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The “New” Giorgione:
Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Pater, and Morelli

Volume 1

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted anywhere for any award.

Luke Uglow

For my Mum and Dad

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ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns a shift in the historiography of the Venetian painter Giorgione (c1477-1510). In important ways, this change was caused by Joseph Archer Crowe (1825-1896) and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle (1819-1897) in their *A History of Painting in North Italy* (1871). This text met seminal reactions from Walter Pater (1839-1894) in his essay “The School of Giorgione” (1877) and from Giovanni Morelli (1816-1891) in his *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden und Berlin* (1880). Following a method of close reading, the analysis will concentrate on the intertextual relationship between these three works.

This thesis contends that Crowe and Cavalcaselle comprehensively problematised scholarship on the artist, creating a “new” Giorgione; that Pater responded dialectally to scientific connoisseurship with aesthetic criticism, intellectually justifying and morally absolving his interpretation; that Morelli responded by offering a noticeably different catalogue of paintings, and by making Giorgione function within his anti-authoritarian rhetoric as a validation for his method; however, in so doing, Morelli was conducting an ironic problematisation of connoisseurship in general. The thesis begins with an introduction to the “old” Giorgione, before discussing the concepts of aestheticism and connoisseurship. It is then divided into three studies and a conclusion.

The first part considers how the artist was understood in the nineteenth century prior to Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s research, before discussing the nature of the two connoisseurs’ enquiry. The second part focuses on Pater and his relationship with Giorgione, placing his essay in the context of *The Renaissance* (1873); after this the study follows Pater as he

defines his theory of aesthetic criticism and responds to what he understands as scientific history, before analysing his interpretation of Giorgione. The third and final part of this thesis will seek to understand Morelli's ambiguous text and the function of the artist within it; examining his method, rhetoric, and polemic with Crowe and Cavalcaselle, it will conclude by arguing that irony was an active concept in Morelli's thinking. By attending to a specific artist's historiography at a particular time, this thesis indirectly reveals the way art history on Italian painting operated in this period, when the discipline was undergoing the processes of professionalisation and institutionalisation.

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¹ The current gallery attribution will be given

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INTRODUCTION TO THE “NEW” GIORGIONE

This thesis examines a profound shift in our understanding of the Venetian painter Giorgione (c1477-1510) towards the end of the nineteenth century. The change in the artist's historiography from an “old” to a “new” scholarship was relatively abrupt, although it is possible to exaggerate the transition. The essential point is that the discourse on Giorgione came to comprehend him as fundamentally problematic. My argument is that this transformation was the consequence of Joseph Archer Crowe's (1825-1896) and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle's (1819-1897) *A History of Painting in North Italy* (1871); this discourse-defining text provoked important reactions from Walter Pater (1839-1894) in his essay “The School of Giorgione” (1877), and from Giovanni Morelli (1816-1891) in his *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden und Berlin* (1880). These three works have not been considered as a group before, but I believe a close textual analysis will demonstrate the depth and significance of their interrelationship.

My argument is that Crowe and Cavalcaselle problematised Giorgione. Their treatment of the artist has never been examined in detail, while general discussions have mostly concerned the question of which author is speaking. Instead, I will ask the questions *what* is being said, and *how* do they say it? By radically reducing the number of works attributed to the painter, and investing their judgements with scientific authority, Crowe and Cavalcaselle changed our view of Giorgione; they demonstrated that we can only hope for a very conditional knowledge. This was dramatically important for Pater, whose essay revealed an emotional and intellectual reaction. For the past ten years “The School of Giorgione” has been discussed in terms of contemporary Victorian painting, while modern scholarship on the artist rejects

this text.¹ I want to ask *why* Pater wrote about Giorgione, *how* his essay is structured, and *what* it says. My analysis will show that Pater, by responding dialectally to scientific history with aesthetic criticism, creates a “new” and original image of the artist, functioning as an intellectual justification and moral absolution. Pater’s essay does reflect ideas about the nineteenth-century painters Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) and James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834 –1903), by responding to the controversy around the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in May 1877, but nevertheless it is *about* Giorgione. To say this seems redundant, but it is necessary to insist that Pater’s artistic and ethical defence was a direct result of Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s disattribution and, in his reading, their defamation of the *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1).

Morelli appears to stand alone; he re-problematizes the artist, creating a new and different catalogue, apparently distancing himself from all previous scholarship. As an art historian he is famous for his method and for the attribution to Giorgione of the *Sleeping Venus* in Dresden (Fig.A2), which in turn validated his reputation as “the celebrated inventor of scientific connoisseurship”.² The *Venus* also helped restore Giorgione’s status as a great painter. However, Morellian method has never been satisfactorily defined and, in many ways, Morelli’s treatment of the artist seems to contradict his own scientific principles. Scholarship has primarily been concerned with how the method is “scientific” and, more recently, with the politics of his writing.³ The common thread of research on Morelli is a lack of attention to the published texts; this is because, I will argue, they too are problematic. From my close reading I have found two aspects to Morellian method: it is not only material or scientific, but also spiritual or aesthetic. The relationship between these strands creates problems, and this has not been recognised before. Another troubling aspect of Morelli’s connoisseurship is the

¹ Teukolsky, 2002; Bullen, 2008; Barolsky, 2010; Ferino-Pagden, 2004, pp.13

² Anderson, 1999, pp.8-9

³ Wollheim, 1973; Zerner, 1978; Ginzburg, 1980; Vakkari, 2001; Anderson, 1996; Griener, 2004

antithetical design, involving his abuse of Crowe and Cavalcaselle; despite this, Morelli created a dedicated following, the texts being simultaneously irritating and inspirational; this too has never been analysed before. The doubleness of method and rhetoric suggests that irony is an active concept in Morelli's thinking. While scholars admit that Morelli can be ironic,¹ I will argue that it is essential to acknowledge that the texts are intentionally ambiguous.

My thesis is comprised of three individual studies. The interrelation between Crowe and Cavalcaselle and Pater, and between Crowe and Cavalcaselle and Morelli, is clear to any reader; however, what has emerged from my research are interesting parallels between Pater and Morelli. Although rhetorically diverse, and apparently representing opposing methods, it has been suggested that the two writers are comparable.² As for Giorgione himself, in this group of texts we can recognise the germ of modern scholarship, at a point in time when art history was defining itself as an academic discipline, when positivism and idealism were the dominant modes of thought. The works of these writers represent a conflict between scientific and aesthetic understanding, being involved in a rhetorical competition for authority, and therefore part of the wider intellectual trends of their time. The decade 1870-1880 defined scholarship on Giorgione well into the twentieth century and in many respects still does.

First I will consider the "new" Giorgione as he appears in the twenty-first century. This involves attempting to define "problematisation" and identifying what it means to be definitively problematic. The "old" Giorgione was created between 1550 and 1648, in Vasari's *Vite* and Ridolfi's *Maraviglie*; the "new" Giorgione is based on the primary sources and Michiel's *Notizia* (1525-1548). After discussing the image of the artist that emerges from

¹ Gibson-Wood, 1982, p.175; Anderson, 1993, p.84; Carrier, 1991, p.138

² Carrier, 1991, p.130

these early sources, I will offer a brief definition of aestheticism and connoisseurship, understanding them as, in essence, subjective methods.

The “New” Giorgione

For 140 years the “new” Giorgione was a mystery. In June 2011 a document was published that may usher in an even “newer” Giorgione, but the effects of this source are yet to be seen.¹ This thesis was conceived in 2005 as a reflection on the origins of the mystery. The most important “fact” remains the same; it is a reasonable conjecture that the artist painted *The Tempest*, *The Three Philosophers* and the *Portrait of a Lady* (“*Laura*”) (Figs.A3, A4, A5), three iconographically and stylistically unique paintings.² The only surviving attribution that could be considered legally demonstrated is a faded, fractured fresco, the *Standing Nude* (Fig.A6), an attribution supported by the few “juristic facts” that confirm Giorgione was active in Venice in 1507-1508. The last “fact” is that the painter died, in quarantine, on the Lazaretto nuovo, in 1510.³ The rest remains a mystery.

It has not always been this bleak; there was a time when the image of Giorgione seemed complete. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century he was lauded as the progenitor of modern Venetian painting, with monumental works in public galleries still attributed to him. He was also, it appeared, a musician and a lover who died young, and was therefore the perfect romantic genius. Some scholars still believe in parts of this image, but crucially others do not; consequently, rather than the “old” Giorgione – vivid, significant – we are left with

¹ Segre, June 2011 – The document inventories Giorgione’s possessions six months after his death and suggests a family name and possible relations

² Hereafter I shall refer to the *Portrait of a Lady* as *Laura*

³ Segre, June 2011, p.383

the “new” Giorgione, a manifestation of doubt and uncertainty. The title of the 2004 exhibition at Vienna’s Kunsthistorisches Museum was *Giorgione: Myth and Enigma*; in his review of the exhibition Holberton commented that it is rare not to find the painter described by the word “problem”, and criticised the exhibition’s title for making this a virtue.¹ I understand “Myth” and “Enigma” to signify the “old” and the “new” Giorgione: the art historical problem defined in opposition to the romantic legend. Yet there is still something seductive in the idea of an unsolved “problem”, this loss of identity being particularly attractive in a post-modern context. To make sense of Giorgione, my thesis returns to the moment when he began to be understood as problematic. Although Crowe and Cavalcaselle attempted to construct a stable biography and catalogue, the responses of Pater and Morelli show that the actual effect of what they wrote was quite different. Both these subsequent writers offered their own “new” Giorgione, powerful and romantic images, but nevertheless defined by doubt.

It is a truism that nothing is intrinsically *problematic*, and that it is the human mind that creates *problems*, an act that might be termed *problematization*. Michel Foucault (1926-1984) used this word when reflecting on his work in an interview towards the end of his life (“Le souci de la vérité: propos recueillis par François Wald”, May 1984). He explains that this notion had been common to all his work since the *Histoire de la folie* (1961), and involved answering the question: “comment est-ce qu’un savoir peut se constituer?” For instance, the *Histoire de la sexualité* (1976-1984) is “une histoire de la manière dont le plaisir, les désirs, les comportements sexuels ont été problématisés, réfléchis, et pensés dans l’Antiquité”. Although Foucault claims he never defined this idea sufficiently, he argues that “Problématisation” is *not* representation *or* creation:

¹ Holberton, 2004, p.58

C'est l'ensemble des pratiques discursives ou non discursives qui fait entrer quelque chose dans le jeu du vrai et du faux et le constitue comme objet pour la pensée (que ce soit sous la forme de la réflexion morale, de la connaissance scientifique, de l'analyse politique, etc).¹

I am not concerned here with interpreting Foucault; I would though, from this definition, draw two conclusions. First, in the sense of constituting “an object for thought”, it seems that every *thing* must have been problematised to some extent, and second, that problematisation is a necessary step to discuss any *thing*. In this way problematisation is a matter of degree. However, some *things*, like madness, sexuality, or Giorgione, do not find an easy resolution; their problematisation is on-going. This process involves *introducing some thing into the play of true and false*; problematisation produces uncertainty; “to problematise” is “to play”.

The necessity of problematisation, of making some *thing* “an object for thought”, explains why science creates “problem situations”, and why in the humanities scholarly investigations often begin by identifying gaps in our knowledge, contradictions, or misrepresentations. In most cases this is rhetorical; the scientist or scholar has already, we assume, found a satisfying resolution; with Giorgione this is not the case. To open the catalogue that accompanied the 2004 exhibition Ferino-Pagden uses words like “enigmatic”, “legend” “mystery”, “inscrutability”, “secret”, but concludes “the secret is safe”. Giorgione is still considered to be “the great innovator of Venetian painting”, but there remain “countless problems”, and worse, “a solution to these problems is not in sight”.² Aikema echoes this thought, arguing that “Giorgione research has recently reached a certain impasse”; this is linked to the *type* of questions we ask, scholarship being entrenched in the traditions of

¹ Foucault, May 1984a, p.18

² Ferino-Pagden, 2004, p.13

connoisseurship and iconography.¹ Apart from a very few paintings, attribution is a continuous debate; Gentili discusses recent “neo-expansionist” trends, while Hope argues that although there is a wide measure of agreement on the status of many paintings, this is much the same as in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.² Happily, there are many convincing iconographic studies; the difficulty is: “Not a year goes by without new interpretations of Giorgione’s paintings”.³ Although Aikema complains that we continue to ask the same questions,⁴ I would suggest there can be no more fundamental questions than *who* painted this picture, and *what* does it mean? When there is no consensus, we have a critical impasse, and Giorgione becomes fundamentally problematic.

We must also be aware that “Problematisation is at the same time a demythicisation”.⁵ Giorgione is a *myth*, and as Eliade explains: “Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial Time, the fabled time of ‘beginnings’”.⁶ In Vasari’s *Vite*, Giorgione is a *creation myth*, because “circa 1507”, the artist invented/introduced modern painting in Venice.⁷ Ferino-Pagden, like many other scholars, accepts this *myth*, describing Giorgione as “the father of Venetian painting”. However, she rejects others, arguing that since Pater’s 1877 essay “it has become increasingly clear to what degree the myth of Giorgione as a musician, poet, and painter of enigmatic pictures can also obstruct a pragmatic definition of him”, concluding that “the music has faded away”.⁸ This is because, like religious narratives of creation, the Giorgione myth has been challenged by science, especially in 1871 by Crowe and Cavalcaselle. Both science and myth perform an

¹ Aikema, 2004, p.85

² Gentili, 2004, p.57; Hope, 2004, p.53

³ Borchhardt-Birbaumer, 2004, p.71

⁴ Aikema, 2004, p.85

⁵ Crotty, 1988, p.157

⁶ Qtd. in Segal, 1996, p.87

⁷ Vasari, Vol. VI, 1987, p.155

⁸ Ferino-Pagden, 2004, pp.13-14

explanatory function: “To accept a scientific view of the world is to render the mythic one both superfluous and outright false”.¹ This is true of Giorgione; therefore *myth* can be taken as a synonym of *untruth*; “demythicalisation” replaces traditional beliefs with scientific explanations.

The conference accompanying the 2004 exhibition was entitled “Giorgione: Entmythisiert”. Ferino-Pagden explains that the exhibition’s title made experts worried they would be perceived to be celebrating the “myth” and “enigma”, as indeed they were; instead, the conference represents itself as a continuation of the process of demythicalisation.² However, to what extent has Giorgione been “demythicalised”? Defining the enigma in opposition to the myth perpetuates the legend of the artist; this is necessary because cultural myths perform a function that scientific explanations cannot, they create value. This leads to the contradiction which is highlighted by Aikema: Giorgione’s fame is in “inverse proportion” to the “facts” relating to his life.³ Gentili argues that if restricted to the written sources, then scholarship should keep silent, and that remaking Giorgione is “soltanto per gioco”.⁴ To problematise the artist is “to play” because there is no hope of resolution. It is important to see why science fails to replace the romantic myth; strangely, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Morelli and Pater, all preserve traditional notions of Giorgione’s individuality. Even today personality is key; Giorgione being described as “an elitist painter, a modern man with a humanist education”,⁵ being therefore quite similar to scholars themselves. However, when art historians ask the question, “Who then was the real Giorgione?”, the answer begins “Probably...”⁶ In response to Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s problematisation of the artist, both Pater and Morelli pose this

¹ Segal, 1996, p.82

² Ferino-Pagden, 2008, p.1

³ Aikema, 2008, p.175

⁴ Gentili, 2008, p.105

⁵ Ferino-Pagden, 2004, p.14

⁶ Aikema, 2008, p.186

question; their answers show us that the “real” Giorgione is a subjective combination of romantic myth and scientific enigma.

The “Old” Giorgione

We can see that the “old” Giorgione is still alive today; his very name signalling that scholarship cannot relinquish traditional ideas and values. The artist’s real name, his Venetian name, was Zorzi da Castelfranco (or perhaps Gasparini),¹ and so we must briefly consider this transition from Zorzi to Giorgione. Beginning with records from within his own lifetime, and moving through early sixteenth-century references, I will note the image of the artist that emerges from these primary sources. Following this, I want to consider the “old” Giorgione as he is described by Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), representing a Tuscan perspective, before moving into the seventeenth century and the beginning of the “pan-giorgionesque”, but also Venetian historiography, in the work of Carlo Ridolfi (1694-1568).

Not all the primary sources that constitute the twenty-first-century Giorgione were known to Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Pater and Morelli, while others were ignored. Most significant is an inscription on the reverse of *Laura* (Fig.A5), giving the date 1 June 1506 and naming “maistro zorzi de chastel fr[ancho]” as the artist.² Although first published in 1882, this painting does not even appear in Morelli’s 1891 catalogue.³ A quasi-primary source that embodies the artist’s cultural value, but was unmentioned in the nineteenth-century historiography, is Baldassare Castiglione’s (1478-1529) *Il libro del Cortegiano*, set at Urbino

¹ Segre, June 2011, p.386

² Torrini, 2004, p.24

³ *Giorgione: Myth and Enigma*, 2004, p.197; Pignatti, 1971, p.100 (Dollmayr, *Catalogue du Louvre*, Paris, 1882; the attribution was first established in Justi, L., *Giorgione*, Berlin, 1908)

in 1507 and published in 1528. In a dialogue on aesthetic uniqueness, Giorgione's name is found alongside Leonardo (1452-1519), Mantegna (1431-1506), Raphael (1483-1520), and Michelangelo (1475-1564).¹ The artist's status at northern Italian courts is also demonstrated by the correspondence of Isabella d'Este, Marchesa of Mantua (1474-1539). Writing to her agent Taddeo Albano, 25 October 1510, Isabella enquires about "Zorzo da Castelfrancho pittore", and asks if in his "heredità" there is "una pictura de una nocte, molto bella et singulare". Albano's response, 8 November 1510, is that "ditto Zorzo morì più di fanno da peste". The letters were first published in 1888;² in 1891 Morelli continued to follow Vasari's dating of Giorgione's death to 1511.

The "juristic facts" of the "new" Giorgione are contained within two sets of documents that record two major commissions: a canvas for the Audience Chamber in the Doge's Palace and frescoes on the facade of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. The only surviving element of the fresco decoration is the *Standing Nude* (Fig.A6). The canvas may have been destroyed by fire in 1574 or 1577, although it could have been removed in 1555.³ There are three documents relating to the Audience Chamber commission; the first two record payments to "maistro Zorzi da Castelfrancho depentor" (14 August 1507 and 24 January 1508), the third records a payment for a covering curtain (23 May 1508).⁴ The Fondaco was the German warehouse at the Rialto which burned down in January 1505, but it was reconstructed by April 1507. Two documents relate to a dispute that arose about the valuation of Giorgione's frescoes. The first, dated 8 November 1508, is "nella causa di maistro Zorzi da Chastelfrancho" and asks for "giustizia". The second, dated 11 December 1508, records the settlement of the dispute and names three artists who had been selected by Giovanni Bellini (c1430-1516) to value the

¹ Torrini, 2004, p.21

² *Archivio Gonzaga: copialettere della Marchesa, Libro 28* – Luzio, A., "Isabella d'Este e due quadri di Giorgione", in *Archivio Storico dell'Arte I*, 1888, p.47-48 – Pignatti, 1971, p.166

³ Hope, 2010, p.179

⁴ *Notatorio del Provveditori al Sal*, n.3, 114v, 119, 121; Pignatti, 1971, p.165

frescoes.¹ These documents were first published in 1840-1842 and supply Crowe and Cavalcaselle's historical framework.²

The most important document for the definition of the “new” Giorgione was first published as *Notizia d'opere di disegno* in 1800. The *Notizia*, or the “Anonimo”, a Venetian dialect manuscript by Marcantonio Michiel (1484-1552), created between 1525 and 1548, selectively records various art collections in cities across northern Italy;³ it provides the foundation of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's catalogue. This manuscript is significant for containing the first reference to *The Tempest*, *The Three Philosophers*, and, importantly for Morelli, the *Sleeping Venus* (Figs.A3, A4, A2).⁴ The *Notizia* mentions sixteen works executed by Giorgione,⁵ showing a painter of portraits and half-lengths (sometimes in armour), of religious, pastoral or pagan images and, vitally, of female nudes.

The first reference to Zorzi as Giorgione appeared in the *Dialogo della pittura* (1548) by the painter Paolo Pino (active 1535-65).⁶ The first full-scale characterisation was the life of “Giorgione da Castelfranco: Pittor Veneziano”, in Vasari's *Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori Italiani*, first published in 1550. A second, expanded and amended edition of 1568 saw Giorgione's career dramatically altered; this was a response to Venetian criticisms, particularly Ludovico Dolce's (1508-1568) *L'Aretino* of 1557. For Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Pater and Morelli, the second edition of the *Vite* determined their understanding. It supplies basic narrative facts, such as the year of birth, 1478, meaning

¹ *Notatorio del Provveditori al Sal*, n.3, c.123v; n.7, c.95r; reprinted in Pignatti, 1971, p.165

² Gaye, G., *Carteggio inedito d'artisti XIV, XV, XVI, Vol.II 1500-1507*, Florence, 1840; Gualandi, M., *Memorie originali di Belle Arti*, III, Bologna – Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 1871, p.141, n.2, and p.142, n.2

³ Williamson, 1903, p.v; Fletcher, 1981, p.453

⁴ Michiel describes this last work as “La tela della Venere nuda, che dorme in uno paese cun Cupidine, fo de mano de Zorzo da Castelfranco, ma lo paese et Cupidine forono finiti da Titiano.”

⁵ Williamson, 1903, pp.24, 93-94, 101-106, 114, 121, 123, 128, 133; Michiel also mentions two works after originals by Giorgione

⁶ Barocchi, 1977, p.552

Giorgione died young, aged thirty-three. The artist is credited with inventing/introducing the *maniera moderna* to Venetian painting and is therefore included at the beginning of Italian painting's third age. For Vasari, the historical significance of Giorgione's art is also demonstrated by his two *creati*, Titian (d.1576) and Sebastiano del Piombo (c.1485-1547).

Vasari suggests a vague but plausible career; starting with “molti quadri di Nostre Donne, et altri ritratti di naturale” and culminating in an important public commission. Six specific works are attributed in the 1550 edition: a portrait in Faenza, frescoes on the Ca' Soranzo and Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Fig.A7), the *Saint John Chrysostom and Saints* (Fig.A8), and finally the *Storm at Sea* (Fig.A9). This last work, Vasari argues, proves that Giorgione was “fra que' rari che possono esprimere nella pittura il concetto de' loro pensieri”.¹ In the 1568 edition the number of works rises from six to fourteen; assessed qualitatively however, Giorgione's output seems less significant. This is due to the disattribution of the *Storm at Sea* (given to Palma Vecchio, c.1480-1528) and also the *Saint John Chrysostom and Saints* (ascribed to Sebastiano),² which left Giorgione without a significant altarpiece or history painting. However, the new attributions did fall in line with Michiel, Vasari mentioning several portraits of “vari principi italiani”, such as Doge Leonardo Loredan (1436-1521).³

Vasari refers to the artist by his epithet: “Giorgio, dalle fattezze della persona e da la grandezza dell'animo chiamato poi col tempo Giorgione”.⁴ This conveys a sense of character that was crucial for nineteenth-century writers, as was the idea that although “d'umilissima stirpe”, he was nonetheless “gentile e di buoni costumi”. While the biography follows the set-

¹ Vasari, Vol.IV 1976, pp.42-47

² *Ibid.*, pp.550-551; Vasari, Vol.V 1984, p.86

³ Vasari, Vol IV 1976, pp.46-47

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.41

piece pattern for lives in the *Vite*,¹ Giorgione's is especially romantic, functioning in part as a criticism of the sensuality of Venetian painting; the artist "cantava nel suo tempo tanto divinamente" and "dilettossi continuamente delle cose d'amore" and "innamoratosi delle cose belle".² In the life of Titian, Vasari narrates a dispute over the Fondaco frescoes, sourced from *L'Aretino*. Dolce had explained that while Giorgione painted the frescoes facing the canal, those that faced the street were by Titian. The story continues with Giorgione's friends mistakenly praising Titian's frescoes, to which "con grandissimo suo dispiacere, rispondeva, ch'era di mano del discepolo"; after this he "stette alcune giorni in casa come disperato".³ In the *Vite* when the mistake is discovered Giorgione "da indi in poi non volle che mai più Tiziano praticasse, o fusse amico suo".⁴ The artist's death is significant because biography, when it verges on fiction, makes this event emblematic of the life:⁵

[Giorgione,] nel molto conversar, che e' faceva per trattener con la musica molti suoi amici, si innamorò d'una madonna, e molto goderono l'uno e l'altra de' loro amori. Avvenne che l'anno 1511 ella infettò di peste; non sapendo però altro e praticandovi Giorgione al solito, se li appiccò la peste di maniera, che in breve tempo nella età sua di 34 anni se ne passò all'altra vita, non senza dolore infinito di molti suoi amici che lo amavano per le sue virtù, e danno del mondo che [lo] perse.⁶

Vasari shows a "general disapproval of amorous indulgence",⁷ as here with Giorgione, the way of his death being the way of his life, full of music and love.

In 1550 Vasari is brief but complimentary, stating that "il nostro Giorgione, il quale imparando senza maniera moderna", tried "di imitare sempre la natura il più che e' poteva".

¹ Rubin, 1995, p.158

² Vasari, Vol IV 1976, pp.42

³ Dolce, 2000, p.186

⁴ Vasari, Vol. VI, 1987, p.157

⁵ Lee, 2005, p.208

⁶ Vasari, Vol IV 1976, p.47

⁷ Rubin, 1995, p.53

The second edition begins with a reference to Leonardo and Florence, clearly displaying Vasari's Florentine bias.¹ In 1568 Giorgione's acquisition of the *maniera moderna* is confused; he continues to reproduce nature, but is no longer an innovator. Instead, having seen "cose di mano di Lionardo", he began to imitate this style. Even so, Vasari retains the statement that Giorgione "traesse al segno delle cose vive, e non a imitazione nessuna della maniera".² The Tuscan also criticises Venetian painting for a lack of *disegno*: a cognitive faculty that linked painting, sculpture and architecture, offering "a conceptual basis for appreciating the arts".³ This in turn was criticised by Dolce, who, following Pino, proposed a tripartite division of painting: *invenzione*, *disegno* and *colore*; additionally, the significance of Giorgione is minimised in favour of Titian.⁴ In 1568 Vasari transformed this into a polemic between *colore* and *disegno*.

In the second edition Vasari refers to a *paragone* painting. This is sourced from Pino's *Dialogo* in which Giorgione paints Saint George in armour, reflected by two mirrors and "una fonte limpida, & chiara"; this demonstrates "ch'uno pittore può far vedere integramente una figura à uno sguardo solo, che non può così far un scultore".⁵ In the 1568 edition Vasari describes a similar "ghiribizzo e capriccio" painting, framed within the same theoretical context; the figure is now "un ignudo" and reflected by a "fonte d'acqua limpidissima" and "un corsaletto brunito" and also "uno specchio".⁶ *Paragone* – comparisons between different artistic mediums – were typical of sixteenth-century art theory and would prove crucial for Pater's "new" Giorgione.⁷

¹ Vasari, Vol.IV 1976, p.41

² *Ibid*, p.45

³ Rubin, 1995, pp.242, 2

⁴ "fù questo opera (come cosa di Georgione) perfettamente intesa in tutte tre le parti di pittura, cio è disegno, inventione, & colorire" – Pino, 1548 (Pignatti, 971, p.167); Dolce, 2000, p.85; Rubin, 1995, p.245; Roskill, 2000, p.39

⁵ Pignatti, 1971, p.167

⁶ Vasari, Vol IV 1976, p.46

⁷ Klein and Zerner, 2001, pp.4, 16

The most important criticism of Giorgione's art, however, is Vasari's discussion of the frescoes; for instance, on the Ca' Soranzo the artist painted "sue fantasie". In 1568, Vasari expands upon this criticism, arguing that on the Fondaco "Giorgione lo dipignesse in fresco di colori secondo la sua fantasia, purché e' mostrasse la virtù sua", and again he "non pensò se non a farvi figure a sua fantasia". He claims the images show "nessuna persona segnalata, o antica o moderna" and relates that "io per me non l'ho mai intese, né anche, per dimanda che si sia fatta, ho trovato chi l'intenda".¹ Giorgione therefore disregards *Ut pictura poesis* and does not paint *storia*, the content being non-literary subjective *fantasie*; in Pater's interpretation the value of this judgement is reversed.

In his life of Titian, Vasari refuted Dolce, making Giorgione the progenitor of modern Venetian painting: "poi, l'anno circa 1507, Giorgione da Castel Franco, non gli piacendo in tutto il detto modo di fare cominciò a dare alle sue opere più morbidezza e maggiore rilievo con bella maniera". Vasari argued that Giorgione neglected preliminary drawing, the basis of *disegno*, and replaced it with *colorire*, believing this was "il vero disegno". Giorgione is represented as a sensualist, which, as in the nineteenth century, becomes an ethical issue, using live models being "servitù".² Vasari's *Vite* was discourse-defining, presenting Giorgione as the originator of a tradition which was understood as intellectually, ethically and artistically suspect.

