the text offers both pleasure and bliss.

The opening sentence of *Sentimental Tommy* is illustrative of both the inherent inconsistency in reader/narrator/character, and of the power relationships that this style creates. The text first introduces a character, “the celebrated Tommy”. This phrase both gratifies and disappoints the reader expecting a *bildungsroman*, offering an exceptional character deserving to be written about, but prematurely: a character who should not be celebrated *quite* yet. Although reassuringly claiming that Tommy deserves to be celebrated, will do something to merit our attention, still the phrase's suggestion that Tommy is already celebrated before he does these things is disarming. By whom, we may ask, is he celebrated? By critics, reviewers and audiences later in the narrative, but now? There is an uncomfortable sense that in reading about Tommy, in choosing to direct our attention to him, we are celebrating him, making him “the celebrated Tommy”. This reliance of Tommy's deserving of his audience's inclination for celebrating is later suggested by the narratorial claim “unless you admired Tommy he was always a boor in your presence, shy and self-distrustful” (*ST*, p. 408). This reader/narrator/character relationship is established by the very fact of reading, in which narrator presents, reader receives, and by meriting such attention the character is created as deserving of it. Tommy's character is primarily formed by the fact of his being looked at: a position which, as protagonist of a novel, he cannot avoid.

This act of looking is made overt in the clause “first comes into view”, though attention here is shifted to the relationship between reader and narrator, and how that relationship impacts on that between reader and character, and indeed narrator and

character. If the character comes into the reader's view, we may ask two questions: where is this reader in relation to the character, and how is movement achieved? The reader is assumed to be in a stable position from which movement can be observed, but Tommy is not moving. Rather, he is standing on the stairs of his building, and cannot “come” in any active sense. The phrase must therefore be read more as stage direction than opening sentence of a novel, with narrator acting as curtain operator, revealing Tommy to a seated audience, and the present tense “comes” consolidating this immediacy. However this actor/stage-manager/audience relationship does not entirely elucidate the phrase, as the present tense of “comes into view” also presupposes that Tommy was standing there before we looked. This moment is nothing more than the conjunction of our lives and his, orchestrated by the narrator; he is unaware of our gaze, and would change his position if aware of it. The relationship therefore becomes less theatre-going and more of a peepshow, where the narrator, in arranging Tommy's naïve movement, allows that narratorial/readerly “we” to exercise perceptive power over the character in the way that a voyeur revels in a powerful gaze. Yet such naïvety on Tommy's part does not quite fit with his characterisation as “the celebrated Tommy”; those who are celebrated, we may feel, tend to seek out their fame (and there is indeed something of the exhibitionist about Tommy). The relationship is therefore fluid, playful, as we can choose between offering a solicited or unsolicited gaze, or indeed both. Such readerly potential is perpetuated as the sentence advances, as Tommy could “sit down hurriedly” to hide his “sexless garments” either to evade observation, or coyly. It is therefore up to us to locate power in either ourselves or in a seductive character; so long as we surrender to the revealing power of the narrator.

It is not only *inconsistency* of personalities and relationship, then, that characterises this style and this sentence, but the play of *power* within those

relationships. The sentence can be a text of pleasure in that it allows us to dominate Tommy or to be dominated by him, depending on our taste as readers. But it is also a text of bliss for the reader who wishes to preserve both of those possibilities, to engage with both at once and therefore give up the satisfaction of a fixed power relationship in return for perpetual power-play.⁸ The only thing that cannot be played with, the only uncompromisingly fixed point, is the narrator's power. The tyranny of the text is here expressed as the tyranny of the narrator, who is portrayed as controlling the reader's experience.

This masterliness of the text, with its suggestion of ill-advised consensual surrender that it creates, is unproblematic when isolated within art. However, the interaction between text and reader transcends art's boundaries, and Barrie's work seems to imply keen awareness of this. Power lies in potential action, the ability not only to dominate but to effect and to change; the text's power thus entails the extension of its influence beyond art, to the reader and, more importantly, the society of which that reader is a member. Furthermore, the responsible or irresponsible deployment of such power within a society is generally considered a moral point, particularly when 'moral' is understood in Barrie's own Victorian-inspired sense.⁹ In this dissertation I follow Stefan Collini in considering 'morality', in accordance to common Victorian

⁸ The term "power-play" is used by Tanya Krzywinska in *Sex and the Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press, 2006), p. 188, to describe the 'fantasy', and thus 'safe', element of BDSM (Bondage/Discipline/Sadism/Masochism) sexual relationships. However, just as Krzywinska points out that this 'safety' can not be guaranteed between a BDSM performance on film, and the way in which that performance is viewed, my argument here relies on the impossibility of guaranteeing such 'safety' between text and reader. I thus extend the use of the phrase 'power-play' to encompass the play of safety/danger, unreality/reality between text/reader, a play that is always threatening to cease being play at all.

⁹ For the purposes of this dissertation, 'society' can be understood as "the state or condition of living or associating with others" (OED, sense 2, accessed online 10th September 2012). Society is created whenever a person is associated with another person, and such association need not be active; as humanity is not self-generating, so we are associated with others from and because of birth, in a way that cannot be erased however we may strive to extract ourselves.

understanding, as the “set of rules of conduct or obligations towards others”,¹⁰ which regulates these inevitable interpersonal associations, allowing people to live together productively and peaceably.¹¹ This definition, though inevitably reductive, allows a working model that comes close to much Victorian moral feeling and seems to be implicit in Barrie's work (see chapter one below). In this model - essentially utilitarian in the widest sense of the word - the 'good' of the individual is conflated with the 'good' of society, and anti-sociality can be approximated to immorality.¹²

Textual power-play becomes problematic in such a moral climate. Though the text cannot actively participate in society, it nevertheless exercises power, being able to manipulate readers and thus to have an impact within society; and so, it may be felt, must be available for moral consideration. The text can be conceived as generating the *appearance* of moral action without moral agency: consequence without responsibility. Further, this relationship between reader and text can likewise be thought to be open to moral judgement if the text is *imagined* as an moral agent: if it is believed that there is some agency in the text, whether in the illusion of narrator or omnipotent author. In the Tommy novels, I will argue, an environment is created for such moral consideration of the text/reader relationship by Barrie's collapsing of it into that of artist/audience. Barrie creates the artist (Tommy) as personification of his (Barrie's) own style, and therein creates the text as moral agent, exploring the 'immorality' that can be felt in the text's relationship with the reader. In particular, he examines the extent to which the reader/text relationship can be overlain with late Nineteenth-Century

¹⁰ Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 63.

¹¹ I use this definition of 'morality' in order to exclude a religious sense, in which morality can exist outside of society, concerning only the individual and God.

¹² Throughout this essay I use the word 'utilitarian' to indicate a value system based on utility to the greatest number, rather than the more ambiguous 'happiness' used by Utilitarian theorists such as Bentham, Mill and Sidgwick. The relationship between different generations of Utilitarian thought and art, though fascinating, is too complex to be entered into here.

conceptualizations of power within gender difference, and the social problems this collation can create for (particularly male) artists, and for the (non-artistic) women with whom they interact (as I shall show in chapter three).

Both the plot and symbolic structure of *Sentimental Tommy* arise from the problems and pleasures of Barrie's style. Throughout the novels this textual power-play is transposed onto social relationships, acting as a paradigmatic relationship that characters cannot avoid. Further, Barrie's building of his Tommy novels around the style in which they are written - his construction of characters, plots and symbolisms in accordance to the power-relationship between text and reader - corresponds to his literary-critical thinking. Barrie's artistic ideal was just such an interdependence between style and subject matter. In an 1891 article entitled "Mr Kipling's Stories" he illustrated this theory: "words", he writes, "are what we spell ideas with ... the ideas are the matter, and the spelling is the style".¹³ Consequently, "unless we have the right letters arranged in one way we do not have the word, and similarly, without the right words arranged in one way, we do not get the idea".¹⁴ For Barrie, as for many others, meaning is created equally between style and matter, and one cannot exist without the other; if a thing were not described in a certain way, it would not exist. Thus in response to Mark Twain's claim that "it would be a good thing to read Mr Kipling's writings for their style alone, if there were no story back of it", Barrie writes, "this might be a good thing, if it were not impossible, the style being the story".¹⁵ However, though Barrie's idiosyncratic style is noticeable from his earliest work, it is only in *Sentimental Tommy*, along with its sequel *Tommy and Grizel* (1900),¹⁶ that he allows

¹³ Barrie, 'Mr Kipling's Stories', *The Contemporary Review*, 59 (March, 1891), p. 365.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Barrie, *Tommy and Grizel* (London: Cassell, 1900). All subsequent references will be to this edition, referred to as 'TG', and will be given within the text.

subject matter to arise directly from, and explore, the power relationships inherent in style. He does this, I shall argue, because they are novels about art and the artist; about how art is created, and the impact of that process upon the non-artistic world.

The result is a narrative about artistic power relationships; how they can give extreme pleasure, and yet contain the perpetual possibility that one is being seduced into complicity in one's own exploitation. This ambivalence about the morality of the text's relationship with the reader, about the power that the text exercises and whether a text can be trusted to use power responsibly is analogized in the novel to the question of what happens when the artist reaches beyond art, and recreates the power-play of art within social relationships. The narrative therefore explores the incompatibilities between artistic and inartistic relationships, particularly (hetero)sexual relationships, where power-play has a different set of implications and consequences against which artistic power-play may clash.

Such a hypothesis risks portraying Barrie's Tommy novels as introspective, reflective only of their own concerns. So they would be, were they not ambivalent in their opinion of themselves, at once celebratory and critical; if at one moment they seem to cry with Tommy, "am I not a wonder?" (*TG*, p. 185), in another they seem to say sadly with Grizel, "I wanted to admire you, and I can't" (p. 101). Furthermore, they are written at a time when society was warmly debating the moral implications of fashions for art that claimed to be reflective only of its own concerns; art that existed for art's sake. Barrie was not the first (nor the last) to find the power dynamics of art morally troubling, and he does not ignore this relevance, but uses it to connect his novels to the contemporaneous debates over the ways in which art should relate to life. These connections are in themselves criticisms of self-sufficient art, suggesting as they do that art must be concerned with something beyond itself. In the course of my

analysis of the way in which Barrie's style produces his plots and symbolisms, I will draw out some of the key elements of these connections, offering a contextualisation of Barrie within 1890s art theory.¹⁷

R.D.S. Jack has argued, against a critical tendency to mistake Barrie's simplicity of diction for simplicity of thought, that Barrie operates symbolically and allegorically; symbolically in that his texts create an artificial reality in which objects, events and characters have the potential to carry multiple meanings; and allegorically in that these symbols interlock to create not only internal strands of logic within one text (Barrie often creates many overlapping, even contradictory strands), but an accumulative logic *between* texts.¹⁸ Part of my aim will be to test this theory through an analysis of some of the internal logic networks of the Tommy novels, arising from a narrative realisation of stylistic concerns. In particular, my conclusion will show how Barrie's meditation on the power relationships between reader and text eventually finds expression in the symbolic relationship between mother and eternal boyhood. Barrie's preoccupation with this relationship has had a significant influence on Western culture; though (and perhaps because of this) it has suffered greatly from simplification. I argue that the mother/eternal boy power-play becomes a symbolic paradigm in Barrie's later work, through which these ambiguities of power, and the problems that they produce, can be expressed.

One final point must be established before I can proceed to analysis. In speaking of text/reader relations as a system of erotics, a desiring and seducing, I of

¹⁷ To date, the consideration of Barrie in this context has been limited to one essay, Paul Fox's 'The Time of His Life: Peter Pan and the Decadent Nineties.' in *J.M. Barrie's 'Peter Pan' In and Out of Time: A Children's Classic at 100*, ed. Donna R. White and C. Anita Tarr (Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 23-45, though this essay does not consider Barrie's 1890s writing. Andrew Nash identifies Tommy's approach to art as that of the "decadent aesthete", but does not take this contextualisation further ('"Trying to be a Man": J.M. Barrie and Sentimental Masculinity', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* [April, 1999], p. 123).

¹⁸ Jack, *Myths and the Mythmaker*, *passim*.

course not only follow a tradition of French theory but also reproduce the metaphoric structuring of Barrie's novels. This is not with the intention of influencing readers – making the connection seem, through repetition, somehow more 'true' – but because I believe Barrie to have found an effective language for the articulation of a text/reader relationship that is as valid now as it was in the late Nineteenth Century. René Girard argues that criticism “should formalize implicit or already half-explicit systems” within texts, though such formalizing may be an impossible task, a description of the indescribable.¹⁹ A language of erotics is, it seems to me, the best way of formalizing, and articulating, the complex network of influence, anticipation and correspondence that exists between text and reader, and will be so until both text and reader have changed beyond recognition. Though the reader now is possibly not quite as in the 1890s, Barrie's texts are the same. Part of my intent in this dissertation will be to separate those differences (the perhaps outdated anticipations that Barrie's texts assume they will find, or can easily induce in their readers) from the similarities, the ways in which the text now, as then, seeks to mould, manipulate and seduce its readers.

I will end this introduction with a brief summary of the events of *Sentimental Tommy* and *Tommy and Grizel*, without knowledge of which any analysis would be useless. The novels are semi-realist, apparently set between London of the 1860-80s and Scotland of the 1830-60s.²⁰ *Sentimental Tommy* begins with Tommy as a small child living with his mother on a dilapidated London street. This mother is a native of Thrums, a small weaving town in Scotland where she left a man she loved to marry a charming rogue, Tam Sandys, who, taking her to London, treated her badly before dying and leaving her, and their son Tommy, in poverty. Soon after the novel begins,

¹⁹ René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1965; originally published as *Mensonge Romantique et Vérité Romanesque*, 1961), p. 3.

²⁰ See Nash, *Kailyard and Scottish Literature*, ch. 2, for more on this incongruity.

Tommy's sister Elspeth is born, and as she grows their mother weakens and dies. They are then taken to Thrums by Aaron Latta, their mother's early love, where they meet Grizel, the daughter of the Painted Lady (a local prostitute). The novel then becomes episodic, and their relationships develop, largely around Jacobite-themed games played in the woods. However, as he grows older, it becomes evident that Tommy must choose a career. Unfortunately he fails to carry a university bursary, and also fails to win an essay prize, and is thus sent to the herding.

Tommy and Grizel opens with Tommy at sixteen arriving with Elspeth in London to work as assistant to a hack writer, Pym. Over the next few years it becomes obvious that he is intended for literature, and he finds success by publishing a book of advisory letters to young men about to be married. Although previously uninterested in women, he then begins to realise that he is very good at flirting with them, and enjoys doing so. Eventually he and Elspeth return to Thrums, where they again meet Grizel, now grown into a beautiful young woman. She and Tommy have a stormy relationship, within which she admits to her loving him and he gallantly pretends to love her, although incapable of loving anyone for longer than a few minutes. All ends badly, and Tommy leaves for London. Grizel pines and finally decides Tommy is ill and needs her, and so sets off for London. Following him to Switzerland she catches him flirting outrageously with a woman named Lady Pippinworth, and lapses into insanity. Returning to Thrums, Tommy cares for and marries Grizel, and though she eventually recovers they never have children. Finally, Tommy encounters Lady Pippinworth one day, who reveals that she burnt the manuscript of his unpublished masterpiece. He chases her, and dies by accidentally hanging himself while climbing over a fence.

Chapter One: The Artist

Religion, sex, art, and drugs ... I tend to put those all under the umbrella of surrender ... co-operation and surrender are actually parts of the same skill.

Brian Eno, 'Composers as Gardeners', lecture at Serpentine Gallery, 16th October 2011.

My claim that the Tommy novels are primarily concerned with art and the artist requires some qualification. Though early reviewers recognised in both novels a consideration of the artistic temperament,¹ recent criticism has tended to interpret Tommy's profession as a manifestation of Barrie's supposedly autobiographical leanings.² Tommy however is not an artist incidentally, his profession arbitrary and selected purely because it happens to be the author's own profession; but rather, literature is emphatically said and shown to be the only profession that he *can* follow:

1 See, for example: [Anon.], 'Tommy and Grizel by J.M. Barrie', *The Review of Reviews* (November, 1900), 499; [Anon.], 'Tommy and Grizel by J.M. Barrie', *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, 5, 1 (January, 1901), 195; Arthur Quiller-Couch, 'Mr Barrie's Sentimental Tommy: A Causerie', *The Contemporary Review*, 70 (November, 1896), 653; [Anon.], 'A New Boy in Fiction', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 160, 974 (December, 1896), 800.

2 Few contemporaneous reviews treated the Tommy novels as directly autobiographical. More tended to read them as a version of Burn's life (see Quiller-Couch, 'Mr Barrie's Sentimental Tommy: A Causerie', p. 653) or Stevenson's (Barrie himself claimed as much, see *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Bradford A Booth and Ernest Mehew [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994-5] vol. 8, p. 321), or as a theoretical might-have-been constructed from exaggerations of aspects of the author's own character. In contrast, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Epistemology of the Closet* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994; first published 1990) interprets the novels as autobiographically playing out of Barrie's own *sexual* rather than artistic problems (ch. 4), while Jack in *Myths and the Mythmaker*, despite arguing against the academic tendency to misread Barrie's texts, accidentally reports and repeats a misreading of *Tommy and Grizel* from Harry M. Geduld's psychoanalytic biography *Sir James Barrie* (New York: Twayne, 1971) which, in having Grizel and Tommy marry earlier and take a honeymoon in Switzerland, makes the novel more closely mirror Barrie's own marriage and honeymoon (*Myths and the Mythmaker*, p. 239). A welcome divergence is Ormond's *J.M. Barrie* which, despite referring to the "strong autobiographical element" in the Tommy novels, nevertheless reads them as evaluating the place of art within society (p. 56). For more on the overwhelming tendency of modern readers to treat Barrie's novels as autobiographical, and the relationship of this tendency to the myth of Barrie as simplistic and childlike writer, see Jack's *Myths and the Mythmaker*, ch. 1.

“if I could make a living at anything else” admits Tommy, “I would give up writing altogether” (*TG*, p. 381). This point is fundamental to the structuring of both novels, and to a reading of Tommy's character as a product of Barrie's conception of a text's impact upon readers and society. Tommy's being considered as inherently an artist by disposition instead of by mere accident makes his every action an inevitable application of artistic power-play to non-artistic life, as he never ceases to act like an artist, and thus his life entails a reiteration of the pleasures and problems described above. Furthermore, I will test the theory that Tommy is an artist both inherently (that is, biologically) and environmentally, since the Tommy novels were written at a time when the various claims of nature and nurture on the formation of character were increasingly debated.³

The word 'artist' is used to describe Tommy long before he starts writing. In chapter 6 of *Sentimental Tommy*, he discovers a London street full of Thrums people, and though they “would have been content to accept him as a London waif who lived somewhere round the corner” (p. 63), Tommy is not content to be so easily accepted. Instead he adopts the identity of his friend Shovel, claiming “his name was Tommy Shovel, and that his old girl walloped him, and his father found dogs, all which inventions Thrums Street accepted as true” (p. 63). This behaviour is accounted for not by appeal to the badly brought up child's disposition towards lying,⁴ but by the assertion that “to trick people so simply ... is not agreeable to an artist” (p. 63). Likewise, on Tommy's first day in Thrums he fights with another boy, Francie Crabb, who had been harassing Grizel. Having triumphed, Tommy then forces Francie to

3 Though the terms had been contrasted long before 1837, they were popularized in their modern sense by Francis Galton in 1874: “nature is all that a man brings with himself into the world; nurture is every influence that affects him after his birth” (Francis Galton, *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture* [London: Macmillan, 1874]), p. 12.

4 See Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 60-74.

thank God for his conqueror, a final humiliation prefaced with the words “being an artist, Tommy had kept his best for the end (and made it up first)” (p. 146).