Ridolfi's biography is often cited as the origin of the mythic, false Giorgione.³ Published in Venice in 1648, *Le maraviglie dell'Arte* was a response to Vasari's *Vite*; however, it is a complicated relationship that veers from emulation to refutation. The Venetian reproduces the

¹ Vasari, Vol IV 1976, p.44

² Vasari, Vol. VI, 1987, pp.155-156

³ Pignatti, 1971, p.10; Aikema, 2008, p.175

Florentine's stylistic analysis, but renegotiates Giorgione and, in general, elaborates Dolce's arguments.¹ Ridolfi attributed nearly eighty works to Giorgione, who is again identified as a painter of devotional pictures, allegorical or armoured half-lengths, portraits and frescoes. The *Maraviglie* emphasises a new Ovidian or pastoral theme and suggests the artist painted "rotelle, armari, e molte casse in particolare".² The text includes five important attributions: *The Castelfranco Altarpiece*, *The Dead Christ* in Treviso, the *Pitti Concert*, *The Judgement of Solomon*, and the *Sleeping Venus* (Figs.A10, A11, A12, A13, A2). The Treviso picture functioned for both Cavalcaselle and Morelli as proof of the appalling standard of Giorgione attributions before their time. The *Maraviglie* is the first record of the attribution of *The Castelfranco Altarpiece*. For Morelli, regarding the *Venus*, Ridolfi substantiated Michiel.³

Ridolfi claims "sincerità e verità" in reporting works he had seen for himself; however, the reliability of some of the *Maraviglie's* attributions is questionable, because the text functioned within the art market.⁴ For instance, we find what might be the *Edinburgh Archer* (Fig.A14), in a list of works owned by Flemish collectors.⁵ There is also anecdotal evidence that Ridolfi, Marco Boschini (1613-1678), Pietro della Vecchia (1603-1678), and Nicolò Renieri (Nicolas Régnier, 1591–1667), were involved in the forgery/imitation of works available for purchase as original Giorgiones.⁶ Boschini's writing (*La carta del navegar pitoresco*, Venice, 1660, and *Le ricche minere della pittura veneziana*, Venice, 1674) is of less importance than Ridolfi's, but was cited by Crowe and Cavalcaselle.⁷ Ridolfi was not simply naïve; in Titian's life he writes that Giorgione "non havendo egli però nè brevi anni

¹ Goldstein, 1991, p.649

² Ridolfi, 1648, pp.78-79

³ *Ibid.*, p.78, 84, 78, 81, 83

⁴ Qtd. in Shiffman, 1996, pp.37-38; Haskell, 1981, p.592

⁵ Ridolfi, 1648, p.88

⁶ Mason, 2004, p.33

⁷ Scholsser, 1967, p.547

della vita fatte, che poche Pitture”.¹ Acknowledging this suggests the author knowingly exaggerated the artist’s oeuvre.

Ridolfi’s *Giorgione* is, however, more substantial than Vasari’s, with regard to the artist’s life and career.² In the life of Titian the dispute over the Fondaco frescoes is again used to illustrate the progression from Giorgione; however, while Vasari attempted to produce pathos, Ridolfi blamed Titian’s “amici”, making it a malicious altercation.³ The *Maraviglie* differs from the *Vite* by offering variant versions of the painter’s birth and death; all of which were repeated by Crowe and Cavalcaselle.⁴ Unlike the *Vite*, Ridolfi did not invest Giorgione’s death with moral significance, and instead his narration is gossipy and euphemistic. The artist may have been “infetandosi di peste, per quello si dice, praticando con una sua amica”; alternatively, he may have died “in preda alla desperation”, after being betrayed by Pietro Luzzo (Morto da Feltre, c.1480-1526/1527); “terminò di dolore la vita, non ritrovandosi altro rimedio alla infettatione amorosa, che la morte”.⁵ This exaggerates the Vasarian characterisation of Giorgione, Ridolfi helping to perpetuate this reputation into the nineteenth century.

For Ridolfi, Giorgione’s life was poetic, while his paintings exemplified *Ut pictura poesis*. The biography balances themes of joy, connected to Giorgione’s personality and *colorire*, with themes of misery, connected to the artist’s tragic life and the meaning of his work. For instance, the chapter opens with an elaborate theatrical metaphor for the history of Venetian painting: “[una] sontuosa scena diede à vedere più deliziosi oggetti”.⁶ The contrasting

¹ Ridolfi, 1648, p.135

² *Ibid.*, pp.78-81

³ *Ibid.*, p.138

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.77-78

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.88

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.77

pessimism can be heard in the quote from Ovid: “Nec modus, & requies, nisi mors reperitur Amoris” (*Metamorphoses*, 10:377).¹ *Ut pictura poesis* functions as a justification for Venetian painting, as can be seen by the copious literary quotations. Even if Ridolfi was “limiting himself to a very literal interpretation of this concept”,² *Ut pictura poesis* negates Vasari’s criticism. Also, quoting the modern Italian poets Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) and Giambattista Marino (1569-1625) aligns Giorgione with admired painters among Ridolfi’s central Italian contemporaries, for instance Nicolas Poussin (1594-1655). Giorgione is repeatedly referred to as a poet, as an “Autore”; this is literalised by the poem that concludes the chapter, written in Giorgione’s own voice: “Et hor del mio pannel l’opre reprendo, / Che vaneggio con l’ombre trà viventi, / Mentre nel Ciel forme divine apprendo”. In this way, allegorical half-lengths become “il simbolo dell’humana vita”, so that the military theme demonstrates “la vita dell’uomo altro non essere, che una specie di militia sopra la terra, & i giorni suoi simili à quelli de’ mercenari”.³ Poetry for Ridolfi serves the same function as music would do for Pater in 1877.

Ridolfi ends with a polemic defence of Venetian *colorire*, arguing that artists who follow Giorgione have “il vero modo del colorire”.⁴ Boschini in the *Minere* refers to “Zorzon”; although this author developed an original, Venetian notion of *pittoresco*, a painterly *non-finito* aesthetic,⁵ it was the more conservative Ridolfi who had greater influence in the nineteenth century, ensuring the Vasarian-Tuscan image of Giorgione (not Zorzon), retained its authority. Ridolfi’s text demonstrates the two discursive themes that were to dominate the work of Crowe, Cavalcaselle, Pater and Morelli: misattribution and sensuality. The

¹ Ridolfi, 1648, p.88 – “No respite from her love except in death”; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Melville, A. D., Oxford, 1986, p.237

² Shiffman, 1996, p.26

³ Ridolfi, 1648, pp. 84, 87, 90, 81-83

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.89

⁵ Sohm, 1991, pp.8-9

Maraviglie represents the archetypal “old” Giorgione; one that Crowe and Cavalcaselle tried to sweep away, that Pater would attempt to recover, and that Morelli would surreptitiously advocate.

Connoisseurship and Aestheticism

Connoisseurship and aestheticism are concepts that will recur often in my thesis and consequently require definition. Concerned with the identification of authorship, there is a perception that connoisseurship is therefore unconcerned with the “fundamental theoretical problems of art history”.¹ This does not mean, however, that art history should not be fundamentally concerned with connoisseurship. The attribution and dating of works of art is an absolutely necessary step in the study of Italian Renaissance painting. The problem of unidentified authorship is complicated by issues of influence, imitation, and forgery; often this can make the situation seem almost irresolvable, particularly in regard to Venetian painting. Nevertheless, the early theory of connoisseurship offered a direct and practical method, tailored to this particular “problem situation”.

Various forms of evidence can aid attribution, but connoisseurship in its purest form has always been primarily visual. Jonathan Richardson (1665-1745) defined a basic method of attribution in 1719: “there is but one way to come to a knowledge of hands, and that is to furnish our minds with as just and complete ideas of the masters as we can”.² The first step is to come to an *idea* of the artist. This *idea*, of course, exists within the mind of the connoisseur and is a subjective conception of what, and how, a particular painter might have painted. How

¹ Hatt and Klonk, 2006, p.40

² Qtd. in Gibson-Wood, 1982, p.96

the mind arrives at this concept is a difficult question, but the practice of connoisseurs in the nineteenth century shows the accepted method was to base this *idea* on what are believed to be securely attributed works.¹ The next step that Richardson prescribes is to “compare the work under consideration with the idea we have of the manner of such a master, and perceive the similitude”. Put another way, the method is observation and comparison, not between two paintings, but between *image* and *idea*. Richardson, and connoisseurs in general, emphasise that it is “on the works themselves we must chiefly depend, as giving us ideas which no *words* possibly can”. If this method is employed simply for the benefit of the practitioner, then there is no need for description, as the working of visual-memory to make connections between paintings – “exposure and recall”² – requires no linguistic formulation. However, as soon as we need to convince others of our attribution, to give connoisseurship a scholarly function, description must follow observation.

This was implied, although not stated, by Beck’s attempt “to create a precise methodology” for attributing sculpture in 1998: the first two (of thirteen) steps being “A Visual description of the object” and “A Technical description of the object”.³ Connoisseurs in the twentieth century openly accept that their “judgements will be liable to contain a strong subjective element”, that their conclusions are provisional, and that the process is open-ended.⁴ Confounding this is Gombrich’s 1978 “A Cautionary Tale”, in which he uses the methods of connoisseurship to justify an absurd attribution.⁵ This had the effect of making the connoisseurial rhetoric seem specious, regardless of the sincerity of the attribution; Beck therefore makes the concessionary gesture that “we should keep in mind” Gombrich’s tale

¹ Gibson-Wood, 1982, p.52, 152

² *Ibid.*, p.52

³ Beck, 1998, p.24

⁴ Pope-Hennessy, 1980, p.12; Previtali, 1984, p.28

⁵ Gombrich, 1987, p.91

and its warning about “the usual techniques of ‘plausible rhetoric’”.¹ This is unhelpful; even science is rhetorical;² rhetoric is a method by which knowledge is constituted. Despite insecurity about its own method, connoisseurship is still central to the discipline.

Connoisseurship is unpopular with today’s academic art historians; scholars may practice attribution, but reject the title of connoisseur. By contrast the nineteenth century is often referred to as the age of the connoisseur. Primarily a German tradition, some famous names include Karl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785-1843), Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1797-1868) and Otto Mündler (1811-1870). Due to the sheer quantity of genuinely erroneous attributions, there was a demand for the kind of connoisseurship that is now restricted to the auction house. Crowe, Cavalcaselle and Morelli considered their work a serious intellectual discipline and in this period, it has been argued, connoisseurship seemingly “constituted an attempt to conduct art history empirically” in which “objectively verifiable facts became paramount.”³ There is though a paradox: the ends of connoisseurship are empirical statements, yet the means are unavoidably subjective. Despite knowing there can be only one correct answer, connoisseurship inevitably produces a variety of results. This does not, however, invalidate the method as we should remember that the “distinguishing characteristic of empirical statements are their susceptibility to revision”.⁴ How can we know that a statement is justified unless there is an alternative hypothesis? The “new” Giorgione did not emerge from subjective analysis or specious rhetoric, but from the desire to make art history “scientific”.

¹ Beck, 1998, p.24

² Gower, 1997, p.16

³ Hatt and Klonk, 2006, p.41

⁴ Hassanein, 2006, p.226

Aestheticism is back in vogue as a subject of study, the common current of which is an emphasis on the broad socio-cultural phenomenon.¹ My interest in aestheticism is art historical, although this is not a central concern of recent scholarship, and so I will begin by appropriating a definition of aestheticism in general: “the term is linked to art for art’s sake and its French equivalent *l’art pour l’art*; associated with the idea of pure art; related to the notion of autonomous art”.² The etymological root of “aesthetic” is the Greek word *aisthētkos*, meaning essentially sense perceptions; modern usage derives from Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten’s (1714-1762) *Aesthetica* of 1750. In reference to the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1824) “aesthetic” means “the science of sense perception”, while in other contexts it designates a philosophy or system of the beautiful.³ The term aestheticism itself is more complicated but, solely in reference to an art movement, has been taken to categorise the “confusion of styles and cacophony of conflicting theories” that were current in the nineteenth-century British art world.⁴

Aestheticism, because it is concerned with sense perceptions, is subjective, just like connoisseurship. The notion of “*l’art pour l’art*”, because it is tautological, can be variously interpreted. It has been described as “a non-theory or even an anti-theory”.⁵ The origins of aestheticism lie in German idealist philosophy and French literature. It was Friedrich Schiller’s (1759-1805) *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (1795-98), and Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s (1770-1831) *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (1835-1838) that were to shape Pater’s writing.⁶ The notion of “*l’art pour l’art*” will also always be associated with Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), especially his novel *Mademoiselle*

¹ There have been multiple recent publications, culminating in this year’s exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum: “The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900” – Calloway, 2011, p.22

² Comfort, 2008, p.2

³ *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles, Vol.1 A-M*, Oxford, 1933, p.34

⁴ Calloway, 2011, p.11

⁵ Prettejohn, 2007, p.3

⁶ Hereafter referred to as the *Aesthetic Education* and the *Ästhetik*

de Maupin (1835-1836), the preface to which pre-emptively attacked moralistic critics and argued for artistic autonomy.¹ Another French influence was the poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) and his scandalous *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857); breaking the boundaries of acceptable subject matter, their publication in June resulted in the conviction of the author two months later for offending public morality.²

Aestheticism affords “a central place to the pleasures of visual experience, valued both for its own sake and as a source of self-knowledge”; conversely, it has been seen as separating art from life by elevating “Art” to an autonomous sphere. The problem is that “*l’art pour l’art*” feels empty; as early as 1847 Gautier complained it has been read as “la forme pour la forme, le moyen pour le moyen”.³ However, the slogan does indeed imply these attitudes and, consequently, can seem disconnected from the *human*; it is amoral, asocial, apolitical and so perhaps, *inhuman*.⁴ Even so, it has been argued that “aesthetes, even if they are formalists, tend to be social thinkers”, and this can certainly be connected to the idea that aestheticism treats “life in the spirit of art”.⁵

Literature was important for the self-definition of aestheticism in England. For instance, Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) with his blasphemous and erotic *Poems and Ballads* (1866); the poet reacted to a negative reception by publishing a pamphlet (October, 1866) which inveighs against critics “who seek for sermons in sonnets and morality in music”.⁶ Interestingly, Pater’s *Giorgione* essay argues that music is moral, while any art that

¹ Gautier, 1837, pp.5-68

² Baudelaire, 2008, p.lii

³ Qtd. in Prettejohn, 2007, p.167

⁴ Comfort, 2008, p.4

⁵ Carrier, 1997, p.5; Comfort, 2008, p.3

⁶ Owens, 2011, p.52; qtd. in Owens, 2011, p.54

seeks to be like music is therefore ethical. After the publication of Rossetti's *Poems* in 1870, Robert Buchanan (1841-1891) accused aesthetic poetry of decadence and unmanliness in "The Fleishy School" (October, 1871), criticising the "weary, wasting, yet exquisite sensuality".¹ Pater was of central importance; his use of "aesthetic" gave the word currency, while his single, loaded employment of "art for art's sake" inspired many of the next generation.²

Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), which has been called the "manifesto" of the movement, invites the critic "to become a discerning connoisseur of his own experiences."³ This comparison between the aesthetic critic and the connoisseur is intriguing; here connoisseur is not *someone who knows*, but *someone who judges*. Rather than referring to the knowledge of dates and attributions, the connoisseur and critic both make judgements of taste. Both can therefore be understood as using similar means, visual discernment, but to different ends; the connoisseur strives to make empirical statements, the critic aspires to self-expression. Pater is part of a tradition of aesthetic art history which includes John Ruskin (1819-1900). Although Ruskin rejected the word *aesthetic* and also the divorce of art from religion, his work is devoted to the idea of *beauty*. The next generation of artists and writers defined themselves against his didactic, redemptive view of art; however, the shadow of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1843-1846) still hangs over Pater's work.⁴ Despite this attention to Ruskin, Pater's essay on Giorgione is modern; "modernist" art, because it is self-conscious, is necessarily historical. Pater achieved this by writing art *history* and not art *criticism*, thereby instructing contemporary artists.

¹ Calloway, 2011, pp.16-17; qtd. in Owens, 2011, p.55

² Teukolsky, 2009, p.3; Owens, 2011, p.40; Prettejohn, 2007, pp.261, 281

³ Owens, 2011, p.57

⁴ Teukolsky, 2009, p.5; Carrier, 1997, pp.9, 11

In this thesis I will be discussing approaches to Giorgione that reflect two distinct trends: positivist empirical connoisseurship and idealist aesthetic criticism. Although seemingly exclusive, within these writers both modes of analysis can be interpreted as contingent. Pater, while not being actively involved in attribution, responded to and even emulated connoisseurship; Morelli, despite his reputation, was clearly interested in the emotional dimension of the art he studied, aspects that may not seem compatible with scientific analysis; even Crowe and Cavalcaselle, notwithstanding their practical empiricism, reveal attitudes to painters and paintings that might be understood as incompatible with their material mode of enquiry. Ultimately, from this group we learn that while science may provide objective knowledge, these individuals valued art for the subjective experience. This can be seen most clearly in their responses to Giorgione.

CROWE & CAVALCASELLE'S "NEW" GIORGIONE

The "new" Giorgione was born in 1871; this is not the painter Zorzi, but the historiographical enigma; in Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *New History*, the artist became a problem. They challenged perceptions by reducing the number of paintings that were considered genuine, while basing their history on Vasari, Ridolfi and the primary sources. Their characterisation distanced Giorgione from the culturally popular image of musician, lover and poet, making the Giorgionesque no longer a cult of morally ambiguous sensuality. Hope argues that Crowe and Cavalcaselle's Giorgione was not as original as it may seem, "the majority of paintings regarded as central" having been questioned and that these "new ideas" had been developed over the course of the century. They were building particularly on the work of Pietro Selvatico (1803-1880), Wilhelm Lübke (1826-1893) and, especially, Müндler; their achievement was the clear and comprehensive expression of these ideas, demonstrating "how many famous pictures had been excluded from Giorgione's oeuvre and just how few remained".¹ But although the "new" Giorgione was not entirely novel, I will argue that Crowe and Cavalcaselle did more than just radically reduce the number of attributions.

The "newness" lay in the connoisseurs' problematisation; this is demonstrated by Pater and Morelli's reactions to the authority of *New History*. The importance of the Crowe and Cavalcaselle's work can also be heard in the contemporary reception. In *The Edinburgh Review* we read how the two connoisseurs "relieved Giorgione of the paternity which did him no honour", while the *Quarterly Review* questions if they had gone far enough: "Crowe and Cavalcaselle only admit the undoubted authenticity of about nine pictures attributed to him, and one of them, the fine "Nativity", belonging to Mr. Wentworth Beaumont, [*The Adoration*

¹ Hope, 2004, p.48

of the *Shepherds*, Fig.A15] has been assigned, on equal if not higher authority, to another painter”.¹ Finally, *The Pall Mall Gazette* admires the “boldness” of the connoisseurs’ Giorgione, but is “not startled by the scepticism”, judging that they “have cleared the way for a rational view”. Like Hope, the reviewer acknowledges that the “best modern critics” had indeed “greatly narrowed the number of works attributed to him”, but that “our authors with unflinching hand snatch from him even most of those spared by others”. Consequently, in a judgement later echoed by Pater, “his fame is left dependent upon one or two undoubted pictures, or, shall we say, *almost* undoubted”.² This final clause is evidence of the “new”, enigmatic Giorgione.

Two reviewers openly question Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s judgements; it seems to me, however, that this questioning had been predetermined by the text itself. In their chapter on Giorgione the authors, for the first time, showed that *doubt* is the reasonable intellectual position, the “rational view”, implying that their own history is uncertain. Levi attributes to Cavalcaselle the “sistemazione del problema giorgionesco”; the Italian’s self-awareness can be read in the notes for the chapter, in which he reminds Crowe:

...molta cautela e circospezione cosa che noi cercheremmo di fare senza mai nascondere i dubbi che ci nascono [...], e per la confusione che vedremmo, o per la poca conoscenza ancora che abbiamo intorno a dei pittori seguaci di quella maniera. Infine andremmo cauti e preferiamo piuttosto la taccia di paurosi...³

Crowe then gave this *doubt* English expression, and although attempting to reach a resolution, the consequence of their joint approach was to give authority to a “new”

¹ *The Edinburgh Review*, 1872, p.126; *Quarterly Review*, 1872, p.144

² *The Pall Mall Gazette*, , 30 August, 1871, p.12

³ Qtd. in Levi, 1988, p.277-278

confusion. This was the “new”, inscrutable Giorgione, one that is recognisable in the twenty-first century.

Before considering the *New History*, however, it is necessary to understand ideas about the artist that were current before 1871. Concentrating on England and France, I want to consider attribution and the art market, while highlighting a traditional image – one dismissed by Crowe and Cavalcaselle but crucial for Pater – of a romantic Giorgione. I will then turn briefly to the art historical situation, considering Selvatico, Lübke and Müндler, before tracing the changing perceptions of the artist through the several editions of Franz Kugler’s (1808-1858) *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei seit Constantin dem Grossen* (1837), and Jacob Burckhardt’s (1818-1897) *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens* (1855).

The Nineteenth Century: Giorgione in France and England

The nineteenth century begins, in an art historical sense, with Luigi Lanzi’s (1732-1810) *Storia Pittorica dell’Italia* (1795-1796), which for much of the century was the principal text on Italian Renaissance painting. Lanzi’s *Storia* is indicative of a key intellectual trend in the humanities that was a prime concern for Pater, Morelli, Crowe and Cavalcaselle: the aspiration to scientific method. In the preface Lanzi wrote of enlarging the sphere of science, and later, that although the art historian “non si può dunque imitare i naturalisti”, they can attempt something similar in distinguishing styles by “tessere separamente la storia di ogni scuola.” The *Storia* is divided between lower and upper Italy and follows Vasari by

differentiating them according to “il disegno” and “il colorito”.¹ In the introduction to the second epoch of Venetian painting, of which Giorgione is the progenitor, Lanzi clarifies that his innovation was “dal meccanismo, e dall’arte del colorire”.² However, while Lanzi’s stylistic analysis was of major importance for Crowe and Cavalcaselle, none of the five pictures he attributed to Giorgione were retained in the *New History*, and three of these were specifically disattributed: *The Finding of Moses*, *The Dead Christ*, and *the Storm at Sea* (Figs.A16, A11, A9).³

Lanzi was notably confident in his pronouncements on the artist’s character, musical style and school. In a view that foreshadows Morelli, Lanzi’s Giorgione received his sobriquet for the grandeur “nell’animo e nella persona; grandiosità che imprese anco nelle sue pitture, quasi come avviene a chi scrive, che nel suo scritto ritrae una immagine di sè stesso”. The stylistic analysis is assured and familiar, Lanzi describing “una certa libertà” of which Giorgione was the inventor, “più naturale e più morbido il passaggio d’una in altra tinta”. In the *Storia* Giorgione is primarily a frescoist, although one who painted portraits “maravigliosi per l’anima che vi è dentro”; Lanzi also mentions the strange clothes and hair (*zazzere*), and again like Vasari, “la freschezza della carne viva”.⁴ His technical analysis is conflated with a musical analogy that would later be employed by Pater: “Pochi colori, ma ben disposti, e bene accordati, e ben rotti cogli scuri fanno all’occhio un’armonia austera, dirò così, e simile a una musica, che con poche note, ma temperate maestrevolmente, vi diletta sopra ogni concerto più fragoroso”.⁵ Finally, and crucially, Lanzi held that Giorgione inspired a school of imitators, naming Morto da Feltre, Sebastiano, Palma, Francesco Torbido (1486-1562),

¹ Lanzi, Vol.1, 1818, pp.i, ix, xxxvii

² Lanzi, Vol.3, 1818, p.69

³ All five works were found in Italy; the final two being the *Virgin and Child* (Ambrosiana, Milan), and a “*Virgin and Child with St. Omobono*” (lost; formerly Scuola dei Sartori, Venice); *Ibid*, pp.76-77

⁴ Vasari, Vol IV 1976, pp.42-43

⁵ Lanzi, Vol.3, 1818, pp.74-77

Giovanni da Udine (1487-1564), Lorenzo Lotto (c1480-1556), Giovanni Cariani (c1490-1547), Rocco Marconi (d1529), Paris Bordone (1500-1571), Girolamo da Treviso (1508-1544), Pordenone (c1484-1539) and Bernardino Licinio (c1489-1565).

In France, Giorgione's fame grew dramatically during the nineteenth century, the artist becoming a virtual symbol of romanticism. In 1816, Artaud de Montor's (1772-1849) note on Giorgione in the *Biographie universelle* (Michaud) shows the first, somewhat contradictory signs of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's scepticism: "Les tableaux de Giorgion sont très rares: le musée du Louvre en possédait cinq". The *Biographie* also shows the romantic tendency that was to drive the artist's celebrity, explaining that Giorgione was "éperdument amoureux", and so could not recover "de cette infidélité et de cette ingratitude. Il mourut de chagrin..."¹ For Stendhal (the pen name of Marie-Henri Beyle, 1783-1842), the art, history and civilisation of renaissance Italy was an ideal, while Giorgione was a romantic genius. In *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817* (1817) Stendhal essentially follows Vasari and Lanzi by describing the Venetian's discovering "la vérité de la couleur", so that the artist was "en état de copier la nature *comme au miroir*" (1826 edition). Dédéyan argues that Stendhal shows "la sympathie du romantique", which can be heard in the repeated references to Giorgione "qui mourut d'amour à trente quatre ans" as opposed to "Le froid Titien" who died of plague at the age of ninety-nine.² Although not publishing at length on Giorgione, Stendhal mentions him, along with Correggio and Simone Cantarini (1612-1648), in a passionate passage from his *Histoire de la peinture en Italie* (1817), as artists who "à force d'être eux-mêmes qu'ils ont été grands".³ These judgements are repeated by Louis Viardot (1800-1883) in his *Les Musées d'Italie* (1842).⁴

¹ Qtd. in Dédéyan, 1981, pp.684-686

² *Ibid.*, pp.686, 689-691

³ Stendhal, 1817, pp.148

⁴ Dédéyan, 1981, p.709

Early catalogues for Christie's auction house in the Victoria and Albert Museum show that paintings attributed to Giorgione were regularly available to buy in London between 1795 and 1828. When Joshua Reynolds' (1723-1792) collection was sold by Christie's over three days on the 11, 12 and 13 March 1795, the catalogue described it as "COMPRISING THE UNDOUBTED WORKS OF THE GREATEST MASTERS", works which were "*In the most perfect State of Preservation*".¹ The seven attributions to Giorgione are of interest for the image they create of his art. On the second day there were three works; lot 7 was "Solomon's Judgement and a Landscape", lot 52 was the vague "A Subject from scripture", while lot 33 was more specific, being "The WOMAN ACCUSED of ADULTERY". (This recalls "the woman taken in adultery", disattributed at length by Crowe and Cavalcaselle: *La femme adultère*, Fig.A17).² On the third day, lot 62 was "A SHEPHERD AND SHEPHERDESS IN A LANDSCAPE", lot 69 showed "HIS OWN PORTRAIT, remarkably high finished", and lot 87 was sold as "PORTRAIT OF A VENETIAN OFFICER OF STATE". This Giorgione – the creator of religious and pastoral works with an emphasis on landscape and portraits with military themes – resembles that projected by Vasari and Ridolfi.

The Christie's catalogues also inform us of the availability of paintings attributed to Giorgione: the combined effect of the attributions is an image of the artist current in this reasonably well informed market place. On 2 March 1804, for example, lot 40 was a "Virgin seated in Landscape", including Christ embracing John the Baptist "and a Soldier looking on". Lot 11, on 18 March 1806, is described as "*finely coloured*", Lot 38 as "*vigorously painted and coloured*", and lot 29 as being "*painted with great animation and richly*

¹ Picture Catalogues, III; reproduced in Millar, O., "Sir Joshua Reynolds' Collection of Pictures II", in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 87, No. 510, September 1945, pp. 210-217

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.158-159

coloured".¹ The emphasis on *colouring* and the appearance of small religious works are evidence of a basic awareness of Vasari and Ridolfi, as is the soldierly theme. The *Vite* and the *Maraviglie* were the main source for this image of the artist, as can be seen by the "Christ carrying his Cross" (lot 43, 16 March 1811), advertised as "a model from the famous picture at Venice – the drawing is excellent and the colouring of his best time".² On 15 May 1802, a "Cupid Stung by a bee, Complaining to Venus" prompts the significant assessment: "The scarcity and merit of genuine works of Giorgione recommend them to the connoisseur".³ However, Christie's continued to sell many works attributed to Giorgione. In one noteworthy "Holy Family, with St. Catherine" (lot 66, 25 May 1811), there is an estimation of the artist in relation to Titian, and a description of the unity in "transparency" and "vigour" of tone, but also the almost contradictory statement: "The genuine works of Giorgione are extremely rare". The Christie's Giorgione is also a portraitist and painter of half-length allegorical figures; for instance, on 30 June 1827, lot 52 was described as "Portrait of Himself as an Officer of the Archers"; this image, Humfrey has suggested, could be identical with the Edinburgh *Archer* (Fig.A14).⁴ There is also, on 3 June 1815, "A Warrior arresting a Youth wearing a Chaplet of Vines, allegorical", a description that clearly recalls the Vienna *Il Bravo* (Fig.A18).

On 16 April 1825, lot 52 pictured a "Knight and a Female", intriguingly described as a "Musical Conversation" which had been set "in a romantic Landscape".⁵ What is striking in the catalogues is the consistent image of a "romantic" Giorgione, seen in the pastoral and musical themes. There are several *musical conversations* between male and female figures,

¹ Picture Catalogues, III-IV

² Picture Catalogues, VIII

³ Picture Catalogues, III, VII, XIII

⁴ *Giorgione: Myth and Enigma*, p.206 – There is also a "David with head of Goliath" (Lot 52, 14 June 1828) although this is not described as a self-portrait

⁵ Picture Catalogues, IV, XI, XIII

for instance lot 76 on 19 May 1804 represents one between Petrarch and Laura, previously belonging to “the noble Vendrameni family of Venice”. On the same day lot 72 was considered as equal in colouring to Titian and advertised as “A pastoral Poet, playing on a Musical Instrument to two Damsels seated on the Ground” (this recalls the Lansdowne *Concert*, Fig.A19, ascribed by Crowe and Cavalcaselle to “the Friulian Grassi”).¹ The romantic themes are continued with concert scenes (Lot, 36, 14 June 1828, “A Venetian Family listening to a band of Musical Performers after Dinner”), and pastoral-mythological subjects (“The Judgement of Paris”, lot 73, 5 May 1810, and lot 11, 11 March 1815²).