In both these episodes, the identity theft in the first case and the humiliation in the second, Tommy becomes an 'artist' when he creates something in excess of what the situation demands: at one point it is said of Tommy that “whatever he is he will be it in excess” (p. 332). Though not quite in accordance with Oscar Wilde's famous epigram “all art is quite useless”,⁵ there is a divorce here between pragmatism and art, between what is needed and what is pleasurable, that not only separates Tommy from a utilitarian vision of society but is reminiscent of late nineteenth-century Aesthetic theory, or what has been called the “high Aestheticism” of Walter Pater and Wilde.⁶ Barrie makes this connection explicit in chapter 8 of *Sentimental Tommy*, where Tommy pretends to be a juvenile criminal in order to gain access to a charitable dinner, but finds himself enjoying the pretence more than the dinner. On the way there, his friend Shovel enquires what makes his face shine: was it anticipation of the food? “No, it was hardly that, but Tommy could not tell what it was. He and the saying about art for art's sake were in the streets that night, looking for each other” (p. 83). Pleasurable excess is not only identified as artistic, but is referred to using Aesthetic theory's best known slogan, though the failure of Tommy and the phrase to find each other reflects Barrie's desire to preserve the tangential nature of this connection. The Tommy novels are not *about* Aesthetic theory, but they present some interesting similarities of which Barrie is anxious that his readers should remain mindful.

5 Oscar Wilde, 'Preface to Dorian Gray', in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellmann (London: W. H. Allen, 1970), 235-36; first published 1891.

6 See Linda Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art: the Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996), p. xi. This phrase, however seemingly meaningless, is useful in distinguishing the aestheticism of Pater and Wilde from the more socially engaged aestheticism of Ruskin and Morris. Morris in particular eventually condemned the phrase art for art's sake as “a piece of slang that does not mean the harmless thing it seems to mean” (William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art* [London: Ellis and White, 1882], p. 54).

Yet despite being ostensibly antithetical to utilitarian society, Tommy is a success within it: the novels describe him as “the favoured of the gods” (*TG*, p. 307). The artist, and by extension art, is that which is excessive yet valued; unnecessary but perversely desired. One may be reminded of Pater's 1864 essay 'Diaphaneité', where the artist, along with the saint and the speculative thinker, is granted by society “the right to exist”,⁷ despite being “out of the world's order”,⁸ and “discontented with society as it is”.⁹ Wilde, in his 1891 essay 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism', goes further than Pater, portraying the artist not as mysteriously tolerable but one of the very few manifestations of an ideal Individualism, with the potential to inspire social transformation by example.¹⁰ I will position Barrie in relation to these theories in chapter three.

These conceptualizations of the artist typify Pater's and Wilde's respective attempts to neutralize a paradox in late Nineteenth-Century aesthetic theory. Wilde and his followers explicitly claimed that art had nothing to do with moral and social life. Art, in Wilde's terms, produced “beautiful sterile emotions”,¹¹ without consequence and without moral responsibility: “the sphere of Art and the sphere of Ethics are absolutely distinct and separate”.¹² However, both Wilde and Pater also claimed that the realm of art included not only music, poetry, painting but also personality, the way or style in which the artist lived his life. Pater in his introduction to *The Renaissance* defined “the

7 Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; first published 1873), p. 154.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*, p. 158.

10 Wilde, 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism' in *The Artist as Critic*, 255-89; first published in *Fortnightly Review*, 49, 290 (Feb, 1891), 291-319.

11 Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist' in *The Artist as Critic*, 341-407; first published in *Intentions* (London: James R. Osgood McIlvaine, 1891), p. 169.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

objects with which aesthetic criticism deals” as “music, poetry, artistic and accomplished forms of human life”,¹³ whereas Wilde again went one step further, seeing art as a manifestation of the artist's consummate individualism. Artists, in Wilde's model, were to concentrate on becoming entirely themselves, and if they achieved this then whatever they produced - whether painting, music, or a way of living - would deserve the name of art. “Art is Individualism” he writes,¹⁴ “the most intense mode of individualism that the world has known”,¹⁵ meaning that “a work of art is the unique result of a unique temperament. Its beauty comes from the fact that the author is what he is”.¹⁶

Yet how can art extend into life and yet remain separate from it? How can an artistic personality, however beautiful, escape being a moral agent when the actions, the choices of that personality impact upon the lives of others? Though an artist may well produce art “alone, without any reference to his neighbours, without any interference” (p. 270),¹⁷ can he cease to be an artist when he leaves that solitude, he whose art is a product of his entire being? This paradox is akin to that inherent in Barrie's style; power cannot exist without being exercised, but how can the text have power yet not have responsibility for it? What are the consequences of surrendering to such an irresponsible tyrant? Like Wilde's artist, Tommy, as artist by disposition, provides a vehicle for the exploration of these questions, though each takes a different

13 Pater, *op. cit.*, p. xxix.

14 Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 270.

16 *Ibid.* That Barrie to some extent shared this vision of the artist is shown by a letter to Quiller-Couch, dated 25th July 1909, in which he critically says of his play *What Every Woman Knows* that it is “ingenius enough but not dug out of myself. It really isn't the sort of man I am” (*Letters of J.M. Barrie*, ed. Viola Meynell [London: Peter Davis, 1942], p. 21). Good art, in this model, is an extension of an artist's identity (Pater, “the style is the man”, see ‘Style’ in *Appreciations* [London: Macmillan, 1924; first published 1889] p. 33).

17 Wilde, *loc. cit.*

route.

I will consider in chapter three Tommy's toleration by, even necessity to, a society that he should by definition be at odds with. Yet if Barrie appears to enjoy the power-play of his style, he also interrogates it; art and the artist are not generally portrayed positively in the Tommy novels. The two episodes in which the child Tommy is referred to as “artistic” also show him using this excess irresponsibly, dominating and manipulating as the text dominates and manipulates the reader. Though the first of these abuses is without consequence, the word “trick” suggests that what the artist is doing to his audience is comparable to the activity of a prankster. Like a practical joke it suggests a fun that verges on cruelty, that requires an unwilling victim. The second example is a more explicit victimization. In forcing the boy unwillingly to profess willingness, to become reluctantly complicit in his own domination, Tommy unwittingly creates a symbol of how the artist/audience relationship can go wrong, suggesting a power-play that is more exploitative than pleasurable (he becomes, as it were, an intrusive text, powerful though undesired). Within the practice of reading, such a relationship would be difficult to maintain – a reader can always stop reading if displeased – yet the Francie Crabb episode also shows what happens when the text/reader relationship is collapsed into that between artist/audience, and so begins to have more tangible consequences. This problem is then reiterated in Grizel's reaction to Tommy's victory:

When it was all over Tommy looked around triumphantly, and though he liked the expression on several faces, Grizel's pleased him best. 'It ain't no wonder you would like to be me, lassie!' he said, in an ecstasy.

'I don't want to be you, you conceited boy,' retorted the Painted Lady's

child hotly, and her heat was the greater because the clever little wretch had read her thoughts aright (*ST*, p. 146).

Grizel admires Tommy's excessive domination of Francie, in a way reminiscent of Wilde's claims that there was something aesthetically splendid about violence and crime.¹⁸ But she also seems to recognize that there is something similar in Francie's humiliation and her admiration, in Tommy's domination of his victim and of his audience, and she will not submit. When told by Tommy to run away, she refuses, saying "I shall not let you help me, and I won't run" (p. 146); instead she "walked off leisurely with her head in the air, and her dignity was beautiful" (pp. 146-47). The scene is also their first meeting, and instigates a power struggle that sets the tone for their subsequent relationship.

Despite moral reservations, however, such power-play is shown not only to be inherent in the artistic disposition, but also fundamental to the creation of art. In both his writing and his life, Tommy becomes artistic by surrendering to impulse, allowing himself to be seduced by emotional impressions and the desires that they produce. In youth he is repeatedly shown "yielding to his impulses" (*TG*, p. 26), and he later admits that these yieldings are necessary to his writing. "I wish I were different" he says to Grizel when explaining one of these impulsive episodes; "but that is how ideas come to me - at least, all those that are of any value." When she suggests he should suppress his impulses, he objects: "that would mean my giving up writing altogether" (p. 101). Surrendering to impulse, he claims, is one of the "preliminary stages of composition" (p. 100). This concept of surrendering to self relies on a dualism, implicit

18 Wilde, 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism', pp. 259, 270, 276.

in much Victorian moral thought, in which self is divided into 'instinct' and 'will'.¹⁹

Whereas 'instinct' in this dualistic model is usually driven by a person's selfish whims and desires, 'will' is able to contradict instinct, allowing people to act for the wider good rather than for the simple satisfaction of basic needs. The successful exercise of will over self (as opposed to will over others) was thus commonly felt to be a moral act, with social as well as personal repercussions. In allowing his instinct to rule him, Tommy demonstrates a lack of will and thus a lack of social and moral feeling, though such surrender is suggested to be necessary to the emotional life out of which art is created.

This incessant surrendering leads to an identity that is constantly shifting as one enters different situations. In chapter 29 of *Sentimental Tommy*, an interested party (Mr McLean) calls on Tommy's schoolteacher, Mr Cathro, to enquire about the boy's "character" (p. 331). Cathro gives the following account of Tommy:

He is constantly playing some new part - playing is hardly the word though, for into each part he puts an earnestness that cheats even himself, until he takes to another. I suppose you want me to give you some idea of his character, and I could tell you what it is at any particular moment; but it changes, sir, I do assure you, almost as quickly as the circus-rider flings off his layers of waistcoats. A single puff of wind blows him from one character to another, and he may be noble and vicious, and a tyrant and a slave, and hard as granite and melting as butter in the sun, all in one forenoon (p. 332).

¹⁹ See Collini, *Public Moralists*, chapter 1.3. This basic dualism was rarely contested in the Victorian period, though there was some question of whether altruism actually had its root in selfish instincts, see Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), *passim*.

The inclusion of the roles “tyrant and slave” are particularly poignant here. Throughout the novels Tommy's inconsistency of character is described as willed submission, a surrender to a mastering force reminiscent of the reader's surrender to the text. Cathro recognises this power-play, confiding to McLean that “there is something inside him, or so I think at times, that is his master ... no, I can't tell what it is; when we know that, we shall know the real Tommy” (p. 338). Inconsistency of character, it appears, is an indispensable quality of the artistic disposition. The artist treats the world as text and surrenders himself to be its reader, sensing what style of self is needed in order to gain the most pleasure from a particular situation, and then becoming that self.

Within the novels this wish to surrender to emotional impulse is called being 'sentimental', and Tommy's tendency towards such inconsistency earns him the soubriquet 'Sentimental Tommy'. It is Cathro that initially, and very literally, brands Tommy with this name. After Tommy has been particularly emotional in class, Cathro takes a charred stick from the fireplace and writes 'ST' on his forehead, saying that, as the sheep and criminal are branded so that all know to whom they belong, “now ... we know to whom Tommy belongs ... wipe away, Sentimental Tommy, try hot water, try cold water, try a knife, but you will never get those letters off you; you are branded for ever and ever” (p. 422).

Barrie's choice of the word 'sentimental' instead of 'artistic' or 'emotional' for Tommy reveals his intention that this behaviour be, at least potentially, judged negatively. Gesa Stedman in her study of Victorian discourse on the emotions found that, in contrast to keywords such as 'feeling', 'emotion' and even 'passion', the adjective 'sentimental' was used in an almost exclusively negative sense, being associated with “false feeling, affectation and excessive emotionality”.²⁰ There was

²⁰ Gesa Stedman, *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in the Victorian Discourses on Emotion, 1830-1872* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2002), p. 44.

much Victorian anxiety about sentimentalism, especially later in the century, when it was frequently derided in the journals. Thus an anonymous contributor to *The Speaker*, in an 1890 article entitled 'Sentimentalism', argues that, though “an immense quantity of [sentimentalism] is now at large”, it was nevertheless “unnatural”.²¹

It cannot be wholesome to live in a condition of things which lacks reality: and one of the notes of sentimentalism as distinguished from pathos, consists in the absence of reality.²²

The word 'wholesome' here, reminiscent of the late-nineteenth century blending of discourses of morality and health, emphasises the moral judgement of sentimentalism.²³ Furthermore, though this writer acknowledges sentimentality to belong legitimately in the relatively amoral world of art, he objects when it is found in people:

The result of this sentimentalism in life is very marked. We can laugh at it, and to a moderate degree even enjoy it, in books. But when it meets us in an actual work-a-day world, the contact becomes nothing else than sickening ... sympathy with vice is often a result of sentimentalism.²⁴

Whether such objection indicates an actual increase in sentimentality is less important

²¹ [Anon.], 'Sentimentalism', *The Speaker*, 1 (Feb 15, 1890), p. 176.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See Allan M. Brandt, *Morality and Health* (New York: Routledge, 1997), *passim*, and Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism*, ch. 4.

²⁴ [Anon.], *op. cit.*, p. 177.

than the widespread belief in its perniciousness. Thus C. Fred Kenyon in an 1897 article for *The Musical Standard* writes of Mendelssohn's "sentimentalism and insincerity",²⁵ while G.K. Chesterton, in an essay entitled 'The Sentimentalist', writes "[the sentimentalist] seeks to enjoy every idea without its sequence, and every pleasure without its consequence".²⁶ Barrie, too, published an article in 1890 called "The Sentimentalist", in which he tells the story of a university man:

Sentiment was a horse ever standing ready for him. He jumped on, and away he went. Then he dismounted with a proud chest, and at once did a mean thing, if convenient. All he remembered next day was his gallop.²⁷

Again, it is the lack of moral responsibility, and the disinclination to follow through on potentially moral feelings, that make the sentimentalist objectionable. From these examples it seems that sentimentality is felt to be immoral because it is an *excess* of emotion, emotion beyond what is necessary or appropriate. Sentimentality is, like art in the Tommy novels, the enjoyment of emotion for emotion's sake, reminiscent of Wilde's assertion that, "emotion for the sake of emotion is the aim of art".²⁸ However, an equal objection seems to be the sentimentalist's desire to enjoy an emotion, action or aesthetic without it being morally responsible. Thus Chesterton says "the Sentimentalist, roughly speaking, is the man who wants to eat his cake and have it" (p. 213).²⁹ The sentimentalist desires, impossibly, to be both moral and immoral, bad and

²⁵ C. Fred. Kenyon, 'Mendelssohn the Sentimentalist and Chopin the Poet', *Musical Standard*, 7, 167 (March 13, 1897), p. 169.

²⁶ G.K. Chesterton, 'The Sentimentalist.' in *Alarms and Discursions* (London: Methuen, 1910), p. 214.

²⁷ Barrie, 'Young Men I Have Met: 1 – The Sentimentalist', *The Young Man*, 4 (January to December, 1890), p. 6.

²⁸ Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist', p. 169.

²⁹ Chesterton, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

good.

Such objections can only be understood in relation to the moral environment within which they are felt. They would have had particular currency in what Collini calls the “ideal-typical moral system” found in the “dominant culture” of middle-class Victorian Britain, the moral logic that the majority in this society understood as 'morality'.³⁰ This morality, based upon a conflation between social and individual good, functioned as a “system of obligations”,³¹ in which each member of society had a hierarchy of 'duties' towards fellow members. Within this system altruism and selfishness appeared as the highest good and lowest evil. Combined with a dualistic model of selfhood, this moral logic allows the suppression of instinct by will to be considered not only a moral good, but a moral duty. Though this moral logic was by no means universally adopted, the belief in such universality was very much a part of its power, allowing moralists such as John Stuart Mill and Matthew Arnold to speak confidently, as though they represented a majority, as it were “from a vantage-point that combined reflective disinterestedness with judicious realism”.³²

Within this moral climate the effective exercising of will over instinct for the good of others was typically described as one's having 'character'. To have 'character' in Victorian Britain suggested a group of closely connected concepts which, while having

30 Collini, *Public Moralists*, p. 64. There are obvious problems with assuming that identification with a social class entailed wholehearted endorsement of a moral system. However, Collini comments on the remarkable homogeneity of Victorian society on these points, which were “rarely contested” (*ibid.*). Though I will go on to identify contestation from an Aesthetic standpoint, it certainly does seem to be the case that these elements formed the basis of morality for most of Britain throughout Victoria's reign. Most importantly, they were considered ideal both within the working-class Calvinistic portions of Scottish weaving communities that Barrie described, and for the middle-class English nonconformist-liberal audience that made up a large portion of his readers, see Thomas Knowles, *Ideology, Art and Commerce: Aspects of Literary Sociology in the Late Victorian Scottish Kailyard* (Göteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothaburgensis, 1983), ch. 2.

31 Collini, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

no fixed or fixable definition, yet (or perhaps because of this) had great moral currency.³³ While one's character was understood to be the sum of the qualities forming the coherent whole of personality, marking the limits of one's selfhood, to have 'character' also entailed the possession of certain moral features, identified by Collini as most often, though not exhaustively: self-restraint, perseverance, strenuous effort, and courage in the face of adversity.³⁴ Despite altruism's being identified as the highest social good, this suppression of selfish impulse required an intense observation and cultivation of selfhood, the building of the self into a coherent and consistent personality. Coherence of character in the first sense could therefore be seen as evidence of 'character' in the latter sense, as “the assumption that the possession of settled dispositions indicated a certain habit of restraining one's impulses”.³⁵

When McLean inquires about Tommy's 'character', then, he is asking two questions: what is the boy's personality? and is he moral, does he stand to develop into a good citizen? Tommy's inconsistency, in making the first of these questions difficult to answer, suggests that the second should be answered negatively; and indeed Cathro hints at such when he says, in reference to the games played by the children in the woods, “unfortunately his Saturday debauch does not keep him sober for the rest of the week, which we demand of respectable characters in these parts” (*ST*, p. 332). Along with 'character', the word 'respectable' was most often engaged in Victorian Britain to describe those who accorded with a middle-class “dominant morality”,³⁶ or with the version of it current in one's community.³⁷ Like his sentimentalism, Tommy's

³³ *Ibid.*, ch. 1.3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³⁶ Collini, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

³⁷ This meaning evolved in the mid-eighteenth century, in relation to the idea of 'character'. See OED, sense 3a, accessed online 1st September 2012.

inconsistency of character means that he fails to be respectable.

However, Tommy's inconsistency, if likely to be considered 'immoral' by the majority of middle-class Victorian Britain, finds sympathy within the alternative aesthetic morality of Pater and Wilde.³⁸ Pater began his famous 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance* with a Heraclitan epitaph, translated by himself in *Plato and Platonism* (1893) as “all things give way; nothing remaineth”.³⁹ He then proceeds to apply this philosophy. As in society “to regard all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought”,⁴⁰ so science has destroyed any coherent sense of the body, “that clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours ... it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways”.⁴¹ The result is that “the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind”,⁴² yet even this cannot be relied upon for coherence:

Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice can ever pierce on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without.⁴³

38 There is an obvious difficulty in taking anything that Wilde writes as representative of an overarching theory, since he specifically claims each essay to be a pose (See 'The Truth of Masks' in *The Artist as Critic*, p. 432; first published 1891). However, it is possible to identify recurring ideas between Wilde's texts that constitute something approaching a philosophy, whether or not Wilde the man can be thought of as fully endorsing it.

39 See Adam Philips' edition of Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 174; note to p. 150.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 150.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*, p. 151.

43 *Ibid.*

This radical subjectivism leads Pater to figure selfhood as inevitably inconsistent, “that continual vanishing away, that strange, perpetual, weaving and unweaving of ourselves”.⁴⁴ In this alternative model there can be no stable 'character' in either sense, and personality must be in a constant state of creation. This results in a stress on the importance of the particular moment, in which “not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end”.⁴⁵ Artist and critics in this model make the most of their experience with art, which gives “nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake”.⁴⁶

Pater evades the question of social morality; of how such selves could ever be held responsible for their actions, how they could, in short, ever live together. A belief in consistent selfhood is necessary for human cohabitation; it is, after all, the only thing that allows us to predict behaviour. *The Renaissance* suffered contradictory criticisms on this account; on the one hand the essays were felt to divorce art needlessly and wrongly from society, while on the other 'The Conclusion' was blamed for drawing from art a rule for the conduct of this society. Thus although Emilia Pattison in the *Westminster Review* not only complains that “we miss the sense of the connexion subsisting between art and literature and the other forms of which they are the outward expression” but uses the word “sentimental” to denote this false detachment,⁴⁷ yet Sidney Colvin objects “by all means, let the people whose bent is art follow art, by all means refine the pleasures of as many people as possible; but do not tell everybody

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴⁷ Emilia Pattison, unsigned review in *Westminster Review* (April, 1873) in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R.M. Seiler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 72.

that refined pleasure is the one end of life”.⁴⁸

Both of these objections were typical of common reaction; essays like Pater's, it seemed, could at once be judged to be too detached and too involved. His work became problematic not only by attempting to separate art from conventional morality, but by seeming to make that separation an alternative morality in itself: “what become of the uncomely and unlovely ones in such a world as this?” asks an American reviewer.⁴⁹ Aesthetic art, like sentimentalism, could be imagined as wanting to eat its cake *and* have it, to pronounce on social matters yet be free of obligation to society. When Wilde explored the social implications of Pater's theories - though he reimagined innate loneliness as ideal Individualism - he addressed this problem in utopian fashion by describing his ideal political system as one which “knows that people are good when they are let alone”.⁵⁰ As such he reintroduced morality through the back door, though this did not prevent his work from coming under more vitriolic moral criticism than Pater's.⁵¹

Though the difficulties that Tommy experiences in his interactions with other people are initially a product of the difficulties of artistic power-play, these difficulties have echoes in contemporaneous Aesthetic theory and the debates surrounding it, which Barrie seems to be implicitly referencing. In defining art and the artist implicitly as excess and inconsistency, yet remaining explicitly cognizant of their necessary interaction with society, Barrie provides opportunity in the Tommy novels for a full

48 Sidney Colvin, unsigned review in *Pall Mall Gazette* (1st March, 1873) in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, p. 54.

49 Sarah Wistern, 'Pater, Rio, and Burckhardt', *North American Review* (July, 1875), in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, p. 106. Barrie explores this question explicitly in his 1908 play *What Every Woman Knows* (in *The Plays of J.M. Barrie in One Volume*, ed. A.E. Wilson, 665-746).

50 Wilde, 'The Soul Of Man Under Socialism', p. 284

51 See *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Karl Beckson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970). The difference, of course, was that Wilde attracted criticism as much for his lifestyle as for his literary work, found as early as 1881 (p. 41).

exposition of Aestheticism's difficulties in accommodating moral responsibility. Yet he also raises the question of what becomes of the impulsive and sentimental in a moral climate such as Victorian Britain; what, in other words, becomes of play?

* * *

It remains to determine that Tommy's fulfilment of these criteria is necessary and significant rather than merely incidental. Tommy's artistic disposition is inherited from his father, who shares his pleasure in excess, albeit in a more unruly fashion. Tommy's mother describes his father's "queer games" (*ST*, p. 108) in Redlintie, a town near Thrums, where he appeared one day demanding to be acknowledged as the illegitimate son of the town's excise-man, Mr Cray, begotten during the latter's libertine days. On Cray's denial, Tam dresses up as him and imitates those days, with the result that "a report spread to the head office o' the excise that the gauger of Redlintie spent his evenings at a public house, singing 'The De'il's awa' wi' the Exciseman' " (p. 109). The townspeople bribe Tam into leaving but the pleasure he takes in playing makes this difficult: "to make a sensation was what he valued above all things" (p. 109) says Jean. The Burns reference - to a lyric that can be read as celebrating the 'immorality' of art - makes explicit the similarities of excess and inconsistency between Tommy's artistic disposition and his father's.⁵² This correspondence is especially poignant since the relationship between Tam and Jean Myles becomes one of the more extreme examples of reader/text gone wrong, where he courts her against her better judgement. "My will was no match for his," she says, "and the worst o't was I had a kind o' secret pleasure in being mastered" (p. 107). I will return to this episode in more detail later.

⁵² In the manuscript version of *Sentimental Tommy*, Tam was a travelling actor; see Ormond, *J.M. Barrie*, p. 41.

Tommy's inheritance of his father's artistic disposition, and the similarity between that and a more dangerous one, criminal even, resonates with much nineteenth-century scientific theory. In particular, mid- to late-nineteenth-century degeneration theorists, preoccupied with the inheritance of morbid characteristics by those whose parents had lived in unhealthy conditions,⁵³ saw in both criminal and artistic behaviour evidence of racial devolution, with Max Nordau claiming in 1892 that “degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists”.⁵⁴ The two were thought to belong to the same “anthropological family”,⁵⁵ and shared many characteristics that can also be found in Tommy, and in some cases his father: excessive emotionality, the inability to control oneself, excitability, openness to suggestion, the ability to believe in falsehoods, a desperate need for the attention and admiration of others. The degenerate's “hysterical craving to be noticed”,⁵⁶ and “longing to make a sensation”,⁵⁷ can be found in Tam's valuing of “a sensation ... above all things” (*ST*, p. 109), and in Tommy's desire to be “admired” (*TG*, p. 95). Likewise, Nordau's degenerate “laughs until he sheds tears, or weeps copiously without adequate occasion”,⁵⁸ a habit that

53 The conditions need not be those of poverty, but could be the consequences of unhealthy or immoral living. Thus Max Nordau claims that degeneration was rather a middle or even upper class condition, consisting “chiefly of rich educated people, or of fanatics” (Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, trans. unknown [New York: D. Appleton, 1895; originally published in German as *Entartung*, 1892], p. 7).

54 *Degeneration*, p. v. Though the most infamous in this vein was Nordau, the theory was first popularised by Cesare Lombroso (*L'Uomo di Genio* [Torino: Bocca, 1888; trans. into English as *The Man of Genius*, 1891]), which book inspired a rash of such studies across Europe and the United States. For the influence of such theories on literature of the period, see William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), *passim*.

55 Nordau, *op. cit.*, p. v. See, for example, Havelock Ellis' anthropologically-styled *A Study of British Genius* (London: Hurst and Blackett 1904), which built upon his earlier part-translation of Lombroso's *The Man of Genius* (See Ellis, *The Criminal* [London: Walter Scott, 1890]).

56 Nordau, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 319.

58 Nordau, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

chimes with Tommy's sentimentality, his ability to “laugh or cry merely because other people were laughing or crying, or even with less reason” (*ST*, p. 81). Nordau considers these degenerate characteristics to have one cause: lack of the self-control “of which [the degenerate] is incapable on account of his organic weakness of will”.⁵⁹ This organic weakness, Nordau claims, is caused by inherited wasting of the brain cells, a devolution of the brain primarily induced by the mass over-excitement of the industrial revolution.⁶⁰ The degenerate is therefore biologically immoral, incapable of moral feeling or of altruism.⁶¹ If the subject is mildly degenerate this inability will lead to criminal activity, as they will not be able to generate the moral feeling for duty and obligation that prevents people from hurting each other. However:

If his nervous system is not strong enough to elaborate imperious impulses, or if his muscles are too feeble to obey such impulsations, all these criminal inclinations remain unsatisfied, and only expend themselves by way of his imagination.⁶²

It is the advanced degenerate that becomes an artist instead of a criminal. Though the criminal may seem more immediately dangerous than the artist, it was Nordau's belief that artists, unlike criminals, were able to spread their disease through the production of art, and so corrupt society at large; a potential for powerful action that relies on belief in the ability of a text not only to influence, but permanently to change its readers. In particular Nordau accused Aestheticism, and the popular craze at the close

⁵⁹ Nordau, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 260.

of the century for all things 'aesthetic', of this corruption. Degenerates were, he claims, particularly attracted to Aesthetic forms of art, having natural affinity with “the purely aesthetic mind, whose merely aesthetic culture does not enable him to understand the connections of things, and to seize their real meaning”.⁶³

Even without the extremities of degeneration theory, Tommy's character type can be found in contemporaneous accounts of nervous disorders. It has become fashionable, in recent criticism and biography, to diagnose Tommy (and indeed Barrie) according to modern psychological theory.⁶⁴ While to a great extent an unhelpful impulse,⁶⁵ I would nevertheless argue that it is a reasonable one, since the text arguably invites readers to diagnose Tommy, particularly in late Nineteenth-Century terms. For example, in lectures on nervous disorders in childhood delivered through the 1890s, Leonard Guthrie,⁶⁶ though regretting the popularization of degeneration theories,⁶⁷ nevertheless identifies a “neurotic temperament” as displaying roughly the same characteristics as Nordau's degenerate, and Tommy.⁶⁸ Guthrie defines 'neuroticism' as “a disposition in which the emotions are easily kindled, sternly felt, and restrained or controlled with difficulty”, caused by “deficient development of control, deficient powers of judgement as to the weight of the cause which excites emotions, which

63 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

64 Jack detects both histrionic syndrome and general sexual immaturity ('J.M. Barrie' in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, vol. 2: *Enlightenment, Britain and Empire 1709-1918*, general ed. Ian Brown, period ed. Susan Manning [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007, 331-37]; and *Myths and the Mythmaker*, p. 240). Sedgwick assigns his character to homosexual panic (*Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 188) and Geduld to oedipal anxiety (*Sir James Barrie*, pp. 45-52).

65 This tendency becomes particularly damaging when combined, as it nearly always is, with assumptions that Tommy is a direct autobiographical representation of Barrie. See Jack, *op. cit.*, ch. 1.

66 Leonard G. Guthrie, *Functional Nervous Disorders in Childhood* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907).

67 *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 96, 120.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 8. Guthrie too accedes such a temperament is “largely a matter of direct inheritance” (p. 9) though warning that “the forces of heredity are mysterious, complex and little understood” (p. 115).

cause is exaggerated by process of imagination”.⁶⁹ In particular, Tommy matches Guthrie's account of the “unrestrained emotional” neurotic. This type, according to Guthrie, will exhibit a feverish energy and be “demonstrative of affection, but such affection is often due to sheer selfishness”.⁷⁰ This selfishness leads them to “crave for sympathy and think themselves ill-used if everyone does not give way to them”.⁷¹

Like Nordau, Guthrie identifies in this character type the potential criminal and artist; though they often become “alcoholics or drug takers; suicidal, homicidal or insane”,⁷² they also commonly “achieve brilliant success in art or literature”.⁷³ Unlike Nordau, however, Guthrie does not see this condition as inevitably producing immorality or, in contemporaneous terms, moral insanity. Though neuroticism can, according to Guthrie, be a symptom of moral insanity, a neurotic child caught early can be taught to exercise will and thus counteract heredity.⁷⁴ Environment, in Guthrie's theory, can reverse the effects of inheritance.

However Tommy's artistic disposition can also be read as arising from his environment, primarily owing to the influence of his mother.⁷⁵ Finding herself living in poverty in London, Jean deals with her misery by relating to her children exaggerated

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18. He does not, however, match Guthrie's account of the physical attributes of this type, unusually thin with pale, sallow, dark eyes and bad digestion (p. 19); “such children,” Guthrie claims, “cannot romp” (p. 31). Barrie at several points stresses Tommy's physical fitness, a point that, among other things, may suggest an unwillingness to endorse the late Nineteenth-Century materialism, found in Guthrie as in others, that equated physical and psychological attributes.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷⁵ Whether Tommy inherits this from his mother in the same way as he does from his father, or whether he learns it entirely, depends on whether the author (or reader) is thought to be endorsing a Lamarckian or Darwinian theory of evolution. There is no evidence that Tommy's mother is in any way artistic before circumstances make it necessary. Lamarckian theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics would allow Tommy to biologically inherit his mother's adaptation to her environment but this is not necessary to the narrative, while his limited exposure to his father make a full endorsement of learned rather than inherited behaviour unlikely.

stories about the glory of Thrums, and by writing imaginary versions of her London life and sending them to Thrums. Other Thrums people in London also adopt pretence as a coping mechanism, recreating their home town in a London street though “nevertheless few of them wanted to return to it” (*ST*, p. 61). Tommy learns this make-believe strategy as a way of dealing with difficult situations. On arriving in Thrums he finds himself boasting about London in the same way that, in London, he had repeated his mother's boasts about Thrums, though this time *consciously* pretending (“Oh, Gav, if you just saw the London mountains!” [p. 160]). Art as an adaptation to environment, as learned rather than simply inherited behaviour, moves away from the often hysterical accounts of degeneration theorists and suggests a possible place for art in society, as a defence strategy, a way of coping with inconvenient desire for impossible things.

This connection between art and therapeutic pretending is symbolised in an episode in chapter 5 of *Sentimental Tommy*. Tommy teaches Elspeth to read from London placards and these, her first texts, have such an impression that her “faith in them is absolute”:

here was her religion, at the age of four:

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.

HAPPY ARE THEY WHO NEEDING KNOW THE

PAINLESS POROUS PLASTER (p. 55)

This juxtaposition of medical commercialism with religion is mutually illuminating, implying that, while religion may be thought of as an ineffective universal cure like a

porous plaster, nevertheless such a universal quack cure, in the absence of other cures, can assume the significance of religion.⁷⁶ When Jean Myles falls ill with bronchitis the children decide to buy her a plaster (though bronchitis was one of the few things that it did not claim to cure). However they are distracted in their search by coloured chemists' bottles, and this distraction is described not as religious but *artistic* experience:

Tommy and Elspeth in their wanderings came under the influence of the bottles, red, yellow, green, and blue, and colour entered into their lives, giving them many delicious thrills. These bottles are the first poem known to the London child (pp. 56-57).

Artistic experience, and aesthetic pleasure, takes on a language of surrender. Art, and particularly the surrender to art, is thus figured as a cure (though an ineffective one, for their mother is left with bronchitis), an escape from troubles that cannot really be escaped. Furthermore the wanderings directed by this surrender lead, notably, to the street on which the Thrums people live, to which it is said that “the bottles are a coloured way” (p. 57). Thrums is thus introduced as a symbol of false comfort, a place where therapeutic pretence may be expected.

I will now offer two readings of the Tommy novels. The first of these will focus on the criticisms of art that the novels offer through Tommy's various antisocial behaviours, particularly in reference to the gendering of power in (hetero)sexual relationships. In contrast, the second reading will explore the pleasure and comfort

⁷⁶ Allcock's Porous Plasters were advertised as a remedy for, among other things, “a weak back, rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, colds, coughs, sore throats, pulmonary and kidney difficulties, malaria, dyspepsia, heart, spleen, liver and stomach affections, and all local pains and strains”. For example, see front inside cover of *The Young Man*, 3-4 (1889-90), a journal to which Barrie regularly contributed.

generated through Tommy's non-romantic relationships with various people. Finally, I will indicate the way in which the Tommy novels move towards a symbolism which, in Barrie's later work, becomes paradigmatic of this simultaneous admiration and criticism; that is, the paradoxical relationship between temporal mother and eternal boy.

Chapter Two: Of Masterful Men

Flirting is fine, but to be a flirt is not.

Adam Philips, *On Flirtation* (p. xvii).

In chapter 24 of *Tommy and Grizel*, Grizel asks “what was it in women that made men love them?” (p. 289). Her first conjecture involves a gendering of power: “she remembered that the language of love is in two sexes - for the woman superlatives, for the man diminutives. The more she loves the bigger he grows, but in an ecstasy he could put her in his pocket” (p. 290). In this theory men love women for their helplessness, and women love men for their strength. But this does not explain her love for Tommy, whom she does not consider strong: “instead of needing to be taken care of, she had obviously wanted to take care of him: their positions were reversed” (p. 290). She therefore dismisses normative gendering, instead postulating “the strong like to be leaned upon and the weak to lean, and this irrespective of sex” (pp. 290-91). However Grizel lives in a world where strength is traditionally imagined as masculine and weakness feminine, and though she realises that in practice this is not always true she nevertheless accepts it as ideal. “No woman could be less helpless than herself,” Grizel thinks, concluding that she is therefore not a “womanly woman” (p. 290), and cannot be loved by a “real man” (p. 305). She feels that Tommy should be a “real man”, and describes herself as “trying only to help you to be what a man should be” (p. 291). This leads her to re-evaluate her own gender: “perhaps, Grizel said to herself, I should have been a man” (p. 290).

But this would not solve her problem. Grizel both admires and desires strength, but her theory suggests that love cannot exist without one person's weakness. "You are to make me strong in spite of myself", says Tommy, "are you to grow weak, Grizel, as I grow strong?" (p. 291). Behind this question lurks another, more poignant one, namely: what happens if Grizel grows weak before Tommy grows strong; if, like the reader, she surrenders to a man who cannot control himself? The power-play of the text can thus be analogized to late Nineteenth-Century genderings of power. In the Tommy novels the consequences of the artist's involvement in society are explored through Tommy's romantic relationship with Grizel.

I say late Nineteenth-Century gendering because, though many societies develop strong/male and weak/female configuration of power, yet this period saw a particular burdening of that configuration. Nineteenth-century masculinities struggled to accommodate the male artist.¹ Mid-century, a male artist found himself especially at odds with a re-energized rhetoric of civic masculinity, which identified 'manliness' with successful maintenance of the bond between individual and society, and considered the individualism - or selfishness - of art as 'effeminate', unsuitable for public life.² This struggle only increased as the century progressed, and 'effeminacy' gathered new significance.³ In particular, as socio-scientific discourses redescribed the link between individual and society as primarily sexual, and reproduction as a public act contributing to the prosperity of the race, so 'effeminacy' became understood as

¹ James Eli Adams explores the different poses that artistic and intellectual men adopted in order to deal with these gaps (*Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Manhood* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995]), *passim*, while Herbert Sussman investigates the strategies of particular artists (*Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995]), *passim*.

² For the Victorian appropriation of the rhetoric of civic masculinity, see Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), *passim*.

³ For changing definitions of effeminacy see Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), *passim*.

lack of sexual virility as well as social feeling.⁴ Of course this transition was by no means sudden and complete, and the 'new' masculinity was not without its critics. Thus Hugh E.M. Stutfield, writing in the wake of the Wilde trials, groups extreme social Darwinism together with modern art as symptoms of “flabbiness and effeminacy” in society, objecting particularly to their shared interest in sex.⁵ Yet it is precisely at the intersections between old and new definitions of effeminacy and manliness that the male artist suffered, as artistic individualism became associated with both social and sexual inefficiency, a two-fold 'immorality' of which Wilde is the most famous victim.

Barrie engages in this problematizing of artistic masculinity by portraying the artist as unable to love. “I don't think you know how to love”, says Grizel to Tommy (*ST*, p. 367), an accusation that the novels substantiate with excruciating thoroughness.⁶ This inability seems to emerge from the artist's civic 'effeminacy', his necessary individualism and lack of commitment to anything outside of himself: on pondering Tommy's curious lack, Grizel decides “there are some who cannot fall in love, and that he was one of them. He was complete in himself” (*TG*, p. 396). Yet it also evokes a newer ideal of masculinity as sexuality appropriately expressed. Although not debarring feelings of affection and sexual attraction, inability to love severs the link between individual and society in disallowing legitimate expression of sexual virility in marriage. Failing in one type of 'manliness', the artist is presumed to fall short in others too, and this failure is described in the Tommy novels as

⁴ See Angelique Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction & the New Woman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), especially chapters 1- 4. Greenslade traces the impact of some of the more extreme of these discourses in *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, *passim*.

⁵ Hugh E.M. Stutfield, 'Tommyrotics', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 157, 956 (June, 1895), p. 843.

⁶ It is assumed throughout the novels that love, as distinguished from lust or flirtation, naturally concludes in marriage. Though marriage can exist without love (as between Jean Myles and Tam Sandys), love must manifest itself in marriage. There is thus no proposal between Grizel and Tommy, as their declarations of love presuppose engagement, see *TG* ch. 13.

effeminacy: “even as a monk did Tommy submit, or say, rather, with the meekness of a nun” (p. 219).⁷

However as the text desires readers, so Barrie's artist demands admiration, and the aesthetic of love and marriage becomes irresistibly attractive to him. Tommy finds that his inconsistent artistic behaviour facilitates flirtation with women, allowing him to be “most loyal and tender so long as it was understood that he meant nothing in particular” (p. 33). Power-play between reader and text is thus conceived as flirtation between man and woman, or rather, one inconsistent man (the text's fixed physical form) and many women (potential readers). When finally married (though without loving), Tommy imagines other women calling to him, and their words make precisely this connection between the power-play of flirtation and of text/reader:

'Your books are move one in the game of making love to us' ... He heard their seductive voices. They danced around him in numbers, for they knew that the more there were of them the better he would be pleased; they whispered in his ear and then ran away looking over their shoulders. (p. 401).

In a polygamous society such indiscrimination would be unproblematic; however, in a society where monogamy is regarded as the only 'moral' form of erotic love, the promiscuous artist is condemned to immorality.