The romantic Giorgione gained a key supporter in Lord Byron (1788-1824) who lived in Venice from 1816-1819. In his poem on the carnival, *Beppo: A Venetian Story* (1818), a painting attributed to Giorgione sets the scene; as the narrator explains: “when I fix my story, / That sea-born city was in all her glory.” Typically, Byron’s concern is for Venetian women; “Black eyes, arched brows, and sweet expressions” they look “out a picture by Giorgione”, a painter “Whose tints are Truth and Beauty at their best”.³ In April 1817, Byron visited the Manfrin gallery; in *Beppo* the narrator urges his reader to go there too, explaining that his favourite picture: “’Tis but a portrait of his Son, and Wife, / And self; but *such* a Woman! Love in life!” The narrator sees in the face everyday Venetian women, making Giorgione a realist: “not love ideal, / No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name, / But something better still, so very real, / That the sweet Model must have been the same”. Byron was clearly captivated by this image, calling it “A thing that you would purchase, beg or steal”. The narrator’s attention is firmly fixed on the expression that “recalls some face, as ’twere with pain, / You once have

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.161

² One painting of this subject is disattributed and described as “a Bolognese picture” by Crowe and Cavalcaselle – Vol.2, 1871, p.161

³ Byron, *Poetry*, 1901, p.162

seen, but ne'er will see again", but the poem offers little to identify the painting.¹ There is therefore some debate about which picture this is, *The Tempest* (Fig.A3), or the *Triple Portrait* (Fig.A20), both of which bore the name "The Family of Giorgione" at various points in the nineteenth century.² Although the female faces in both images could be described as "'twere with pain", it seems unlikely the poet would have linked the Venetian carnival to *The Tempest*. Either way, Byron made a huge contribution to perpetuating the popular image of Giorgione as a great lover.

In his letters, Byron made two more references to Giorgione;³ in a description of his trip to the Manfrin gallery, and in his advocacy of the Kingston Lacy *Judgement of Solomon* (Fig.A13). Byron wrote to his publisher (14 April 1817), confessing "I am no connoisseur [...] I know nothing of painting" and "detest it", arguing it is "the most artificial and unnatural" of arts; nonetheless, he said, he had been struck by "some very fine Giorgiones". Interestingly, he describes a Laura and Petrarch, "very hideous both"; the poet has "not only the dress, but the features and air of an old woman", while his muse "looks by no means like a young one, or a pretty one".⁴ As in *Beppo*, Byron emphasises the attractive verisimilitude to the female faces, for instance the "queen of Cyprus and Giorgione's wife, particularly the latter".⁵ From Ravenna, in response to a letter asking for his advice, he wrote to William Banks (26 February 1820), again insisting "I know nothing of pictures myself, and care almost as little", but does add that he did believe "there are none like the Venetian – above all, Giorgione". Byron remembered the *Judgement of Solomon* in the Marescalchi Collection:

¹ Byron, *Poetry*, 1901, p.163

² Cf. Hauptman, 1994; Anderson, 1994

³ Byron's letters were first published in 1830 – Moore, T., *Letters and journals of Lord Byron*, 4.Vols, London, 1830

⁴ This recalls the curious *Laura* (Fig.A7), but also the Christie's catalogue, 25 November 1826, which advertised: "An original and very curious PORTRAIT of LAURA; and a portrait of Petrarch, the companion" – Picture Catalogues, XIII

⁵ Byron, *Letters and Journals*, 1901, pp.105-107

“The real mother is beautiful, exquisitely beautiful. Buy her, by all means, if you can, and take her home with you: put her in safety”.¹

A very different writer and critic, Anna Jameson (1794-1860), was widely read in England in the mid-nineteenth century.² Two books by Jameson – *Companion to the Most Celebrated Private Galleries of Art in London* (1844) and *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters and the Progress of Painting in Italy* (1845) – reveal an image of Giorgione that would later be reflected by Pater and Morelli. This image, as we will see, is influenced by Kugler’s *Handbuch*; however, there is scepticism about the “Pedantry of connoisseurship as regards the old masters”, Jameson describing the jargon and “unmeaning stuff” designed to “confound simple-minded people, and make them doubt whether there be any truth whatever”.³

At the Bridgewater gallery Titian’s *Three Ages of Man* (Fig.R1) is considered “a piece of poetry in the truest sense” in which colour is “to the significance of the composition what music is to the song”; however, Jameson’s suggests it was Giorgione who *invented* these “pictorial lyrics”. Included in the Lansdowne collection are two portraits, one being of Jacopo Sansovino (1486-1570): “The Venetian architect and sculptor, an intimate friend of Giorgione”. In 1844 the collection of Samuel Rogers contained *A Man in Armour* (Fig.A21) “called Gaston de Foix”, an attribution that would be supported by Crowe and Cavalcaselle. Jameson articulates the central concern of Pater and Morelli by insisting that Giorgione “stamped his own individuality on his art”. This is a romantic, *Ut pictura poesis* representation, the painter becoming “a *subjective* poet, who fused his own being with all he

¹ Banks had already acquired the painting in January; Byron, *Letters and Journals*, 1901, p.411; *Sebastiano del Piombo*, 2008, p.102

² For Jameson’s reputation and possible influence on Rossetti see Ludley, 1991-1992, p.29

³ Jameson, 1844, pp.xvii, xxxvii

played and created: - if Raphael be the Shakespeare, then Giorgione may be styled the Byron, of painting”. The author explains that “Giorgione’s genuine pictures are very rarely to be met with”, and goes on to say, as Morelli would do, that although forgeries may have fooled some, “they could not for one moment deceive those who have looked into the *feeling impressed* on Giorgione’s works”. Based on major traditional attributions, Jameson recalls Lanzi’s conclusion and foreshadows Pater, as the paintings “remind us of the old religious music to which we have listened in Italian churches – a few simple notes, long sustained, deliciously blended, swelling into a rich, full, and perfect harmony, and melting into the soul”.¹

A further work, Waagen’s three volume *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Illuminated Mss., &c., &c* (1854) was also a source for Crowe and Cavalcaselle. In this survey of public and private galleries the connoisseur attributes twenty-two works to Giorgione, disattributes nineteen, and remains undecided on seven.² Noticeable among these attributions is a painting resembling the Vienna *Knight and Page* (Fig.A22), of which there are many other versions; this class of image was especially important for Pater, although by then they had been disattributed by Crowe and Cavalcaselle.³ Considering Titian in the Munro collection, the connoisseur employs the kind of argumentation Morelli would use, attributing the picture to Giorgione based on the “fervent and poetic in feeling”.⁴

¹ Jameson, 1844, pp.128, 388, 395; Jameson, 1845, pp.212, 215-219, 223-224 (Such as *The Finding of Moses*, the *Storm at Sea*, and the Dresden *Jacob and Rachel*, Figs.A16, A9, A26)

² Waagen, 1854; Vol.1, pp.276, 333-334, 416; Vol.2, pp.31, 59, 77, 82, 90, 100, 133, 179, 196-197, 227, 244, 267, 278, 284, 293, 355, 358-359, 410; Vol.3, pp.19, 48, 162, 202-203, 265, 270, 274, 289, 303, 325, 345, 357, 383, 446; See also, Vol.2, 1854, pp.77, 82; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.163

³ Waagen, Vol.2, p.278

⁴ *Ibid*, p.133

While Giorgione was famous in nineteenth-century England, in France he acquired a cult following, based on the Louvre *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1). It was Gautier's writing in particular where Giorgione functioned as a symbol of the romantic ideal. In his early poem *Albertus, ou l'Âme et l'Péché* (1832), Giorgione's name appears alongside Raphael and Titian as being among those whose art cannot compare to God's creation of a beautiful woman – “vainement nous l'essayons”. This sets the theme, as in Gautier's writing Giorgione is inexorably related to female beauty; for instance in the poem “La Diva” (1838):

Du moins je le croyais, quand au fond d'une loge
J'aperçus une femme. Il me sembla d'abord,
La loge lui formant un cadre de son bord,
Que c'était un tableau de Titien ou Giorgione,¹

This finds its most vivid expression in the novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, an epicene romance on the moral autonomy of beauty. When the protagonist, a young idealist named d'Albert, tries to describe the woman he is in love with, “une que je n'ai jamais vue”, he turns to painting for inspiration. Searching to express his conception of the ideal female form d'Albert explains that she will have “un caractère de beauté, fin et ferme à la fois, élégant et vivace, poétique et réel; un motif de Giorgione exécuté par Rubens”.² Later this is inverted; writing to his recently engaged friend, d'Albert explains that he is lucky to have fallen in love with a *real* woman: “Tu n'as pas cherché si l'or de ses cheveux se rapprochait pour le ton des chevelures de Rubens et de Giorgione; mais ils t'ont plu, parce que c'étaient ses cheveux”.³ The significance for Pater can be heard when d'Albert recalls a vision of his new love: “Un des angles lumineux que le soleil dessinait sur le mur se vint projeter centre la fenêtre et le tableau se dora d'un ton chaud et transparent à faire envie à la toile la plus chatoyante du

¹ Gautier, 2004, pp.49, 221

² Gautier, Vol.1, 1837, p.93

³ *Ibid.*, p.304

Giorgione”.¹ The image of sunlight falling on a wall will recur in “The School of Giorgione” as a metaphor for formal qualities in painting.

Later, in his 1852 tourist memoirs *Italia*, Gautier evokes the allegorical half-length tradition so as to “faire le portrait d’une jeune fille qui se tenait debout sur le seuil d’une boutique. L’intérieur obscur lui faisait un fond vigoureux et chaud, sur lequel elle se détachait comme une tête de Giorgione”.² There was though one particular painting on which Gautier’s idea of the artist was based, the *Concert Champêtre*.³ Haskell has discussed the changing reputation of the *Concert* through the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Along with Rubens (1577-1640), Giorgione was especially loved by the Romantics, including Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) who copied the Louvre picture. Even with the rise of Realism, the artist maintained his status, the *Concert* becoming a “tranche de vie” of Renaissance Venice for new artists such as Jean-François Millet (1814-1875). It was, however, the perceived sensuality of the nudes that attracted later painters, noticeably Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and Paul Cézanne (1839-1906).⁴

The most important copy was Édouard Manet’s (1832-1883) *Déjeuner sur l’herbe* (1862-1863, Fig.R2); like its model, the *Déjeuner* was considered morally ambiguous, Haskell arguing for a parallel between Émile Zola’s (1840-1902) defence of Manet’s work in January 1867, and Gautier’s discussion of the *Concert Champêtre*, published in May; this is seen as the origin of “Giorgione as a ‘pure painter’, totally uninterested in subject matter.”⁵ In “Édouard Manet, étude biographique et critique”,⁶ Zola parodies the popular reception of the *Déjeuner*: “Bon Dieu! quelle indécence: une femme sans la moindre voile entre deux

¹ Gautier, Vol.2, 1837, p.8

² Gautier, 1852, p.46

³ *Ibid*, p.254

⁴ Haskell, 1987, pp.148-151

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *La Revue du XIX^e siècle*, 1 January, 1867

hommes habillés! Cela ne s'était jamais vu." In response the author references "plus de cinquante tableaux" in the Louvre that contain the same indecent contrast of female nudes and clothed males: "Mais personne ne va chercher à se scandaliser au musée du Louvre." Zola's argument is that Manet was a "peintre analyste" for whom subject matter was merely "prétexte à peindre".¹ Gautier, in his "Le Musée du Louvre" of 1867,² describes Giorgione's *Concert Champêtre* as "d'une composition bizarre et d'une étonnante intensité de couleur", in which the two clothed males "ne semblent nullement se préoccuper un contraste que présentent leurs riches habits avec la nudité de leurs compagnes." Echoing Zola, Gautier argues that Giorgione "dans cette suprême indifférence artistique qui ne songe qu'à la beauté, n'a vu là qu'une heureuse opposition de belles étoffes et de belles chairs, et en effet il n'y a que cela." In an interpretation that would be elaborated by Pater, the *Concert* is read as "ce tableau sans sujet et sans anecdote". We can hear Gautier in dialogue with Zola when he explains that "n'attire peut-être pas beaucoup la foule, mais soyez sûr que tous ceux qui cherchent les secrets de la couleur s'y arrêtent longuement",³ making formal and not literary quality, the moral and intellectual justification.

To conclude, one interesting but little noticed appearance of Giorgione in the French historiography is another 1867 interpretation, this time by Alexis-François Rio (1797-1874) in the expanded edition of his *De l'art Chrétien* (1861-1867). This text represents the "old" Giorgione, but with a new and intriguing characterisation. Importantly, "malgré l'originalité prodigieuse et la supériorité de son génie", Giorgione takes a secondary place in this "audaciously subjective" (his own words), transcendental, Catholic history of Italian

¹ Zola, 1991, pp.158-159

² *Paris Guide: La Science – L'Art, Vol.1*, Paris, 1867, pp.305-415; compiled by Victor Hugo for the Exposition Universelle

³ Gautier, 1867, p.331

painting,¹ Rio arguing that “ses types de Christ ou de Vierge s’élèvent rarement au-dessus de la conception purement humaine”. Giorgione is still “l’auteur d’une révolution”, but one with an ethical dimension, the writer stating that he must protest at the consequences of this emancipation. Nevertheless, Rio is “subjugué par l’éclat, la grandeur et l’originalité de ses œuvres”, suggestively comparing Giorgione to Luther; both leaders of unchristian reformations, but who are pardoned by the force of their genius. Foreshadowing Morelli, Rio sees Giorgione’s work as being “ennoblie par une expression mélancolique qui ouvre un champ libre aux conjectures”; he also references the Marcello “Venere” and claims the painter’s nudes are free of Titian’s “accentuation lubrique”.²

In Rio’s characterisation, Giorgione is an artist devoted to “l’idéal héroïque”. This is linked to his origins in Castelfranco and the context of foreign invasions. Through the military half-lengths, Rio envisages a gladiatorial Giorgione who idealises the “rôle de libérateur armé”. Warrior saints are therefore of the highest order, seen by “sa dévotion pour saint Georges”, for instance in *The Castelfranco Altarpiece*, which stands “non plus comme objet d’invocation, mais comme un *ex-voto* national”. Rio argues that Giorgione’s “humeur belliqueuse” explains why the subject of David had a personal attraction “pour un peintre également jeune et d’une trempe également héroïque”.³ However, the romantic Giorgione is still dominant, and when discussing the nudes and pastorals, Rio passes a moral judgement on the artist in comparison to Raphael, as Crowe and Cavalcaselle would also do.⁴ When discussing Giorgione’s mode of subject matter, he is particularly critical, but partly excuses the artist by arguing this was in accord with the taste of his patrons, classifying it as the

¹ Qtd. in Bullen, 1994, pp.82-88

² Rio, 1867, pp.133-135 – Later I will suggest that Morelli had read and was responding to Rio

³ *Ibid.*, pp.135-137, 140

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.145; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.156

“genre de luxe dormait”.¹ This sensuality is connected with Vasari’s statement that Giorgione was a musician and a lover, seen primarily in the *Concert Champêtre*, in which the female nudes “prennent tellement au sérieux le rôle innocent qui leur est dévolu”.² Rio argues their nudity is motivated only by the desire of the painter to show the flesh tones of beautiful models on a large surface, an inversion of Gautier’s moral defence of the painting.

Rio does not question any specific attributions and instead bases his presentation on a pan-giorgionesque array of paintings, including *The Dead Christ* (Fig.A11). Many of the portraits came with famous identifications of the sitters, such as “l’infame César Borgia”; rather than problematise, Rio asks whether it is necessary to doubt them and attempt to trace “les désignations authentiques?” Even in the seventeenth century, he explains, Ridolfi could not identify the sitter of an armed portrait: “Le fil de la tradition une fois rompu n’a pu être renoué, et cependant, en présence de si sublimes hiéroglyphes, on ne se résigne pas à ignorer le mot de l’énigme”.³ Pater was to reuse this image, the thread of the tradition breaking, but whereas Rio could choose to ignore the problem, after the *New History* Pater could not. Interestingly, both Pater and Morelli, in their desire to return to the more traditional ideas, returned to Rio’s text, the last creative expression of the “old” Giorgione.

The Nineteenth Century: Giorgione Scholarship

As has been said, Crowe and Cavalcaselle were not the first to doubt the most important Giorgione attributions; Hope argues that “new ideas” about the artist can be found in the

¹ Rio was especially critical of corrupt patronage and excessive nudity – Bullen, 1994, p.83-85

² Rio, 1867, pp.139-143

³ *Ibid*, pp.137-140

scholarship of Selvatico and Lübke, but most influentially in Mündler's corrections to Burckhardt's *Cicerone*.¹ None of these texts, however, can fairly be compared to the *New History* in regard to the extent of the two connoisseurs' problematisation. Instead, Selvatico and Lübke should be read as representing the traditional image of an artist defined by sensuality, while Kugler and Burckhardt both offer influential presentations of the painter, but which evolve through several editions, evidencing the transition from the "old" to the "new" Giorgione. The 1869 edition of Burckhardt's *Cicerone* marks the moment at which connoisseurs really began to doubt the established corpus of works.² From this scepticism Crowe and Cavalcaselle consciously created a "new" Giorgione, finishing their chapter by directly refuting "erroneous impressions of his style and character" and specifically referencing Selvatico and Burckhardt.³ I would like to look briefly at all these writers, seeing how these "new ideas" developed up to (and beyond) the publication of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's Giorgione in 1871.

Selvatico's second volume of the *Storia estetico-critica* has been described by Hope as a "decisive shift" because of its praise for *The Castelfranco Altarpiece* (Fig.A10). This resulted in the 1861 *Handbuch* describing the canvas as "the only completely secure work of the master, on the basis of credible sources"; the source being Ridolfi.⁴ In the *Storia*, Selvatico also attributes two panels in the Uffizi, *The Trial of Moses* and *The Judgement of Solomon*, the *Triple Portrait*, a portrait of "Gattamelata" (*Warrior with Equerry*), the *Concert Champêtre* and the *Storm at Sea* (Figs.A23, A24, A20, A25, A1, A9); only three of the seven attributions would be retained by Crowe and Cavalcaselle. In the *Storia* Giorgione breaks from Bellini in order to "vestire di allettante sensualità ogni prodotto del suo pennello".

¹ Selvatico, P., *Storia estetico-critica delle arti del disegno*, Vol.2, Venice, 1856; Lübke, W., *Grundriss der Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1868; Burckhardt [Mündler], 1869, pp.975-976

² Hope, 1997, p.93

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.156

⁴ Hope, 1997, p.93

Selvatico describes the artist's technique in terms of "macchia robusta" and "succoso colore", while in his subjects Giorgione "preferi al mistico de' vecchi pittori, quel naturale che ricrea i sensi, e lascia muta l'intelligenza". When discussing the *Altarpiece*, Selvatico argues that the model for Mary was Giorgione's lover, "le infedeltà della quale così ammalarono l'animo, e più forse il corpo del sommo pittore che nel 1511, non ancora compiuti trentatre anni, miseramente moriva". As evidence, he transcribes an inscription on the reverse of the altarpiece, apparently lost during a restoration: "*Cara Cecilia, vieni t'affreta / Il tuo aspetta / Giorgio Barbarella*".¹ In this way, a renewed emphasis on the *Altarpiece* is conflated with traditional ideas of alluring sensuality and the narrative of the artist's tragic-romantic death, perpetuating the accepted image.

Lübke differs from Selvatico, but predicts Pater by proposing an intellectual justification for the sensuality of the whole Venetian school; his 1868 *Kunstgeschichte* displays a Hegelian rationalisation, describing Giorgione as taking "Den ersten Schritt zur völligen Befreiung der venezianischen Kunst". Venetian painting is an escape from the "Kämpfe und Schmerzen der Welt", lacking strong action and passionate emotion, "sie sind nur zu schönem Genuss geschaffen". Lübke defends the sensuality of Giorgionesque colour by arguing the paintings are "die Ausstrahlung einer innerlichen Harmonie, einer natürlichen Gesundheit des Geistes und des Körpers, die sich als vollendete sinnliche Schönheit voll Adel und Reinheit offenbart". Understanding Giorgione's sensual beauty as having *nobility* prefigures Crowe and Cavalcaselle, although of the six specific works Lübke attributes,² only three would be retained in 1871. Lübke also anticipates Morelli, significantly in "die Landschaft in bedeutend poetischem Sinn aufgefasst ist". The conception is poetic because the images express Giorgione's "poetischen Geist". Although Crowe and Cavalcaselle equivocate on the

¹ Selvatico, 1856, pp.526-527

² *The Castelfranco Altarpiece, Storm at Sea, The Dead Christ, the Judgement of Solomon, the Jacob and Rachel and the Pitti Concert* (Figs.A10, A9, A11, A13, A26, A12)

issue of portraiture, Morelli places great emphasis on this genre, seeming to follow Lübke's idea that "folgt er gern diesem poetischen Hange und erhebt das einfache Bildniss dadurch zu einem charaktervollen und anziehenden Genrebild".¹ Lübke can be read as representing the "old" Giorgione, contributing to the romantic idea of the artist, interpreting the works as highly sensualised.

Kugler's *Handbuch* was published in 1837 and translated into English by 1842; Burckhardt's *Cicerone* was published in 1855, but not translated until 1873. Both works went through several editions and developed under the control of different connoisseurs; for instance, Charles Lock Eastlake (1793-1865) published the first three English editions of the *Handbuch*, Elizabeth Eastlake (1809-1893) revised the fourth edition in 1874, while the fifth, published in 1887, was edited by Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894) who based his work on Morelli. The 1869 edition of the *Cicerone*, which signalled a shift that was to result in Crowe and Cavalcaselle's "new" Giorgione, was edited by Albert von Zahn (1836-1873), but much of the new content was contributed by Müндler, notably regarding attributions to Giorgione in Italy. After discussing Kugler's and Burckhardt's original representations of the artist, I will look at the way their texts were modified up to 1871, before considering subsequent editions to assess the impact of the *New History* and, later, Morelli.

The *Handbuch* presents itself as a short introduction which makes no claim to originality;² nevertheless, it was often cited in the nineteenth century as a source of authority, offering a coherent and confident Giorgione. The story is familiar, the artist breaking from Bellini "und die Kunst mit Freiheit, den Auftrag der Farbe in einer kühnen entschlossenen Weise behandelte", these colours having "einer innerlich verschlossenen Glut". In one sentence,

¹ Lübke, 1868, pp.601-602

² Kugler, 1837, p.v

which Pater seems to have echoed in “The School of Giorgione”, the figures in the paintings are seen as “ein erhöhtes Geschlecht von Menschen, welches die Fähigkeit zu den edelsten und grossartigsten Aeusserungen des Lebens in sich trägt”. Although Kugler argues that the artist’s works are rare, he nevertheless goes on to list *The Assassination of St Peter Martyr*, the *Jacob and Rachel*, and the *Storm at Sea* (Figs.A27, A26, A9).¹

Kugler categorises Giorgione’s mode of subject matter in terms recognisable later in Lübke’s work:

...so findet man überhaupt mannigfach in Giorgione’s Bildern eine besondere, poetische Anschauungsweise, welche sich eines Theils in allegorischen Beziehungen und Andeutungen (die jedoch nicht immer leicht zu enträthseln sein dürften), anderen Theiles, in der Composition mehr novellistischer Scenen äussert und die eine bedeutende Verwandtschaft mit dem, heutigen Tages sogenannten “romantischen Genre” hat.²

This idea of a “poetische Anschauungsweise” was to be significant in Morelli’s writing, while the suggestion that the paintings represent scenes from novels would prove important for Burckhardt and Pater. Kugler gives as examples *The Astrologer* (Fig.A28) and the *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1), described as “ein Bild voll glühenden Lebens und edler Sinnlichkeit”. The image of a romantic, sensual artist is maintained in the attribution of the *Finding of Moses* (Fig.A16), interpreted as a history painting, “aber ebenfalls von novelistisch romantischer Auffassung” and in which the “höchste Erdenpracht und Lust vereinigt”. In this picture Kugler also emphasises the Venetian costume, arguing that though anachronistic, “indem es hiebei nicht auf eine nüchtern historische, sondern mehr auf eine poetische

¹ Kugler, 1837, pp.300-301

² *Ibid.*, p.301

Wahrheit abgesehen und die Gegenwart reich genug an Poesie war”.¹ Fashion would prove an important aspect of the artist’s popular image, as seen again in Crowe and Cavalcaselle, and Pater.

The second edition of the *Handbuch* was published in 1847 with assistance from Burckhardt. The 1851 English translation was again edited by Charles Eastlake, who questioned several of the initial attributions. The German text contains a new discussion of the “Charakterköpfe”, asking if they are portraits or genre subjects, and listing as examples the Pitti *Concert* and Uffizi *Warrior* (Figs.A12, A25). There are few significant changes between the first and second editions, although the number of attributions does double from twelve to twenty-four. There is also the first appearance of an adjective that would be utilised by Morelli; when discussing *The Holy Family* (Fig.A29) Kugler considers the landscape to be “hochpoetischer”.² The fourth English edition of 1874, published after the *New History*, shows dramatic changes. This was not based on a new German edition but “Revised and Remodelled from the Latest Researches, by Lady Eastlake”. The preface stresses the forty years since the *Handbuch* was first published and also the developments in the study of Italian painting, evidenced by the National Gallery’s acquisitions and the “gradually correcting nomenclature”. Eastlake’s two main sources, she explains, were her husband’s notes and Crowe and Cavalcaselle, “whose researches have, in many respects, created a revolution in the history of early Art”; she also cites Müндler’s contribution to the 1869 *Cicerone*.³

This edition begins its discussion of Giorgione, as Crowe and Cavalcaselle had done, by emphasising the artist’s consistent celebrity, while re-enacting the *New History*’s

¹ Kugler, 1837, pp.301-303

² Kugler, Vol.2, 1847, pp.26-30; Kugler, Part II, 1851, pp.430-433

³ Kugler, Vol.1, 1874, pp.v-vi

problematization: “yet, of the numerous works that have borne his name, many have perished, many are missing, and of those that remain but few can be indisputably assigned to him”. The issues of imitation and restoration mean attribution “is a task of delicate and mature connoisseurship”. The new introduction continues by explaining the lack of primary sources and arguing that traditions about the artist became “overladen with fable”. Specific works from previous editions are reattributed, for instance the *Jacob and Rachel* (Fig.A26), while Eastlake follows Crowe and Cavalcaselle closely, reproducing their arguments and technical analysis. Not all their disattributions are acknowledged, importantly the *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1) is described as “a further measure of Giorgione’s power”. Almost because much of Kugler’s original text is retained, this is a “new”, problematised Giorgione.¹

As if in competition with this version, in 1887 Layard argues that a fifth edition is necessary:

A book has [...] since appeared which may be considered, in many respects, the most important contribution ever made to the study of art, and may be said to have caused a revolution in the history of Italian painting, and to have been the first successful attempt to give a sound and scientific basis to investigations into the genuineness of pictures ascribed to Italian Masters.

This book was Morelli’s 1880 publication on the galleries in Munich, Dresden and Berlin. Layard here shows a new sense of contention, and the origin of this, we discover, is that Morelli’s opinions, method “and the unsparing way he destroyed the reputation of many famous pictures” caused at first “a storm of protest”.² Layard effectively rewrote Kugler’s presentation of Giorgione based on Morelli’s German galleries book, arguing that authentic

¹ Kugler, Vol.2, 1874, pp.509-512

² Kugler, Vol.2, 1887, pp.xv-xvi

works are “extremely rare” and then listing the nineteen paintings of which his mentor “admits the undoubted genuineness”.¹

Burckhardt’s 1855 *Cicerone* was more than a tourist’s guide to Italian art, it represented a historical revaluation; critical of romanticism, it located in Renaissance art the origins of modern culture.² The discussion of Giorgione begins by focusing on his representation of individualities, “durch hohe, bedeutende Auffassung, durch den Reiz der vollkommensten malerischen”, and suggesting these characters were afforded “eine abgesonderte Behandlung”. Just as Bellini painted half-length Madonnas, Burckhardt argues, Giorgione created allegorical half-lengths with “bloss poetischen Inhaltes”, therefore appearing to be simply portraits. The artist is given a high status: “Er ist der Urvater dieser Gattung, welche später in der ganzen modernen Malerei eine so grosse Rolle spielt”. This resounds in Pater, where Giorgione’s art functions in contemporary debates about Aesthetic painting, artists such as Rossetti and Whistler being implicitly included within the school of Giorgione. The painter’s costumed figures, for Burckhardt and later Pater, are seen as idealised, “er darin einen abgeschlossen poetischen Inhalt zu verewigen im Stande ist”. Again Pater is guided by the *Cicerone* when it explains that Giorgione’s *poetry* is opposed to an idea of *narrative*, it was not “erzählenden, dramatischen Malerei”, although like Kugler the author questions “Soll man sie historische oder novellistische Charaktere nennen? bald überwiegt mehr di freie Thatfähigkeit, bald mehr das schönste Dasein”.³

Burckhardt gives a very modern interpretation of the artist, reformulating the *Ut pictura poesis* interpretation. There are fifteen attributions that evidence this analysis, including, interestingly, *The Tempest* (Fig.A3), and also a *Nymph and Satyr* (Fig.A30), an attribution

¹ Kugler, Vol.2, 1887, pp.551-558

² Gossman, 1999, pp.890, 898

³ Burckhardt, 1855, p.961

supported by Morelli. Although the role of this text as a source for Pater has not been discussed before, we can read a clear precursor in Burckhardt's ideas. He argues that Giorgione wanted to represent the splendour of everyday Venetian life, "eines reichen und farbenschönen Daseins", the paintings being the "Darstellung der blossen Existenz auf bedeutenden landschaftlichen Hintergrunde". This makes the secular sacred, so that the genre of "Novellenbilder" also includes religious scenes like the *Finding of Moses* (Fig.A16).¹

In the second edition of the *Cicerone* Burckhardt's original attributions have been reduced, leaving only *The Astrologer* (Fig.A28) and the *Finding of Moses*, which the editor in parenthesis attributes to Bonifazio. The text has been restructured so that the original analysis remains, but with little reference to paintings; instead, attributions are considered in a long, concluding editorial section written by Mündler. Hope explains that Crowe and Cavalcaselle were indebted to this edition of the *Cicerone*, sharing Mündler's belief that many of the paintings attributed to Giorgione were actually by later artists.² It seems true that the *New History* built upon this scepticism, expanding the scope of the problematisation to produce their catalogue raisonné. The best evidence for this is the 1879 edition; when Crowe had the chance to revise Mündler's attributions, he made no changes and only questioned three works, including the *Astrologer*, which is "certainly not by Giorgione. – Ed."³

Mündler's contribution to Giorgione scholarship was essentially a list of attributions, contending that of the pictures in Italy attributed to Giorgione "nur sehr wenige Anspruch auf Echtheit" and one must look abroad to appreciate his "künstlerischen Begabung". Following Kugler, the *Altarpiece* is said to be the only picture "ist ganz sicher und urkundlich beglaubigt", while of the half-lengths Mündler only accepts the *Concert*. In this genre he

¹ Burckhardt, 1855, pp.961-963

² Hope, 1997, p.93

³ Burckhardt, 1879, p.185

suggests also that “allenfalls” the *Astrologer* and “Familie Giorgione’s” could be considered,¹ while he argues, surprisingly, that the *Dead Christ* (Fig.A11): “Von Einigen bezweifelt, ist dennoch des Meisters würdig”. The majority of pictures, however, are disattributed or given to other artists. For example, of the nine works, two are given to Pietro della Vecchia, one to Dosso Dossi, and one to Bernadino Licinio; the two Uffizi panels (Figs.A23, A24) and Bellini’s *Sacred Allegory* (Fig.A31) are described as “paduanischer”, with a suggested attribution to Basaiti, while the *Knight of Malta* (Fig.A32) is given to della Vecchia, an attribution that would severely irritate Morelli.²

This small piece of writing had lasting implications when expanded and invested with authority by Crowe and Cavalcaselle. Even so, the culturally popular, romantic Giorgione was deeply embedded and would not be so easily undermined, as seen by three publications in 1869, 1879 and 1881. Alfred Walker, a playwright based in Utica, New York, gave form to the popular image in his Shakespearean pastiche *Giorgione, the Painter of Venice: a tragedy in five acts*, quoting as the source of his plot Jameson’s *Memoirs*,³ Byron’s *Beppo* and letter to Bankes. It does not appear to have been performed, but it is obvious how enamoured Walker was by the *idea* of Giorgione. In his “Author’s Address” he tells us “My name was called, I plainly heard a voice” and that “Ridolphi came to me, / And by his side, that interesting man, / Giorgione, he who loved his art, / And was a painter-poet”.⁴ In 1879, the journalist and politician Ferdinando Petrucelli della Gattina (1815-1890) published *Giorgione: Romanzo Storico*, narrating the last few months of the painter’s life. His motivation for writing, explained in his long preface, was political. He laments the lack of “società” in Italy compared to London and Paris, mentioning the 1830 July Revolution and the 1832 Reform

¹ Joining the confusion, Crowe’s edit suggest this was *The Tempest*, however, the context would suggest Mündler meant the Alnwick *Triple Portrait* – Burkhardt, 1879, p.185

² Burkhardt, 1855, pp.185-186

³ Referenced by Walker as “Merrifield’s *Lives of the Painters*”

⁴ Walker, 1869, pp.17-20, 26

Bill, and calling for “il mio amico Morelli, ed altri campioni della donna, libera e politica, insorgeranno”.¹ Finally, in 1881, Gasparo Martinetti Cardoni, a historian of Dante, published a short story *Gli amori di Cecilia e di Giorgione, pittore famoso*. Based on Selvatico’s anecdotal explanation of the lost inscription on *The Castelfranco Altarpiece*, Cardoni develops a longer narrative of Cecilia’s betrayal.² Eventually this image of Giorgione as a great Venetian lover would pass away, but the romantic ideal would still find an influential advocate in Pater.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s New History

In 1857 Crowe and Cavalcaselle published their first collaboration, *Early Flemish Painters*; this was followed in 1864 by *A New History of Painting in Italy from the Second to the Sixteenth Century* in three volumes. Their “new” history was continued with *A History of Painting in North Italy*, in two volumes, in 1871. The 1864 and 1871 histories essentially comprise one consistent whole, but divided between *lower* and *upper* Italy respectively; it was their publisher John Murray (1808-1892) who insisted on releasing the 1871 volumes under an alternative title, contrary to the authors’ wishes.³ Although the five volumes were extensive and comprehensive, there was a conspicuous absence of studies on Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Correggio, and Titian. It was the two connoisseurs’ intention to publish monographs on each of these artists, but they only completed *The Life and Times of Titian* in two volumes (1877) and *Raphael* in two volumes (1882-1885).

¹ Della Gattina, 1879, p.10

² Cardoni, 1881

³ This thesis refers to both the 1864 and the 1871 volumes as the *New History*. – Levi, 1988, p.253

The *History of Painting in North Italy*, which contained a long chapter on Giorgione, met mixed reviews. Seven years earlier, on the publication of the 1864 *New History*, the *Gazette des beaux art* had crowned the authors the “New Vasari”.¹ In 1871 *The Examiner* repeated this epithet, but judging that the “great length to which the history is running, will make it tedious to some students”, nevertheless “it is well that, once and for all, we should have such a thoroughly exhaustive memoir of Italian art”.² The *Quarterly Review* acknowledged that it was not a regurgitation of Vasari, but instead, “with much industry and care”, corrects this historian’s “mistakes and misstatements”.³ *The Pall Mall Gazette* praised the authors, particularly for their use of new archival material, but also their attention to lesser known artists.⁴ *The Examiner* agreed: “It is a good thing that fifth and even tenth-rate artists should be discussed”, but again thinks of the unfortunate reader, who “is apt to get bewildered”; also, in the work itself, “there are some artistic blemishes that are disappointing”.⁵ These blemishes were the literary style, which is a point on which the reviews concur. For example, *The Edinburgh Review* laments “the absurd and farfetched style of this otherwise admirable work”, questioning “why it should not be given in a more readable form”.⁶

Several reviews highlighted the chapter on Giorgione as exemplary and significant; however, the significance was not, perhaps, what the authors would have intended. Rather than provide a platform for a more solid understanding of Giorgione’s work, Crowe and Cavalcaselle succeeded in rendering their subject intrinsically unstable. To understand this process I will look at their attributions, seeing the way the connoisseurs attempt to build a coherent career for the artist. I will then discuss the term Giorgionesque, arguing that Crowe and Cavalcaselle

¹ “Leur livre est en somme un nouveau Vasari, moins coloré, moins piquant, moins pittoresque peut-être que le premier, mais à coup sûr plus exact, plus complet, plus sérieux” – Wilson, 1868, p.503

² *The Examiner*, 6 May, 1871

³ *Quarterly Review*, 1872, p.121

⁴ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 August, 1871, p.11

⁵ *The Examiner*, 6 May, 1871

⁶ *The Edinburgh Review*, 1872, p.122

endeavoured to address the implications of their negative attributions by modifying the narrative progress of Venetian painting. Considering that attributions were the focus of their history, I want to analyse the two connoisseurs' ekphrastic method, understanding the way they gave descriptive cohesion to their catalogue, but also the rhetorical effect of their technical vocabulary. Finally, I want to explain the importance of collaboration in their approach and the authority this generated. Crowe and Cavalcaselle were intentionally problematising and demythicising Giorgione; what they did not appreciate, however, was the consequence of the *New History's* scepticism, the creation of a "new", perpetually elusive, Giorgione.

The "New" Giorgione's Paintings

While Crowe and Cavalcaselle may have been cementing a trend of reductionism in attribution, they believed they had created a "new" Giorgione. This was achieved by giving structure to his career, which fell into three definable phases. In the first Giorgione paints small religious works, while the second period includes the altarpiece in Castelfranco, his Venetian frescos, and some important works on canvas. The third section, in retrospect, seems overly optimistic, as it demands a major development in Giorgione's technique. As Hope has argued, Crowe and Cavalcaselle attributed pictures that were "surprisingly advanced in terms of figure style", but "did not draw the obvious conclusion from their survey" that the traditional image of Giorgione "was so unreliable as to be virtually worthless."¹ Even so, it would be wrong to argue that this conclusion is obvious, even today.

¹ Hope, 2004, p.48

The image of Giorgione that Crowe and Cavalcaselle created was, within itself, reasonable and consistent, except perhaps for the final stage. The connoisseurs did try to modify the “conventional image” of the artist’s significance, as will be discussed, but their failure to surrender their traditional notions of Giorgione’s *greatness* led them to give a confused presentation of early cinquecento Venetian painting. However, it was not the *truth* of their Giorgione that mattered, but the self-conscious approach. It is important to consider what Crowe and Cavalcaselle say the artist definitely painted, but almost more importantly, what they claimed he did not paint. These attributions produce an image of Giorgione, an image that is in turn engendered with an array of artistic, intellectual, social and ethical values.

The first two paintings the connoisseurs attribute are *The Trial of Moses* (Fig.A23) and *The Judgement of Solomon* (Fig.A24). The authors explain the provenance, writing that they were bought to Florence at some unknown date along with Bellini’s *Sacred Allegory* (Fig.A31), all considered to be by Giorgione. Crowe and Cavalcaselle link the three paintings as “companion” pictures, claiming the *Allegory* was “the model” on which Giorgione based his two compositions. Next, directly compared to the “treatment” of the Uffizi panels, they attribute the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (FigA15). Last in this group, and the only entirely “new” attribution, is the “the Epiphany”, or *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig.A33), Crowe and Cavalcaselle suggesting that it is “equally entitled to rank amongst the creations of Giorgione as the gems of the Uffizi and Lord Allendale”.

To define the artist’s early career with these works was genuinely original and has often been repeated. Perhaps more significant for Giorgione’s historiography, however, was the self-questioning means by which these paintings are linked to Vasari’s reference to “molti quadri di Nostre Donne”. Crowe and Cavalcaselle explain that the issue of justification is “worthy of

consideration” and admit they must show “on what ground anyone of them should be accepted”, considering “there is nothing to support their nomenclature but tradition”. The stylistic arguments they provide will be discussed below, but more important is their acknowledgement that “it would be vain to assert that debate is from henceforward to cease”.¹ Although the early career of the artist is new, at the same time it is explicitly problematised.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle introduce *The Castelfranco Altarpiece* (Fig.A10) as “Foremost among the productions acknowledged by successive generations as true Giorgiones...” The attribution is recognised as being based on tradition, the connoisseurs suggesting it “is only ascribed to Giorgione by the concurrent testimony of history and local annals”. They maintain that “the style is that of Giorgione’s youth” while making a connection to the four paintings above. The next painting, *A Man in Armour* (Fig.A21), is described as a “manly and spirited study” for the warrior saint in the *Altarpiece*, the authors arguing the principle difference is that “the head is bare and the right hand idle”.² After discussing the relationship between Bellini and Giorgione as viewed through the *Altarpiece*, and after some disparaging remarks on the local antiquarianism in Castelfranco, the fresco decorations in the Casa Marta-Pellizzari and the detached portrait of an emperor (Figs.A34, A35, A36) are described as “certainly painted in a Giorgionesque spirit”, while other frescoes in Castelfranco “bear the test of examination less”.³

Crowe and Cavalcaselle then move back to Venice, in a sense following Ridolfi’s narrative; the next two paintings function as the secure centre of Giorgione’s oeuvre. These are the two attributions based on Michiel’s *Notizia*, pictures “celebrated at Venice in the early part of the

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.124-129

² *Ibid*, 1871, pp.129-131

³ *Ibid*, pp.134-135, n.2

16th century”. They were “the ‘Chaldean Sages’ of the Belvedere at Vienna” (*The Three Philosophers*, Fig.A4), and “the so-called ‘family of Giorgione’ at the Manfrini palace” (*The Tempest*, Fig.A3); both are described at length and offer an opportunity to define Giorgione’s style. In the *Philosophers*: “We may give undivided attention to Giorgione for his spirited and easy reproduction of instant motion, the lightness of his touch, and the subtle feeling which he evinces colour. His art is that of Bellini, regenerated and instinct with new life”. *The Tempest* is “admirable in the same respects” and, following Vasari, “is of equal value as proof of Giorgione’s constant appeal to nature”. Interestingly, both paintings are seen to embody a “form of art in which landscape is treated as of equal if not superior importance to figures”, while in *The Tempest* specifically, the landscape “seems at one moment a pretext for the figures, while these at other moments look like a filling for the landscape”.¹

The following attribution, the Kingston Lacy *Judgement of Solomon* (Fig.A13), is said to mark a new stage in Giorgione’s career, being related to the *Tempest* and *Philosophers* “in the mechanism of their painting, but improved in treatment”. It therefore marks the point at which Crowe and Cavalcaselle begin to attribute to Giorgione the “surprisingly advanced” figure style. It is described as the “bringing of Bellinesque art to perfection” but also has “an impression of novelty”. This development is discussed in relation to the possible influence of Leonardo, and the end of the influence of Antonello da Messina (c1430-1479). However, the problem is left open; the connoisseurs suggesting it might be “the simple process of natural expansion” owing to the influence of Venetian contemporaries and antique sculpture.²

After a long discussion of Giorgione’s work in fresco, Crowe and Cavalcaselle problematise the attribution of the *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Fig.A7). The San Rocco picture provides an

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.135-136

² *Ibid.*, pp.138-139

opportunity to confuse Titian and Giorgione; from Vasari we learn “Vecelli at some period of his life frankly followed Giorgione in the mechanism of his painting”. The problem initially seems to be Vasari himself, as this “acute critic was deceived by the conformity of style” and therefore ascribed the canvas to Giorgione, but “which he afterwards thought fit to restore to Titian”. As the connoisseurs fail to resolve their own visual analysis, the problem of attribution is performed in the text: “Now that we look at the picture with the full consciousness of these contradictions, we are still left in doubt...” They maintain the Giorgione attribution, but with the qualification that “it may be possible to admit that Titian acquired the manner of Giorgione so perfectly as to deceive us”.¹ Six years later in *Titian*, they continue this process, eventually writing that “we must concede” that Titian “finished” the San Rocco *Christ*.²

The last attribution is combined with the first major disattribution; for Pater and Morelli, this became a major source of discontent with the “new” Giorgione. As the culmination of the painter’s development Crowe and Cavalcaselle choose as Giorgione’s masterpiece the Pitti *Concert* (Fig.A12), rejecting the alternative, the Louvre *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1). Dissatisfaction seems to have been a common reaction, one review arguing that “technical considerations have been suffered to warp the judgement”.³ The rhetorical introduction of the Pitti *Concert* foreshadows many of these problems, as by stressing the value of the work they reject the possibility of comparison: “One picture which has not its equal in any period of Giorgione’s practice” and yet “gives a just measure of his skill, and explains his celebrity”. Again, however, Crowe and Cavalcaselle seem more certain of the problem than the solution, deciding to end this attribution, and so the list of Giorgione’s genuine works, with the “unfortunately true” idea that none of these works “are at all comparable” in quality to

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.143-144

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 1877, pp.61-62

³ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 August, 1871, p.12

Concert. This seems to negate the basis of their comparative method, the connoisseurs being “forced reluctantly to conclude” that either the paintings have been damaged, or that only copies are extant, “or – at the worst – that he did not execute what we are fond of attributing to him”.¹ In this way, the most important painting by the “new” Giorgione is immediately problematised.

The vast majority of paintings mentioned by Crowe and Cavalcaselle are *not*, they argue, by Giorgione. Near the beginning of the chapter they explain the process of the pan-giorgionesque: “in course of time, connoisseurs learnt to confound the real with the unreal, the good with the bad, and one painter with the other”.² In his notes Cavalcaselle defined this problem:

...il nome di Giorgione, come si disse, può riguardarsi come un nome di convenzione, sotto il quale nome si dànno una quantità di opere di carattere veneto detto moderno e cinquecentista, perché pare che da esso principalmente abbia l’origine, le quali opere in gran parte per non dire *quasi* tutte? non sono di Giorgione...³

Here the Italian connoisseur bases his investigation on a “problem situation”; Giorgione is defined as a name and not an artist; the founding principle is scepticism. The idea that “almost all” works attributed to Giorgione are conventional attributions is manifested in the *New History*, which, following Cavalcaselle’s notes, argues the problem is “that value was attached to the greatness of a name”.⁴

After the attribution and disattribution of the two concerts, the connoisseurs begin the analysis of their most significant disattributions: “Let us compare, again, with the genuine

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.144-146

² *Ibid.*, p121

³ Qtd. in Levi, 1988, p.278

⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p121

Giorgiones the picture which so many writers – old and new – have extolled as one of his most undoubted works”. The painting referred to is *The Dead Christ* (Fig.A11), and in this way, the structure of the text replicates connoisseurial method, forming a tight group of authentic works, intending to preclude what follows. Instead of Giorgione, Crowe and Cavalcaselle suggest a comparison of this picture with Pordenone’s frescoes in the Broccardi Chapel in Treviso, while leaving an element of doubt over the question of quality. Among the other important disattributions is the *Jacob and Rachel* (Fig.A26), which on the basis of a landscape comparison is given to a Bergamasque painter. Initially Palma, but following the inscription G.B.F, rather than “Giorgione Barbarella fecit”, the connoisseurs conclude it “probably means Giovanni Busi (Cariani of Bergamo) fecit”.¹

Crowe and Cavalcaselle are less certain when it comes to portraiture and half-lengths. Given they have no secure attribution to function as a control, the examples they consider “very nearly approach to the required standard”, but at best are merely “specimens of the Giorgionesque”, the connoisseurs lacking “proof of their absolute genuineness”. They come close to attributing the *Knight of Malta* (Fig.A32), and claim the *‘Il Bravo’* (Fig.A18) is “nearer to the feeling of the time and to the suggestiveness of the manner of Giorgione.” Crowe and Cavalcaselle “might desire” to attribute a double portrait in Berlin, and “might be inclined” to accept a male portrait in Rovigo, but in the end, they do not.²

The last section of the chapter consists of “eleven pages of almost microscopic print”, as one reviewer complains,³ in which Crowe and Cavalcaselle list over a hundred pictures they disattribute from Giorgione. As they explain: “It would probably be fatal [...] to attempt to

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.146-149, 149 n.2, p.150-151; significant disattributions include four versions of the *Knight and Page*, the *Storm at Sea* and the *The Astrologer* (Figs.A22, A9, A28)

² *Ibid.*, pp.151-155

³ *Quarterly Review*, 1872, p.144

follow the ghost of his name through the numerous galleries which boast of possessing pictures by his hand". This does not stop them, however, producing an extensive list of such works, "classified according to the predominant character of each piece".¹ The first list names sixty-three pictures that are considered "missing", in that they are mentioned in early sources but no longer traceable in the 1860s. Some of these lists serve to delineate other artists, for instance one begins: "We had occasion to notice some celebrated compositions in which the treatment of Cariani appears. There are others suggestive of a similar origin, others again redolent of the style of Lotto or his school".²

Whole regions are included, so that the Friulian School provides artists like Pellegrino da San Daniele (1467-1547), Pordenone, Morto, and Licinio; or Brescia, which produces a large number of "Giorgionesque imitators", including Girolamo Romanino (c1485-c1566) and Moretto da Brescia (c1498-1554); there are also much later artists, like Pietro della Vecchia and his "loose unsatisfactory imitations".³ Found here are important works like the *Finding of Moses* (Fig.A16) and the *Portrait of a Warrior* (Fig.A37), which "has no claim to be accepted as a Giorgione although was apparently so called of old". There are also two attributions that would be revived by Morelli, the *Nymph and Satyr* (Fig.A30), and the *Apollo and Daphne* (Fig.A38).⁴ These lists amount to a tedious but vital piece of text, existing as a formal problematisation. When introducing them Crowe and Cavalcaselle argue that "the absence of any challenge" to the pan-giorgionesque has meant "the most erroneous impressions of his style and character gained currency";⁵ the function of the lists is to provide this challenge.

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.155-156

² *Ibid.*, pp.156-159

³ *Ibid.*, pp.160-164

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.166, 164, 161, 162, 163, 165

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.156

The Life of the “New” Giorgione

The reduction in the number of pictures is combined with an attempt to establish the facts of Giorgione’s life. Crowe and Cavalcaselle base this history on documentary evidence and the early biographies. They attempt to create a cohesive narrative and therefore are not overly critical of the sources; they do distance themselves from Vasari and Ridolfi, but the effect is not a demythicisation, since they search for a more reasonable, probable, or “scientific” myth. They recount the life in a series of approximate or conditional statements: “Giorgione was born before 1477, Titian after 1480”. Studying the manuscript of the *New History* we can see how this statement was reworked to make it at once exact, yet also an estimation of probability.¹ The chapter begins with a discussion of the relationship between these two artists, for instance Titian’s steady rise to eminence compared with Giorgione who, “at a very early period, showed signs of precocious skill”. Their narrative method seeks a unified account, but also stresses the secondary nature of the information. For instance, both painters are pupils of Giovanni Bellini, after which “it is characteristic that Titian” becomes the “disciple” of Giorgione. While this artistic heritage may seem definite, the footnote defines this statement as problematic by revealing it as an interpretation: “The tendency of modern criticism has been to doubt this”.²

Although arguing that Giorgione was to have a dramatic effect on Titian, in the overall presentation Crowe and Cavalcaselle create an image of an artist with strong links to the quattrocento. The story goes that Giorgione went to Venice when the Bellini had “won the race of fame against the Vivirini” and when “the mechanism of painting was altered by the

¹ The first clause is changed from “Giorgione was born in 1478”; the second clause was originally “Titian somewhat later”; this is combined with a heavily reworked footnote, evaluating the arguments for Titian’s date of birth, referencing Vasari, Dolce, Ridolfi, Ticozzi and Cadorin – Crowe, 1865-1870, pp.180-181, n.2

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.119-120, 120 n.1

use of the oil medium, and the halo which surrounded Antonello began to pale.” Giorgione then “had the luck and skill” to combine the styles of Messina and Bellini, forming his own by “uniting the charms of both.” As evidence the connoisseurs refer to Vasari’s mention of early religious works and later their four attributions. They also argue that Giorgione followed Bellini with the move into *genre* painting. This characterisation of a Janus-faced artist looking back to the fifteenth and forward to the sixteenth century was again not “new”. The trend in connoisseurship had been to attribute pictures much closer in style to Bellini and his contemporaries.¹ But it was Crowe and Cavalcaselle who gave this image historical substance and scientific authority.

The connoisseurs argue that Giorgione was born into the Barbarella, “a family of standing and property in the country of Castelfranco” but was also “the son of a country girl at Vedelago, and not subsequently legitimised”. This argument reconciles the two claims recorded by Ridolfi and was proposed by the local historian Luigi Tescari.² Although questionable, the *New History* is recognisably nineteenth-century in its historical method, building its narrative on the foundation of documentary evidence. Crowe and Cavalcaselle also distance themselves with conditional clauses, “it was said” and “it is stated”, but seem to accept Giorgione’s early biographers. This allows them to present their own version of the Vasarian characterisation, so that Giorgione “was of distinguished presence and spirited character, kindly and of good manners, adored by women, an admirable musician, and a welcome guest in the house of the great”.³ The implied value judgements help the two connoisseurs shape the image of their “new” Giorgione.

¹ Hope, 2004, p.48

² A footnote explains that Tescari based his argument on “the silence of the baptismal registers” and the transcription of a lost epitaph – Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.123, n.1

³ *Ibid.*, pp.122-123

The emphasis is on *aristocracy* and Giorgione's *aristocratic* manners. Crowe and Cavalcaselle depict Castelfranco itself in terms of its proximity to Asolo, the court of Caterina Cornaro, and also as "the residence of Tuzio Costanzo a condottiere of whom the Duke of Orleans had said he was the best lance in Italy".¹ In their interpretation of Giorgione's style and subject matter they accentuate these qualities, in opposition to the romantic, sensualist image:

It is perhaps to his early intercourse with aristocratic company that he owed the peculiar breadth of distinction which we find in all his impersonations, and that fine acquaintance with all that is subtle and delicate as contra-distinguished from that which is mere glitter in the circles of the wealthy.

To underline this connection they refer to Vasari's list of distinguished persons from whom Giorgione "had the privilege of sittings", including two Doges. These sitters, Crowe and Cavalcaselle assume, "were but the chosen few out of a much larger and distinguished body of patrons".²

The indirectly documented commission of the *Castelfranco Altarpiece* (Fig.A10) forms an important part of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's narrative history and characterisation. They refer again to Costanzo and his retirement to Castelfranco because it was his ancestral home and also near the court of Cornaro "whom he had followed from Cyprus". The story continues that Tuzio's son Matteo "actively pursued" his father's trade, but died at Ravenna in 1504 and was buried in the family chapel. For this brief history Crowe and Cavalcaselle cite several sources in a footnote, adding more detail and transcribing the inscription on Matteo's tomb.³ Again they preface the following history with, "It is said", writing that Giorgione was

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.121-122

² *Ibid.*, p.123

³ *Ibid.*, p.129

commissioned to paint the altarpiece, and also frescoes, for the Costanzo Chapel walls.¹ An exact date for the *Altarpiece*, however, proves elusive: “we may hesitate to believe that the decoration of the Costanzo chapel should have been postponed to the time determined by the premature end of Tuzio’s son, whose burial in the sacred precinct presupposed its earlier completion”. They caution the reader that the destruction of the original church “only makes the question of dates more obscure”, but later, based on style, they argue that the *Altarpiece* was “executed before 1504”. This in turn strengthens their description of the early works as both embodying “the freedom of the moderns” and yet also “some lingering reminiscence of Antonello”.²

Crowe and Cavalcaselle validate Ridolfi’s narrative by arguing that the fresco decoration of the chapel “necessarily took him to Castelfranco”. They give credence to the idea, as “some say”, that the saints in the *Altarpiece* are portraits of Giorgione and his brother or, as “others” say, the warrior saint is a portrait of Matteo. They also lend respectability to the romantic inscription, taken from Selvatico, by reproducing it in their text. However, they then distance themselves from the characterisation of Giorgione as a great lover with the gently sardonic, “modern critics naturally found in the words a proof of the painter’s fondness for the sex”. In this way the connoisseurs acknowledge the image “scientifically”, admitting that it “is not beyond the limits of probability that he should have made love to a female model”. They then further distance themselves by linking the romantic Giorgione to Venetian technique, suggesting that “there is no reason to doubt that he first sketched his figures from life”.³

¹ The frescoes were mentioned by Nadal Melchiori (1671-1735) in a manuscript (1720-1727) published as *Notizie di pittori e altri scritti*, (ed. Favero), Venice, 1964. These frescoes were lost when the church in which the *Altarpiece* was originally housed was demolished in 1723; the frescoes showed the Redeemer, the Evangelists, some arabesques and were attributed to Giorgione – Melchiori, 1964, p.136

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.130, 133

³ *Ibid*, p.130

The narration of the dispute over the value of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi frescoes is combined with the commission for the Audience Chamber canvas; this gives substance to Crowe and Cavalcaselle's life of the artist. Again, the authors attempt to create a cohesive narrative, conditionally related to the general problematisation: "It is hardly rash to suppose that the rarity of Giorgione's pictures is due to his constant employment as a decorative painter".¹ Based on the primary sources and early biographies, the idea that Giorgione "in the short span of his life" was mainly engaged in painting frescoes, explaining therefore the scarcity of authentic oil paintings, is presented as a reasonable assumption. To justify this supposition the connoisseurs refer to lost "mural designs" in the Campo di San Polo, the Campo di San Silvestro, and at Santa Maria Zobenigo, citing without critical comment Vasari, Ridolfi, Boschini, and Antonio Maria Zanetti (1706-1778). However, "the most celebrated of all his creations of this sort was the decoration of the mart of the Germans or Fondaco de' Tedeschi rebuilt in 1506".²

Crowe and Cavalcaselle date the Fondaco frescoes early, before the commission for the audience chamber, believing they were painted between 1506 and summer 1507. They then recreate the commission from documentary evidence, detailing in a footnote the story of the fire, rebuilding, and painting of the Fondaco, before narrating that "differences broke out as to the price to be paid", and explaining that "in respect to these differences the following documents have been found and made public", before summarising and referencing Gualandi. Although lamenting the lack of evidence "as to the manner that Giorgione obtained the patronage for so important a commission", by citing Ridolfi and Vasari they suggest this might be linked to the portrait of Doge Loredan. They then describe the composition, following Ridolfi, Boschini and Zanetti, suggesting for example the upper half was divided

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.21

² *Ibid.*, p.140

into “niches with representations of isolated individualities” and translating the *Maraviglie*, “geometers measuring the globe”.¹

Zanetti’s *Varie Pitture a Fresco* is the most important source for this reconstruction of the Fondaco frescoes. After commenting that the *Standing Nude* (Fig.A6) “still exists” and resembles “a coloured statue in a niche”, they refer to Zanetti’s three engravings, the *Seated Nude Male Figure*, the *Seated Nude Female Figure*, and the *Standing Female Nude* (Figs.R3, R4, R5),² and paraphrase the eighteenth-century scholar’s assessment of the relation between Giorgione and Titian in language that echoes their own visual analysis. Giorgione’s technique is described as “the artifice with which light and shade are broken, blended, and distributed”, while in Titian one sees “the moderation that avoids Giorgione’s fire whilst it abstains from darkness of shadow and excessive redness of skin”. In conclusion, Crowe and Cavalcaselle explain it is reasonable to cede authority on the frescoes to Zanetti; “in this dispassionate judgement”, they argue, “there is every reason to concur”.³

When describing the dispute over quality between Giorgione and the supporters of Titian, Crowe and Cavalcaselle begin by paraphrasing Vasari, suggesting that he was “delighted” by the “vivid brightness of the colouring”; however, he judged that the frescoes lacked “unity of thought and narrative power in the complex of the design”. This is then linked with the financial dispute, Crowe and Cavalcaselle arguing that Vasari’s “opinion was shared at the

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.141; “Geometri, che misuranon la palla del Mondo” – Ridolfi, 1648, p.81

² Zanetti, 1760, Plates: 1-3 – The connoisseurs previously mention Zanetti’s engraving of “a Fortitude in female dress” on the Palazzo Loredan (Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.140); of the attribution Zanetti writes: “Io non so chi prima la sua” – Zanetti, 1760, Plate 4, p.vi

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.140, 143 – The connoisseurs reproduce Zanetti’s analysis of the colouring “sanguigna e fiammeggiante”, his judgement that Giorgione was “un genio fervido e originale” but that Titian was “un genio più grande, più tranquillo”, and this analysis: “La pronta e risoluta attitudine è maravigliosa; e lasciando stare il colorito, in cui par di veder *Un vivo raggio ded cocende sole*; comparisce in essa l’artificoso maneggio dell’ombre, disposta, sfumate, e rinforzate”; Titian “moderando il gran fuoco di Giorgione nell’ombre forte” - Zanetti, 1760, pp.v-vii

time in influential quarters”, causing Giorgione to appeal to his guild and so vindicate “his right to a large and generous payment”. They continue to make conjectural connections, defending Giorgione by arguing that “the truth appears to be that Giorgione’s aristocratic patrons were highly satisfied”. The success of the Fondaco frescoes is seen as leading to the Audience Chamber commission, by the argument that from the advances paid we know that this work “was of the highest consequence.” In a footnote they again reference Gualandi as the source of the documents, and again try to make the attributions and narrative cohere by proposing the Audience Chamber canvas could be the Kingston Lacy *Judgement of Solomon* (Fig.A13).