Women in contact with the male artist so conceptualized are drawn as readers into a relationship for which he does not wish to be held responsible, just as the text cannot be responsible for its relationship with the reader. Furthermore, within this transitional conception of masculinity, art-relationships can be thought of as inevitably

⁷ For the gendering of sentimentality in the 'Tommy novels', see Nash, '“Trying to be a Man”: J.M. Barrie and Sentimental Masculinity', *passim*.

antisocial, as there is no art-equivalent for marriage, no contract between reader and text that guarantees the responsible exercise of power.⁸ This sense of the artist's covert power can also be found in *fin-de-siècle* culture. Association between the social and the sexual, along with the 'evidence' of the Wilde trials, led to the development of a cultural conflation between artistic behaviour and male sexual deviance, while theories of inheritance and degeneration allowed such deviancies to be portrayed as a very real social danger, whereby 'unhealthy' masculinity was polluting the race through reproduction.⁹ The artist was particularly dangerous in this respect. Despite effeminacy's becoming part of a parodic language having reference to art - particularly aesthetic art -¹⁰ a lingering awareness of the text's potency allowed art to be depicted as virile even when the artist was not, causing the degeneration of its audiences through a spreading of diseased values. Thus Nordau, who considered the pleasure of art to be the sharing of common values,¹¹ was not unusual in justifying his criticism of “degenerate” art by claiming that “books and works of art exercise a powerful suggestion on the masses. It is from these productions that an age derives its ideals of morality and beauty”.¹² The artist could thus be thought of as simultaneously too weak and too powerful, existing at the edges of deviant masculinity.

Within the Tommy novels the rhetoric of powerful yet irresponsible masculinity

⁸ The connection between the power-play of art and love in the Tommy novels seems only half-metaphor. Though Barrie is not claiming that the relationship between reader and text, or artist and audience, is actually (hetero)sexual - reader/text is only *like* man/woman - there is nevertheless an implicit causality, as the power-play of art threatens to recreate itself through the artist as promiscuity.

⁹ See Michael Foldy, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde: Deviance, Morality and Late-Victorian Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), especially ch. 6.

¹⁰ See Anne Anderson, '“Fearful Consequences of Living Up to One's Teapot”: Men, Woman and “Cultcha” in the Aesthetic Movement', in James Edwards and Imogen Hart eds, *Rethinking the Interior, c. 1867-1896: Aestheticism and Arts and Crafts* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 111-29.

¹¹ Nordau, *Degeneration*, p. 548.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. vi.

is examined through the character type of the “masterful man”. In simple terms, the masterful man is one who, having seduced a woman and taken his pleasure, refuses to take responsibility for this pleasure and either ceases to care for her or abandons her. His relationships with women thus perform the power-play between text and reader, and display the antisocial possibilities of such. Both Tommy's father and Grizel's are masterful men who seduced their mothers, Tommy's taking her to a life of abuse in London, Grizel's leaving an illegitimate child. This heritage forms their characters (though in opposing directions) to such an extent that their relationship can be read as enacting a trial of the masterful man, and, with him, of the text.¹³

Grizel

Grizel does not approve of pretence, nor, by extension, of art. As we have seen from her first encounter with Tommy, she finds surrender distressing, and she extends this logic to the obstinate masterfulness of the text: “books often irritated her because she disagreed with the author; and it was a torment to her to find other people holding to their views when she was so certain that hers were right” (*TG*, p. 45). Likewise, in trying to justify his inconsistency, Tommy finds it “useless to say anything about the artistic instinct to her, she did not know what it was, and would have had plain words for it as soon as he told her” (p. 70). Grizel is not always strictly inartistic; along with other children in Thrums, she joins Tommy in elaborate role-playing games in the woods and enjoys them thoroughly. Unlike the others, however, she cannot imagine pretending without consequence, and especially refuses to pretend to be Tommy's wife, suspicious even at this early age of a similarity between the consequences of artistic

¹³ Ormond has also suggested that Grizel and Tommy's relationship is semi-allegorical, though between “creative man and domestic woman” (*J.M. Barrie*, p. 78). I would argue that this creativity and domesticity are symptoms of different attitudes towards play, power and selfhood.

and sexual surrender (*ST*, p. 310-11).

This disapproval of art derives from Grizel's experience of irresponsible power.¹⁴ Unlike Tommy, who both *inherits* a dispositional tendency towards pretending and *learns* it, as a pleasurable antidote to the pains of life, Grizel grows up in an environment where insincerity and inconsistency are the most obvious manifestations and causes of those pains. Grizel's mother was seduced by a 'masterful man' as a young girl and left with an illegitimate baby, which she brought to Thrums in search of the father. Not finding him, she resigned herself to prostitution as the local 'Painted Lady', and, as Grizel grew up, became increasingly "silly" (p. 358), experiencing delusional episodes wherein she walked in the woods with an invisible man, implied to be the father, and had to be coaxed home by her daughter. This fancy is referred to as "the man who never came" (p. 166).

Grizel's upbringing induces her to construct her own morality - she "made her religion for herself" (p. 187) - in which the greatest goods are sincerity and consistency of personality. She is described as "Grizel, who was never known to lie" (p. 163), and this over-valuation of honesty continues into adulthood: "it was a physical pain to Grizel to hide her feelings, they popped out in her face, if not in words" (*TG*, p. 45). It becomes apparent that Grizel equates truth and honesty with stability of identity, feeling untruth to indicate a changeable personality like her mother's, and like her inconstant father's. "Two minds to one person were unendurable to her" (p. 232), and "there were moments when she did not know what to think, and that always distressed Grizel, though it was a state of mind with which Tommy could keep on very friendly terms" (p. 73). Pretending can thus have no comforting or therapeutic function for her:

¹⁴ Sedgwick has argued that Barrie formed Grizel as a "negative image of the hero" (p. 198), a "residueless sacrifice" intended to illuminate Tommy rather than provide interest for her own sake. Such conclusions betray an unnecessarily partisan reading of the novels; though it is to a certain extent true that Grizel is created to be caused exquisite pain by Tommy, it is equally true that Tommy's character means that he is caused pain by Grizel.

though Tommy “sought to comfort [people in distress] by shutting their eyes to the truth for as long as possible”, this “was useless to Grizel, who must face her troubles” (*ST*, p. 264). A loosened grip on decisive facts for Grizel is identified with dissolution of identity, and objective truth considered to be intimately related to 'character' in both senses of the word.

Grizel's personal morality closely resembles the dominant moral trends described above. Though having different origins, a similar valuation of consistency allows her, to a certain extent, symbolically to represent those sections of Victorian society in which it bore emotional currency.¹⁵ However, her morality is also shown to have an arbitrary origin in a reaction against the pain and suffering of mental illness, rather than in rational thought. If Tommy resembles Guthrie's account of the “unrestrained emotional” neurotic, Grizel just as closely resembles the “restrained emotional” neurotic: she can control her emotions, and, though observant and sensitive, is also solitary and proud.¹⁶ Grizel's character therefore allows Barrie to test the claims and limits of certain trends in Victorian society just as Tommy's allows a testing of the claims and limits of art, though this symbolism never quite becomes heavy-handed allegory.

Grizel becomes consciously apprehensive of masterful men after her mother's death, when people see fit to warn her about her supposedly inherited tendency towards sexual immorality. Like her mother, they tell her, she has strong instincts - “the bad thing that is in my blood” (p. 369) - but a weak will; and must therefore cultivate scrupulous self-control if she is to remain “good” (p. 370). These instincts will be

¹⁵ Ormond states of Grizel that “she stands for human values in the novel” against the “distancing and coldness” of the artistic temperament (*op. cit.*, p. 56). This implies an degree of partisanship that is not present in the novel, though it represents the reactions of a particular kind of reader.

¹⁶ Guthrie, *Functional Nervous Disorders in Childhood*, p. 19. Also like Grizel this neurotic type, according to Guthrie, “sometimes develop abnormally conscientious scruples of moral and religious nature” (p. 19).

particularly activated by a 'masterful man', whom she is told she will recognise “if she likes him and fears him at one breath, and has a sort of secret dread that he's getting a power over her that she canna resist” (p. 403). Grizel immediately recognises Tommy as this character type: “I believe - I think - you are masterful” she says; “now I know why I would not give in to you when you wanted me to be Stroke's wife [in the games]. I was afraid you were masterful!” (p. 404). Her first act of conscious self-control is to refuse to see him again, though this is forgotten by the time they meet as adults.

Moreover, she believes there to be something in her that desperately desires to surrender - “it wants so much to be wakened” (p. 371) she says - with the implication that this desire is a manifestation of female sexuality: “if it is once wakened it will run all through me, and soon I shall be like mamma” (p. 371). On realising that she has loved Tommy without his wanting to marry her, she breaks off their engagement and Tommy indulges in premature relief:

There were times when Tommy's mind wandered to excuses for himself; he knew what men were, and he shuddered to think of the might have been, had a girl who could love as Grizel did loved such a man as her father. He thanked his Maker, did Tommy, that he, who was made as those other men, had avoided raising passions in her. I wonder how he was so sure. Do we know all that Grizel had to fight? (*TG*, p. 292).

For any reader familiar with the story of the Painted Lady and Grizel's fears of inheritance, the word “passions” here must be unambiguous. Female sexuality within the Tommy novels consists of the same willing submission involved in reading,

making a seduced woman (as opposed to a raped woman) to some degree complicit in her seduction. This sexual surrender is portrayed as beginning as soon as a woman allows herself to love a man. What Grizel really desires most in the world is to love and be loved: “ 'You have a terrible wish to be loved,' [Tommy] said in wonder, and she nodded her head wistfully. 'That is not what I wish for most of all, though,' she told him, and when he asked what she wished for most of all, she said, 'To love somebody; oh, it would be sweet!' ” (*ST*, p. 367). Grizel's “bad thing” is thus rooted in a basic human impulse, the desire for love. However, when Grizel finally allows both herself and Tommy to realise that she loves him (an allowance that results from her belief that he loves her), “a strange birth came into her face ... the maid kissing her farewell to innocence was there” (*TG*, p. 157). This loving surrender, it is suggested, is only 'safe' insofar as the man uses the power it gives him responsibly: “the birth which comes to every woman at that hour is God's gift to her in exchange for what He has taken away, and when He has given it He stands back and watches the man” (p. 157). Though Tommy is aesthetically impressed by this change, he also realises that he will not pass the test: “the artist in him who had done this thing was entranced, as if he had written an immortal page. But the man was appalled” (p. 157). The universalizing tone of such narratorial statements shows the surrender of female love and sexuality to be part of a value system that goes beyond the psychology of characters, and is endorsed by the novels.¹⁷

Grizel's fear of the potentially dire results of such surrendering sexuality, of which she has ample evidence, becomes equated with the surrender to inconsistency, since both result from lack of self-control. This inspires her to treat inconsistency

¹⁷ It is important to note here that I am claiming such gendered values for these texts only, rather than for Barrie in general. Not enough work has been done, by myself or by others, on Barrie's other texts to establish authorial opinion.

harshly: “if writing makes you live in such an unreal world” she says to Tommy, “it must do you harm” (p. 101). Likewise her emergent sexuality, resulting from a surrendering love not supported by the contract of marriage, results in a replication of her mother's insane inconsistency. Thus when Grizel realises that she has loved and been left by a masterful man (Tommy) she not only becomes insane but believes she has, like her mother (“they say she was looking terrible like her mother” [p. 368]) had an illegitimate baby from the encounter (p. 378). For Grizel, the surrender of love is so closely associated with the sexual surrender that the one is felt as if it were the other.¹⁸

Yet despite her sharing of values with utilitarian morality, Grizel's combined desire for/fear of love, along with her valuation of consistency and sincerity, makes her rather antisocial. On being accused, by Tommy, of not being able to know what love is, as she has never experienced it, she objects that she has:

'I do love her and she loves me.'

'But wha [who] is she?'

'That girl.' To his amazement she pointed to her own reflection in the famous mirror the size of which had scandalized Thrums. Tommy thought this affection for herself barely respectable, but he dared not say so lest he should be put to the door. 'I love her ever so much,' Grizel went on, 'and she is so fond of me, she hates to see me unhappy. Don't look so sad, dearest, darlingest,' she cried vehemently; 'I love you, you know, oh, you sweet!' and with each epithet she kissed her reflection and looked defiantly at the boy (*ST*, p. 367).

¹⁸ Edmund Gosse's memory of a “Miss Flaw”, also believed to have been driven mad “through disappointment in love”, testifies to the credibility of such causality for a late Victorian audience (Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments* [London: Penguin, 1989; first published 1907]), p. 130.

This incident baffles a reader's potential identification of Grizel with socio-moral values. Tommy's sense that this self-love is "barely respectable" seems justified by Grizel's use of the mirror "which had scandalized Thrums", symbol of her mother's occupation and the vanity that putatively led to her seduction. Grizel's behaviour is therefore judged negatively within a moral climate that it can also be felt to represent, an irony which seems to comment on a society where stability of self is lauded yet the highest moral good thought to be self-abnegation, living for others. Wilde identifies the contradictory nature of a selfish/altruistic binary, writing that "selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live".¹⁹ A combination of loneliness and moral feeling forces Grizel into an exaggerated self-love which, in reinforcing her sense of self as not only consistent but also desirable, makes it difficult for her to sympathise with those who are unlike her. "She could only be herself and was without tolerance for those who were different", we are told; "[Tommy] had at no time in his life the least desire to make other persons like himself, but if they were not like Grizel she rocked her arms and cried 'why, why, why?' "(p. 187). Unable to accommodate inconsistency in herself, Grizel is unable to accommodate it in others and must therefore judge behaviour as essential and innate rather than incidental, as symptomatic of 'character'. It is thus perhaps not surprising that, in practice, Grizel's morality does not endear her to Thrums: "she was a proud-purse, they said, meaning that she had a haughty walk. Her sense of justice was too great. She scorned frailties that she should have pitied" (*TG*, p. 44). In practice, it is implied, utilitarian morality does not create effective social bonds, and thus undermines that which it seeks to support.²⁰

However, if we *are* the teachable reader, if we listen carefully to this text and

¹⁹ Wilde, 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism', p. 285.

²⁰ I will explore these contradictions further in chapter three.

allow ourselves to be manipulated by it, then it becomes difficult not to sympathise with Grizel and to suspect that there is indeed something dangerously promiscuous about pretending, and, by implication, about art. The relationship between masterful man and seduced woman - who, despite knowing the consequences, is nevertheless complicit in her own seduction - aside from being unquestionably dangerous in itself, also offers an analogy of the relationship between reader and text. “The way the men do it”, says Grizel, “is this: they put evil thoughts into the woman's head, and say them often to her, till she gets accustomed to them, and thinks they cannot be bad when the man she loves likes them, and it is called corrupting the mind” (*ST*, p. 391). Like the masterful man, the text seeks to create inconsistency, and like the masterful man the text must be surrendered to, *before* the reader or woman can know whether or not the resulting power will be exercised responsibly. For a woman in the late Nineteenth Century, the effects of interaction with an irresponsible male power, as shown in the stories of Grizel's and Tommy's mothers, were dire enough to merit wariness in relationships with all men. We may be induced to wonder how far this also is true for the reader.

Tommy

Grizel's conflation of inconsistency with sexuality is endorsed in the novels through Tommy's behaviour. Tommy's father is the archetypal masterful man, nicknamed 'Magerful [masterful] Tam, “through being so masterful” (*ST*, p. 108); and Tommy inherits masterfulness from his father along with his artistic disposition. The story of Tommy's parents explicitly outlines the power-play involved in seduction. When Tam arrived in Thrums, Jean was almost engaged to Aaron Latta: “he hadna

speired [asked] me at that time, but I just kent [knew]” (p. 106). Tam kisses Jean and “I struck him, but ahint [behind] the redness that came ower [over] his face, I saw his triumphing laugh, and he whispered that he liked me for the blow. He said, 'I prefer the sweer anes [unwilling/reluctant ones], and the more you struggle, my beauty, the better pleased I'll be' ” (p. 108). Difficulty heightens the pleasure, the triumph, of seduction, which is enjoyed for its own sake rather than for its facilitating of pleasure.

Tam reappears just as Aaron and Jean are about to marry, “boasting that he had but to waggle his finger to make me give Aaron up” (p. 110). In retrospect Jean is aware of the power that she finds attractive in Tam, crying “if Aaron had just gone in and struck him!” (p. 111), though “instead o' meddling he turned white, and I couldna help contrasting them, and thinking how masterful your father looked. Fine I kent he was a brute, and yet I couldna help admiring him for looking so magerful” (p. 111). Instinct and will are at odds in Jean, and one might be reminded of Grizel's reluctant admiration of Tommy when he forced Francie Crabb to thank God for his conqueror. There is, it seems, an aesthetic attraction in the exercise of power that goes against the instinct of self-preservation.

The tale comes to a climax with Jean and Aaron sitting by a stream in the woods - known in the town as 'the Den' - where courting couples go for privacy. Aaron writes on the ground with a stick the words 'Jean Latta', but then Tam unexpectedly arrives. “'You've written the wrong name, Aaron,' he says, jeering and pointing with his foot at the letters; 'it should be Jean Sandys' ” (p. 112). However, instead of changing the name himself, Tam forces Aaron to do it: “he was loath, but your father crushed him to the ground, and said do it he should, and warned him too that if he did it he would lose me, bantering him and cowing him and advising him no' to shame me, all in a breath” (p. 112). This cowardice destroys Jean's love for Aaron, and in her

opinion makes Tam her master.²¹ She leaves the Den with him and they spend the night together.

Jean is luckier than the Painted Lady, and persuades Tam to marry her (though he barely upholds the contract thus created). However, the dynamic of their relationship is repeated in their son's relationship with Grizel, though their awareness of masterful men makes them both conscious of their repeating history. When they are still children Grizel thanks Tommy for an unexpected kindness by embracing him, leading to the following exchange with Elspeth:

'she did it!' he added triumphantly; 'you saw her do it, Elspeth!'

'But you didna like it?' Elspeth asked, in terror.

'No, of course I didna like it, but - '

'But what, Tommy?'

'But I liked her to like it,' he admitted (p. 208-9).

The gaining of pleasure from being desired and admired becomes a marker of the masterful man. Grizel's suspicions of Tommy's masterfulness are confirmed by his pleasure in the concept: “ 'to think o't, to think o't!' he crowed, wagging his head, and then she clenched her fist, crying, 'Oh, you wicked, you should cry with shame!' ” (p. 404-5). This crowing echoes the child Tommy's reaction to his mother's deathbed story, which she intended as a warning. Though repeating the prayer that she teaches him - “O God, keep me from being a magerful man!” - he then quietly adds “but I think I would fell [really] like it” (p. 119). Like the text, masterful men both desire power and

²¹ The people of Thrums disagree over whether this was indeed the case. Though they blame Jean for leaving with Tam they nevertheless condemn Aaron for having, in his own words, “violated the feelings of sex” (p. 68). Jean's belief echoes that of Wanda in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* (in *Masochism* [New York: Zone Books, 1991], p. 251), a novel which, like Barrie's, explores the cross-overs between artistic, social and sexual power-play.

enjoy it as an end in itself, power for power's sake.

As a young man in London, Tommy again enjoys the seduction process far more than any projected end, and at first this complicates his relations with women. He finds the middle-class women of respectable homes uninspiring, and cannot muster desire for them. He displays a “remarkable indifference to female society” (*TG*, p. 1) which his employer and friend Pym connects to his artistic troubles: “ ‘shyness I could pardon,’ the exasperated Pym would roar; ‘but want of interest is almost immoral ... there is not a drop of sentiment in your frozen carcass ... an artist without sentiment is a painter without colours’ ” (p. 21). Lack of sentiment cannot be Tommy's problem; rather, being truly sentimental, he cannot engage in a role that is intended to be permanent, cannot fall in love with women who may expect it to last forever.

Yet Pym's connection of artistic with sexual enthusiasm seems justified, if back-to-front. Tommy's interest in women does evolve in tandem with his artistic ability, though it is art, rather than love, that must make first move. Pym is a hack writer of romances for journals, and Tommy is his amanuensis. Tommy, however, quickly becomes dissatisfied with Pym's stories, particularly with the women, and sets about editing them. Pym's women, who, in true romance fashion, claim to be virtuous and yet act “with what may be called rashness” (p. 16), fail to satisfy Tommy because they are not “human” and “consistent”, and therefore he makes them so: “out went this because she would not have done it, and that because she could not have done it” (p. 16). Tommy's complaint of inconsistency may seem hypocritical, and to a certain extent is, but ‘making consistent’ is also a form of mastering. As Tommy makes the women so “noble” that they “must have been astounded as well as proud to see what they were turning into”, it is in quite a different manner that he enjoys his creations:

The lady was consistent now, and he would think about her, and think and think, until concentration, which is a pair of blazing eyes, seemed to draw her out of the pages to his side, and then he and she sported in a way forbidden in the tale (p. 16).