“It is said”, write Crowe and Cavalcaselle, that Titian painted “a rival decoration” on the Merceria façade of the Fondaco:

At the close of his efforts there was some divergence of opinion as to which of the two artists had displayed the highest power and it is added that some persons congratulated Giorgione on the completion of frescoes which they supposed to be his, thereby mortally offending him in his pride as an artist.

In support of this they reference Dolce’s *Dialogo* and Ridolfi’s *Maraviglie*.¹ This understated narration hides a large amount of rewriting at manuscript level. Previously the anonymous “persons” had been “Vecelli’s friends”; removed also is the idea it was a “joke”; while, in the earlier version, Giorgione was offended because “he felt that Titian had surpassed him”. This shows, I would argue, a conflict between Crowe’s desire to offer an impartial, reasonable narrative, and his emotional reaction to the sources. The influence of Ridolfi can also be heard earlier in the chapter when the connoisseurs write of “the habit of Titian’s friends to sneer at [Giorgione]”. When, however, they discuss the dispute itself the manuscript shows a

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.141-142

change from “the story of Titian’s friends” to the published version of “Giorgione’s enemies”.¹ The desire to give a consistent narrative conflicts with their normally self-critical history, which six years later, in *Titian*, made Crowe and Cavalcaselle conclude: “the competition of Titian and Giorgione at the Fondaco de’ Tedeschi, though decisive as to the career of both, is still involved in great obscurity”.²

The discussion of the artist’s death is another example of this conflicted, “scientific” history. Rather than philologically criticise the source texts, they place them in comparison and sceptically assess their probability, drawing a moral conclusion on the romantic traditions:

It is probably true that he was fond of gallantry, for Ridolfi, who rejects the covert hint thrown out by Vasari that he perished from sickness engendered by excesses, admits that he died of a broken heart because he was robbed of his mistress by his disciple, Luzzi; but it is folly to set up a high standard of morality as regards the sex for men of the artistic profession in the 16th century; and there is not a whit more to be said against Giorgione than was said with truth of Raphael.

The death of Giorgione “of plague” in 1511 is registered with absolute uniformity by all – even the oldest – authorities. His remains were taken to Castelfranco in 1638 and buried in the Church of San Liberale.

However, in the accompanying footnotes they comment that Dolce “only says that Giorgione died of plague”, while for the interment in Castelfranco they reference the local historians Melchiori and Tescari.³ Instead of being emblematic of the artist’s life and work, or used as an opportunity to scientifically question the traditional image, the Victorian connoisseurs frame Giorgione’s death as an ethical issue. As with the inscription on the *Altarpiece*, they judge it “probable” that the romantic image is true, while offering a contradictory defence.

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.120, 142; Crowe, 1865-1870, pp.209-210

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 1877, p.80

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.156

They stress historical relativity of ethics, yet implicitly declare the subject as immoral. Accepting Vasari's characterisation of Raphael and Giorgione, they are judged as no more corrupt than each other, or indeed, any cinquecento "men of the artistic profession". The connoisseurs' narrative is "scientific", in Ranke's sense of following the documents,¹ but not in their uncritical acceptance of traditions. These conflicts, as we will see, are also reflected in the technical analysis.

The "New" Giorgionesque

Crowe and Cavalcaselle struggle with the implications of their research, failing to surrender the traditional image of the artist. The problematisation also had wider implications due to the significance Giorgione held in Vasari's progress of Venetian painting. The reduction in the quantity of attributions suggested a correlating limiting of art historical value; the two connoisseurs therefore increased the significance of Bellini in the Giorgionesque innovation and raised the status of Palma Vecchio. However, the counterbalancing implication was that the many reattributed pictures by a multitude of "Giorgionesque imitators" demonstrated that Giorgione had a great influence on Venetian art. Ostensibly, Crowe and Cavalcaselle redistribute credit for the innovations, yet implicitly maintain Giorgione's high status, by inscribing positive value in their descriptions.

This struggle can be read in the word *Giorgionesque*; a crucial part of their vocabulary. Crowe and Cavalcaselle quasi-justify the Castelfranco frescoes (Fig.A34, A35, A36) by arguing they are "certainly painted in a Giorgionesque spirit"; conversely, they cannot

¹ Howell and Prevenier, 2001, p.12

support with certainty the various “specimens of the Giorgionesque” portraiture. Their use of the word is open, they offer no strict definitions, it becomes a term for the changed Venetian painting in general; it is thereby disassociated from the artist himself. For instance, Bissolo “becomes Giorgionesque in contour and drapery”;¹ although this may seem exact by indicating directly identifiable features, what in this context the word actually denotes is imprecise. In general, Crowe and Cavalcaselle emphasise aristocracy, music and fashionable clothes as elements of the Giorgionesque; in their technical analysis they included emotive light effects and a mechanism for colouring; they also use the word to describe a change from religious to secular subject matters. Nevertheless, it is an open category, meaning Pellegrino da San Danielle can “acquire something of the attractiveness of the Giorgionesque”.² It is therefore restrictive to define their use of this term.

In practice, Giorgionesque is defined in the *New History*, not by Giorgione’s authentic works, but with reference to various artists, communally contributing to the development of Venetian painting. In their chapter on the “Painters of Friuli” Crowe and Cavalcaselle offer a description of the changes in technique:

At Venice a great revolution had been made in painting; secrets of medium, problems of perspective, subtle laws of harmony, had been mastered and applied; composition, proportion, expression, and the draughtsman’s skill, if not neglected, had become second to effect in pictures; touch had taken the place of pure outline; artifice of treatment and of colour that of severe science; scenic concentration, deep flush of light, sweeps of strong shadow, twilight of glowing tone, were the qualities that gave a new aspect to the works of Bellini, Giorgione, and Palma.³

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.1, 1871, p.288

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.197

³ *Ibid.*, p.197

Although in some ways this is a familiar description, unlike Vasari they do not ascribe these innovations to one particular artist who is presented as their originator; instead, the works of Giorgione, Bellini and Palma simply exhibit these changes. This is a “new” history of Venetian painting, a story of reciprocal exchange rather than the pioneering individual; therefore Bellini and Palma both contribute an *esque*. This can be heard in Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s ekphrasis of their Giorgione attributions; the artist himself is subject to influence in *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (Fig.A15) and the *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig.A33), both being described as a “medley of Bellinesque and Palmesque”.¹

In the chapter on Giorgione, the two connoisseurs’ changing ideas about the relationship with Bellini can be seen in the numerous edits to the manuscript, regarding the idea that the older artist taught the younger “the charms of genre”.² Crowe and Cavalcaselle argue that Bellini was the innovator of Giorgionesque subject matter, creating “the original model of those landscape pictures in which Giorgione, Titian, and Cariani became so famous”, and in which “the figures are altogether subordinate to the locality to which they are introduced”. He is also an innovator in technique, contributing to Vasari’s *maniera moderna*, the connoisseurs suggesting it was the “perseverance” of Bellini that first “succeeded in losing all trace of hardness, and acquired what may be called the Giorgionesque touch”.³ Accordingly, Bellini’s most important work is the *San Zaccaria Altarpiece* (1505, Fig.R6), the connoisseurs suggesting: “The quality for which it is pre-eminently remarkable is depth of light and shade – a quality prominent in Giorgione, Sebastiano and Titian”; however, they were all pupils of

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.128

² Crowe, 1865-1870, p.186

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.1, 1871, pp.180, 167

Bellini and so “were taught to attain” this effect. In a footnote Crowe and Cavalcaselle declare that: “The later Venetians all pretend that Bellini is here inspired by Giorgione”.¹

Conversely, Sebastiano maintains his subordinate position, as heard in the ekphrasis of the *Saint John Chrysostom and Six Saints* (Fig.A8), which “completely embodies and illustrates the precepts of Giorgione”. Crowe and Cavalcaselle characterise Sebastiano as “completely similar in feeling” to Giorgione, emphasising the relationship between music and painting for both artists; even so, he is of lower status being only an “assistant”. In the *New History* the altarpiece functions as “a symbol of the near relations”; however, the two connoisseurs conjecture that Sebastiano “struggled as a beginner”, consequently leaving Venice before Giorgione’s death. In the description there is therefore a quality distinction; the painting “wants compactness” and displays “the realistic, impetuous spirit of a man gifted with pictorial fire, but without the exquisite delicacy of Giorgione”.²

The most dramatic result of this revisionism was Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s presentation of Palma Vecchio:

From the borders of Piedmont on the west to the Gulf of Trieste on the east – in the valleys that imbed the streams running from the Alps, or the plains watered by the Adige and the Po – there is not a city of any pretensions that did not feel the influence of Palmesque art...

This munificent assessment opens the *New History’s* chapter on the artist, the authors subsequently arguing that the Palmesque should be ranked alongside the Giorgionesque. This is based on their idea that Palma was *not* born in 1500 and was *not* the pupil of Titian, as

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.1, 1871, p.173, n.2 – Cf. Zanetti, 1771, p.51; the altarpiece shows Bellini had seen Giorgione’s work and “avea saputo cogliere da esse alcuni frutti”.

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.310-313

traditionally assumed, but instead came from the same generation as Giorgione, being slightly older than Titian and Sebastiano.¹ Having attributed the *Jacob and Rachel* (Fig.A26) to “a disciple of Palma”, Crowe and Cavalcaselle attempt to rectify the historiographical imbalance by claiming Palma “contributed mainly to the creation of that form of art which has too exclusively till now been called the Giorgionesque”.² However, the reader may question Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s commitment to this notion, given that they also argue that “Palma was not a great master” having “neither the weight nor versatility of Titian, nor the highest gifts of the colourist which distinguish Giorgione”. As with Sebastiano, the connoisseurs make a qualitative distinction that supports the traditional canonisation, but therefore undermine their argument that “Palma shared with Giorgione and Titian the honour of modernizing and regenerating Venetian art”.³ This conflict continued late into the editing of the *New History*, as shown by the manuscript in which Palma’s name is missing from this published statement: “Giorgione and Palma were just rising to the highest place”.⁴

Two interesting examples of Giorgionesque imitators are Torbido and Cariani, and the *New History’s* treatment of these artists manifest what Morelli was to term a “theory of influences”.⁵ Following Vasari’s claim that Torbido was taught by Giorgione, Crowe and Cavalcaselle attribute to this artist the *Warrior with Equerry* (Fig.A25). In Torbido’s works the authors “discern the habits of the Venetian in the method of turning half-tones into deep shade, after the fashion known as the Giorgionesque”. This technical analysis is coupled with a characterisation of Torbido as an imitator, although “without being able to conceal his

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.456-457 – The connoisseurs argue that as Palma made his testament and died in 1528, having displayed works before 1512, and considering Vasari gives his ultimate age as forty-eight, he must have been born in 1480. This line of reasoning is still used today: www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/palma-vecchio (04.02.11).

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.459

³ *Ibid.*, p.457

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.314; Crowe, 1865-1870, p.426

⁵ Morelli, 1893, p.153; 1891, p.202

individuality”; he therefore “seems to fill the part of a man who assumes a dress to which he is not entitled, and who thus deceives the casual spectator”. As before, to differentiate Torbido and Giorgione, Crowe and Cavalcaselle make a quality distinction, but combined with a regional categorisation and technical description: “It is needless to say the catalogue is wide of the mark in placing this piece under Giorgione’s name; it has the double character of Venetian art engrafted on the Veronese”.

Cariani also owes his place in the *New History*, not to his genius, but his “knack of imitating the great Venetian masters”; he is therefore characterised as being of “a lower class” to Palma and Giorgione.¹ This may seem harsh given the connoisseurs attribution to him of the *Jacob and Rachel* (Fig.A26), however, they had argued that the painting showed “more of the Palmesque than Giorgionesque” and though the technical analysis supported Palma’s authorship, due to the inscription they “must needs fall back on Cariani”.² With this in mind, Crowe and Cavalcaselle offer a curious description of the Detroit *Triple Portrait* (Fig.A39), as they fail to acknowledge that this picture is either an unbelievably important collaboration by Giorgione, Titian and Sebastiano, or, a seemingly accurate pastiche of their three styles. Instead they argue the *Triple Portrait* shows Cariani at the point at which “he strove to keep as closely as he could to Giorgione”.³

For Crowe and Cavalcaselle the Giorgionesque is greater than Giorgione; the fluidity of the term allows other painters to create their own brands of Giorgionesque. For instance, the “spirit transfused” into the *Seven Albani Portraits* (signed by Cariani, 1519, Fig.R7) “is that

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.547-548

² *Ibid.*, p.555

³ *Ibid.*, p.553 – It has been claimed that “all of the experts agree” that it is a genuine collaboration; *Sebastiano*, 2008, p.110

of the Giorgionesque, and particularly that of Bernadino Licinio”.¹ The situation is made more complicated by the idea that there is also a *false* Giorgionesque, propagated by imitators and connoisseurs. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, countless paintings attributed to Giorgione were “thrown upon the market place”, and:

Certain it is that, in the course of time, the combined enticements of high-born person, pompous dress, and luscious colour became irrevocably connected with the man who first brought them into fashion; a host of imitators thronged to occupy a field which seemed so easy of access.²

Colour and clothes are part of the connoisseurs’ genuine Giorgionesque, but here they are invested with negative value, becoming “pompous” and “luscious”. Quality judgements determine empirical statements; the connoisseurs differentiating between the *true* “aristocratic” Giorgionesque, and the *false* “which is mere glitter”.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s Connoisseurial Method

The next questions concern Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s method; how did they justify their attributions, and how did they create their Giorgione? By the 1870s connoisseurship had become central to the discipline of art history. Gibson-Wood argues that the *New History* follows Rumohr, being based on documentary evidence and visual analysis, in which “original stylistic profiles based on authentic works” become “touchstones for additional attributions” meaning “the extent of each painter’s oeuvre is demonstrated”.³ In 1875 Anton Springer broke their method down into three essential components: “Exact source research,

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.549

² *Ibid.*, pp.547-548

³ Gibson-Wood, 1982, p.164-165

clear description of the content of individual paintings, and full consideration of technique”.¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s connoisseurial method, therefore, can be considered ekphrastic, in that they attempted to create a detailed textual representation of the painting. It is a three-part description, explaining pictorial content, analysing technique, and in their footnotes offering a definition of the object (location, measurement, etc). Not only do these descriptions justify attributions, in combination they also generate an image of Giorgione. To understand this process I will consider the method’s critical reception and the importance of literary style, before discussing separately the visual, technical and object descriptions, and then examining the relationship between ekphrasis and connoisseurship. Next, I will argue that value judgements – artistic, social, moral – play an important role in validating and possibly even making attributions, as seen in Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s comparison between the Pitti *Concert* (Fig.A12) and the Louvre *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1).

Contemporary reviewers’ judgements on the *New History*’s technical vocabulary were mostly negative:

...nothing has been gained, but rather more popularity lost, by a crude and crotchety vocabulary, equally at variance with the propriety of history, and with the accepted phraseology of art; technical terms being almost as rigorous in art as in science. But these pages teem with new-coined expressions which have no graphic merit to excuse their novelty.

The reviewer goes on to recite some particular expressions – “‘masks’ for faces, ‘frames’ for figures, ‘glazes’ for glazings” – arguing that these “severely interrupt the attention and respect due to such researches”.² Another more judicious reviewer considered that although technical descriptions “can never be attractive”, they “must object to the art jargon”,

¹ Qtd. in Kultermann, 1993, p.113

² *The Edinburgh Review*, 1872, p.123

believing it “unnecessary to coin uncouth words and phrases to point out the merits and demerits of a picture”.¹ The novelty and propriety of their technical vocabulary was questioned by critics who considered that this language made the text uninviting. However, I would argue the function of this vocabulary is more significant, showing Crowe and Cavalcaselle employed an expert language that gave authority to their attributions.

Crowe composed the English text of the *New History* and was therefore responsible for the style, although this was the least well received aspect. We know that Crowe took these matters seriously; he writes in his autobiography that *Early Flemish Painters*, compared to his later work, was “without charm of style and without eloquence”.² The prose of the *New History* is poetically aspirational, as can be heard in the description of the Madonna in *The Castelfranco Altarpiece* (Fig.A10): “a glance abstracted from sublunary concerns”. However, sometimes the language is almost unintelligible: “Even the hale of men is rendered with a fine grain of swarth.”³ Levi argues that “le letture cavalcaselliane necessitano di un vocabolario che la letteratura artistica non poteva fornire.”⁴ Instead, the reviews seem to suggest that Crowe and Cavalcaselle needlessly modified an established language. The issue is not so much propriety or novelty but literary quality; considering the methodological importance of ekphrasis, this determined the effectiveness of their connoisseurship.

The *New History* was successful, however, as Crowe and Cavalcaselle systematically constructed their descriptions to create complete and compelling representations of the paintings. They begin by offering directly referential visual observations, listing in the Castelfranco frescoes (Figs.A34, A35) “books, easels, brushes, compasses and rulers,

¹ *Quarterly Review*, 1872, p.121

² Crowe, 1895, p.231

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.132, 458

⁴ Levi, 1988, p.285

astronomical instruments”. This is taken further, so that narrative or basic iconography is explained, occasionally with reference to contemporary interpretations as designations: the “Chaldean sages” (*The Three Philosophers*, Fig.A4).¹ However, the connoisseurs are not particularly interested in specific subject matters; referring to the “motive, thought and purpose” of the Pitti *Concert* and conceding that in *The Tempest* there “may be some deeper meaning”. Crowe and Cavalcaselle do discuss Giorgionesque subjects generically, considering Giorgione the inventor of “conversational pieces”,² but modes of iconography were not a major criterion for making attributions.

Instead, a different type of visual content is used to make distinctions; Crowe aiming at a poetic evocation of the aesthetic, for instance the “matchless serenity” of *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Fig.A7), or light effects, as in the *Philosophers*: “The mass of light concentrated round a couple of small grey clouds filters through the glade”.³ These descriptions are given in conjunction with factual, object descriptions, containing observations on condition; for instance, the *Altarpiece*:

Castelfranco, church. Wood, m.2 high by 1.45, the figures above half life-size. This picture was restored on several occasions by Pietro Vecchia, Melchiori, Antonio Media, Ridolfo Manzoni of Castelfranco, and Amiano Balzafiori of Naples. G.G Lorenzi went so far as to paint a beard to St. Liberale, which was taken off again by Paolo Fabris of Venice, who seems indeed to have removed many of the oldest repaints. The surface is, however, more or less rubbed down; and in some spots — as in the darker parts of the face and outlines of St. Liberale, in the forehead and hair of the Virgin, in the hands of St. Francis and in bits of landscape — there are clear traces of retouching.⁴

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.134-135

² *Ibid.*, pp.145, 136, 120

³ *Ibid.*, pp.144, 135

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.133, n.1

These footnotes are the basis of their analysis, attending to the issue of restoration, while having precise referential value. The combined function of these visual and object descriptions is to allow Crowe and Cavalcaselle to make connoisseurial judgements with authority.

The most characteristic element of the ekphrastic method is the representation of technique. This entailed a specialist vocabulary; although Levi argues that Cavalcaselle experimented with a new method of analysis, technical analysis itself was not new.¹ In England it was exemplified by Charles Eastlake's *Materials for a History of Oil Painting* (1847 and 1869). In the second edition, Elizabeth Eastlake explains that Cavalcaselle had been "greatly assisted and promoted by Sir Charles".² Eastlake's *Materials* offers a practical language of painting: "the 'sfumato' of the Venetians was not produced by common glazing, as understood of a perfectly transparent medium over light, but by colours of a semi-transparent kind". This is the vocabulary of expertise; the average reader will not be comforted by the idea that: "The experiences and observation of another may be given as far as possible in words; the actual meaning of those words can only be determined by years of practice".³ These specialist descriptions are not designed to be accessible to the amateur, but imply an exclusive audience, while also impressing the authority of the connoisseurs' observations.

The descriptions in Cavalcaselle's notes strain towards exactitude;⁴ Crowe attempts to replicate these observations in English; the Uffizi *Judgement of Solomon* (Fig.A24) displays a "comparative rawness of handling by copious use of filmy glazes and light scumbles".⁵ In

¹ Levi, 1988, pp.282-283; Morelli suggests it originated with Nicolas de Largillière (1656-1746); Morelli, 1890, pp.38-39

² Eastlake, 1869, p.v

³ *Ibid.*, pp.291-292

⁴ Levi, 1988, p.284

⁵ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.126

one of their few methodological statements, Crowe and Cavalcaselle underline the importance of technical comparisons:

In no fresco is Pellegrino's skill at imitating Giorgione more remarkable than here, and it is not without interest to dwell minutely upon the manner in which the imitation is made, because when a dissection of this kind has taken place it helps us to determine what pictures are justly attributed to Giorgione or Pellegrino.¹

In the word "dissection" Crowe and Cavalcaselle suggest their method and language is scientific; indeed, one reviewer cites the "profound acquaintance with *technique* and practical science of art which gives to their volumes a distinguishing and exceptional value".² In *Titian*, however, we find this rhetoric circumvented; the connoisseurs decide that the artist "when painting these pieces in a Giorgionesque form, was also painting other things in a form not Giorgione's" and this justifies their attribution of works "technically different in handling".³ Nevertheless, the consistencies in the technical ekphrases allow the connoisseurs to build stylistic profiles, a process evident in their treatment of Giorgione. I would argue that this consistency constitutes Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *idea* of the artist, functioning to justify their attributions.

Images of equilibrium define this *idea*, so that in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (Fig.A15) "exquisite harmony pervades the luscious and variegated toning", and with metaphorical uniformity the *Altarpiece* shows "an uncommon attention to the balanced distribution of light and shade".⁴ The repetition of adjectives also functions in this way, variations of "subtle" and "delicate" recurring in their descriptions of the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the Kingston *Judgement of Solomon* (Fig.A13), the *Philosophers* and the *Pitti Concert*, while Crowe

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.205

² *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 August, 1871, p.11

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 1877, p.62

⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.128, 131

and Cavalcaselle argue that the *Astrologer* lacks the “subtlety of Giorgione”. These two adjectives themselves define Crowe’s use of “aristocratic”; the ekphrases reflect the earlier characterisation of Giorgione’s familiarity with “aristocratic company” and so “all that is subtle and delicate”.¹ Crowe makes Cavalcaselle’s technical analysis of *The Tempest* rhythmic and poetic, expressing balance:

None of Giorgione’s pieces is more clever in diversity of handling, none more skilful in varying tone according to distance. There is a very clear definition of things and exquisite lightness of touch near the foreground. The air swims with modulations of density of the background. The trick of getting rich and luscious surface from bright glazes...²

The technical nouns like *handling*, *tones*, *glazes*, are imaged through adjectives such as *clever*, *exquisite*, *luscious*. We can see the effort taken over this rhetoric in the tautology “bright and sombre, or sombre and bright”; the manuscript shows this was originally, “dark on light, or light on dark”, but the author, to express himself better, has added emotional suggestion to the technique of the *Philosophers*.³

The question still remains how Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s ekphrases related to the process of attribution. Technical descriptions are such a central part of their rhetoric that it seems unlikely they were simply subsequent justification. I would argue – from the evidence of their notes, sketches, and published texts – that these ekphrases did function as a standard by which works were judged, and also that descriptions of individual paintings were not designed to adhere to a generalised analysis. For instance, in their discussion of the Kingston Lacy *Judgement*, Crowe and Cavalcaselle describe the figures as “full and fleshy”; this is in

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.127, 136, 139, 145-146, 153, 123

² *Ibid.*, p.137

³ *Ibid.*, p.136; Crowe, 1865-1870, p.201

keeping with their description of Sebastiano, but not Giorgione.¹ In this case, a strong received attribution has influenced the connoisseur's judgement, a fact betrayed by their analysis.

In other cases, however, descriptions function as a standard of attribution, as for instance with *Laura* (Figs.A5). The archive of the connoisseurs' notes at the Victoria and Albert Museum contains a pencil drawing of the painting, in Crowe's hand, next to which is the name Romanino da Brescia (Fig.R8). In 1854 the *Laura* was catalogued as "Venezianische Schule", but by 1881 this had been changed to Romanino;² the sketch was made before 1880, and most probably before 1871. There is minimal analysis on the sketch and nothing to explain why the connoisseurs considered Romanino the author (*Laura* did not appear in the final text), although a list of attributions suggests the connoisseurs rejected the idea that it was painted by Giorgione (Fig.R9). When the actual *Laura* is compared to the *New History's* description of Romanino's portrait in the Tosi collection, Brescia – "a model of free handling, though somewhat marked and raw in tone" – I would argue that the concurrence between text and image explains the attribution.³

An important aspect of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's method is their description of landscape, especially for Giorgione, but rather than consider, as does Lübke, the landscapes as "bedeutend poetischem",⁴ they attempt to materially validate their attributions by connecting the paintings to Giorgione's birth place. Therefore, early in the chapter Castelfranco itself is described, with the importance of this for attribution being stated plainly: "It should not be forgotten, in forming an opinion as to the works of Giorgione, that he was born in a mainland

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.138, cf., p.311

² Ferino-Pagden and Deiters, 2004, p.282

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.395; Both the sketch and the list of attributions are contained within Austrian Galleries Box II – Crowe and Cavalcaselle, c1860-1880

⁴ Lübke, 1868, p.601

city”. What follows is an aesthetic contextualisation of the origins of Giorgione’s landscape, containing imagery that will merge with the descriptions of paintings. Castelfranco is “one of the most beautiful spots that it is possible to conceive – a town on the plain at the foot of the Alps, a square fortress with high rectangular towers”. However, it is not contemporary Castelfranco that they describe, but the town as they imagine it in the sixteenth century: “The country for miles around was but half cultivated, half covered with primitive vegetation. The stream which filled its ditches before running to the lagoons was fringed with stately wood”. The description of the “grand and solemn Alps, bathed in mist at noon, but sparkling with gorgeous tints at morn or eventide” prefigures the description of Giorgionesque light-effects. Crowe and Cavalcaselle try to resolve the disparity between Castelfranco in the nineteenth century and the Castelfranco they believe is envisioned in Giorgione’s paintings:

Even now that time has had its way of the old worn dungeon, and thrown its mantle over many of its ruins, even now that the forest has been cleared, and the ploughshare furrows the ground, a picturesque tower still remains to cheer the view; there are trees and shrubs and hedges to attract the eye, and we can fancy that, before the villagers left the vast quadrangle of brick within which their habitations nestled to take up airier quarters outside the walls, the place was picturesque enough to stir the heart of Giorgione.

The importance of this description can be seen in the multiple changes to the manuscript, where the emotive “stir the heart” was originally just “inspire”.¹

When describing pictures attributed to Giorgione in which landscape is a conspicuous feature, Crowe and Cavalcaselle make reference back to this description. Sometimes this is stated openly, for instance in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* “the turrets, the trees, and the hills peculiar to Castelfranco are seen”, or the Uffizi panels (Figs.A23, A24) which “suggest

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.121-122; Crowe, 1865-1870, p.184

the vicinity of Castelfranco, and as such a man of Giorgione's power might vary at his pleasure without doing serious violence to the reality".¹ The connoisseurs again attempt to resolve the disparity between real and painted landscapes, unintentionally making this argument problematic. Even so, the consistency in the descriptions creates coherence in the catalogue; the "gorgeous tints at morn or eventide" in Castelfranco is echoed by the "cloudless sky" that "sheds a mild light" in the *Altarpiece*, and the "gloom of evening" in the *Philosophers*.² By connecting the paintings with *Zorzi da Castelfranco*, Crowe and Cavalcaselle strive against the problematisation of attribution, endeavouring to make their "new" Giorgione historically substantial.