Tommy splits Pym's inconsistent women into two consistent ones, one virtuous and the other promiscuous. He particularly finds himself attracted to Pym's use of “delicious” diminutives to refer to women, a habit that “went to Tommy's head” (p. 13), yet he is aware that their use implies a power relationship that is not quite respectable (especially when you *know* the powerful one to be irresponsible). When making his ladies consistently virtuous he “sternly struck out the diminutives” (p. 16), but they are reintroduced when he extracts the women from plot for his private pleasure:

While he sat there with eyes riveted, he had her to dinner at a restaurant, and took her up the river, and called her 'little woman'; and when she held up her mouth he said tantalizingly that she must wait until he had finished his cigar. (p. 16-17).

Tommy enjoys the woman's desire for him more than he desires her, and thus makes her wait for a kiss that he has no desire to give. Diminutives, it is suggested, are used by the kind of man who gets pleasure rather from the act of surrender than the outcome: by masterful men, that is. It is appropriate that the verbs here, “had” and “took”, are common sexual euphemisms, gesturing towards the power of the male in the implied sexual relationship. Readers may therefore worry to see diminutives creep into Tommy's conversations with Grizel: “ 'I like you to call me child,' she said, 'but

not to think me one'. 'Then I shall think you one,' he said triumphantly" (p. 163).

Again, triumph signals male masterfulness.

Tommy's division of women into consistent wholes represents the splitting of his own inconsistent desire. I have explained above how Barrie's artist, in order to create art, must first surrender to his aesthetic or emotional impulses, and then master his audience. In wanting women to be virtuous *and* promiscuous, Tommy treats them in both of these manners. By creating women as consistently virtuous he generates an aesthetic that can be 'safely' surrendered to without danger, as this virtue guarantees lack of desire to exercise any power thus bestowed. However, with a consistently promiscuous woman - where, like all female sexuality in the novels, promiscuity means surrendered receptivity - Tommy can indulge his desire, like that of the text, to manipulate this receptivity, to enjoy power. His activity in making characters "consistent", then, extends rather than limits their possibilities, making them consistent only within texts (just as Tommy is temporarily consistent in any given moment).

Yet Tommy finds that, in making Pym's women consistent, he has also destroyed the romances. Consistent characters are not compatible with the movement of plot:

The plot was lost for chapters, the characters no longer did anything, and then went and did something else; you were told instead how they did it; you were not allowed to make up your own mind about them; you had to listen to the mind of T. Sandys; he described and he analysed; the road he had tried to clear through the thicket was impossible for chips (p.18).

It is implied that, in a moral climate valuing consistency, there is something 'immoral'

about plot, and, by extension, literary forms that rely more on plot than on characterisation. It is perhaps this that inspires the irony that Tommy's writings take the form of "moralisings" (p. 26), and Tommy himself a hypocritically 'moral' public persona; he is later described as "concealed, as usual, in the garments that clung so oddly to him, as if they were really his, modesty, generosity, indifference to applause, he could not strip himself of them, try as he would" (p. 282). Tommy eventually evades the novel format altogether, adopting instead a series of episodic forms. His first publication is a one-way epistolary, entitled "Letters to a Young Man About to be Married", on which the narrator comments that it may better have been called "Bits Cut Out of a Story because They Prevented its Marching" (p. 27), while it is said of his second publication, "Unrequited Love", that "he had invented ... something new in literature, a story that was yet not a story, told in the form of essays which were no mere essays" (p. 303). Tommy's artistic disposition thus leads him to create work similar in form, though not philosophy, to much aesthetic writing of the 1890s.²²

Of course, actual women cannot be split into several consistent characters to be enjoyed separately, and Tommy thus continues to have trouble with them. This difficulty is illustrated through his relationship with Dolly, a barmaid whom Pym's friends discuss:

Coarse pleasantries passed, but for a time he writhed in silence, then burst upon them indignantly for their unmanly smirching of a woman's character, and swept out, leaving them a little ashamed. That was very like Tommy.

But presently a desire came over him to see this girl, and it came

²² In particular, Tommy's admission that "I have to assume a character ... and then away we go" (p. 306) is reminiscent of Wilde's statement that "there is much [in this essay] with which I entirely disagree. The essay simply represents an artistic standpoint, and in aesthetic criticism attitude is everything" ('The Truth of Masks', p. 432).

because they had hinted such dark things about her. That was like him also (p. 23).

But instead of courting Dolly, he constructs “romances” about her, “some of them of too lively a character, and others so noble and sad and beautiful that the tears came to his eyes” (p. 24). In this way he creates several Dollys, to whom he can safely surrender and whom he can dominate at will: “he could not have said whether he would prefer her to be good or bad” (p. 24). Unlike Pym's women, however, Dolly exists beyond the romances: she is not in fact a doll; and this intrusion of the methods of art into reality may also feel like the “smirching of a woman's character”. Again, inconsistency may be thought promiscuous, as it makes morality and immorality equally possible.

Such intrusion can be found in Tam's courting of Jean. Jean eventually recognises that, though “he was aye saying things that made me think he saw down to the bottom o' my soul” (*ST*, p. 111), no specific knowledge of her was needed to do this: “what I didna understand was that in mastering other women he had been learning to master me” (p. 111). Tam controls Jean by presuming a psychology of inconsistency and telling her that she is whatever he desires her to be. Tommy finds in romancing (an intriguing verb that links fiction and love-making) a similar way of gaining control over Dolly by exposing her potential inconsistency. However he cannot exercise these methods in a sexual seduction because, unlike Tam, he does not know what he desires Dolly to be, good or bad, and therefore cannot manipulate her into his chosen form. Instead Tommy, like Barrie, wants to maintain the reader's possible fluidity between personalities, to have Dolly both good *and* bad rather than one or the other.

Tommy discovers a solution to this problem in a different kind of woman. After

the success of his first book he moves into more distinguished society: “ 'To meet Mr. T. Sandys.' Leaders of society wrote it on their invitation cards ... their daughters, athirst for a new sensation, thrilled at the thought” (*TG*, p. 27). Among these Tommy finds women as willing to pretend as he; women who desire the sensation of being believed virtuous without the trouble of actually being so. With these women Tommy can indulge in the sentiments of the lover, who believes a woman to be the most virtuous on earth and can trust her to do nothing that will contradict that belief (within his sight at least), yet can also indulge such sentiments with as many women as he likes (as they can, too, with a similar number of men). Such actions will not give offence, will not be judged immoral, because these women are as emotionally promiscuous as he, desiring his loving attentions yet also desiring other “sensations”. 'Sentimental' Tommy revels in this culture of sentimentalism.

The 'safety' of mutual sentimentalism is sustained by rumours that Tommy's supposed insights into womanhood come from a dead fiancée. This assures that sentimental play avoids practical consequences:

It allowed them to go to a certain length, while it was also a reason why they could never, never exceed that distance; and this was an ideal state for Tommy, who could be most loyal and tender so long as it was understood that he meant nothing in particular (p. 33).

Tommy's artistic disposition allows him to play at loving, though it does not allow him to love. The sentimentalism of upper-class London society creates an alternative morality antagonistic to that described by Collini; furthermore, this morality is very explicitly connected to the 1870-90s upper- and middle-class taste for Aestheticism.

After the publication of 'Unrequited Love', a "Tommy society" is formed in Mayfair, the location attesting to its upper- rather than middle-class membership (p. 308). This society is less a reading group than an opportunity to indulge in irresponsible sentiment: "nearly all the members" were "eminent or beautiful, and they held each other's hands. Both sexes were eligible, married or single, and the one rule was something about sympathy" (p. 308). Tommy's use of a past love as a way of maintaining sentimental distance is imitated in the society, to enter which one has to "pass an examination in unrequited love, showing how you had suffered, and after that either the men or the women (I forget which) dressed in white to the throat, and then each got some other's old love's hand to hold, and you all sat on the floor and thought hard" (p. 308).

However the phrase "both sexes were eligible, married or single" also implies sexual availability, and this promiscuity is further shown to be socially detrimental: "it is said that the House of Commons was several times nearly counted out because so many of its middle-aged members were holding the floor in another place" (pp. 308-9). Furthermore, though the "Tommy society" surely parodies the unbridled fandom manifest in the late nineteenth-century Browning Societies,²³ a more explicit comparison is made in the phrase "it afterwards became the Souls" (p. 308). The Souls were a high-society clique active from the late 1880s to about 1910, centring around conservative politician Arthur Balfour. Though the Souls did not have an organized philosophy they certainly had an ideological identity, based upon intimate friendship and a love for art, and had many Aesthetic connections. The "Tommy society" seems to reference the promiscuity of this clique; the Souls practised "licensed infidelity" in

²³ The first of these was founded in 1877; the first in London in 1881 by Frederick James Furnivall and Emily Hickey. Like the Tommy Society, the Browning societies were most popular during the poet's lifetime, though he did not himself attend. See William Irvine and Park Honan, *The Book, The Ring, and The Poet: A Biography of Robert Browning* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), pp. 500-4.

which “once a son was born the rest could be fathered by other men”.²⁴ Yet the parody is not so much of the Souls in particular as of a fashion of which they were an extreme example. The indulgent dolefulness of the Tommy society, along with their valuation of emotion in only aesthetically attractive people (one can be “blackballed” for being too “plump” [p. 308]) can be found, for example, in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *Patience*, a parody of Aestheticism written and performed before the Souls existed in any coherent form.²⁵

Upon observing Tommy flirting outrageously with a leading member of the Tommy Society, Lady Pippinworth, Grizel finally realises that she has loved and been left by a masterful man, and lapses into insanity. Tommy's relationship with Lady Pippinworth shows the extremes to which sentimentalism can lead him. Though he had found in society women perfect readers, passively willing to be seduced yet knowing that he “meant nothing in particular” (p. 33), Lady Pippinworth seems to invite seduction and yet reject it disdainfully: “though she looked disdainful she also looked helpless. Now we have the secret of her charm” (p. 335). Seeming to surrender, she nevertheless retains control. Of course Tommy also wants control, and so their relationship is a constant battle, attractive precisely because of the frustration and pain that it causes; Tommy wonders “do I come for the pleasure of the thing or for the pain?” (p. 337). Lady Pippinworth forces Tommy to become, as it were, a reader of a text of bliss, the text of frustration and dissolution, a potentially pleasurable position for those who desire it. But Tommy also *is* a text, and one text cannot comfortably read another without constantly attempting to subdue it. Thus their relationship is a power struggle: “they began by shaking hands, as is always the custom in the ring” (p. 404).

²⁴ ODNB, 'The Souls', accessed online 10th September 2012. See also Jane Abdy and Charlotte Gere, *The Souls* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984).

²⁵ W.S. Gilbert, *Patience* in *Selected Operas by W.S. Gilbert* (London: Macmillan, 1939; first performed 1881), 21-72.

Tommy also expresses his desire to master Lady Pippinworth as a wish to restore their relationship to an normative gender dynamic. Just as Grizel, in trying to make Tommy unsentimental, says “I am trying only to help you to be what a man should be” (p. 291), so Tommy in trying to master Lady Pippinworth says: “don't you see I was doing it only to make a woman out of you?” (p. 353). If Tommy is not a 'man' because he cannot control himself, then Lady Pippinworth, it is implied, is not a 'woman' because she controls herself too much.

Tommy devotes himself to Grizel, marrying her to save her from the asylum. In doing so he observes the damage that his sentimentalism can cause to those he cares about, and begins to control himself in earnest. But, when she wakes one day and is well again, she realises that, though she is grateful for his sacrifices, he still does not love her as he claims to. Their subsequent relationship consists of a compromise between the opposing forces that we have been discussing. Though still valuing truth and stability, Grizel's experience of instability allows her to be more accommodating, to appreciate her own weakness and therefore to forgive his, “as if sympathy had brought her to love even the Tommy way of saying things” (p. 402). Perhaps, it is suggested, art and society are not totally incompatible after all: perhaps some mutual sympathy and understanding can allow them to live harmoniously together, despite their being fundamentally opposed.

But the novel does not end there: reader and text cannot compromise, cannot negotiate. Barrie instead constructs an ambiguous (rather than ambivalent) ending that can be read as either a justification or condemnation of art. Tommy dies when, being particularly taunted by Lady Pippinworth, his coat becomes caught while scaling a fence and strangles him. This coat was Dr McQueen's old coat, given to Tommy after the doctor's death in order to hide the “dandy” velvet jacket that had become

metonymic of his sentimental Aesthetic taste (see p. 71). Thus Tommy is strangled to death in the midst of sentimentality by a symbol of practical morality, of health.

Though critics strongly objected to this ending, it is symbolically elegant.²⁶

Whilst seeming to endorse the view that society has a right to object to art and should destroy it, the ending also allows both Grizel and Tommy to escape prosaic compromise, to have instead “realised themselves”,²⁷ in a way that is more aesthetically satisfying than their marriage, which, in being insincere and yet fixed, was an amalgamation of their worst qualities. The ending therefore preserves the text's flirtatiousness. Though the climactic tableau seems to show art to be morally undesirable, yet it not only does this using principles of aesthetic judgement, but leaves the reader with a potent image, not of compromise, but of the power-play of the text/reader relationship.

²⁶ For example, see [Anon.], 'A Budget of New Books', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 168, 1021 (Nov, 1900), 729-40 and [Anon.], 'Tommy and Grizel by J.M. Barrie', *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, 195. Though this scene does not actually end the book (it is followed by excerpts from obituaries, and a final vignette of Grizel alone), it is what critics refer to when they object to Barrie's ending of the novels, a fact that testifies to its power as a final symbolic image.

²⁷ Wilde, 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism', p. 257.

Chapter Three: Inconsistency and the Individual

The only thing that one really knows about human nature is that it changes.

(Oscar Wilde, 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism', p. 284).

Barrie wrote of Tommy that “you are supposed to like him against your better judgement”.¹ I have said a great deal about the problems and impossibilities of Aesthetic art, and the pain such problems can cause; however so far I have said little to account for its pleasures, the perverse attraction that inspires emotional sympathy with art as well as against it. Having suggested why a reader's better judgement may find against Tommy, I will now explore what the novels have to say as to why that reader may nevertheless 'like' him. In order to do this, I will examine Tommy's relationships with two people, his teachers Mr Cathro and Miss Ailie. This may seem a somewhat arbitrary selection, and to a certain extent it is. Tommy as artist desires power in a way that parallels the desires of the text; as such, all his relationships, not just those with women, parallel possible text/reader dynamics, and the different kinds of pleasure that can be derived from artistic power-play. However, his desire for power makes Tommy's relationships with authority figures particularly suggestive and, as we shall see, the pleasure that the teachers take from these relationships are very different since they become different kinds of reader.

It was Cathro who branded Tommy 'Sentimental Tommy'. We return to his conversation with McLean concerning Tommy's “character”. Cathro doubts the

¹ Letter from J.M. Barrie to Arthur Quiller-Couch, dated 19th January 1896 (in *Letters of J.M. Barrie*, p. 9).

possibility of placing Tommy in society: “what trade would not be the worse of him?”

he says:

He would cut off his fingers with a joiner's saw, and smash them with a mason's mell [hammer]; put him in a brot [apron] behind a counter, and in some grand, magnanimous mood he would sell off his master's things for nothing; make a clerk of him, and he would only ravel the figures; send him to the soldiering, and he would have a sudden impulse to fight on the wrong side (*ST*, p. 338).²

Just as Tommy is unsuitable for marriage, so he is unsuitable for work; without 'character' in either sense he cannot be trusted to act responsibly.

Nevertheless he fascinates his teacher, and an examination into the nature of this fascination may do much to illuminate the ability of both Tommy (the artist) and art to give pleasure. Cathro enjoys relating stories of Tommy's exploits - if we want to hear of one of Tommy's adventures then we are to “try ... Mr. Cathro ... who delighted to tell the tale” (p. 212-13) - and this fascination extends to the classroom:

He peered covertly at Tommy, and Tommy caught him at it every time, and then each quickly looked another way, and Cathro vowed never to look again, but did it next minute, and what enraged him most was that he knew Tommy noted his attempts at self-restraint as well as his covert glances (pp. 224-25).

Not only can Cathro not tear his attention from Tommy, but his inability to do so is

² This fickleness is later echoed in Peter Pan's tendency to suddenly become a pirate, as mentioned in Barrie's Dedication to the published play. Writing of *The Boy Castaways*, a photographic narrative featuring the Llewellyn-Davis boys, he says of their having “changed from Lost Boys into pirates” as “probably also a tendency of Peter's” (in *The Plays of J.M. Barrie in One Volume*, p. 496).

expressed in terms of a test of character in the moral sense, “self-restraint”, with Tommy's fascination irritatingly revealing Cathro's own inability to control himself. The same is true if 'character' is used in its wider, amoral sense, as can be seen in Cathro's conversation with McLean. To the question “I see you don't find him an angel?”, Cathro replies, “ 'deed, sir, there are times when I wish he was an angel”, and says it “so viciously that Mr McLean laughed” (p. 331). This laughter seems inspired not by the comedy of the reply itself but by the incongruity of tone, with a viciousness that, to McLean, must indicate a level of seriousness not warranted in the relationship between a schoolteacher and pupils. Cathro contradicts McLean's expectations of a dominie [teacher], and this undermining of his 'character' is partly what enrages Cathro so much about Tommy.³ “His humour” Cathro says “is ill to endure in a school where the understanding is that the dominie makes all the jokes” (p. 331-32), suggesting that Tommy not only refuses to acknowledge Cathro's authority but also compromises this authority with others, disallowing him to fulfil his desired role. Tommy's inability to recognise authority contributes to his unfitness for any hierarchical society.

Cathro revels in his dominie role for as long as he is allowed to forget Tommy. Flattered into admitting that, as an experienced teacher, he can predict how well his boys would do in examination, “he lay back in his big chair, a complacent dominie again”, and “for the next half-hour he was reciting cases in proof of his sagacity” (p. 336). But this does not last: “ 'wonderful!' chimed in McLean. 'I see it is evident you can tell me how Tommy Sandys will do,' but at that Cathro's rush of words again subsided into a dribble” (p. 336). As the town's most respected schoolteacher Cathro's authority, his power, is based on his being a source of knowledge, an authority. As knowledge runs out, so does power.

³ The word 'dominie' is a corruption of the Latin *domine*, vocative case of *dominus*, meaning lord or master. In this light Barrie's penchant for dominie narrators, as in *Auld Licht Idylls* and *The Little Minister*, gains significance.

Tommy exasperates Cathro because he frustrates his desire to project a stable image of himself, to fulfil a particular identity. Being in a state of fluidity himself, Tommy reveals inconsistency in others and, even worse, seems to Cathro to be aware of it, able to see through Cathro's self-projection as a figure of authority. Yet rather than openly contradict Cathro's authority, a testing of boundaries that would allow an open battle (and potential resolution), Tommy appears to enter into an unspoken power-play with the dominie; or so Cathro feels, for there is no evidence that Tommy is actually aware of this. Denied the control that he feels he should have over Tommy, unable to predict or understand the latter's behaviour, Cathro sets about treating him like a character in a novel; seeking clues, watching behaviour, attributing significance to his smallest gesture. But Tommy, for Cathro, is character and narrator in one, credited with the ability to reveal or conceal as he pleases. Cathro therefore interprets Tommy as a tease, deliberately concealing knowledge that he wants, and with it withholding the authority, the stable identity, that he desires.

In this context, Cathro's assertion that "never did any boy sit on my forms whom I had such a pleasure in thrashing" (p. 339) suggests more than the pleasure of punishing an irritating child. Other pupils wonder at Tommy's punishments:

They saw him punish Tommy frequently without perceptible cause, and that he was still unsatisfied when the punishment was over. This apparently was because Tommy gave him a look before returning to his seat. When they had been walloped they gave Cathro a look also, but it merely meant, "Oh, that this was a dark road and I had a divot in my hand!" while his look was unreadable - that is, unreadable to them, for the dominie understood it and writhed. What it said was, "You think me a wonder, and therefore I forgive you." (p. 225).