In the *New History*, the comparisons and distinctions of connoisseurial method are also made between real landscapes. This functions to differentiate between Titian and Giorgione:

The country which he knew had not the rocky character, nor had it the giddy heights, of that which Titian found at Cadore. It had no dolomites to spread their jagged edges on the pure horizon: but it had its elms and cypresses, its vines and mulberries, its hazels and poplars, its charming undulations, wooded vales, farm buildings, and battlements...³

Crowe and Cavalcaselle repeat this method in *Titian*; they maintain a link between actual and painted landscapes, explaining variety by reference to origin: "There came into Venice also a new class of painters, bred on the verge of the Brescian and Bergamasque provinces, or born in the Friulian hills, each of who carried some new form of landscape with him".⁴ In the *New History*, this way of thinking leads to the disattribution of the *Jacob and Rachel*, the painter

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.126-127

² *Ibid.*, pp.132, 135

³ *Ibid.*, pp.122

⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 1877, p.24

having represented not Castelfranco, but “the wooded sweeps of the Bergamasque”.¹ The relation between material and artificial landscapes was a sincere and significant part of their method, as shown by the effort Cavalcaselle took to travel to Titian’s birthplace, Pieve di Cadore, and sketch the panorama as seen from the castle.²

While Crowe and Cavalcaselle base their attributions on connoisseurial comparisons, their descriptions of paintings are not entirely objective. Instead, the analysis is inflected with artistic, social, and moral value judgements, all serving to influence the reader’s attitude to the work. This too was recognised at the time, the review in the *Pall Mall Gazette* complaining that “even the technical descriptions are loaded with positive or negative assessments”, while suggesting had the authors “abstained from praise and censure their work would have lost none of its value”.³ Although this is a fair assessment, it fails to recognise that these value judgements have an argumentative and justificatory function. These implicit attitudes reflect back upon Giorgione, creating an image of the artist that supports Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s attributions. It is necessary to recognise that these intonations serve the cause of attribution, generating a moral picture of the artist, and creating relative standards of judgement.

The *New History* is hierarchical, categorising artists as first, second, and third rate, or as masters, followers, and imitators. These judgements are not only stated overtly, but are made intrinsically within the descriptions themselves. This gradation happens over the course of the history; while most judgements made about Giorgione’s genuine works are positive, if we move away from the sixteenth century we find that negative descriptions are more common. For instance, an early fifteenth-century painting by one of the Vivarini is: “Affected in

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 1877, p.149

² Moretti, 1973, p.26

³ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 August, 1871, p.12

attitude and mannered in contour, as well as course in character and incorrect in shape, the figures are strikingly vehement; [...] we contemplate the disagreeable peculiarities of form, of feature, and of drapery which they exhibit”.¹ The connoisseurs’ description is itself “vehement” and leaves no doubts for the reader on the question of quality. The cause of these “disagreeable peculiarities”, Crowe and Cavalcaselle argue, is the influence of the Paduan school. The chapter on the school of Squarcione is one of the more explicit examples of negative characterisation, the connoisseurs attempting “to prove the real mediocrity” of the Squarciones, who they believe have been “enriched by an artificial halo”. To achieve this they repeatedly employ the adjective “childish”, while characterising the school’s understanding of Donatello as “puerile”.² These adjectives devalue the object historically and artistically, reproducing Vasari’s metaphor of human growth for art historical development, and therefore recasting the school as prepubescent.

Another relative quality judgement used by Crowe and Cavalcaselle is the assessment of works according to an ideal or academic standard. For instance, the depiction of a “Death of the Virgin” by Girolamo da Treviso, dated 1478: “Outlines of angular break, rectilinear drapery with cross lines to indicate folds, and loud contrasts of tertiary colours are its conspicuous defects.”³ This representation of the painting immediately implies artistic failings, which the last phrase makes explicit. Giorgione’s early works are described with a mix of positive and negative attributes, such as the *Trial of Moses* (Fig.A23) showing “occasional embarrassment in movement, and somewhat angular drapery”.⁴ The modifying words “occasional” and “somewhat” signal these as minor imperfections, differing from *actual* angular drapery. At the close of the artist’s career, however, the assessment of

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.1, 1871, p.78

² *Ibid.*, pp.342-348

³ *Ibid.*, p.355

⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.145

Giorgione's technique is entirely positive, the Pitti *Concert* displaying: "Warm spacious lights, strong shadows, delicate reflections". Academic standards are also relative, shown by the general description of Giorgione's painting which repeats Vasari's analysis of Titian.¹ In the context of the *New History*, however, what was a criticism becomes a mark of the artist's genius. This is seen in the word "simple", another of their characterising adjectives; Giorgione "was an accomplished dissembler of his means, for, artful as his method really is, it looks almost elementary in its simplicity".²

The social and ethical values that Crowe and Cavalcaselle inscribe in the paintings are those of a Victorian England. One feature of this value-based criticism is its use of gendered language: as Flint suggests, Victorian ideas of artistic quality "are masculine, rather than feminine, in their emphasis".³ In the *New History*, Francesco Francia's art is characterised as having a "somewhat feminine style",⁴ while Giorgione is said to have produced the "manly and spirited" *A Man in Armour* (Fig.A21).⁵ Although it would be unfair to characterise Crowe and Cavalcaselle as employing what Flint terms "the vocabulary of masculine power and domination",⁶ they do demonstrate ambivalence about the erotic content and sensualist reputation of Venetian painting. For instance in their conflicted judgements on Palma's courtesan portraits: "There is something aristocratic at least in the freshness of complexion which he gives to females exuberant in charms, generously furnished with locks, blue-eyed, cherry-lipped, and fair".⁷ The first words redeem the artist, the use of "aristocratic" indicating a conflation of gender and class values that functions to deliver the images from moral

¹ "...e ciò adiviene perché, se bene a molti pare che elle siano fatte senza fatica, non è così il vero e s'ingannano, perché si conosce che sono rifatte, e che si ritornato loro addosso con i colori tante volte che la fatica vi si vede." – Vasari, Vol. VI, 1987, pp.166

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871 p.137

³ Flint, 1983, p.62; and cf. Eastlake, 1869, pp.274-275, on the "manly" Flemish method, and the defence of the Venetians against the "charge of effeminacy".

⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.1, 1871 p.560

⁵ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871 p.131

⁶ Flint, 1983, p.64

⁷ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871 p.458

condemnation. These problems can also be heard in the ekphrasis of a painting, shown at the Royal Academy, attributed to Giorgione and recalling the nude on the left of the *Concert Champêtre*, but that is disattributed in the *New History*. After describing the “comely female” as “coquette”, the connoisseurs decide that her “extremities are ill-drawn and lame, the drapery angular and broken”.¹ Crowe’s alluring visual description of the display of flesh moves suddenly into a negative technical analysis, doubly negative, considering two pejorative adjectives are required for each noun.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle do not reverse the romanticisation, they make it art historical; Selvatico’s “Cecilia” becomes Giorgione’s lover *and* model, while they insist that any ethical judgement must be relative, and so, perhaps recalling Rio, they both defend and condemn the artist alongside Raphael.² Their defence of Venetian painting comes from the value judgements inscribed in the artist’s “noble” and “aristocratic” paintings. In general, this “praise and censure” endows attributions with value, whereas a dispassionate list of documents with neutral descriptions of paintings would have rendered the connoisseurship ineffective. In ekphrasis, as has been argued, particular interpretations are always implied, the aim of the descriptions being not only to seem “factual”, but to demonstrate how the “facts” are to be understood.³

The complex relation between observation, comparison, description, attribution and justification is exemplified in Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s contrast of the Pitti *Concert* (Fig.A12) and the *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1). The two connoisseurs suggest that, despite the “very great charm in the warmth and tinted colouring of the figures and landscape” in the Louvre canvas, “what can be more striking than the diversity of treatment the two

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871 p.160

² *Ibid.*, p.130; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.156; Selvatico, 1856, pp.526-527; Rio, 1867, p.145

³ Carrier, 1991, p.109

compositions betray?" The technical comparison that follows combines social and artistic values, the paintings therefore projecting an image or idea of their creators. Crowe and Cavalcaselle use this to distance the two paintings. The Pitti *Concert* displays "perfect drawing, aristocratic form, same impast, and subtle modulations", while the Louvre *Concert* shows "slovenly design, fluid substance, and uniform thickness of texture, plump, seductive, but un-aristocratic shape". The adjectival contrast is dramatic; in opposition to perfect and aristocratic the reader is given slovenly and un-aristocratic: "Are these divergences to be reconciled with the theory of a common origin? We think not".¹ I would argue that these ekphrases are personifications, as the paintings seem to have taken on the perceived attributes of their figures. The Pitti *Concert* has become like the "aristocratic" Monk and the *Concert Champêtre* like the "seductive" female nudes. Finally, this suggests a class differentiation, making the implication clear: one picture is *worthy* of the "noble" Giorgione, the other is not.

When the *Concert Champêtre* is described on its own the pejorative representation is invested with further moral value: "The dress of the nymphs, if they have any, is meant to enhance, not to conceal their charms." That this emphasis was intentional is signalled by edits in the manuscript; "a woman" becomes "a scantily clad woman", and "another woman" becomes "another woman, naked".² The issue here is a critical difference between the word "naked" with its carnal connotation, and "nude" with its artistic merit.³ After building a description which to a Victorian audience was loaded with moral suggestion, Crowe and Cavalcaselle openly pass judgement, condemning as they defend: "There is no conscious indelicacy, but we stand on the verge of the lascivious". This is indicative of their conflicted position on Giorgionesque painting, as can be heard in the visual description of the image:

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.146

² *Ibid.*, p.146; Crowe, 1865-1870, p.215

³ Flint, 1983, p.59

The principal attraction here, in addition to richness of colour, is the paradise in which the party sits – a paradise in which the air is balmy and the landscape ever green; where life is a pastime, and music the only labour; where groves are interspersed with meadows and fountains, where nymphs sit playfully on the grass or drink at cool springs.

In the edits to the manuscript we can see Crowe's attempts to moderate his enthusiasm in this bucolic ekphrasis. Removed is the idea that image "takes us into" this paradise, which initially was also "fabulous" and where once the air was "always balmy".¹ This double-edged description of an immoral and yet alluring pastoral paradise, reveals the difficulty they must have had in making this attribution.

In the end, Crowe and Cavalcaselle argue that the *Concert Champêtre* "suggests, more than any other name, that of an imitator of del Piombo", an attribution that Moretti describes as "una specie di limbo".² The reasoning offered is that:

We cannot say that Giorgione would not have painted such a scene; but, as far as we know, he would have treated it with more nobleness of sentiment, without defects of form or neglect of nature's finesses, without the pasty surface and sombre glow of tone which here is all-pervading; he would have given more brightness and variety to his landscape.³

In the manuscript Crowe had to add further grounds against Giorgione's authorship, explaining why the final clause spoils the rhythm of the passage. The quasi-attribution has also been changed from "a follower" to "an imitator".⁴ As we will see, what is striking is the

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.146; Crowe, 1865-1870, p.215

² Moretti, 1973, p.106

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.147

⁴ Crowe, 1865-1870, p.216

difference in moral standards from Pater to Crowe and Cavalcaselle, and also Morelli's willingness to accept the traditional attribution to Giorgione.

While this comparison between the two "Concerts" is primarily rhetorical, designed to validate the connoisseurs' attribution, we can find the source for some of these judgements in Cavalcaselle's notes. Even though it is probably true that the moralistic considerations were Crowe's own, as Moretti suggests, the negative tone is also found in a copy of the *Concert Champêtre* the Italian connoisseur made in 1852. The notes that accompany the watercolour contain pejorative descriptions such as "corpetto violaccio scuro" and "si vede giallastro"; the canvas is attributed to Schiavone. In 1856 (or 1866?) Cavalcaselle added the name "Morto da Feltre", Moretti arguing that the connoisseur had resorted to "attribuzioni sperimentali" in order to "per uscire dal labarinto, com'egli lo chiamava, della pittura giorgionesca".¹ The reason Cavalcaselle needed to experiment was that, essentially, the disattribution had already been made with the negative description, the alternative attributions being an attempt to understand the work as being painted by anyone other than Giorgione.

In 1868-1869 Cavalcaselle composed an account of the *Concert Champêtre* from which Crowe created the published text. The Italian draft offers a mixed judgement on the work, so that it is both "lo studio del vero" and yet the "movimento che manca di naturalezza, ricercata e contorta". We find the same negative observations in both draft and published text, for instance "le forme specialmente gli attacchi e le estremità e le dita sono difettose", while "il tocco del pennello è grasso", and significantly "non vedesi quella spontaneità e naturalezza che è l'arte dei grandi pittori". In the draft Cavalcaselle disattributes the picture like this:

¹ Moretti, 1973, p.106

Il paese, benchè sia un bel paese e vi sia il principio anche ciò detto giorgionesco, pure non presenta quel carattere bello o sorridente come nel Giorgione. Ma nel tutto ai non sembra vedere quell'arte sì nobile e elevata che si domanda in Giorgione, né quel colorire vago e vigoroso e pieno di luce, chè anzi abbiamo un tono alquanto basso di tinta, che direbbesi esser quello d'uno che tiene dietro più a quello di Sebastiano che a quello di Giorgione.¹

This analysis demonstrates many of the problems encountered in the *New History* itself, for instance the contradiction that the “principle of the Giorgionesque” is present, but Giorgione is not. The *Concert Champêtre* fails to meet Cavalcaselle’s *idea* of the artist; “che si domanda in Giorgione”, the “sorridente” of his “nobile e elevata” art. Both Cavalcaselle’s draft and Crowe’s finished text negotiate alternative characterisations: one elevated, one base. Crediting the first involved discrediting the second; to achieve this Crowe constructed an elaborate rhetorical juxtaposition between the two *Concerts*. However, although the descriptions invested the Louvre canvas with negative artistic and moral value, the argument failed to convince, as shown by the responses of Pater and Morelli, who restore the view that the *Concert Champêtre* was a masterpiece.

Collaboration, Authority and the “New” Giorgione

The historiographical analysis of Crowe and Cavalcaselle has in general been more interested in their partnership than the content of their work. Bisecting this collaboration is significant because it constitutes the most characteristic element of the *New History*. However, this overlooks the implications of partnership; the fact that their method was collaborative gave it considerable authority. They were not independent individuals making entirely subjective

¹ Qtd. in Moretti, 1973, p.107

judgements but an alliance; this stretched beyond the authors to become a collaboration across the scholarly community, the *New History* building on previous publications and integrating the research of local historians. When the working relationship between the two connoisseurs is analysed, there is often a relative judgement as to the value of the different contributions. Instead, I would argue that it is the collaboration itself that is significant, producing the rhetoric of authority and a cautious approach.

In Crowe's memoirs, *Reminiscences* (1895), he offers a partisan explanation of his working relationship with Cavalcaselle, defending the value of his own role. Evidently the critical bisection of the partnership began from the publication of *Early Flemish Painters* in 1857; remembering its reception Crowe writes:

The world tried to get at the secret of our collaboration. In Italy people said that Cavalcaselle was a nobody; in England many extolled Cavalcaselle and sneered at the ignorance of Crowe. I was obliged at last to protest publicly against the theories broached all round us on the subject of authorship...

The English connoisseur specifically mentions Ruskin as being "amongst the critics who most indulged in sneers", stating that the criticisms from *Mornings in Florence* (1875) "are altogether unwarranted".¹ Ruskin had interpreted two distinct voices in the visual and object analysis, rather than two modes of description: "Let us first hear what Mr. Crowe directs us to think". In the *New History's* discussion of Giotto's frescoes in Santa Croce, Ruskin argues that one author undermines the other: "To these inspiring observations by the rapturous Crowe, the more cautious Cavalcasella appends a refrigerating note". The aesthetic evocations are contrasted with the analysis of condition, Ruskin adding that: "I venture to attribute the wiser note to Signor Cavalcaselle because I have every reason to put real

¹ Crowe, 1895, p.232-233

confidence in his judgement”.¹ This seems to have been a common response in the nineteenth century, the *Edinburgh Review* suggesting that the *New History* “owes its contents principally to, we believe, an Italian”.² It became the consensus view in the twentieth century, the collaboration being understood in regards to visual connoisseurship as one-sided: “Crowe was the synthesiser and historian, Cavalcaselle was the eye”.³

In *Reminiscences*, Crowe tells how he first met his partner somewhere between Hamm and Minden in 1847, and then again shortly after at the Berlin gallery. Cavalcaselle implored Crowe to give up his “stupid quest” to see the Flemish paintings and enjoy an Italian masterpiece, but as Crowe relates it, he convinced the Italian to follow him instead.⁴ Two years later they were reunited on the streets of Paris, when Crowe was “accosted by a man in very tattered dress who asked if I did not recognise him”. The Englishman was “greatly distressed” but also “proportionally interested” in the cause of his misfortune. Cavalcaselle had been fighting in the Wars of Italian Independence, in which, we are told, he had been taken prisoner twice and sentenced to death twice; Crowe then helped Cavalcaselle establish himself in London.⁵ Crowe himself was to serve as a journalist in the Crimean War, before being appointed as consul-general at Leipzig in 1860 and continuing in diplomatic work for the rest of his life; Cavalcaselle, after much travelling, became Inspector of the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in 1867, and accepted the ministerial position of Ispettore di Belle Arti in 1875.⁶

¹ Ruskin, 1875, pp.61-63

² *Edinburgh Review*, 1872, p.123

³ Pope-Hennessy, 1980, p.13

⁴ Crowe, 1895, pp.65-66

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.65-66, 88

⁶ Douglas, 1904, pp.xii, xvii

In an 1863 letter to their publisher Crowe rather unsympathetically explains their co-dependency, defending his role in the collaboration:

It is a mistake to suppose that he has anything by him except rough notes. When he says he could not do anything without me, he means that possibly few persons would have the patience [...] The two volumes you have were put together by me as it were in conference with him. They are not a translation of anything he has done [...] I brought the whole together in narrative and connected it with authorities.¹

Thirty years later, in his memoirs, Crowe continues to defend himself by emphasising mutuality, characterising their working relationship as one of competition and yet synchronicity. After sometimes “acrimonious debate” either “he or I yielded, and then, the question being decided, I adopted it and set in its proper order in the narrative which, like all others bearing our joint name, was entirely written by myself”.² This is Crowe claiming a stake in attribution, while the last clause shows that whatever conclusions were accepted, the eventual form of their history was his.

The *New History* has been read by Levi as an elaboration of Cavalcaselle’s notes, which lacked only a “discorso connettivo”. These notes were supplied to Crowe in an extremely raw state, meaning that descriptive style and architectonic problems were his responsibility. One of Crowe’s contributions, Levi argues, was the hierarchical treatment of painters, which is absent from Cavalcaselle’s notes. The Englishman’s synthesis was therefore reductive, evaluating works according to a relative standard, creating a stratified history so as to simplify the prolix Italian notes.³

¹ Anderson, 1990, p.44

² Crowe, 1895, pp.102-103

³ Levi, 1988, pp.252, 254-255, 257, 267-269

Without wanting to value one contribution over the other, it seems clear the authors had different roles in the production of the text.

What the precise compact is between the two labourers in this vast field we know not; or whether the matter be all owing to the Italian, and the manner to the English gentleman; but we are well aware that the fruits of Signor Cavalcaselle's indefatigable pilgrimage throughout his native country, embodied in Italian notes and illustrated by plans, diagrams, and sketches presented a species of shorthand, which, however intelligent, was not easily reducible into any language. The labour incurred by Mr. Crowe in giving form and order to such materials must have been enormous...¹

This assessment in the *Edinburgh Review* seems fair; Cavalcaselle's "indefatigable pilgrimage" did provide most of the material for the 1871 volumes. During 1865 the Italian managed to travel through Eastern Europe, up to St. Petersburg, while in 1867 he journeyed the length of Italy from Treviso to Naples, and back up to Lombardy.² A consensus has developed that Cavalcaselle's connoisseurship was of a high standard, while Crowe's was not. This leads to the perception that "Crowe's literary style had obfuscated many of Cavalcaselle's discoveries", Adolfo Venturi suggesting that Crowe's history served as a framework for Cavalcaselle's research, "but a simple catalogue of those notes, would have been the ideal way of presenting his work".³

Crowe's final statement on the issue stresses the strength of their personal and professional alliance: "Cavalcaselle had more confidence in me than any living man, and this being his opinion of me, as mine was of him, we were eminently fitted for the association which we formed, and which nothing has ever been able to dissolve".⁴ Levi argues that the letters of the

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, 1872, p.124

² Levi, 1988, p.248-249

³ Anderson, 1990, p.44; qtd. in Kulturmann, 1993, p.114

⁴ Crowe, 1895, p.235

two connoisseurs display the communication “fra due studiosi intenti a un’opera comune”.¹ A consequence of this, however, is that while they attempted to create a cohesive and coherent history, a collaborative method requires compromise and results in cautious conclusions. This seems especially true for their treatment of Giorgione, Crowe having composed the chapter with Cavalcaselle’s words guiding his pen, “preferiamo piuttosto la taccia di paurosi”. However, the reduction of the artist’s oeuvre was also bold, as recognised in the contemporary reviews. There is nevertheless a large degree of uncertainty as to the “new” Giorgione, and the manuscript shows the text was originally even more cautious. After questioning whether they are justified in attributing the four early religious works, Crowe has removed the idea that “Basaiti and Savoldo might be put forward as alternative candidates for the authorship”.²

It might be argued, in fact, that Crowe and Cavalcaselle do not attribute any pictures to Giorgione, and simply create a catalogue based on reasonable conjecture. The attributions of the early works are linked to Vasari, the *Altarpiece* to the “testimony of history and local annals”, while the *Tempest* and the *Philosophers* are based on the authority of Michiel. Even the final paintings, including the Pitti *Concert*, are attributed to Giorgione because Crowe and Cavalcaselle needed works that “explains his celebrity”. The chapter is constantly self-conscious and self-questioning, the connoisseurs even doubt “what we are fond of attributing”, and although they “might desire” to attribute certain works, instead they equivocate. This circumlocution results in Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s readers having different opinions about which works they actually do attribute to Giorgione, for instance Morelli cites their attribution of the *Knight of Malta* (Fig.A32), while Pater claims they disattribute both

¹ Levi, 1988, p.256

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.129; Crowe, 1865-1870, p.193

Uffizi panels (Figs.A23, 24).¹ Although the two connoisseurs strive to give completeness to their “new” Giorgione, and often say with certainty what he did not paint, the implication of their cautious collaboration was to make the artist seem unknowable.

In the preface to the German edition of *Reminiscences*, Max Jordan argued against the idea that “Cavalcaselle provided the content for their books, and Crowe their form”. He claims instead that “the two men lived and worked together, consolidating their views so systematically that they could all but read each other’s minds”. This is cited as the basis of their “substantial results, which is to say their remarkable achievement was irreducibly the work of the two”. This is a partisan assessment which possibly overstates the case, especially the description of “the unusually simple, seductive elegance of their style”.² However, the perception of synchronicity was crucial for their history’s authority, and it can be felt in the substance of the finished text. Ruskin was wrong to separate the two authors; in the language of the *New History* the partnership is “irreducible”, the collaboration being tangible in the careful and considered language, while compromise is written into conditional attributions and implied degrees of probability. For instance, a portrait in Rovigo “perhaps more than any other, approximates to the true style of Giorgione”.³ However, the self-conscious method is again in conflict with the desire to construct an authoritative history, so that, as above, absolute statements are combined with conditional clauses, making their pronouncements almost contradictory: “There is not the slightest doubt that Giorgione might have seen da Vinci”.⁴

¹ Morelli, 1893, p.216; Pater, October 1877, pp.533

² Qtd. in Kulturmann, 1993, p.114

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.155

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.139

The scientific editing of possibilities is clear in the manuscript; things that were “obviously” correct become “probably” correct.¹ Many of their statements are set in a conditional balance, as with the defence and condemnation of the *Concert Champêtre*, or in their non-attributions, for example the *Knight of Malta*: “We conclude that Giorgione’s work was altered by late retouching, or the painter is a skilful imitator of Giorgione’s manner”.² Originally Crowe had phrased this as an open question: “Are we to conclude that Giorgione’s work was altered by late retouching, or the painter is a skilful imitator of Giorgione’s manner? Such questions might puzzle the most experienced judges”.³ By changing questions into statements, Crowe displays the authors’ conflicted attitude to their scientific problematisation, the language of their “new” Giorgione oscillating between doubt and certainty.

While contemporaries often condemned the *New History’s* literary style, the awkwardness of the prose was a combination of Crowe’s convoluted expression, the desire to be “scientific”, and the technical vocabulary that Cavalcaselle describes as “il mio brutto gergo artistico”.⁴ It seems then that the “obfuscating” style was in part a product of their collaboration, a point Crowe makes in his defensive memoirs: “Cavalcaselle, though he did not write, attributed meanings to certain words which he coaxed me to bring in with merciless repetition”.⁵ Everything in the text is offered to the reader as a coaction. Their two voices become one, so that statements of belief are made in the first person plural, suggesting this opinion has been discussed, considered and agreed upon: “Our memory accepts this picture as a real Palma”.⁶ In essence, this supplies rhetorical weight in the authority of consensus.

¹ Crowe, 1865-1870, p.195

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.154

³ Crowe, 1865-1870, p.224

⁴ Qtd. in Levi, 1988, p.287

⁵ Crowe, 1895, p.231

⁶ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.485

Would either Crowe or Cavalcaselle have been able to produce the *New History* entirely on their own? Maybe, but it would have been a very different thing. I would argue that its systematic construction, its completeness, even its very existence, were all dependent on the collaboration, a fact that is often ignored. Cavalcaselle, industrious, knowledgeable, but not financially or socially in a position to sustain himself and his research, “lacked the benefit of philosophical or aesthetic training; his rather scant education had been mostly technical”.¹ Crowe, well connected and well educated, helped the Italian establish himself in London, as well as enabling the publication of their work. Both men were capable of writing a history on their own, but it would have been structurally or analytically lacking. What the partnership brought was a wider set of skills, a useful division of labour, a considered approach, and with all this, most importantly, came authority.

This was recognised by one reviewer, who argued that in Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s work, “a keen critical spirit has been sharpened by an extraordinary amount of accurate technical knowledge, which, if it fails to inspire implicit faith in all the judgements, at least ensures solid respect for the authors”.² In the end, the “new Vasari” created a “new” Giorgione, while maintaining his importance within the history of Venetian painting. The attributions imply the idea that to discuss the artist is fundamentally problematic, and that this is supported by the authority of science. This makes the problematisation even more complex, the collaboration creating uncertainty with authority, as in the attribution of the *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Fig.A7): “Now we look at the picture with the full consciousness of these

¹ Kulturmann, 1993, p.111

² *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 August, 1871, p.11

contradictions, we are still left in doubt”. The connoisseurs’ conclusion is that “it may be possible to admit that Titian acquired the manner of Giorgione so perfectly as to deceive us”.¹

Conclusions

Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s “new” Giorgione should be considered as materialist; based on technical analysis and documentary evidence, it aspires to a scientific understanding of the painter’s work. It is significant that the two connoisseurs were not just scholars, they had also trained as artists, Crowe in Paris with Paul Delaroche (1797-1856) and Cavalcaselle at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice.² The *New History*, with its emphasis on technique, is a painter’s history of art. Technical vocabulary may be the rhetoric of expertise, but it is also the practical language of art. Their descriptions may inflect values, but they also imaginatively reverse the process of creation. When Cavalcaselle went to Pieve di Cadore, he did not draw the panorama of Titian’s youth topographically or geographically but artistically, creating a landscape that, like his sketches and watercolours, is not diagrammatic but impressionistic.³ Even their emphasis on landscape is rooted in the material existence of the painters. However, this materialism is also “scientific”: when they discuss Giorgione’s personality, this is not the artist’s *Geist*, it is a conjecture based on his socio-economic origins and the fact he painted for the Venetian patriarchy. This “scientificness” is most notable in the absence of the word “Renaissance”; Giorgione plays no part in the history of ideas, or a romantic emancipation of *mind*. This, I would argue, is one of Pater’s major objections to their treatment of the artist.

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.143-144

² Douglas, 1904, pp.ix, xiv

³ Moretti, 1973, p.26

Their “new” Giorgione was intended to be original; starting from a position of scepticism, creating doubt and uncertainty, attempting to build a coherent career of the painter and complete catalogue of works. However, the problematisation of Giorgione was more successful and more original, unintentionally validating doubt as the rational intellectual position. Crowe and Cavalcaselle attempted, to a degree, a demythicisation of the artist by standing against the popular image of a romantic ideal, but did not ultimately question the veracity of the early biographies. At one point they plainly state that the text was intended to function as a problematisation, questioning previous readings:

In the absence of any challenge as to the genuineness of productions fathered upon him, the most erroneous impressions of his style and character gained currency, until it became habitual to assert with openness akin to truth that he was a marvellous colourist, but no draughtsman; that he was the father of the biblical novel or the creator of sacred pieces in which profane and poetic feeling overweighted sentiment; that he was a man of sensual habits, transfusing sensuality into his pictorial types.¹

In a footnote the authors implicate Selvatico and Burckhardt, protesting against ideas about Giorgione that had been repeated since the beginning of the century. In the end, however, although their justification of his art as “noble” and in opposition to “sensuality” would be repeated by Morelli, their particular conception did not annul the romantic image of a secularising painter. The reason for this failure was that, inadvertently, the connoisseurs had provided the basis for a rational “challenge” to any possible interpretation, even their own. They had fundamentally problematised the artist, so that then, as now, the “new” Giorgione is defined as an enigma.