Physical punishment - the last resort of threatened authority - is ineffective because it cannot produce the mental authority that Cathro desires. Tommy's unreadable look is readable to the dominie because it is he, not Tommy, who is providing the framework, the game, within which the look has meaning. Still he is predicting his behaviour, providing a character for him, second-guessing what every glance could mean, *reading* him.

The punishment also inevitably fails to satisfy because it is not done in the proper spirit for a dominie, being executed "without perceptible cause". His very act of character assertion thus undermines that character, since Cathro desires power not for the good it allows him to do (as a dominie should) but like the masterful man, for its own sake. It is this desire that frustrates Cathro as a 'reader', as he wishes to believe himself in control of the text. For such a reader, characters exist as an accessible whole, narration becoming a game of striptease (where the subject does not strip personally, but is stripped by a third party for the benefit of an audience). To return to Barthes's erotic terms of readerly pleasure, Cathro desires Tommy as a text of pleasure, who reveals his character gradually with the possibility of being forced to reveal faster (the reader skipping bits of the text, the audience jumping on stage and assisting with the stripping).⁴ Tommy's various poses seem to so strongly suggest personality that Cathro grasps onto these episodes and takes pleasure in relating them, repeating them to anyone who will listen, taking on the role of narrator. However, such episodes cannot be strung together to form coherent personality and Cathro fails as narrator, promising much but revealing little. Having no coherence to discover, Tommy is inevitably a text of bliss, of dissolution, and Cathro unwittingly experiences this bliss as he *enjoys* thrashing Tommy despite the inability of this punishment to *satisfy*. Only his lasting

⁴ See Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, p. 10.

expectation of a text of pleasure rather than of bliss means that he experiences the greater part of this enjoyment as frustration, with blissful pleasure only semi-consciously articulated.

Cathro loves to hate Tommy; is attracted to the perversity of his attraction because it reveals something perversely inconsistent in himself. This is perhaps behind the narratorial pronouncement that Cathro despises Tommy for having “made him self-conscious” (p. 224). It is possible, Barrie seems to imply, that this perverse love can to some extent account for society's continued attraction to and obsession with art, especially Aesthetic art, and the fashions, crazes and outrages that surrounded it. Like Pater, he approaches a model of selfhood that is *universally* inconsistent. Unlike Pater, however, he also acknowledges that such inconsistency harbours social danger.

Tommy's tendency to reveal his readers' inconsistencies is reiterated in his relationship with Miss Ailie, though she constitutes a different kind of reader. Ailie runs a school “for the genteel and for the common who contemplated soaring” (p. 152), offering an education in respectability as well as academia, and Tommy attends this school for the first few years of his being in Thrums. As “school-mistress” (p. 153) rather than dominie, Ailie does not have the same expectations of authority as Cathro, and the school's reputation as “a lassie school” (p. 154) reflects the hierarchy of such female power. Ailie can master her pupils as far as they are children, but loses grip as soon as they are considered men, as illustrated by her fear of “big boys” (p. 294). Though her school is coeducational, she never records fear of big girls.

This ambivalence towards her own authority can be seen in her attitude toward punishment. When McLean (Ailie's future husband) returns from India, he discovers the book in which she records advice and reflections concerning the running of the school. Among these is the word “Punishments”, though “she had written it small, as if

to prevent herself seeing it each time she opened the book” (p. 294). Punishments, it seems, are something she dislikes, though aware of their necessity: “obviously her hope had been to dispose of Punishment in a few lines, but it would have none of that, and Mr. McLean found it stalking from page to page” (p. 294). Punishment seems to function traumatically in the notebook and in her life, repressed and yet compulsively returned to:

Dispiriting item, that on resuming his seat the chastised one is a hero to his fellows for the rest of the day ... Item, that Master T. Sandys, himself under correction, explained to her (the artistic instinct again) how to give the cane a waggle when descending, which would double its nip ... Item, that Master Gavin Dishart, for what he considered the honour of his school, though aware he was imperilling his soul, fought Hendry Dickie of Cathro's for saying Miss Ailie could not draw blood with one stroke (p. 295).⁵

Like Cathro, Ailie is aware that punitive hierarchy is not as absolute as it should be, though unlike Cathro she is uncomfortable with her identity and responsibility as punisher. Beyond mere aversion to cruelty - her book also contains notes on “rubbing of the culprit's hand 'with sweet butter or dripping' should you have struck too hard” (p. 295) - her discomfort seems to arise from the uncertainty of her desire to project an authoritative identity.

Unlike Cathro, Ailie is uncertain of her 'character', and subjects herself to the

⁵ The child who demands to be beaten is a recurring trope in Barrie's work. Most notably it is preserved in *Quality Street*, Barrie's dramatic reworking of Ailie's story (in *The Plays of J.M. Barrie in One Volume* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1942], p. 291). Piers Dudgeon quotes an early article (which I have been unable to locate) in which a boy insists that a man “kick him round the room” (Piers Dudgeon, *Captivated: J.M. Barrie, Daphne du Maurier and the Dark Side of Neverland* [London: Vintage, 2009; first published 2008], p. 94). In both cases the demand for punishment, though obviously intended to be comical, seems to suggest sustained concern with the pleasures and dangers of power, as Barrie plays amusement off discomfort.

watchfulness to which Cathro subjects Tommy. The respect that she shows to the Auld Licht Minister suggests that she belongs to that extreme Calvinist sect, and her notebook displays Calvinistic attentiveness to potential wickedness. She muses “If Kitty [her now deceased sister] were aware that the squealing of the slate-pencils gave me such headaches, she would insist on again taking the arithmetic class, though it always makes her ill. Surely, then, I am justified in saying that the sound does not distress me” (p. 294). At another point she writes after a recipe for beef tea, “it is surely not very wicked to pretend to Kitty that I keep some of it for myself; she would not take it all if she knew I dined on the beef it was made from” (p. 297). In both cases the word “surely” reveals the uncertainty that it seeks to conceal (with the possibility of mistaking one's own character always lurking). The inconsistency of Ailie's identity is thus always semi-conscious, revealed by the act of concealment, denied yet given constant attention.

Such concern with 'character' leads Ailie to keep a tight hold upon herself, an extreme exercise of self-control which, like the word “surely”, presupposes that there is something in need of control: an illicit potential that must be continually fortified against. What is controlled, it seems, is the dissolution of self in the ever-present possibility of change, of other selves. However, as with Grizel, this potential chaos becomes confused for Ailie with her relationships with men, her desire to yield romantically becoming conflated with the temptation to surrender to the dissolute side of herself. Ailie therefore finds relationships with men difficult, especially “masterful” men; on the one hand, she finds them, and the possibility of surrender, very attractive; yet on the other hand this attraction is identified with the attraction to inconsistency and the 'wicked' selves that such inconsistency makes possible.

This desire/fear is manifest in her reading of romances, a genre which she finds

all the more fascinating for her belief that they are wicked. She is a member of the Thrums Book Club, to which members make an annual contribution; and “there was one member who invariably gave a ro-ro-romance” (p. 159). “For months,” we are told, “she avoided his dangerous contribution. But always there came a black day when a desire to read the novel seized her, and she hurried home with it beneath her rokelay [raincoat]” (p. 159). Ailie's ambivalence towards inconsistency is thus explicitly illustrated through her activity *as a reader*. The romances offer double significance, being “dangerous” in both their subject matter and in their style. Ailie must have books read to her rather than read them herself, “to read without knitting being such shameless waste of time” (p. 160); and this necessity resembles her negotiations over beef tea and arithmetic: a compromise with morality that allows otherwise forbidden activity. Romances in particular are open to this charge of shameless wastefulness, having no use beyond pleasure. The reading of romances, then, begins to sound like a slipping of control, beyond which is potential chaos and 'wickedness' (especially if they happen to include romance between a woman and a masterful man).

Tommy is therefore recruited to read romances to Ailie. If, for Cathro, Tommy had been both character and narrator at once, for Ailie he becomes surrogate reader, expressive not only of her own readerly desires and anxieties but also, by proxy, the source of these in her troubled relationship with her potential selves. The choice of Tommy is particularly apt, as their relationship begins with her identification of him with the chaotic 'wickedness' that could result from women's surrendering to men. On their first encounter Ailie did not like Tommy. Though she offered Elspeth free schooling on their arrival in Thrums, “she did not want Tommy, because she had seen him in the square one day, and there was a leer on his face that reminded her of his father” (p. 153). Given that Tommy's father, when Ailie was a young girl, appeared in

her town claiming to be the illegitimate son of her own father, this recognition of the father's "leer" on the face of the son suggests a fear of unrestrained sexuality, and the often disastrous consequences of encounters with masterful men. Her opinion of Tommy changes only when she believes him to be demonstrating (sexless) love for Elspeth, whereupon "Tommy's behaviour seemed beautiful to the impressionable Miss Ailie" (p. 155). Her impressionableness, her openness to suggestion, her readerly passivity is what allows her to admire Tommy, though the use of the word here suggests that such admiration is, at this point at least, not wholly justified. There is in Ailie as in Grizel an unacknowledged desire to admire, to surrender.

During the romance readings, which Ailie assumes a child will be too innocent to understand, Tommy becomes not only symbolically and literally suppressive - the mechanism that allows for, among other things, kindness and pleasure, as having claims above that of the strict Calvinist morality that she has entrusted with her selfhood - but also of her ambivalent relationship with this mechanism, the possibility that 'wickedness' will re-emerge regardless. This symbolism acts as an unspoken significance shared between reader and narrator, and so plays out again the semi-consciousness of her own potential inconsistency. Such a symbolism is prefigured in the description of Miss Ailie's artificial tooth, the precariousness of which is suggestive of this tenuous relationship:

It was slightly loose, and had she not at times shut her mouth suddenly, and then done something with her tongue, an accident might have happened. This tooth fascinated Tommy, and once when she was talking he cried, excitedly, 'Quick, it's coming!' whereupon her mouth snapped closed (p. 158).

Tommy thus functions both as the suppression itself, and the embarrassing, tactless

reminder that there is something to be suppressed, a transference of Ailie's internal conflict that is also found in her reference, in the notebook, to Tommy as “Master T. Sandys”, though the rest of the children are given full names (p. 295); the name at once seems to conceal Tommy, and in its formality reveal his potential power as the man that he soon will be. Ailie's interactions with Tommy are forever revealing and concealing this anxious desire/fear, playing out this ambivalence.

Of course, Tommy is not as innocent as Miss Ailie supposes, and “he discovered one day what something printed thus, 'D—n,' meant, and he immediately said the word with such unction that Miss Ailie let fall her knitting” (p. 159). Thus the 'wickedness' always threatens to emerge so long as the innocent child is educable, an ironic subversion of the relationship between teacher and pupil. The romance, however, is so fascinating that Ailie cannot bear for the readings to end, and so they embark upon a series of negotiations, “Tommy to say 'stroke' in place of the 'D—ns,' and 'word we have no concern with' instead of 'Darling' and 'Little One.' ” (p. 160). However, such a solution conceals rather than neutralizes the problem, and Tommy's knowledge continues to develop, leading finally to the following exchange during a lesson:

'I don't know what to say to you,' she exclaimed.

'Fine I know what you want to say,' he retorted, and unfortunately she asked,

'What?'

'Stroke!' he replied, leering horridly (p. 164).

Again, “leering” echoes the leer that reminded Ailie of Tommy's father, and to Ailie's conflation of her 'wicked' or inconsistent self with sexuality, and the fear in both cases of what will happen if she lapses in her watchfulness.

Tommy's function, then, is deconstructive, breaking down selfhood and 'character'. But such deconstruction is not necessarily destruction, and taking apart may facilitate restructuring. Though Cathro, through his continued desire for power, knowledge and character, is reduced to near insanity by his relationship with Tommy, Ailie's fear of the lack of these things rather than desire for them means that Tommy's deconstruction, though distressing, can also open a space for change. Barrie explores this possibility in *Sentimental Tommy* by creating a character (Ailie) who associates love with immorality and dissolution of self, and making her contradict herself by marrying. Though in the "ro-ro-ro-romance" sections Ailie's secret enjoyment of surrender has been sufficiently established for a reader expecting consistency of characterisation to be satisfied when she agrees to marry McLean, Ailie herself is faced with the very difficult problem of making their engagement public knowledge. Aware of her 'character' in the community as something fixed, and conflating such fixity with moral respectability, she finds it impossible to alter her public identity:

Three calls did she make on dear friends ... to announce that she did not propose keeping school after the end of the term - because - in short, Mr. Ivie McLean and she - that is he - and so on. But though she had planned it all out so carefully, with at least three capital ways of leading up to it, and knew precisely what they would say, and pined to hear them say it, on each occasion shyness conquered and she came away with the words unspoken (p. 328).

Though her personal openness to change means that (under McLean's protection) she can make the character transition within herself, she nevertheless finds that where the community is concerned her established character is incompatible with that she wishes to assume - that of the blushing bride - and the words will not come out. Needless to

say, McLean does not suffer from such a problem, and intends simply to drop in on the doctor and say “how are you, doctor? I just looked in to tell you that Miss Ailie and I are to be married” (p. 328). “The audacity of this captivated Miss Ailie even while it outraged her sense of decency” (p. 328).

How, within a community and indeed a literary genre based upon psychological consistency, is Miss Ailie to make the transition of character necessary to marriage? Barrie provides two spaces in the novel for such transitions: one, figuratively speaking, is Tommy, as we have seen: the other is the physical space of the Den, a wooded ravine in Thrums, “so craftily hidden away that when within a stone's throw you may give up the search for it” (pp. 65-66). Like the inconsistent 'character' of public individuals, the Den is an open secret that echoes the semi-consciousness of Ailie's ambivalence; a space that, in being both there and not there, hidden and not hidden (who is doing this hiding?), can harbour contradictions in the same way that Tommy's character can. We may remember that Thrums people court here, as though such a transitional space were needed for love and sex to exist in a largely Calvinistic community, to allow the 'immorality' that is needed if life is to be perpetuated. The spring at the centre of the Den, called the Cuttle Well, thus has “the reputation of being the place where it is most easily said” (p. 65), the word “it” repeating this repression. This ease seems connected to the water's eternal movement: “it is a spring that will not wait a moment” (p. 67). One may be reminded of the Heraclitian phrase “no man ever steps in the same river twice”, and again Pater's epigram to 'The Conclusion', “all things give way; nothing remaineth”.⁶ The Den is also where the Painted Lady walks with “the man who never came” (p. 166).

Tommy chooses the Den as the setting for his Jacobite games. Inspired by stories told by Blinder, and by Scott's *Waverley*, Tommy gathers a collection of friends

⁶ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 150.

- his wingman Corp, Ailie's maid Gavinia, Elspeth and Grizel - and choreographs a series of fluid plots in which each person plays multiple parts (though Tommy is always the hero). In their first incarnation these games involve hostilities between Jacobites awaiting the Pretender, and the Queen's forces (represented, unwittingly, by Cathro). This phase combines Ailie's and Cathro's relationships with Tommy: while the Pretender (Tommy) is referred to as "Captain Stroke" and characterised as a masterful man - "like all his race the Pretender, or Stroke, as he called himself, was a torment to single women" (p. 307) - the choice of Cathro as enemy draws a comparison between Jacobite rebellion and Tommy's inability to recognise authority. Put together, Stroke can be read as Ailie's suppressed sexuality, battling against cultural and moral convention, represented by Cathro's desire for power.

Following McLean's reappearance, however, Tommy, driven by a mistaken idea that McLean is masterfully tormenting Ailie, alters the game. Now it is McLean who is Stroke, and Tommy becomes the British forces, styling himself "Champion of the Dames" (p. 302), appropriately misheard by Gavinia as "Champion of Damns" (p. 306). A new symbolism is now offered in which Stroke, as an image of dangerous masculine sexuality, represents Ailie's fears, while Tommy, championing both dames and damns, represents the loosening of female repression that is necessary to marriage. Another notable aspect of this change is that Tommy now forbids the playing of multiple characters. "And what am I, forby Ben the Boatswain?", asks Corp. "Nothing," replies Tommy, "honest men has just one name" (p. 311).

Having accidentally overheard the children when out walking, McLean decides to play along. He arranges to meet them in the Den with Ailie and, in the character of Stroke, surrenders, thereby symbolically dispelling the danger that the masterful man presents. After this, though it is not entirely clear how, the marriage is considered

announced and Ailie becomes “a lover at the Cuttle Well at last, like so many others” (p. 347). Uncertainty over the mechanism of this change is voiced by Gavinia, who is confused by McLean's assertion that Tommy engineered the marriage:

Gavinia stuck to her problem, 'How did you do it, what was it you did?' and the cruel McLean said: 'You may tell her, Tommy; you have my permission.'

It would have been an awkward position for most boys, and even Tommy - but next moment he said, quite coolly: 'I think you and me and Miss Ailie should keep it to oursels, Gavinia's sic a gossip' (p. 350).

Gavinia's question cannot be answered within the narrative because the change has been effected not through means tangible to the characters but through the symbolic structure of the text, available to readers as a source of meaning. Though Tommy is equally unaware of what he has done, it is implied that, since his relationships also open space for change, he has an affinity with the text. Such meta-literary potential is later intimated in Tommy's growing awareness of “little gods” who protect him from the consequences of actions which further the plot: “Tommy had a notion that certain whimsical little gods protected him in return for the sport he gave them, and he often kissed his hand to them when they came to the rescue” (p. 151). There is, it may be felt, something mysteriously textual about Tommy.

Tommy's 'character', then, not only manifests a general tendency towards inconsistency that Barrie reads into human nature, but instigates identity play. Many sections of Victorian society, it is intimated, are sorely in need of such play. Although stringent morality and rules of respectability are shown to be both useful and, to a certain extent, reasonable – both Ailie and Grizel's moralities are developed in response

to a very real danger – yet their universal appropriateness is nevertheless queried, and the practical need for flexibility intimated. Barrie finds such flexibility in art and the artist, and it is this, he suggests, despite (or because of) their inevitable threat to Victorian society, that justifies the existence of both.

* * *

The Tommy novels, by personifying art as a character within a realist environment, interrogate the extent to which art can be justified in society. The criticism of art thus offered is persuasive, yet there is also insidious criticism of a society, a morality, an understanding of human nature that fails to accommodate it. Barthes opens *The Pleasure of the Text* with a similar personifying strategy:

Imagine someone ... who abolishes within himself all barriers, all classes, all exclusions, not by syncretism but by simple discard of that old spectre: logical contradiction; who mixed every language, even those said to be incompatible; who silently accepts every charge of illogicality, of incongruity; who remains passive in the face of Socratic irony (leading the interlocutor to the supreme disgrace: self- contradiction) and legal terrorism (how much penal evidence is based on a psychology of consistency!). Such a man would be the mockery of our society: court, school, asylum, polite conversation would cast him out ...

Now this anti-hero exists: he is the reader of the text at the moment he takes his pleasure (p.3).

This personification reads as a theoretical description of Tommy, though Barrie's

tracing of readerly antisociality back to the masterful text leads him to personify art itself rather than the reader. However, Barrie's dramatisation of this personification allows a fuller portrait of both art and society; where Barthes remains polemical, Barrie's choice of the novelistic medium enables him to preserve ambivalence. Furthermore Barrie's symbolic analogy, though insistent, remains tangentially related to characterisation - Grizel and Tommy, though symbolising social and artistic moralities, are also developed and credible psychologies - and this allows empathetic emotion potentially to transcend a reader's reasoned judgement of abstract ideas. A reader may find him/herself sympathising with art through Tommy at one moment, and society through Grizel the next, regardless of rational opinion; for the text masterfully pushes its readers to *feel* the claims of both. Once again the novels can be found exaggerating the reader/text relationship, encouraging readers into "the supreme disgrace: self-contradiction".

Whether this is felt as disgrace depends very much on the particular reader. It is perfectly possible to read these novels as texts of pleasure, merely delivering the comeuppance that art (or society) deserved all along. Yet attentive reading reveals a text of bliss, of disquieting contradiction and confusion of readerly selfhood. Receptive readers may find themselves emotionally predisposed against a position that they nevertheless (however momentarily) occupy, a state with the potential to be 'blissfully' pleasurable one moment and peculiarly distressing the next.

It is my belief that this working on and through emotion has not only earned Barrie accusations of 'sentimentality' more often than warranted, but also accounts for some of the otherwise unreasonably adverse critical reactions. Reviewers frequently found Barrie's work distasteful, though they had trouble tracing this feeling to its source. An anonymous reviewer in 1896 objected to "the attitude of scorn, aversion,

merciless rancour we have called it, taken up by Mr Barrie to Sentimental Tommy the boy; an attitude upon which, rather than upon any one thing Mr Barrie says, we base our contention that his book is radically wrong and unjust”,⁷ while another in 1900 proclaimed that “plenty of intelligent people will dislike Mr Barrie's novel, and with good reason; it is morbid, it is perverse ... Mr Barrie wields his whip [against characters] with the zeal of a flagellant”.⁸ This recurrent complaint of Barrie's cruelty, even sadism, towards his creations, a defence of characters against the tyrannical author, again reproduces the dynamic discussed above. His readers, through sympathy with his characters, both condemn the irresponsible artist and rebel against his power, little knowing that they are surrendering all the while. These are discomforting novels, though an accommodating reader may find great pleasure in the discomfort.

⁷ [Anon.], 'A New Boy in Fiction', p. 811.

⁸ Stephen Gwynn, 'The Autumn's Books', *The Fortnightly Review*, 68 (December, 1900), p. 1037.

Conclusion: Mother and Eternal Boy

'Oh, why,' I remember passionately wondering, 'why can we not all be happy and devote
ourselves to play?'

R.L. Stevenson, 'Child's Play' in *Virginibus Puerisque* (p. 257).

Critics have found many excuses for dismissing Barrie as a serious artist.¹ The majority of these involve one or both of the figures that haunted his later work: the mother and the eternal boy. As early as 1905 Max Beerbohm criticised Barrie by identifying him with his most famous creation: “he himself is that boy”.² Likewise he designated *Peter Pan* “the thing most directly from within himself”.³ Beerbohm then went on to assess Barrie according to a gendered binary of fantasy/female and logic/male. As *Peter Pan* was “a riot of inconsequence and of exquisite futility”,⁴ he concluded, so Barrie was actually not “a dear little boy” but “a dear little girl”.⁵

These charges of childishness and effeminacy dogged Barrie from the early 1900s,⁶ and found their way into post-war biography under the wing of sexual

¹ For a consideration of what constitutes 'serious' art, see John Passmore, *Serious Art: A Study of the Concept in All the Major Arts* (London: Duckworth, 1991).

² Max Beerbohm, 'The Child Barrie' in *Around Theatres* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953; first published 1924), p. 357.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

⁶ For example a reviewer of *The Little White Bird* (*Saturday Review*, 2456, 94 [Nov 22, 1902], 647) writes of “the revelation, at times weirdly feminine, of the delights of babyhood”, while Edith A. Browne ('Mr J. M. Barrie's Dramatic and Social Outlook', *Fortnightly Review*, 79, 473 [May, 1906], 920-29) writes of Barrie having “grasped the whole situation [of “modern life”] with the intuition of a woman [and] passed judgement with the infantile wisdom of the discerning child”.

speculation. In 1970, Janet Dunbar⁷ drew on psychoanalytical theory to trace Barrie's apparent sexual impotence to his relationship with his mother,⁸ who, in contrast to Barrie's own portrayals, is described as an "emotional boa-constrictor",⁹ who's attentions caused him to remain emotionally childlike and so reject "any full-blooded approach to women".¹⁰ This psychoanalytic reading of Barrie's mother-preoccupation found fullest expression in Harry Geduld's identification of the Oedipal complex in every aspect of Barrie's life and work, wherein both predictably suffered.¹¹ However, as Freudianism fell out of fashion, biographical attention turned to Barrie's relations with the Llewellyn-Davis boys, where sexual and paternal frustration were depicted as finding expression in a confused identification and devotion.¹² At worst this devotion has been characterized as flagrant paedophilia, with Piers Dudgeon claiming "there is evidence to suggest that Barrie was sexually aroused by little boys".¹³ Barrie's reputation has never recovered from this impulse to seek ciphers to his symbolisms in his biography.

Paedophilia is increasingly becoming Western society's choice scapegoat.¹⁴

⁷ Janet Dunbar, *J.M. Barrie: The Man Behind the Image* (London: Reader's Union, 1971; first published 1970).

⁸ There is relatively credible evidence that Barrie was sexually impotent, though none as to whether this was psychological or otherwise. See Dunbar, *The Man Behind the Image*, ch. 14, for a too colourful account.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹¹ Geduld, *Sir James Barrie*, *passim*.

¹² First to do this was Andrew Birkin's biography *J.M. Barrie and the Lost Boys: The Real Story Behind Peter Pan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003; first published 1979). This biography, along with the related 1978 BBC docudrama *The Lost Boys*, first brought Barrie's personal history to a mass audience. The latter's flirtatious boys and abundant innuendo has much to answer for regarding Barrie's public image.

¹³ Dudgeon, *Captivated*, p. 23.

¹⁴ This is not to say that child abuse is not a very real and pertinent problem, but that emotional investment in it is increasingly out of proportion with the reality. See Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan; or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, particularly introduction.

Accordingly, *Peter Pan* is frequently identified with 'unnatural' relationships between adults and children, and Barrie himself paraded as a famous example.¹⁵ But the mother/boy relationship is, in Barrie's work, a symbolic product of his thinking on the moral justification of art, a genealogy that has so far remained unacknowledged. Between these two, the problems that power presents - to morality, to society, to selfhood - become neutralized, and 'safe' power-play can be indulged. In Barrie's conception, both mother and boy can play at mastering and surrendering without having meant anything in particular, as each is unable to harm the other. For the boy this harmlessness does indeed follow from his sexual impotence, as his inability to produce children disarms conflation between sexual, social and personal results of inconsistency, and thus allows women to play at surrendering to masculine masterfulness without fear.

As for the mother, her 'safety' relies on an alternative, feminine, configuration of masterfulness. As Tommy, before surrendering, sought to project onto women a consistent virtue that by its very nature could not desire power, so the mother is imagined as enjoying but not desiring power: enjoying it for what it enables rather than for its own sake. In the Tommy novels this feminine masterfulness finds expression in the relationship between Grizel and Dr McQueen, who, after the death of the Painted Lady, contemplates adoption of her child. In Grizel's clean and tidy home, McQueen realises that "he himself was the one undusted, neglected-looking thing ... and he was suddenly conscious of his frayed wristband and of buttons hanging by a thread" (*ST*, p. 359). He thus begins to desire the domestic order that she creates; though when McQueen accuses Grizel of having "set a trap to catch me" (p. 361), she regally

¹⁵ James R. Kincaid's *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992) is illuminative in this respect. Though dedicated to exposing Anglo-American cultural investment in demonized paedophilia, Kincaid nevertheless lists Barrie as one of the "agreed-upon paedophiles" (p. 212 n51). There has been to date no evidence found in support of such sexual preference.

dismisses him. “ 'Oh!' cried Grizel, and she opened the door quickly. 'Go away, you horrid man' ” (p. 361). Grizel's practical nature means that she enjoys housework, enjoys restoring items and people to domestic order, yet she does not seek to create desire for such order in others. If her ability gives her power, it is nevertheless the activity she enjoys rather than the power itself.

Grizel's relationship with McQueen is prevented from becoming that between the masterful man and seduced woman because, though it evolves its own complex power-play, it excludes sexuality. McQueen invites Grizel to live with him (and in fact she agrees to do so) because as a bachelor he needs looking after, mastering; though there are obvious similarities between this and the domestic identity of the Victorian wife, the age difference between Grizel and the Doctor precludes this model.¹⁶ Grizel's inability to accommodate inconsistency means that she develops the ability to shape people for productive interaction with society, in short to make them respectable; and this ability is also described in the Tommy novels as “masterful”: “you are the most masterful little besom I ever clapped eyes on” (p. 398), says McQueen. Such feminine masterfulness, based on a psychology of consistency rather than inconsistency, is not antisocial but rather allows society to exist, acting as an antidote to inconsistency.

Here, then, is a different model for the artist/audience relationship. Like the seduced woman, McQueen desires Grizel's masterfulness; though initially reluctant, he eventually invites it into his home, asks it to make him respectable. However, unlike the masterful man, the masterful woman does not invite such desire, does not seek to create it in the man. Such a masterfulness cannot be seductive as there is no seducer; surrender to this mastery is surrender to a force that, like Plato's philosopher king, does

¹⁶ For the centrality of the domestic sphere to the wife's influence in the nineteenth century, see John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), ch. 3.

not desire to exercise power.¹⁷ This power relationship cannot be reproduced between reader and text; the text always desires power, and is thus always like a masterful man. But we may wonder whether it could be reproduced between artist and audience, since the artist is able to regret the power that they hold. The artist, perhaps, can choose whether to be a masterful man or a masterful woman. Barrie oscillates between the two, seeming at times to revel in his ability to manipulate his readers, yet at others both inviting them to castigate him and reproving them in turn for enjoying the irresponsible surrender that he has instigated.

Of course this symbolism relies on an ideal conception of motherhood rather than biological fact, and this idealization is supported by the Tommy novels.¹⁸ Whereas Jean is too tired and sad to engage with her children, it is Grizel, who never has children, who is the text's most ideal mother. "It will be a damned shame," says Corp, "if that woman never has no bairns o' her ain" (*TG*, p. 376).¹⁹ Her relationship with babies typifies the power-play of mother and boy; though she loves nothing better than caring for them, yet "as soon as Grizel heard there was a new baby anywhere all her intellect deserted her and she became a slave" (p. 45). Unlike her surrender to the masterful man, Grizel's surrender to babies does not harm her, though they are described as naturally masterful (irrespective of their gender, albeit the babies we see her with are always male). "What a way she had with them! She always welcomed them as if in coming they had performed a great feat. That is what babies are agape for

¹⁷ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1930) p. 509.

¹⁸ For the contradictory idealizations of motherhood in the period see Claudia Nelson and Ann Sumner Holmes eds, *Maternal Instincts: Visions of Motherhood and Sexuality in Britain, 1875-1925* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

¹⁹ Ormond also recognises Grizel as the ideal mother-figure (*J.M. Barrie*, p. 76), though she is too thorough in connecting this ideal to an "anti-aesthetic ethos of Thrums". Barrie's mothers are not always anti-aesthetic like Grizel (see, for example, Mary A's domestic creativity in *The Little White Bird*, and *Peter Pan*'s Wendy as story-teller), and neither is Thrums. As we have seen above, although Grizel can be read as symbolising a moral ideal, in practice this ideal alienates rather than endears her to the community, which is more aesthetic than it would like to admit.

from the beginning” (p. 53). Like masterful men, babies desire admiration without deserving it.

The mother/boy dynamic is also used to neutralize the potential danger of male/female relationships. This is particularly seen between Grizel and McQueen who, like Tommy, has been unable to marry. Their relationship is articulated through mother/boy role-play: “ 'mother' was his nickname for her, and she delighted in the word. She lorded it over him as if he were her troublesome boy” (p. 46). Grizel so delights in this role that she wishes to extend it to all her relationships with men. “She could not help liking to be a mother to men, she wanted them to be the most noble characters, but completely dependent on her” (p. 65).

As an elderly bachelor McQueen can legitimately adopt the role of boy because his sexuality is approximated to that of a boy's.²⁰ But for Tommy the role of boy suggests an artistic young man's inability to participate in legitimate sexuality (to love and marry) regardless of his eligibility: a position that carries a certain social stigma. Thus, as boyishness is shown to be a direct result of the artistic disposition - “in the wild spirit that mastered him he seemed to be the boy incarnate” (*TG*, p. 72) - so Tommy's supposed inability to “grow up” (p. 100) is equated with his irresponsibility; he is “the boy who was so fond of games that he could not with years become a man” (p. 428). Yet the novels frequently suggest this to be a failing, not in Tommy, but in society. “In a younger world, where there were only boys and girls, he might have been a gallant figure” (p. 117); and later the narrator confides: “I am his slave myself. I see that all that was wrong with Tommy was that he could not always be a boy” (p. 214). Though not quite a call for revolution along the lines of Wilde's 'The Soul of Man

²⁰ This is not to suggest that a man of McQueen's age (or indeed a boy) is unable to perform sexual intercourse, but that they are unlikely to be considered marriageable and thus able to participate in legitimate sexuality.

Under Socialism', these complaints criticise Victorian society's inadequate accommodation of play, and thus its losing touch with something not only noble but essentially human.

The understanding of these origins of the mother/boy dynamic is essential to fruitful reading of Barrie's later work. There, though this relationship is suggested to be the only way that the power-play of art can be reconciled with utilitarian morality, yet it entails a paradox of origin. Even if the boy could remain eternal, mothers cannot be produced without the existence of boys that *do* grow up, without the willingness of women to risk surrender outside of this 'safe' relationship. The model of the mother and eternal boy therefore offers a solution to the problem of power-play between reader and text only to assert the impossibility of solution, the inevitable antisociality of art. In his later work Barrie seems also to move beyond the problems of art and use this symbolism to explore problems of selfhood, power and surrender as concerns in their own rights. Thus in *The Little White Bird* (1902), Captain W. tests his desire to love and be loved through an absurdly maternal relationship with the boy David, the final result being a confession of a previously unacknowledged loneliness and acceptance of the solution: romantic companionship. "I have stored within me a great fund of affection," the Captain reluctantly admits to David's mother, "with nobody to give it to, and ... if there is one of those ladies [at her tea parties] who can be got to care for me I shall be very proud".²¹ Likewise, Claudia Nelson's excellent reading of *Peter Pan* explores that text's impossible desire for a mother/eternal boy dynamic, as the audience are invited to indulge in a "younger world" in which that dynamic is possible, yet must also realise it as a fabrication, an illusion.²² Barrie seems to make these connections

²¹ Barrie, *The Little White Bird* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), pp. 311-12.

²² Nelson, *Boys Will Be Girls*, pp. 168-73.

when he writes in 1900: “I have a small book and a play in my mind but not much on paper. The world will be younger in them than in Tommy”.²³ *Peter Pan* at once celebrates the artistic temperament in all of us, and mourns its impossible, antisocial nature.

This accumulative symbolism is of clear importance to the study of Barrie as a serious artist. Whereas works such as *Margaret Ogilvy* (1896) and *The Little White Bird* have been previously dismissed as puzzling failures, articulation of the symbolisms that produce them not only allows re-evaluation of their artistic merit, but also of the moral climate within which they enjoyed immense popularity. Barrie had a remarkably rapid rise to fame following his arrival in London in 1886, and his success lasted until his death in 1937.²⁴ However, despite this eminence, and despite Holbrook Jackson's listing him as expressive of the “zeitgeist” of the 1890s, Barrie has been almost uniformly neglected in accounts of this period.²⁵ The 1890s in general have likewise suffered excessive distortion, and the project of rectifying this is now well under way.²⁶ It is my belief that more sustained and impartial study into Barrie's work is an important step in that enterprise.

Yet historical rehabilitation is also important for what it tells us about ourselves and our own moment. Though the majority of Barrie's work is now unread and neglected, even out of print, yet the work in which he culminated the symbolisms and concerns that I have explored continues to have great emotional currency

²³ Letter to Quiller-Couch dated 27th December 1900, in *The Letters of J.M. Barrie*, p. 17.

²⁴ Though the post-WWI generation reacted against Barrie, he nevertheless continued to enjoy widespread popularity. See Horace Thorogood, 'The Author Who Won't Grow Up', *The English Review* (November, 1935), pp. 540-54.

²⁵ For the mythologization of the 1890's, and subsequent neglect of authors who do not fit with such myths, see Kirsten Macleod, *Fiction of British Decadence: High Art, Popular Writing, and the Fin-de-Siècle* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), intro.

²⁶ See Macleod, *Fiction of British Decadence*, *passim*.

internationally. This currency is somewhat ambivalent, culturally repeating the ambivalence that produced its subtleties. In 2012, the London Olympic opening ceremony featured a montage, ostensibly celebrating British children's literature, entitled "Second to the right and straight on till morning",²⁷ in which *Peter Pan* was represented both negatively and positively.²⁸ Following a dance sequence from Great Ormond Street Hospital (to whom Barrie donated the copyright for *Peter Pan* in 1929) children's author J.K. Rowling read an edited version of Barrie's description of Neverland, revising "when you play at it by day with the chairs and table-cloth, it is not in the least alarming but in the two minutes before you go to sleep it becomes very nearly real",²⁹ to "when you play at it by day, with the table and chairs, it's not a bit frightening. But in the two minutes before you go to sleep, it is real." These minor changes, along with the ghouls and monsters that gathered around the sleeping children as she read, significantly altered Barrie's tone and portrayed Neverland as the land of nightmares, a far more sinister version than that found in Barrie's novelisation.

These nightmares were then chased off by GOSH staff, and children rejoiced. In this rescue GOSH seems to derive quasi-magical potency from its association with *Peter Pan*, and the ability of that story and character to evoke an indeterminate 'good' in the cultural consciousness of both British and International audiences. Evidence of this ability can be found in the seemingly limitless use of the words 'Peter Pan' in product branding, stretching from the tangential (children's playgrounds) to the bizarre (Peter Pan Seafoods Inc, Peter Pan dry cleaners). However, London 2012's sinister Neverland also reveals *Peter Pan*'s potential to signal a hidden malevolence in this

²⁷ Echoing Barrie's "second to the right ... and then straight on till morning" in *Peter Pan* (London: Penguin, 2002; first published as *Peter and Wendy*, 1911), p. 38.

²⁸ 'Isles of Wonder': London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony, directed by Danny Boyle, BBC live television broadcast. July 27th, 2012.

²⁹ Barrie, *Peter Pan*, pp. 14-15.

'good', all the more potent for its presenting itself as innocent. Perhaps the most disastrous result of this double appropriation can be found in Michael Jackson's use of Barrie's myth to shape his own relationship with playfulness, and the public reaction to the subsequent allegations of paedophilia brought against him.³⁰ Would Jackson have developed the same relationships with children without the supposedly 'safe' model of adult/child interaction offered by Barrie? And if he had, would so many people have felt there to be something right about the allegations regardless of their being disproved? These are disquieting questions.

Jacqueline Rose has interrogated the need of Twenty-First-Century society for this contradictory myth.³¹ But while Barrie's work reveals similar contradictions, similar ambivalences, yet a close reading of his accumulative symbolism (and particularly of both *Peter Pan* and the Tommy novels) also reveals a suggested solution. Yes, they seem to say; playful inconsistency is attractive; and yes, it has the power to hurt both individuals and society. But the text can also accommodate contradiction, can allow the impossible to exist, and so can offer a way to experience and work through such contradiction with minimal long-term damage. The text, in short, can heal the wounds that it exposes, even where it causes them. Today, in a society where again utility is being valued above individual pleasure, a sustained reading of Barrie's works can perhaps inspire those who, despite strongly feeling the claims of utility and social good, yet cannot resist an equally strong intuition that somehow, a world without play, without art, would be less worth inhabiting. Read carefully, Barrie's work is as relevant to today's problems as it was to those of the last *fin-de-siècle*.

³⁰ For a critical account of these trials, see Margot Jefferson, *On Michael Jackson* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), especially chapters 1 and 5.

³¹ Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan; or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, *passim*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(List of Works Consulted)

Primary

Alexander, W.R. 'The Decadence of the Middle Classes', *Westminster Review*, 167, 6 (June, 1907), 642-48.

Allen, Grant. 'The New Hedonism', *Fortnightly Review*, 55, 327 (March, 1894), 377-92.

[Anon]. 'A Budget of New Books', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 168, 1021 (November, 1900), 729-40.

– 'A New Boy in Fiction', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 160, 974 (Dec, 1896), 800-13.

– 'Fiction: Sentimental Tommy', *The Academy*, 1280 (November 14, 1896), 385.

– 'Margaret Ogilvy by J.M. Barrie', *The Academy*, 51, 1287 (January 2, 1897), 30.

– 'Mr Barrie Fails', *The Outlook*, 6 (November 10, 1900), 473.

– 'Mr Barrie's New Book', *Saturday Review*, 82, 2142 (November 14, 1896), 526-27.