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.156

PATER & GIORGIONE

Pater's "The School of Giorgione" was first published in October 1877 in the *Fortnightly Review*; in 1888 it formed part of the third edition of *The Renaissance*, but with three significant passages removed. In 1869 Pater had transferred to the liberal *Fortnightly*, a periodical founded in 1865, having begun his career in 1866-1868 writing for the *Westminster Review*, known as a radical publication.¹ The essay itself is only a little over 6,000 words, and is clearly divided into four parts by breaks in the text; a brief summary of the contents of the essay will reveal its basic structure.

The first part of the essay (pp.526-530) is devoted to defining the "musical law", opening with a challenge to current critical practice: "To regard all products of art as various forms of poetry is the mistake of much popular criticism". In this section Pater develops the idea of "the condition of music", a concept repeated several times. In music, Pater argues, form and content are indistinguishable; this "condition" is the aim for painting, poetry and sculpture, but it is an ideal they can never perfectly realise, being bound by the material limitations of their medium. In the first two paragraphs Pater discusses each medium as a "mode of reaching the imagination", before continuing with a defence of "the sensuous element in art", meaning elliptically, "almost everything in art that is essentially artistic". After formal-technical limitation, Pater proposes the idea of *Anders-streben*, whereby each medium strives to transcend itself and achieve the "condition" of another art. These opposing theories are reconciled within the famous precept: "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music". Pater illustrates this with an analysis of landscape and poetry, extending the principle to "all things that partake in any degree of artistic qualities". The "musical law" is then

¹ Brake, 1994, p.16

related to a cognitive faculty termed the “imaginative reason”. In the final paragraph Pater argues that the function of the artist is to attempt a “perfect identification of form and matter”, while the function of the critic is “to estimate the degree” to which this has been fulfilled.¹

The second part of the essay (pp.530-535), engages with Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s “new Giorgione”. Pater opens by suggesting Venetian painting is characterised by its apprehension of “the necessary limitations” of its medium. Giorgione, Pater argues, despite the many disattributions, is still the summation of “the spirit of that school”. He then offers a précis of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, describing Giorgione as “the inventor of *genre*”. In the third paragraph Pater places the artist in relation to Titian, in the fourth he passes judgement on the *New History*: “The accomplished science of the subject has come at last, and, as in other instances, has not made the past more real for us, but assured us that we possess of it less than we seemed to have”. Pater continues to lament the loss of “the great traditional reputation” and considers the “new” Giorgione to be “reduced almost to a name”. However, following Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Pater argues that the traditional reputation was justified by the Pitti *Concert* (Fig.A12). Expressing regret for the disattribution of several works, he presents a concise biography of the artist in line with the *New History*. The final paragraph refocuses on “the *Giorgionesque*”, which is described as “an influence, a spirit or type”.²

In the third section of the essay (pp.535-538), Pater offers his aesthetic discussion of Giorgionesque painting, concentrating on the *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1). He opens by arguing that the disattributed works define “a certain artistic ideal” of which the Pitti *Concert* is the “typical instance”. Rather than discuss formal qualities, he explains Giorgionesque

¹ Pater, October 1877, pp.526-530

² *Ibid*, pp.530-535

subject matter in relation to the “musical law”. The works are understood as non-literary, representing “animated instants” and “exquisite pauses”. The third paragraph of this section evokes the aesthetic experience of the *Concert Champêtre*. Pater then argues that music is the key, demonstrated by the fact that the “perfect moments of music” are common subjects in the Giorgionesque, and explains that these paintings represent a type of “existence”, described by Pater as “a sort of listening” or “moments of play”. There is then an ekphrasis of the *Concert Champêtre*, before Pater ends on a discussion of landscape, arguing that the relationship between setting and figures is pure reciprocity.¹

The fourth and final section (p.538) is a single paragraph: “Something like this seems to me to be the *vraie vérité* about Giorgione”. Pater argues that this is a different type of truth to the “strictly deducible facts” of the *New History*, and that the “school” of Giorgione “is the essential truth”.² The structure of the essay, therefore, is dialectical. It moves from thesis, to antithesis, to synthesis, to conclusion. This structure has a specific function, being designed to overcome Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s problematisation, and yet preserve the traditional image of the artist, thereby creating a different “new” Giorgione.

Pater’s work, and especially the idea that art aspires to “*the condition of music*”, had a significant influence on modernist literature, seen in writers such as Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), and James Joyce (1882-1941).³ The “School of Giorgione” was also of great importance in art historical terms; in Italy before 1939, Pater provided the model for understanding Giorgione’s work, the “musical law” allowing for interpretations that complemented early twentieth-century

¹ Pater, October 1877, pp.535-538

² *Ibid.*, p.538

³ MacNeice, 1941; McGrath, 1986; Moliterno, 1998; O’Gorman, F., 2006, p.186; Barolsky, 2010, p.43

intellectual trends.¹ In the 1940s Lionello Venturi declared that Pater had discovered the creative impulse in Giorgione, seeing the Venetian as proto-Impressionist.² As late as 1969, John Pope-Hennessy seems to argue that Pater was a great connoisseur, because, despite being unfamiliar with *The Tempest* and the *Three Philosophers* (Figs.A3, A4), he had still managed “to deduce the artistic personality of Giorgione”.³

Pater’s influence on modernism, however, was disavowed by T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), who represented the Victorian as morally perverse and incapable of sustained reasoning.⁴ It is important to understand that in 1877, Pater’s essay “The School of Giorgione” was already engaged in this struggle, Eliot’s criticisms being a continuation of the ethical and intellectual censure that began as soon as *The Renaissance* was published in 1873. It was not just Pater, however, who was the target of Victorian disapprobation, but Giorgione himself: we have seen that Crowe and Cavalcaselle passed normative judgements on the *Concert Champêtre* and the artist’s sensualist reputation.

Pater’s discussion of the Giorgionesque is a site of engagement with multiple discourses, art historical, philosophical, political and ethical. The presence of these diverse, co-existing discourses creates “an insistent intertextuality”, with source-studies demonstrating Pater’s repeated appropriation and subversion of the language of authority.⁵ It is true that the essay can appear as a tangled web of intertextual references, and that this can lead to the view that “Paterian” ideas always have an intertextual source.⁶ Another problem, according to Brake, is that Pater can be “particularly artful in quoting others without acknowledgement of the

¹ Ascari, 2004, p.57; Settis, 1990, p.57

² Qtd. in Court, 1980, pp.173-174

³ Pope-Hennessy, 1969, p.104

⁴ Cf. Eliot, 1999, pp.141, 441-442; Carrier, 2005, p.140

⁵ Brake, 1994, p.25

⁶ Inman, 1981, p.xii

source, or indeed, quotation”.¹ I read Pater’s essay on Giorgione as a polemic about authority;² the most important engagement being with Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s *New History*. In my analysis of the intertextual web, I also explain the appropriation of Schiller, re-evaluate the relationship with Ruskin, highlight a previously undiscussed connection with John Addington Symonds’ (1840-1893) *The Renaissance in Italy* (1875-1886), and reassess the underrated influence of William Hurrell Mallock (1849-1923), whose “The New Republic” satirised Pater in the *Belgravia* between June and December 1876.

The “artful” quoting of scholarship raises another problem. On what level should we judge Pater’s writing, academic or artistic? Buckler has read Pater as consciously combining these different approaches. This could imply that the value of the Giorgione essay is primarily literary, and that art history has become a stage for new and varied discourses, while art works themselves fade into the background.³ However, in this highly structured response to Crowe and Cavalcaselle there was no contradiction between the intellectual function and artistic implications of his “musical law”, which Pater took as the basis of both his analysis and style.

A decade after its first publication, in 1888, Symonds had concluded that the theory put forward in Pater’s Giorgione essay has value when “considered as paradoxes”, while an 1894 obituary for Pater described the “*condition of music*” as “one of those part-truths which contribute to the whole truth which ever remains incomplete”.⁴ It could be argued that within “The School of Giorgione” the “musical law” is not sufficiently qualified to have an exact

¹ Brake, 1994, p.26; Brake and Small, 1991, p.xvii

² Recently, Coates has discussed “Pater the polemicist”, engaging with his “art of communication” (Coates, 2004, pp.1-2); previously Small had placed Pater at the centre of “a crisis of authority” in the 1870s (Small, 1991, pp.91-92, 132).

³ Buckler, 1987; Brake, 1994, p.26; Stein, 1975, p.4

⁴ Symonds, 1888, pp.47; qtd. in Seiler, 1980, p.283

definition, or that Pater's synthesising criticism, which sought to blur distinctions, inevitably resulted in contradiction.¹ More recent scholarship also exhibits a certain amount of anxiety, discussing Pater's "fierce yet cryptic precision".² I argue that these reactions are predetermined by the theory itself; Pater's own writing "*aspires towards the condition of music*" and is therefore necessarily, and perhaps intentionally, open to different interpretation.

The general trend has been to consider the Giorgione essay as primarily theoretical, the artist's importance being therefore largely functional.³ Kenneth Clark had already argued, in 1961, that the value of the essay, "of course, is not on account of what it says about Giorgione",⁴ and in the last twenty years, Pater's essay has been read more as a commentary on late nineteenth-century painting. Since 1990, when Inman first related "The School of Giorgione" to the Ruskin-Whistler controversy that followed the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in May 1877, this has become a standard interpretation.⁵ The "purpose built and sympathetically decorated" Grosvenor was established as a rival to the Royal Academy and provided a platform for Aesthetic painters such as Burne-Jones and Whistler. The opening of the gallery had been reviewed in July by both Wilde in the *Dublin University Magazine*, and Ruskin in his *Fors Clavigera*. Ruskin's criticism resulted in the *Whistler v. Ruskin* libel trial, the critic having accused the artist of "cockney impudence" for wanting "two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face".⁶

Recently, Barolsky has argued that Pater's theory is an "Aesthetics of Abstraction" and that his ideas should be connected with Whistler's work, while Teukolsky has claimed that

¹ Qtd. Court, 1980, pp.319-320-325

² Tucker, 2002, pp.124

³ Brake, 1994, p.34

⁴ Clark, 1961, p.20

⁵ Inman, 1990, p.385; Teukolsky, 2002; Bullen, 2008; Teukolsky, 2009; Barolsky, 2010

⁶ Calloway, 2011, p.18; Brake, 1994 pp.38-39

“Pater’s Giorgionesque-formalist aesthetic is as much a commentary on Burne-Jones as it is on Whistler”.¹ Pater was clearly interested in contemporary art, being friends with Simeon Solomon (1840-1905), who sketched his portrait in 1872 (Fig.R10). This relationship between modern and historical is in line with the other essays of *The Renaissance*, as Bullen has demonstrated.² In fact, understanding Renaissance painting in this way was a convention of aesthetic criticism, as seen in Swinburne’s “Notes on the Designs of the Old Masters at Florence” (1868). In this piece the poet suggests that one image resembles the work of Burne-Jones, while another “to modern eyes” recalls “the earliest pictures of Mr. Rossetti”.³ Nevertheless, the relationship of past and present in Pater’s Giorgione essay is more complicated, reaching beyond a veiled commentary on any particular artist’s work. The notions of “*the condition of music*” and “school” are ahistorical, as Pater clearly says: we may call a work “*Giorgionesque*, wherever we find it – in Venetian work generally, or in work of our own time”.⁴ My position is that these ideas are rooted in Pater’s response to Giorgione’s art. The artist is not merely a diversion from the real topic of contemporary painting; instead, Giorgione represents something more, the revelation of which becomes the measure of Pater’s own critical authority.

By concentrating on the relationship with contemporary art and describing the “musical law” as a formalist aesthetic, scholarship has misrepresented the essay. It neglects the importance of Giorgione, and consequently fails to see the significance of Crowe and Cavalcaselle. In 2002 Teukolsky argued that Pater’s essay was “a politicised response to some of the dominant ideologies of Victorian bourgeois culture”. When Pater writes of Giorgione’s paintings as a “permanent refuge”, this is interpreted as metaphorically creating a “room”

¹ Barolsky, 2010, p.44; Teukolsky, 2002, p.164

² Bullen, 2008, pp.94-95; [Bullen, 1994, p.273]; see also Prettejohn, 2007, pp.260, 272

³ Swinburne, 1868, pp.25, 30

⁴ Pater, October 1877, p.535

where aesthetes are “indulging in a private, intellectual party”, made manifest in the space of the Grosvenor Gallery. Pater’s aestheticism, by being politically disengaged, is understood to be “radically unanchored from the strictures of Victorian values”. Pater’s choice of Giorgione as a subject, Teukolsky argues, was “deliberate”, allowing him to “attack” the scientific connoisseurship and the interpretations of the “popular criticism”.¹

Against this I will argue that Pater’s engagement with “scientific criticism” is not an “attack”. If he did want to take “refuge”, then this must be seen in the context of the intellectual and personal censure he received between 1873 and 1877. Pater’s ideas about Giorgione date back at least to 1867, while the thinking behind “*the condition of music*” can already be seen in the first edition of *The Renaissance* in 1873. Finally, while the 1877 *Fortnightly Review* version can be placed in the context of contemporary art-politics, the true home of “The School of Giorgione” is within *The Renaissance*. To demonstrate this I will argue that an original version of the essay was written by Pater, but withdrawn due to Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s problematisation. The importance of the *New History* was not socio-political, but personal and emotional, the two connoisseurs having disturbed Pater’s relationship with Giorgione by disattributing the *Concert Champêtre*.

In the following section I aim to place “The School of Giorgione” within the context of *The Renaissance*, discussing the publishing history of the 1873 book, Pater’s concept of “Renaissance”, and the structure of the work itself. I argue that the “musical law” is a product of the moral and intellectual censure Pater endured after 1873, and that “The School of Giorgione” was the sixth of a series of articles composed in response, all of which function as self-justifications. The eventual composition of the Giorgione essay marked a close to this

¹ Teukolsky, 2002, pp.151-152, 156-159; more recently, Teukolsky, in *The Literate Eye* (2009), suggests Pater only “resists” Crowe and Cavalcaselle (p.122); the Giorgione essay is placed in an interesting social context of a fashion for aestheticism in the 1870s and 1880s (p.102)

first critical project, being a polemic that functions as a defence of the author's own moral and intellectual authority. In the next four sections, my analysis of "The School of Giorgione" will follow the structure of the essay itself, the four parts revealing a dialectical system.

As a thesis, I will discuss Pater's definition of aesthetic criticism. By offering a critical "law", his Giorgione essay simulates positivist history. However, this "law" is based on paradox and provides for uncertainty in the idealist separation of form and content. I argue that Pater builds an intertextual network of art theory to explain Giorgionesque painting, the aim of which was to establish the intellectual, moral and artistic autonomy of Giorgione, and through that, of Pater himself. After this I consider the antithesis in Pater's response to what he understands as scientific criticism. In this section of "The School of Giorgione", the judgements of the *New History* are acknowledged and lamented. Pater sublates Crowe and Cavalcaselle's text by adopting their language, imitating their methods, and idealising the connoisseurial ideas of "school" and "Giorgionesque spirit".

After opposing aesthetic and scientific approaches, Pater offers a synthesis, the climax of which is his ekphrasis of the *Concert Champêtre*. In the discussion of Giorgionesque subject matter, music is again the key, providing a non-literary understanding of *genre*. Based on the idea of an interrelation of form and content, Pater creates two musical modes of subject matter: "pause" and "harmony". These function to resolve Crowe and Cavalcaselle's problematisation of Giorgione and to absolve the *Concert Champêtre* from any moral criticism. Instead, Pater argues that this painting contains Giorgione's "spirit" or "influence". In the final section of the essay he offers an assertion of his own authority, claiming this as "the essential truth".

“The School of Giorgione” within *The Renaissance*

The Renaissance in its first edition of 1873 was entitled *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. It comprised a “Preface”, dated 1873, and a “Conclusion”, containing between them eight essays on historical figures: “Aucassin and Nicolette”, “Pico della Mirandola”, “Sandro Botticelli”, “Luca della Robbia”, “The Poetry of Michelangelo”, “Lionardo da Vinci”, “Joachim Du Bellay”, and “Winckelmann”.¹ Five of these essays had already been published in periodicals.² The “Conclusion” was originally part of an unsigned essay, “Poems by William Morris”, in the *Westminster Review*, October 1868.

The Renaissance went through several editions during Pater’s lifetime and for the second in 1877 the title was changed to *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, “Aucassin and Nicolette” was enlarged to become “Two Early French Stories”, and the controversial “Conclusion” was omitted.³ “The School of Giorgione”, published in the *Fortnightly*, was added to the third edition of 1888, which also saw the “Conclusion” reinstated. *The Renaissance*, therefore, is a gathering of disparate, disconnected essays, held together by style, thematics and importantly, an “idiosyncratic notion of the Renaissance”.⁴

The place of “The School of Giorgione” in *The Renaissance* is a matter of some dispute. The question of its date and function could be limited, as in recent studies, to the summer of 1877, however, Buckler suggested it might have been written as early as 1868, the essay being

¹ Pater, 1873, p.iii

² “Winckelmann” (*Westminster Review*, January 1867, unsigned); “Notes on Lionardo da Vinci” (*Fortnightly Review*, November 1869, signed); “A Fragment on Sandro Botticelli” (*Fortnightly Review*, August 1870, signed); “Pico della Mirandola” (*Fortnightly Review*, October 1871, signed); “The Poetry of Michelangelo” (*Fortnightly Review*, November 1871, signed); within the final book, “Aucassin and Nicolette”, “Luca della Robbia”, and “Joachim Du Bellay” are all dated 1872.

³ Pater, 1873, p.210

⁴ Brake, 1994, p.17

“significant to Pater’s evolving conception”.¹ Bullen has argued that by 1869 Pater’s conception of the Renaissance was fully formed, and the Giorgione chapter was separate, having been shaped by reactions to the first edition.² Stein, on the other hand, places the essay at the centre of the book, acting as a stage for debates initiated by reactions in 1873, functioning to make *The Renaissance* a more theoretically complete work; in 1888, the new chapter balanced the re-inclusion of the contentious “Conclusion” by providing its theoretical justification.³ These are reasonable hypotheses, but I will argue that Pater’s thinking about Giorgione dates back to at least 1867, that nearly two-thirds of the essay could not have been written before 1871, and that in its periodical form it certainly relates to events in 1877. However, the ideas behind “*the condition of music*” were part of Pater’s original conception of *The Renaissance*; in the period 1867-1877, “The School of Giorgione” was shaping itself, and being shaped, in Pater’s mind.

It is important to establish what is actually known about the course of events. “The School of Giorgione” became part of *The Renaissance* in 1888; however, a different book had originally been planned. On 1 October 1878, Pater sent a letter to his publisher, proposing a volume of essays to consist of all six of the 1874-1877 essays, and two previously unpublished works. On 5 October two advertisements appeared in *Athenaeum* and *Academy* announcing that Pater would publish a new book to be called “The School of Giorgione, and Other Studies”, described as a sequel to *The Renaissance*.⁴ However, on 18 November, Pater wrote to Macmillan changing the title to “Dionysus and Other Studies” and on the 30 November wrote again explaining that there are “so many inadequacies that I feel compelled, very reluctantly, to give up the publication”. Pater added that Macmillan should not announce

¹ Buckler, 1987, p.91

² Bullen, 1995, p.273

³ Stein, 1975, pp.222, 258

⁴ Qtd. in Court, 1980, p.17

that the book had been cancelled, and on 9 December sent a cheque for compensation.¹ We can assume that the change of title shows Pater had decided to withdraw the essay on Giorgione, while Brake has suggested that the decision not to publish was due to the *Whistler v. Ruskin* libel trial which took place only four days before.²

While it is probable that “The School of Giorgione”, as we now have it, was composed during the summer of 1877, it has been argued in the past that an early version of the essay was removed from the first edition of *The Renaissance*.³ On 29 June, 1872, Pater sent Macmillan a list of ten essays for his first book, and explains that only five had appeared in print before, presumably those on Winckelmann, Leonardo, Botticelli, Mirandola, and Michelangelo.⁴ He claims that he will complete the other five during the academic vacation; however, only four appear in the final book (the Preface, Aucassin and Nicolette, della Robbia, and Du Bellay). The fifth was written, and even went to the printers, but Pater seems to have changed his mind, and on 28 October an agent of his publisher wrote to the author: “The Essay you refer to was printed, but in deference to your wish it shall be cancelled”. Two days later the essay was returned to Pater so that, as the agent writes, he could “embody parts of it in the Preface”.⁵

This could have been an essay on Giorgione; however, versions of “Arezzo”, “Measure for Measure” and “Wordsworth” have also been proposed.⁶ “Arezzo” seems thematically inappropriate, while Pater’s essay on William Shakespeare’s (1564-1616) play is a

¹ Pater, 1970, pp.32-36

² Brake, 1994, pp.38-39

³ Inman, 1990, p.384; Evans, 1970, p.xxvii

⁴ This letter was first published in Charles Morgan’s *The House of Macmillan (1843-1943)*, 1943; Evans, in *Letters of Walter Pater* (1970), transcribes Morgan. Neither publish the list referred to and, in fact, this very valuable letter is not contained in the British Library’s Macmillan Archive (55030., Vol. CCXLV) which mysteriously begins with the next piece of correspondence.

⁵ Pater, 1970, p.7-8

⁶ Brake, 1976; Inman, 1990, p.385 – From the logic of the letter we can assume that the “Conclusion” was not part of Pater’s original plan, having been previously published.

reactionary polemic; “Wordsworth” is a more compelling proposition. A brief section devoted to the poet is embodied in the “Preface”, used to exemplify Pater’s critical technique.¹ Also, within Pater’s transhistorical Renaissance which passes through twelfth-century France, fifteenth-century Italy, and then back through France and Germany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, William Wordsworth (1770-1850) would have formed a bridge into nineteenth-century England. However, the case for Giorgione is equally, if not more, compelling.

The part of the “Preface” devoted to Wordsworth does not give the impression of something added. Instead, the part of the “Preface” that discusses a Hegelian notion of cultural production when “the thoughts of men draw nearer together” and objects “unconsciously illustrate each other”, omitted in anthologies,² appears to be an awkward addition. Such thinking would be highly appropriate to a study of Giorgione because of the scarcity of historical information. Repositioning the objects as examples of *Zeitgeist* would have been a credible part of Pater’s first attempt at this essay, correcting the absence among the Italian essays, surely noted by Pater, of a Venetian embodiment of the Renaissance. Finally, while there seems to have been no direct cause for Pater to have cancelled an essay on Wordsworth, any essay about Giorgione that focused on the *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1), would have been entirely undermined by Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s work.

Although it has been said that Pater was unaware, or largely ignored, the 1864 *A New History of Painting in Italy*, he did make use of this work for his “Botticelli” in 1870.³ Let us conjecture, however, that Pater continued to have little interest in Crowe and Cavalcaselle

¹ Pater, 1873, pp.x-xi

² *Ibid.*, pp.xxiii; McGrath, 1986, p.126

³ Inman, 1981, p.224; Pater refers to two factual corrections that first appeared together in the *New History of 1864* – Tucker, 2002, p.120

and that during the summer of 1872 an essay on Giorgione went to the printers *before* he became aware of the later volumes that contained their findings on the artist: *A History of Painting in North Italy* (1871). If Pater then read the connoisseurs' problematisation of the artist, especially their disattribution and denigration of the *Concert Champêtre*, we would have a direct cause for Pater cancelling the essay. This is speculation, but the idea that "The School of Giorgione" as it appeared in 1877, is a resolution of this situation, and helps us understand the essay as a whole.

Pater had certainly been thinking about Giorgione since before 1867, when the artist is mentioned in the periodical version of "Winckelmann", a reference that was removed when the essay was included in *The Renaissance* in 1873. As we have seen, 1867 was an important year for the artist, with discussions by Gautier and Rio, while in 1868 Giorgione appears in Swinburne's "Notes".¹ The artist had featured in "Winckelmann" as an illustration, forming part of the emphatic, passionate concluding paragraphs in which Pater discussed an individual's "joyful union with the external world". Considering "the supreme, artistic view of life" and the union of many-sided culture within genius:

It would have been easy for Goethe, with the gift of a sensuous nature, to let it overgrow him. [But the utmost a sensuous gift can produce are the poems of Keats, or the paintings of Giorgione; and often in some stray line of Shakespeare, some fleeting tone of Raphael, the whole power of Keats or Giorgione strikes on one from its due place in a complete composite nature.]²

By connecting the artist with John Keats (1795-1821), Pater is rooting Giorgione firmly in the romantic tradition. In "Winckelmann", Pater suggested that Giorgione and Keats are

¹ Swinburne, 1868, p.32; the influence of Gautier's "Louvre" of 1867, and Swinburne's "Notes" of 1868, on the original "Lionardo" essay of 1869 (Inman, 1981, pp.208, 169) and "The School of Giorgione" in 1877, supports the conjecture of an early, original version of the essay.

² Hill, 1980, pp.183, 270 [The cancelled passage is parenthesised.]

unbalanced, overly sensuous, that they do not possess an ideal “composite nature”, of the kind shown by Raphael, Shakespeare, Winckelmann or Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832). However, by 1877 Pater had begun to invest greater value in the sensuous element of art, and so saw Giorgione as fulfilling this ideal. If the author did compose a chapter on the artist as early as 1872, this suggests a reason for his cancelling this passage in “Winckelmann”. Consequently, Giorgione is absent from the first edition of *The Renaissance*, while Titian only appears once.¹ It is not until Pater’s “A Study of Dionysus: The Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew” in 1876, that the artist vividly re-emerges, specifically connected to the *Concert Champêtre*, functioning as the union of the essay’s fire-water dialectic.²

While the name Giorgione may be absent from *The Renaissance* in 1873, music is not, and we find similar ideas to those Pater would express in 1877 throughout the essays. Music is used as a critical metaphor in “Aucassin and Nicolette”, where the innovations in rhymed poetry are described as a “new music”, and also in “Botticelli”, where colouring is understood as “minor”. Analogies to music describe subject matter in Leonardo’s work, for instance the Louvre *St John the Baptist* (Fig.R11), “in which the ostensible subject is used, not as matter for definite pictorial realisation, but as the starting point of a train of sentiment, as subtle and vague as a piece of music”. The notion of *Anders-streben* can be found when Luca della Robbia employs low-relief to “meet and overcome the special limitations of sculpture”, while his works in terracotta “transfer to a different material the principles of his sculpture”. Du Bellay’s poetry strives to emulate *finish* in painting, while Michelangelo’s *non finito* is “the equivalent for colour in sculpture”.³ A putative early version of “The School of

¹ Pater, 1873, p.64

² Pater, December 1876, p.761

³ Pater, 1873, p. 7, 49, 112, 53-54, 131; Østermark-Johansen, 2006, p.33

Giorgione” could therefore have contained ideas like the “musical law”, although perhaps not in such a neat, axiomatic form.