– 'Mr J.M. Barrie: An Inquiry', *The Academy and Literature*, 5, 1488 (November 10,

1900), 445-46.

– 'O.P. Pym', *The Academy*, 1446 (January 20, 1900), 66-67.

– 'Peter Homunculus', *Saturday Review*, 108, 2806 (August 7, 1909), 173-74.

– 'Sentimentalism', *The Speaker*, 1 (February 15, 1890), 176-77.

– 'Sentimental Tommy', *The Athenaeum*, 3602 (November 7, 1896), 635.

– 'Sentimental Tommy', *The National Observer*, 46, 417 (November 14, 1896), 774-75.

– 'The Little White Bird by J.M. Barrie', *The Athenaeum*, 3917 (November 22, 1902),
678-79.

– 'The Little White Bird by J.M. Barrie', *Saturday Review*, 2456, 94 (November 22,
1902), 647.

– 'The Practical Teacher's Library: Sentimental Tommy by J.M. Barrie', *The Practical
Teacher*, 17, 7 (January, 1897), 368-69.

– 'The Sentimentalist', *The Speaker*, 15, 386 (February 2, 1907), 534.

– 'Things and Other Things: Letters to Living Authors – III Mr J.M. Barrie', *Good
Words*, 43 (December, 1902), 369-80.

– 'Tommy and Grizel by J.M. Barrie', *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, 5.1 (January, 1901), 195.

– 'Tommy and Grizel by J.M. Barrie', *The Review of Reviews* (November, 1900), 499.

Ansell, Mary. *Happy Houses*. London: Cassell, 1912.

Baldwin, James Mark. *Mental Development in the Child and the Race: Methods and Processes*. Third edition, London: Macmillan, 1906; first edition 1895.

Barrie, J.M. *Auld Licht Idylls*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1929; first published 1888.

– *Better Dead*. London: Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey and Company, 1888.

– *Courage*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922.

– *The Greenwood Hat: Being a Memoir of James Anon, 1885-1887*. London: Peter Davis, 1937; first published 1930.

– *Ibsen's Ghost: A Play in One Act*. Edited by Penelope Green. London: Cecil Woolf, 1975.

– *Letters of J.M. Barrie*. Edited by Viola Meynell. London: Peter Davis, 1942.

- *The Little Minister*. London: Cassell, 1905; first published 1891.

- *The Little White Bird*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902.

- 'The Lost Works of George Meredith', *The National Observer*, 1 (November 24, 1888), 12-13.

- *Margaret Ogilvy*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1941; first published 1896.

- 'Mr George Meredith's Novels', *The Contemporary Review*, 54 (Oct, 1888), 575-86.

- 'Mr Kipling's Stories', *The Contemporary Review*, 59 (March, 1891), 364-72.

- *My Lady Nicotine*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901; first published 1890.

- *Peter Pan*. London: Penguin, 2002; first published as *Peter and Wendy*, 1911.

- *The Plays of J.M. Barrie in One Volume*. Edited by A.E. Wilson, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1942.

- *Sentimental Tommy: The Story of His Boyhood*. London: Cassell, 1929; first published 1896.

- 'Thomas Hardy: The Historian of Wessex', *The Contemporary Review*, 56 (July,

1889), 57-66.

– *Tommy and Grizel*. London: Cassell, 1900.

– *When a Man's Single*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888.

– 'Young Men I Have Met: I – The Sentimentalist', *The Young Man*, 4 (January - December, 1890), 6-7.

Barron, J. H. 'J.M. Barrie', *The English Illustrated Magazine*, 2 (May, 1903), 207-209.

Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Translated by Jonathan Mayne, London: Phaidon Press, 1995; first published 1964.

Beerbohm, Max. *Around Theatres*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953; first published 1924.

– *Works and More*. London: John Lane, 1952; first published 1930.

Brown, Edith A. 'Mr J.M. Barrie's Dramatic and Social Outlook', *The Fortnightly Review*, 79, 473 (May, 1906), 920-29.

Buchanan, Robert. *The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day*. London: Stahan, 1872.

Cannan, Gilbert, *Peter Homunculus*, New York: Duffield, 1909.

Chesterton, G.K. *Alarms and Discursions*. London: Methuen, 1910.

– 'Barrie as an Artist', *The Bookman*, 59, 351 (December, 1920), no page numbers.

C. Fred Kenyon. 'Mendelssohn the Sentimentalist and Chopin the Poet', *Musical Standard*, 7, 167 (March 13, 1897), 169-70.

Corbet, W.J. 'What Should England Do to be Saved?', *Westminster Review*, 155, 6 (June, 1901), 604-13.

Crackenthorpe, Hubert. 'Reticence in Literature: Some Roundabout Remarks', *The Yellow Book*, 2 (July, 1894), 259-69.

Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*. London: Bradbury and Evans, 1850.

Douglas, George. 'Mr J.M. Barrie', *Good Words*, 40 (December, 1899), 200-203.

Ellis, Havelock. *A Study of British Genius*. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1904.

– *The Criminal*. London: Walter Scott, 1890.

Ellmann, Richard editor. *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*.
London: W.H. Allen, 1970.

Englishwoman, An. 'An Indictment of the Scottish People by One of Themselves', *The Speaker*, 14 (December 12, 1896), 642.

Findlay, Jessie Patrick. 'Thrums in the Rain', *The English Illustrated Magazine*, 16 (June, 1904), 402-10.

Freud, Sigmund. 'The Economic Problem of Masochism.' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: volume 19 (1923-1925): The Ego and the Id and Other Works*, translated by James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1961, 157-70.

Galton, Francis. *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture*. London: Macmillan, 1874.

Geddie, John. 'Concerning Thrums', *The Ludgate*, 4 (August, 1897), 410-13.

– 'The Land of Barrie', *The Ludgate*, 4 (September, 1897), 544-48.

Gilbert, W.S. 'Patience.' *Selected Operas by W.S. Gilbert*. London: Macmillan, 1939; first performed 1881.

Gosse, Edmund. *Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments*. London: Penguin, 1989; first published 1907.

Guthrie, Leonard G. *Functional Nervous Disorders in Childhood*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907.

Gwynn, Stephen. 'The Autumn's Books', *The Fortnightly Review*, 68 (December, 1900), 1028-38.

Hind, Charles. 'Mr Barrie's Way', *The Academy and Literature*, 1593 (November 15, 1902), 525.

Hogarth, Janet. 'Literary Degenerates', *The Fortnightly Review*, 57, 340 (April, 1895), 586-92.

Lang, Andrew. 'At the Sign of the Ship', *Longman's Magazine*, 37, 218, (December, 1900), 183-92.

Lightbody, W.M. 'Why English Literature is Dying', *Westminster Review*, 159, 4 (April, 1903), 415-20.

Lombroso, Cesare. *L'Uomo di Genio*. Torino: Bocca, 1888; translated into English as *The Man of Genius*. 1891.

L.R.F.O. 'Fiction', *The Speaker*, 3 (October 27, 1900), 102-103.

Moffatt, James. 'J.M. Barrie and His Books', *The Bookman*, 39, 229 (October, 1910), 21-26.

Morris, Williams. *Hopes and Fears for Art*. London: Ellis and White, 1882.

Munro, Neil. 'Symposium: Sentimental Tommy', *The Bookman*, 11, 62 (November, 1896), 39-40.

Noble, James Ashcroft. 'The Fiction of Sexuality', *The Contemporary Review*, 67 (April, 1895), 490-98.

Nordau, Max. *Degeneration*. translator unknown, New York: D. Appleton, 1895; originally published as *Entartung*, 1892.

Ockham, David. 'People of Importance in Their Day: IV – James Matthew Barrie', *The Saturday Review*, 152, 3950 (July 11, 1931), 45.

Pater, Walter. *Appreciations: with an Essay on Style*. London: Macmillan, 1924; first published 1889.

– *Imaginary Portraits*. London: Macmillan, 1910; first published 1887.

– *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; first published 1873.

Plato. *The Republic*. trans. Paul Shorey, volume 1, London: Heinemann, 1930.

Quiller-Couch, Arthur. 'Mr Barrie's Sentimental Tommy: A Causerie', *The*

Contemporary Review, 70 (November, 1896), 652-62.

Quilter, Harry. 'The Gospel of Insanity', *The Contemporary Review*, 67 (June, 1895), 761-82.

Sacher-Masoch, Leopold von. 'Venus in Furs.' in *Masochism*, New York: Zone Books, 1991.

Stevenson, R.L. *Treasure Island*. Bristol: Parragon, 1993; first published 1883.

– *Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers*. London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881.

– *The Letters of R.L. Stevenson*. Edited by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994 - 95.

Stutfield, Hugh E.M. 'Tommyrotics', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 157, 956 (June, 1895), 833-45.

Sully, James. 'Genius and Insanity', *Nineteenth Century*, 17, 100 (June, 1885), 948-69.

– *Studies of Childhood*. New York: D. Appleton, 1896.

Thomas, Gilbert. 'A Worker of Magic', *The Bookman*, 74, 439 (April, 1928), 47-48.

Thorogood, Horace. 'The Author Who Won't Grow Up', *The English Review*,

(November, 1935), 540-54.

Wallace, William. 'J.M. Barrie', *The Bookman*, 19 (November, 1900), 40-44.

Waugh, Arthur. 'Reticence in Literature', *The Yellow Book*, 1 (April, 1894), 201-19.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*. Edited by Richard Ellman, London: W.H. Allen, 1970.

– *The Plays of Oscar Wilde*. Edited by Anne Varty, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2000.

Yeats, W. B. *Autobiographies*. London: Macmillan, 1961; first published 1955.

Secondary

Abdy Jane and Charlotte Gere. *The Souls*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984.

Anderson, Amanda. *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Adams, James Eli. *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Manhood*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Asquith, Cynthia. *Portrait of Barrie*. London: James Barrie, 1954.

Barringer, Tim. *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975; originally published as *Le Plaisir du Texte*, 1973.

Beckson, Karl. *London in the 1890s: A Cultural History*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992.

– editor. *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.

Birkin, Andrew. *J.M. Barrie and the Lost Boys: The Real Story Behind Peter Pan*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003; first published 1979.

Black, Jeremy and Donald M. Macrailld. *Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Blake, George. *Barrie and the Kailyard School*. London: Arthur Barker, 1951.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986; originally

published in French as *La Distinction, Critique sociale du jugement*, 1979.

Brack, O.M Jr editor. *Twilight of Dawn: Studies in English Literature in Transition*.

Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1987.

Brandt, Allan M. *Morality and Health*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Briggs, Asa. *Victorian Things*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990; first published 1988.

Bristow, Joseph. *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*. London: HarperCollins Academic, 1991.

Broughton, Trev Lynn. *Men of Letters, Writing Lives: Masculinity and Literary Auto/Biography in the Late Victorian Period*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

– 'Impotence, Biography and the Froude-Carlyle Controversy: "Revelations on Ticklish Topics"', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 7, 4 (April, 1997), 502-36.

Camus, Albert. *The Rebel*. Translated by Anthony Bower, London: Penguin, 1971; originally published as *L'Homme Révolté*, 1951.

Carpenter, Humphrey. *Secret Gardens: The Golden Age of Children Literature*.

London: Faber and Faber, 1985.

Cecil, David. *Max: A Biography*. London: Constable, 1964.

Chaney, Lisa. *Hide-And-Seek With Angels: A Life of J.M. Barrie*. London: Hutchinson, 2005.

Clements, Patricia. *Baudelaire and the English Tradition*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Cohen, Deborah. *Household Gods: the British and their Possessions*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Cohen, Ed. *Talk on the Wilde Side: Towards a Genealogy of a Discourse on Male Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Cohen, Stephen and Ina Rae Hark editors. *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Collini, Stefan. *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Comfort, Kelly editor. *Art and Life in Aestheticism: De-Humanizing and Re-Humanizing Art, the Artist, and the Artistic Receptor*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Davin, Anna. 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop Journal* (1978), 9-65.

Deleuze, Gilles. 'Coldness and Cruelty', in *Masochism*, New York: Zone Books, 1991.

Dellamora, Richard editor. *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Dixon, Thomas. *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Dowling, Andrew. *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*. Sydney: Ashgate, 2001.

Dowling, Linda C. *Aestheticism and Decadence: A Selective Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1978.

– *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

– *The Vulgarization of Art: the Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996.

Dunbar, Janet. *J.M. Barrie: The Man Behind the Image*. London: Reader's Union, 1971; first published 1970.

Dudgeon, Piers. *Captivated: J.M. Barrie, Daphne du Maurier and the Dark Side of*

Neverland. London: Vintage, 2009; first published 2008.

Edwards, Jason and Imogen Hart editors. *Rethinking the Interior C. 1867-1896:*

Aestheticism and Crafts. Surrey: Ashgate, 2010.

Farmer, John S. and W.E. Henley editors. *Slang and Its Analogues Past and Present*.

London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965; first published 1890 - 1902.

Fletcher, Ian editor. *Decadence and the 1890's*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979.

Foldy, Michael. *The Trials of Oscar Wilde: Deviance, Morality and Late-Victorian*

Society. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, The Will to Knowledge*.

Translated by Robert Hurley, London: Penguin, 1998; this translation first published 1978; originally published as *La Volante de Savoir* in 1976.

Frazier, Adrian. *George Moore: 1852-1933*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Gagnier, Regenia. *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-*

1920. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Gaunt, William. *The Aesthetic Adventure*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1945.

Geduld, Harry M. *Sir James Barrie*. New York: Twayne, 1971.

Girard René. *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*.

Translated by Yvonne Freccero, Baltimore: the John Hopkins Press, 1965;
originally published as *Mensange Romantique et Vérité Romanesque*, 1961.

Grant, William and David D. Murison editors. *The Scottish National Dictionary*.

Edinburgh: The Scottish National Dictionary Association, 1952: first published
1931.

Gray, Tony. *A Peculiar Man: A Life of George Moore*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson,
1996.

Green, Martin. *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*. London: Routledge and Kegan
Paul, 1980.

Greenslade, William. *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel, 1880-1940*. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Hamilton, Ian. *Keepers of the Flame: Literary Estates and the Rise of Biography*.
London: Faber and Faber, 2011; first published 1992.

Hammerton, J.A. *Barrie: The Story of a Genius*. London: Samson Low, 1929.

Henderson, Andrea K. *Romanticism and the Painful Pleasures of Modern Life*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Hendrick, Harry. *Children, Childhood and English Society, 1880-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Hennegan, Alison. 'Personalities and Principles: Aspects of Literature and Life in *Fin-de-Siècle* England.' in *Fin de Siècle and its Legacy*, edited by Mikulas Tiech and Roy Porter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 170-215.

Hone, Joseph. *The Life of George Moore*. London: Victor Gallance, 1936.

Irvine, William and Park Honan. *The Book, The Ring, and The Poet: A Biography of Robert Browning*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974.

Jack, R.D.S. 'J.M. Barrie.' in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, volume 2: *Enlightenment, Britain and Empire 1709-1918*. general editor Ian Brown, period editor Susan Manning, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007, 331-37.

– *Myths and the Mythmaker: A Literary Account of J.M. Barrie's Formative Years*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010.

– *The Road to the Never Land: A Reassessment of J.M. Barrie's Dramatic Art*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1991.

Jackson, Holbrook. *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1939; first published 1913.

Jefferson, Margot. *On Michael Jackson*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2006.

Jon, Isabelle. *On Children's Literature*. Translated by Catherine Storr, London: Allen Lane, 1973; originally published in French 1969.

Kateb, George. 'Aestheticism and Morality: Their Cooperation and Hostility', *Political Theory*, 28, 1 (February, 2000), 5-37.

Kincaid, James R. *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Knowles, Thomas D. *Ideology, Art and Commerce: Aspects of Literary Sociology in the Late Victorian Scottish Kailyard*. Göteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1983.

Krzywinska, Tanya. *Sex and the Cinema*. London: Wallflower Press, 2006.

Kucich, John. *Imperial Masochism: British Fiction, Fantasy and Social Class*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Lerer, Seth. *Children's Literature: A Reader's History, from Aesop to Harry Potter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Levine, George editor. *Aesthetics and Ideology*. New Jersey: Rutger University Press,

1994.

Lurie, Alison. *Don't Tell the Grown Ups: Subversive Children's Literature*. London: Bloomsbury, 1990.

MacDonald, Robert H. *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

Mackail, Denis. *The Story of J.M.B: A Biography*. London: Peter Davis, 1941.

Macleod, Kirsten. *Fiction of British Decadence: High Art, Popular Writing, and the Fin-de-Siècle*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Malane, Rachel. *Sex in Mind: The Gendered Brain in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Mental Sciences*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005.

Mavor, Carol. *Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J.M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Marcel Proust, and D.W. Winnicott*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

Maybin, Janet and Nicola J. Watson editors. *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*. Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2009.

Mennel, Barbara. *The Representation of Masochism and Queer Desire in Film and Literature*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Moers, Ellen. *The Dandy: Brummel to Beerbohm*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960.

Mosse, George L. *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

Mulvey, Laura. 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16, 3 (Autumn, 1975), 6-18.

Nash, Andrew. *Kailyard and Scottish Literature*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2007.

– '“Trying to be a Man”: J.M. Barrie and Sentimental Masculinity', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* (April, 1999), pp. 113-25.

Nelson, Claudia. *Boys Will Be Girls: the Feminine Ethic and British Children's Fiction, 1857-1917*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Nelson, Claudia and Ann Sumner Holmes editors. *Maternal Instincts: Visions of Motherhood and Sexuality in Britain, 1875-1925*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997.

Orel, Harold. *Popular Fiction in England 1914-18*. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.

Ormond, Leonee. *J.M. Barrie*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press Scottish Writers Series, 1987; first published 1987.

Passmore, John. *Serious Art: A Study of the Concept in All the Major Arts*. London: Duckworth, 1991.

Peberdy, Donna. *Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Philips, Adam. *On Flirtation*. London: Faber and Faber, 1995; first published 1994.

Richardson, Angelique. *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Robson, Catherine. *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Rodden, John. *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of 'St George' Orwell*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan; or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992; first published 1984.

Sasson, Siegfried. *Meredith*. London: Arrow Books, 1959; first published 1948.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994;
first published 1990.

Seiler, R.M. editor. *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and
Kegan Paul, 1980.

Shuttleworth, Sally and Jenny Bourne Taylor editors. *Embodied Selves: An Anthology
of Psychological Texts, 1830-1890*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Shuttleworth, Sally. *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science
and Medicine, 1840-1900*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Sinfield, Alan. *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment*.
New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Stedman, Gesa. *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in the Victorian
Discourses on Emotions, 1830-1917*. Hampshire: Ashgate, 2002.

Steedman, Carolyn. *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human
Interiority, 1780-1930*. London: Virago, 1995.

Steel, Valerie editor. *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion*. Michigan: Thomas Gale,
2005.

Stewart, Suzanne R. *Sublime Surrender: Male Masochism at the Fin-de-Siècle*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Stokes, John editor. *Fin de Siècle/ Fin du Globe: Fears and Fantasies of the Late Nineteenth Century*. London: Macmillan, 1992.

Studlar, Gaylyn. *In the Realm of Pleasure: Van Sternberg, Dietrich, and the Masochistic Aesthetic*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

Sussman, Herbert. *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Tosh, John. *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Tucker, Herbert F. editor. *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

White, Donna R and C Anita Tarr. *J.M. Barrie's 'Peter Pan' In and Out of Time: A Children's Classic at 100*. Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2006.

Williams, Harold. *Modern English Writers: Being a Study of Imaginative Literature 1890-1914*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1918.

Williams, Joan editor. *Meredith: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and Kegan

Paul, 1971.

Yeoman, Ann. *Now or Neverland: Peter Pan and the Myth of Eternal Youth*. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1998.

Audiovisual

Edge. 'Brian Eno: Composers as Gardeners', Edge website, www.edge.org/conversation/composers-as-gardeners [accessed 10 September 2012].

Finding Neverland. Directed by Marc Forster, New York: Miramax, 2004.

'Isles of Wonder': London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony. Directed by Danny Boyle, BBC live television broadcast. July 27, 2012.

Male and Female. Directed by Cecil B. DeMille, Hollywood: Paramount, 1919.

The Lost Boys by Andrew Birkin. Directed by Rodney Bennet, DVD. London: BBC, 1978.