The Concept of the “Renaissance”

To understand the place that Giorgione had within *The Renaissance*, it is essential to discuss Pater’s notion of the Renaissance, and to analyse the way this concept gave structure to the book. In 1873 the “Preface” explained: “The subjects of the following studies are taken from the history of the Renaissance, and touch what I think the chief points in that complex, many-sided movement”. Pater tells his reader that he will define it further in the first chapter, while admitting that he will give the word “much wider scope than was intended by those who originally used it to denote only that revival of classical antiquity”. He does not deny that this revival was symptomatic of the Renaissance, that “outbreak of the human spirit”. It is in fifteenth-century Italy, Pater explains, “that the interest of the Renaissance mainly lies”:

...not merely for its positive results in the things of the intellect and the imagination, its concrete works of art, its special and prominent personalities, with their profound aesthetic charm, but for its general spirit and character, for the ethical qualities of which it is a consummate type.¹

Here Pater finds the Renaissance within intellectual and material productions, but also within individuals and the “general spirit”; it is significant that for him the Renaissance manifests certain “ethical” qualities. In “Aucassin and Nicolette”, Pater expands on his notion of “an outbreak” to include the idea of *unity*:

¹ Pater, 1873, pp.xi-xii

Theories which bring into connection with each other modes of thought and feeling, periods of taste, forms of art and poetry, which the narrowness of men's minds constantly tends to oppose to each other, have a great stimulus for the intellect, and are almost always worth understanding. It is so with this theory of a Renaissance...¹

The Renaissance is understood as a dialectical “theory” in which traditional oppositions are interconnected; in this way it is remarkable for “its antinomianism, its spirit of rebellion and revolt against the moral and religious ideas of the age”. The Renaissance then is a complex, many-sided outbreak, a relativist “assertion of the liberty of the heart”, manifest within individuals and the general spirit.² This is encapsulated by the idea of perpetual flux, Pater quoting Heraclitus as an epigraph for the “Conclusion”, using motion as a metaphor for emancipation.³

Although Pater's idea of the Renaissance is idiosyncratic, it is also indebted to other nineteenth-century historians. As Bullen explains, the word had come to be taken as subversive, signifying an “ontological shift”, one whose meaning was unstable and whose morality was ambiguous. Ruskin's judgements on the Renaissance gave the concept new vitality, provoking reactions from Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), Symonds, Swinburne and Pater. In Ruskin's history of humanity's moral and imaginative development, we witness the corruption of the “Nature of the Gothic” by the “Nature of the Renaissance”. An “impersonal, rather terrifying force”, Ruskin's Renaissance tears through western civilisation destroying “all that was benevolent or benign”.⁴ Pater's Renaissance, Stein argues, is fundamentally different, being fractured and multilateral, not continuous, direct and morally explicit.⁵ In developing this position Pater was influenced by the French historian Jules Michelet (1798-

¹ Pater, 1873, p.3

² *Ibid*, p.15

³ Shuter, 1997, p.2; Pater, 1873, p.207; “All things are in motion, nothing at rest”, in Plato *Cratylus*, 402a (trans. Jowett) – Hill, 1980, p.451

⁴ Bullen, 1994, pp. 10-11, 134, 123-124

⁵ Stein, 1975, p.232

1874); his Renaissance was a reversal of the traditional Catholic interpretations such as Rio's, showing a renewed interest in Venetian painting whose sensuality had proved problematic. As Pater was to do, Michelet described the Renaissance as a time of unity, when "nature" was reconciled with "spirit", while for both writers the human imagination was a catalyst for historical development. In England alternatives to Ruskin could be found in Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), the chapter on "Hellenism and Hebraism" arguing that the Renaissance and Reformation were key moments of interaction in the title's dialectic; Swinburne's influence was to amplify the morally subversive element of the Renaissance myth.¹

Like Ruskin's, Pater's Renaissance implicitly relates to contemporary society, and both could be read as critiques of modern life.² However, unlike Ruskin's pessimistic *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), which begins with an apocalyptic warning, Pater's *The Renaissance* ends in exaltation, pleading with the reader to fight against the brevity of life, to transcend the flux of existence: "to maintain this ecstasy is success in life. Failure is to form habits..." This is a polemic discourse in which the *myth* of the Renaissance explains the origins of modernity, the use of the first person plurals "us" and "we", making our relationship with the past immediate.³ Indeed, the last three chapters of *The Renaissance* serve as a bridge from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries through to the nineteenth, the relationship between past and present being at its most urgent in the final pages of the book. For instance, "Winckelmann" ends with Pater urging his fellow artists to learn the Hegelian lesson of his history: "What modern art has to do in the service of culture is so to rearrange the details of modern life, so to reflect it, that it may satisfy the spirit. And what does the spirit need in the face of modern life? The sense of freedom".⁴

¹ Bullen, 1994, p. 159-160, 171, 248-255

² *Ibid.*, p.181

³ *Ibid.*, pp.156-157, 273

⁴ Pater, 1873, p.205

The biographical structure of *The Renaissance* demonstrates the importance for Pater of the individual. Pater's history, it has been argued, is "a series of instances of undergoing and transmitting influences" between personalities, while his early work has been linked with Fichte's notion of genius as the "manifestation of spirit in nature".¹ While Pater's emphasis on the Renaissance as a "spirit" may seem Hegelian, he rejects the Absolute, meaning "the self-perceiving mind unfolded in the history of art is human and individual".² The biographical studies in *The Renaissance* attempt to establish a relationship between artist and critic through objects; the historical figures being interpreted as personifications of Pater's Renaissance, for instance Mirandola, "who even in outward form and appearance seems an image of that inward harmony and completeness".³ Stein offers an attractive interpretation of this, suggesting *The Renaissance* is focused upon a recurring protagonist and so "reads like a novel": the hero is a "disembodied sentiment", who, like Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography* (1928) is realised in different bodies at different periods of history. Masterpieces also help to structure this novel, as in them the history of the Renaissance is concentrated and recapitulated. They are expressions of the artist as a "disembodied sentiment" and, as has been acknowledged, Pater often reduces his subjects to a single masterpiece.⁴

The importance of reading *The Renaissance* as studies of individuals, who personify aspects of the period, can be traced back to Pater's early ideas about the perfect personality, expressed in his unpublished lecture "Diaphaneité" (1864).⁵ In this paper the author delineates an ideal individual; defined by the word "simplicity", such personalities represent a perfect relation between physical and spiritual; they are therefore "a paradox in nature,

¹ Wallen, 2002, p.74; Tucker, 1991, p.115

² Iser, 1987, p.173

³ Pater, 1973, p.25

⁴ Stein, 1975, pp.225-227, 230-231

⁵ Tucker, 1991, p.115; Morgan, 2010, p.735; "Diaphaneité" was published posthumously in 1895

denying the first conditions of man's ordinary existence". More than human, they are "a phase of intellect, of culture"; the metaphors Pater uses to explain this are "transparency" and androgyny, "a moral sexlessness, a kind of impotence, an ineffectual wholeness of nature".¹ In 1868, the critic found his diaphanous spirits in Morris' poetry, imagining the characters as "people of a remote and unaccustomed beauty, somnambulistic, frail, androgynous, the light almost shining through them".² In the same year this fashionable, epicene ideal was connected with Giorgione in Swinburne's "Notes", which describe how the artist captures that "exquisite Venetian beauty" which "lifts male and female together".³

It is easy to imagine that Giorgione might have originally played the same role as Leonardo, Botticelli and the other genius-artists in *The Renaissance* in 1873. According to my reading, however, Crowe and Cavalcaselle disrupted Pater's relationship with Vasari's Giorgione, considered the author of the masterpiece the *Concert Champêtre*. "The School of Giorgione" as it is found in *The Renaissance* from 1888 is very different to the other chapters, lacking biographical focus, but the individual artist is still the centre: the difference is that the relationship between artist and critic is achieved through *indirect influence*; Giorgione may personify Venetian culture, but this culture, even modern culture, also personifies Giorgione.

The Critical Reception of Pater and *The Renaissance*

Between 1873 and 1876, Pater and his work were subject to intense moral and intellectual criticism, expressed in reviews of his book, within the University community, and through

¹ Pater, 1900, pp.216-220

² Pater, October 1868, p.302

³ Swinburne, 1868, p.34

Mallock's satire. Positive responses included Sidney Colvin (1845-1927) in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1 March 1873), who discussed *The Renaissance's* "great strengths"; editor of *Fortnightly* John Morely (1838-1923) described the style as "exquisite" (April 1873), while Symonds, in the *Academy* (15 March 1873), considered it "a masterpiece of the choicest and most delicate aesthetic criticism".¹ However, substantial reviews condemning the intellectual content were published by Emilia Francis Strong (1840-1904) in the *Westminster Review* (unsigned, April 1873), and by Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897) in *Blackwood's Magazine* (unsigned, November 1873).

Strong began with a significant criticism that the "title is misleading" because the "historical element is precisely that which is wanting, and its absence makes the weak place of the whole book". Pater, she writes, has failed to follow "the true scientific method", since by not studying art works in their social context they become "a kind of air-plant independent of ordinary sources of nourishment".² We know Pater took this review seriously as in the second edition he removed the word "History" from the title and cancelled a passage cited by Strong as being particularly inaccurate.³ Also, in the essays that followed *The Renaissance* Pater was particularly concerned to give due attention to the results of "scientific criticism".

Oliphant's review was even less sympathetic to "Mr Pater's pretentious volume", which she describes as a "mixture of sense and nonsense, of real discrimination and downright want of understanding".⁴ Oliphant considered the critical project to be superficial, especially its subjectivity and potential to project its own ideas on to artists. *The Renaissance* is therefore presented as "the very madness of fantastic modernism trying to foist its own refinements

¹ Qtd in Seiler, 1980, pp.52, 64, 57

² *Ibid.*, pp.71-72

³ Regarding Arsène Houssaye's *Léonardo de Vinci*, Paris, 1869; cf. *Ibid.*, p.73

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.86, 89

into the primitive mind.” Pater’s interpretation that Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa* expresses a history of “all modes of thought and life”, or that Botticelli’s paintings express religious scepticism, is “as alien to the spirit of a medieval Italian, as it is perfectly consistent with a delicate Oxford don in the latter half of the nineteenth century”.¹ These were powerful criticisms, and we will see that Pater tries hard to justify himself in the following years.

The reception of *The Renaissance* in 1873 shows that Pater’s work was considered not only intellectually, but also morally unsound. George Eliot (1819-1880) wrote to the editor of *Blackwood’s* (5 November 1873), explaining that she “agreed warmly” with Oliphant’s review, and that *The Renaissance* “seems to me quite poisonous in its false principles of criticism and false conception of life”.² This *conception* of life could be found in the “Conclusion”, the author calling upon his reader to live for the perfect aesthetic moment: “burn always with this hard gem-like flame”. Pater argues that “experience itself is the end”, and that we should not sacrifice any part of life to “abstract morality” or “religious and philosophical ideas” which are “only conventional” and “have no real claim upon us”.³ An unsigned review in the *Examiner* (12 April 1873), entitled “Modern Cyrenaicism”, characterises the “Conclusion” as hedonistic and describes Pater as an “apostle of the artistic apotheosis of lotus eating”.⁴ Pater’s justification for this moral autonomy had been a consciousness of “the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity”; Oliphant considered this simply a “new version of that coarse old refrain of the Epicureans”: *Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die*.⁵ Again we can see that these criticisms were taken seriously. Pater removed the “Conclusion” from the second edition in 1877, and when it was returned in 1888, there was a cautionary note attached. The “Conclusion”, Pater explains, had previously

¹ Qtd. in Seiler, 1980, pp.88-89

² *Ibid.*, pp.55, 92

³ Pater, 1873, pp.210-212

⁴ Qtd. in Seiler, 1980, p.76

⁵ Pater, 1873, p.211; qtd. in Seiler, 1980, p.91

been omitted because “I conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall”.¹

Pater had signed his book a “Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford”, and although published by Macmillan, it was printed at the university press. Consequently Pater received criticism from within the Oxford community. For instance, Chaplain at Brasenose, John Wordsworth (1843-1911), wrote to the author personally (17 March 1873), objecting to the suggestion that “no fixed principles either of religion or morality are certain, that the only thing worth living for is momentary enjoyment”.² In November, William Wolfe Capes (1834-1914), Pater’s tutor at Queen’s College, preached a sermon implicitly denouncing his former pupil’s “poor philosophy of life”, that bids us “console ourselves amid our short-lived pleasures”.³ Pater never advanced beyond his tutorship in Oxford. In February 1874 he was passed over for the Junior Proctorship at Brasenose. In February 1877 it was announced in *Academy* that Pater was one of four candidates, alongside Symonds, for the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, the note adding that “Mr Pater we hope to see some day in one of the Slade chairs of Fine Art”. By March Pater had withdrawn his name, followed in May by Symonds: we can assume because both were connected with homoerotic discourse. Although Pater did become Curator of the University Galleries in 1885, in the same year he failed in his attempt for the Slade Professorship.⁴

Although the reception of *The Renaissance* played a part in this, its contribution should not be exaggerated, as other events may have been more important. The non-realisation of the “virtually promised” Proctorship of 1874 has been linked to an incident, evidenced by letters

¹ Pater, 1888, p.246

² Qtd in. Seiler, 1980, pp.61-62

³ Qtd in. Donoghue, 1995, p.58

⁴ Seiler, 1980, pp.xv-xvi; qtd in. Court, 1980, p.16

between undergraduates and also a much later diary entry by one of Pater's biographers, Benson.¹ The sources suggest that there was an affair between Pater and a student at Balliol College, William Money Hardinge (1854-1916), and that letters revealing this relationship came into the possession of the classicist Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893), Master of Balliol. According to Benson's diary (November 1904), the poet Edmund Gosse (1849-1928) told him that Pater was summoned to Jowett and informed that "if ever Pater thought of standing for any university office" the incriminating letters would be produced.² Although there are differing interpretations of the evidence,³ in February 1874 it was certainly implied that Pater had had an improper relationship with a student. This reputation haunted Pater, and two years later in Mallock's caricature "Mr. Rose", was to be made a matter of public interest.

Mallock had been a student at Balliol, gaining two degrees between 1869 and 1874, and went on to have a long career as a reactionary critic. While he was still an undergraduate he began writing *The New Republic*, subtitled *Culture, Faith and Philosophy in an English Country House*, which was published serially in the *Belgravia* between June and December 1876, and as a book in 1877.⁴ In 1920 Mallock explained that he modelled his work on Plato's *The Republic* and the novels of Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866), introducing a circle of friends "who discuss questions of philosophy, religion, art, or the problems of social life, each character representing some prevalent view". He goes on to explain that the "characters in *The New Republic* were all portraits, though each was meant to be typical".⁵ These portraits were of major intellectuals at Oxford in the 1870s. For instance, Jowett became "the celebrated Dr. Jenkinson"; Arnold became Mr. Luke "the supercilious-looking man [...] the

¹ Inman, 1991, p.1

² Shuter, 1994, pp.486-487

³ Inman, 1991; Shuter, 1994; Donoghue, 1995

⁴ Inman, 1991, p.12

⁵ Qtd in. Tillotson, 1951, p.124

great critic and apostle of culture”; John Ruskin became Mr. Herbert with “that strange voice”.

Pater was represented by Mr. Rose: “the pale creature, with large moustache, looking out of the window at the sunset [...] He always speaks in an undertone, and his two topics are self-indulgence and art”.¹ It seems improbable Pater would have been unmoved for the caricature is so direct and personal. It is therefore surprising that Mallock’s influence on Pater’s writing is rarely mentioned. I will argue that *The New Republic* had a direct impact on “A Study of Dionysus”, but more importantly, “The School of Giorgione”.

The opening description identifies Mr. Rose as a hedonist, and throughout the June instalment of *The New Republic*, Mallock continues to parody the ethical positions in *The Renaissance*. The indulgent, effeminate Mr. Rose is juxtaposed with the zealous, moralistic Mr. Herbert, a caricature of Ruskin, who recounts a trip to the Royal Academy in which “my mind was literally dazzled by the infernal glare of corruption and vulgarity that was upon me from every side”. In complete contrast, Mr. Rose believes social dissolution is the “true condition of the most perfect life”.² A theme in *The New Republic* is the way Mr. Rose constantly gets interrupted, ignored and dismissed. This implies that intellectually Pater is inconsequential: “Yes,” said Laurence, not having listened to Mr. Rose, who spoke, indeed, somewhat low”.³ Finally, in the December instalment, the sleepy intellectual bursts out “Listen!” and becomes “much annoyed at these interruptions”.⁴

¹ Mallock, June 1876, pp.520-522

² *Ibid.*, p.533

³ Mallock, October 1876, p.440

⁴ Mallock, December 1876, pp.199, 205

Mr. Rose's contribution to the dialogue represents an insightful parody of *The Renaissance*:

For by the power of such art, all that was beautiful, strong, heroic, or tender in the past – all the actions, passions, faiths, aspirations of the world, that lie so many fathom deep in the years – float upwards to the tranquil surface of the present, and make our lives like what seems to me one of the loveliest things in nature, the iridescent film on the face of stagnant water.¹

Here Mallock perceptively mimics the rhythms of Pater's writing, while accentuating and inverting the characteristic metaphors of water and transparency. *The New Republic* also denigrates Pater's use of intertextual reference, one character pronouncing at the end of a monologue by Mr. Rose: "a knowledge of books as books [...] enriches conversation, by enabling us to talk by hints and allusions, and to convey so many more meanings than our actual words express".²

There is also a malign undercurrent to Mallock's satire of Pater in the homophobic insinuations and taint of sexual violence. In *The New Republic*, Mr. Rose has a pederastic relationship, reciting a sonnet "written by a boy of eighteen [...] whose education I may myself claim"; he then interprets the erotic poem as "a true and tender expression of the really Catholic spirit of modern aestheticism".³ In the October issue of *Belgravia* the satire becomes genuinely malignant when Mr. Rose exposes a sadistic nature by remembering "a delicious walk" by the Thames, in the hope he might see a prostitute commit suicide: "It was a night, I thought, well in harmony with despair".⁴ This desire, Mr. Rose explains, was born

¹ Mallock, September 1876, p.349

² Mallock, October 1876, p.444

³ Mallock, September 1876, pp.347-348; I would argue Mallock refers to Hardinge, whose poems on same-sex desire and alleged affair with Pater, led to his nine-month exclusion from the university – Inman, 1991, p.2

⁴ Mallock, October 1876, p.442

of Thomas Hood's (1799-1845) poem "The Bridge of Sighs" (1844), and Mallock's implication is that *The Renaissance* could inspire similar depravity.

Having reviewed the moral and intellectual criticism Pater was subjected to in the four years prior to the publication of "The School of Giorgione", it becomes clear why the author might have wished for a "permanent refuge" from the "dominant ideologies" of Victorian England. If we accept Teukolsky's argument that in the Giorgione essay Pater was rhetorically defending "the private",¹ then this must be seen as a response to the repressive, heteronormative culture as epitomised by Mallock. A major theme of conversation in *The New Republic* is the establishment of an ideal social order and it is clear that, in their own ways, Ruskin, Arnold, Symonds and Pater all share this aim. The Giorgione essay is no different in this respect. To the question, what is the essence of a good society, Mr. Rose is the first to answer: "Art".²

The Justification of Pater and *The Renaissance*

Pater remained sensitive to adverse criticism for the rest of his life, shown by his actively soliciting good reviews after this period.³ He reacted to the reception of *The Renaissance* in 1873 by making significant changes to the second edition in 1877. In the intervening years he had published five articles that qualified his metaphysical and ethical positions.⁴ The first four studies ("On Wordsworth", April 1874; "A Fragment on *Measure for Measure*", November 1874; "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone", November 1875; "Romanticism",

¹ Teukolsky, 2002, p.152, 169

² Mallock, July 1876, p.150

³ Seiler, 1980, p.11; Donoghue, 1995, p.36

⁴ Qtd. in Court, p.350 (Bizot, R., 1972)

September 1876) were an explanation and explication of ideas already contained within *The Renaissance*. These essays functioned as a public self-justification while also continuing his critical project. In the fifth essay of the series, “A Study of Dionysus”, published late in 1876, the tone of the debate changes. “The School of Giorgione” should be read as the sixth essay in this series.

In his writing on Shakespeare, for example, Pater demonstrated that *Measure for Measure*, which “might well pass for the central expression of his moral judgements”, is an artistic investigation into the relativity of ethics. In this play, he argues, the dramatist recreates the “intricacy and subtlety of the moral world itself, the difficulty of seizing the true relations of so complex a material, the difficulty of just judgement, of judgement that shall not be unjust”.¹

Both “Demeter and Persephone” and “Romanticism” are intellectual responses to Arnold’s “Hebraism and Hellenism” (1869), a dialectic based loosely on an opposition between the Greek and Semitic religions; the Hellenic *idea* being “to see things as they really are”, the Hebraic *idea* being “conduct and obedience”. As a dialectic of mind, the “governing idea of Hellenism is *spontaneity of consciousness*; that of Hebraism, *strictness of conscience*”.²

Pater’s “Demeter and Persephone” is a scholarly exploration of “the mechanisms at work in the birth and development of ancient myths”. Methodologically, the essay emulates Max Müller’s (1823-1900) science of comparative philology, but differed in its use of “the humanistic language of sympathy, where Müller had used the scientific one of *metaphoric transformation*”. In “Demeter and Persephone”, Pater argues that poetry can be constructed

¹ Pater, November 1874, pp.652, 658

² Arnold, 1954, p.503

as an alternative to science, interpreting the natural world by using the imagination as its tool.¹ “Romanticism” was written in response to an anonymous article in the *Quarterly Review*, “Wordsworth and Gray” (January 1876), in which the concept of Romanticism is presented as a disease; what are called the “emasculated principles” of Pater’s writing are used to illustrate the way in which they encourage “effeminate desires”.² To challenge this view, Pater takes up a traditional art critical dualism, “classical and romantic”, offering a definition which echoes Arnold’s dialectic; “the essentially classical element is that quality of order in beauty”, in opposition to the romantic “addition of strangeness to beauty”. This in turn relates to the matter-form dialectic within “*the condition of music*”, Pater explaining that classicists “start with form” and follow “well-recognised types in art and literature”, while romantics “start with an original, untried matter, still in fusion”, which they hold to be “the essence of their work”. However, romantic *matter* after it changes into *form* “becomes classical in its turn”, and so Pater argues for the idea that “all good art was romantic in its day”.³ By his own definition, *The Renaissance* was a romantic work of art;⁴ by defending the romantic tradition, Pater was defending artists like Giorgione, but implicitly himself also.

“A Study of Dionysus: The Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew”, published in the *Fortnightly* in December 1876, shows some dramatic changes. It is an impassioned and poetic composition, which seems to strike out against the indulgent, morbid aesthete Mr. Rose through a lavishness of imagery and argumentation. This, I would suggest, shows a direct engagement with *The New Republic*; however, the essay does not function as self-justification, but instead appears as a self-affirmation. Pater offered in “Dionysus” an amplification of his persona, along the lines of Mallock’s caricature, being over-aesthetic, homoerotic, and even violent. I

¹ Evangelista, 2002, pp.107-108; 113-117

² Inman, 1990, pp.219-220

³ Pater, November 1876, pp.65, 69-70

⁴ Carrier, 1991, p.138

would suggest that “The School of Giorgione” should be read as a continuation of this intertextual engagement, although returning to a more controlled style, and offering a more considered response. In one way, the essays on Dionysus and Giorgione intensify Pater’s positions; in the later essay, however, the affirmation, absolution and justification are systematic and reflexive.

The next four parts of my analysis follow the dialectical structure of the essay itself (as outlined in the introduction). I will take key ideas explained within each section of “The School of Giorgione”, putting them in the wider context of *The Renaissance* and Pater’s thought.

PART 1

Thesis: Aesthetic Criticism

“All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music.”¹ This highly influential and much discussed maxim seems strange in a writer famed for his long, clause-filled sentences. Despite having been a focus for critical debate and source of artistic inspiration for over a century, I want to return to the fundamental question, how does it relate to Giorgione? I will argue that this “musical law”, as Pater terms it, was designed as a resolution to Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s problematisation of the artist.

Pater arrived at the idea of an aspiration to musicality through his attempt to explain two paintings: the Pitti *Concert* and the Louvre *Concert Champêtre* (Figs.A12, A1). The importance of *paragone* to Renaissance art theory and Giorgione’s painting would have been apparent from reading Vasari and the *New History*. In this context, the fact that both paintings represented music, and that music was a common theme of Giorgionesque subject matter, became extremely significant for Pater. From his knowledge of the German idealist aesthetics that influenced him when writing *The Renaissance*, Pater made a connection between Giorgione and Schiller’s *Aesthetic Education*. The full formation of his idea of a “musical law” was generated by the desire to explain the power of the paintings, in the wake of Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s arguments against Giorgione’s authorship. The concept “*the condition of music*” is so crucial, that it deserves to be considered in some detail. I will discuss Pater’s early relativism and thinking about science, before establishing a context between the “Preface” and the “Conclusion” of *The Renaissance*. Having analysed Pater’s argument, I

¹ Pater, 1877, p.528

will explain the intertextual system supporting the “musical law”, investigating how it combines positivist and idealist methodologies.

The Idealist Science of Aestheticism

“The School of Giorgione” has been described as “suffused with theory”, but scholarship has often separated this theory from the artist, reading Pater as having renegotiated the subject into a discussion of the ahistorical Giorgionesque.¹ The theoretical part of the essay is therefore considered self-contained and self-referential. Instead, I would like to contend that “*the condition of music*” emerges from an engagement with Giorgione and the scientific criticism of Crowe and Cavalcaselle. In this way, the “musical law” is designed not only as a measure of Venetian painting, but also as a response to science as represented by the *New History*.

Pater was a modern thinker and a modernist writer; his artistic, intellectual and ethical principles were radical. From his first published essay, “Coleridge’s Writings” (unsigned, *Westminster Review*, January 1866), we find a philosophy that is essentially sceptical and relativist, but with a commitment to empiricism.

The man of science asks, Are absolute principles attainable? What are the limits of knowledge? The answer he receives from science itself is not ambiguous. What the moralist asks is, Shall we gain or lose by surrendering human life to the relative spirit? Experience answers, that the dominant tendency of life is to turn ascertained truth into a dead letter – to make us all phlegmatic servants of routine. The relative spirit, by dwelling constantly on the more fugitive conditions or circumstances of

¹ Brake, 1994, pp.33-34

things, breaking through a thousand rough and brutal classifications, and giving elasticity to inflexible principles, begets an intellectual finesse, of which the ethical result is a delicate and tender justness in the criticism of human life.¹

With more clarity and less circumlocution than he would use later in his career, Pater argued: “Modern thought is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the ‘relative’ spirit in place of the ‘absolute’”. The fundamental principal of his criticism being, therefore, that “nothing is or can be rightly known except relatively under conditions”. For Pater, this type of understanding was scientific, and had ethical implications:

The moral world is ever in contact with the physical world; the relative spirit has invaded moral philosophy from the ground of the inductive sciences. There it has started a new analysis of the relations of body and mind, good and evil, freedom and necessity. Hard and abstract moralities are yielding to a more exact estimate of the subtlety and complexity of our life.²

The argument in “Coleridge” is that adopting the *relative* as opposed to *absolute* “spirit” equates to a recognition of “conditions”, of intellectual and ethical complexity. In the “Conclusion” and “Preface” of *The Renaissance*, Pater would illustrate the invasion of moral philosophy by the inductive sciences and expand upon his critical aim of analysing “conditions”.

The “Conclusion” of *The Renaissance* was originally the conclusion to Pater’s essay on William Morris, first published in October 1868. When Pater edited the text for his 1873 book, he removed two significant passages, the first of which explained the function of the opening paragraphs:

¹ Pater, January 1866, pp.131-132

² *Ibid*, p.107

It is a strange transition from earthly paradise to the sad-coloured world of abstract philosophy. But let us accept that challenge; let us see what modern philosophy, when it is sincere, really does say about human life and the truth we can attain in it, and the relation of this truth to the desire of beauty.¹

For *The Renaissance*, Pater replaced this with an epigraph in Greek stating Heraclitus' axiom of perpetual flux.² The second cancelled passage passed judgement on what philosophy has to say about life, as will be discussed below. The "Conclusion" begins by splitting the world into two: "things and principles of things", both of which are understood as "inconstant". Pater then elaborates on this dualism as a structure for the opening paragraphs: "Let us begin with that which is without – our physical life".

Pater starts his representation of material reality by asking the reader to imagine a particular moment, to fix in their mind one of life's "more exquisite intervals", perhaps the "delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat". He then poses the rhetorical question: "What is the whole physical life in that moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names?" Physical reality is the domain of science, Pater describing it as "a perpetual motion" of "elements", a process "which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces". The reader's body becomes part of this motion, "the passage of the blood, the waste and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of the brain by every ray of light"; imagery which illustrates Thomas Huxley's (1825-1895) idea of "endless modification" in "On Improving Natural Knowledge" (1866).³ In this way, Pater includes the individual in his scientific description of nature, the human figure being simply "a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it." Pater understands the

¹ Pater, October 1868, p.309

² Plato, *Cratylus*, 402A – Hill, 1980, p.451

³ Hill, 1980, pp.453-454

physical life as “flame-like”, as a “concurrence” of “forces”, arguing that it is fundamentally transient, actual only for a moment, before the inevitable dissemination.¹

In Pater’s description of “the inward world of thought and feeling”, the reader’s mind mirrors their physical life, although the perpetual motion is “more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring.” In our mental life, “experience seems to bury us”, the material life “pressing upon us with a sharp importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves”. However, when we reflect upon experience, “each object is loosed into a group of impressions – colour, odour, texture – in the mind of the observer”. Following George Berkeley (1685-1753) and Kant,² instead of a world “in the solidity with which language invests”, the reader’s mental life becomes a series of “impressions” that Pater describes as “unstable, flickering, inconsistent”, essentially “extinguished with our consciousness of them”. The focus of Pater’s description is on the life of individual mind: “Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world”. Again temporality is crucial: mental “impressions” like physical “concurrences” are “limited by time”, and therefore, “as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also”. The only solidity offered the reader is the idea of the *moment*, which Pater describes as “a relic more or less fleeting”. From this combination of physical and mental reality, Pater argues that “what is real in our life” has “ceased to be” and is knowable only in the sense that it is historicised. The present moment is simply “that continual vanishing away, that strange perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves”.³

In 1868, but *not* 1873, Pater drew this conclusion: “Such thoughts seem desolate at first; at times all the bitterness of life seems concentrated in them”. In the cancelled passage, Pater

¹ Pater, 1873, pp.207-208

² Hill, 1980, p.454

³ Pater, 1873, pp.208-210

uses the metaphor of “one washed out beyond the bar in a sea at ebb, losing even his personality”, the individual life becoming an inevitable and unceasing process: “Struggling, as he must, to save himself, it is himself that he loses at every moment”.¹ Without this reflection, in 1873, there is then a sharp change of tone, Wollheim considering the opening dualism to be “bracketed”; as readers “we overhear what it says”.² This dialectic analysis was necessary to transfer speculative thought to human life, Pater explaining that the function “of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit, is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation”. Like science, life is about observation, Pater arguing that the object of enquiry should be the autonomous aesthetic moment.³ The “Conclusion” tells its reader that “Every moment some form grows perfect” and therefore “experience itself, is the end”. With a sense of life’s brevity the individual must ask: “How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?” The pressure to “maintain this ecstasy” is intense, “gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch”. The lesson is that we must strive towards these *moments*, “that seem by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free”.⁴

In the “Conclusion” we witness what Monsman describes as the “metamorphosis of doubt into creed”, a shift from Scepticism to Epicureanism.⁵ Yet this aesthetic creed is an anti-philosophy, valuing the concrete over the abstract.⁶ “What we have to do”, Pater argues, “is to be for ever curiously testing new opinions [...] never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of Comte or of Hegel, or of our own”.⁷ The final statements “make art the ultimate value of

¹ Pater, October 1868, pp.310-311; Morgan, 2010, p.732

² Wollheim, 1973, p.164

³ Cf. Iser, W., *Walter Pater: Die Autonomie des Asthetischen*, 1960

⁴ Pater, 1873, p.211

⁵ Monsman, 1980, p.3

⁶ Williams, 1989, p.189

⁷ Pater, 1873, p.211

human existence,”¹ or in Pater’s words: “the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art’s sake has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake”.² It seems that in the idea of *l’art pour l’art*, Pater locates the possibility of autonomy; art allows us to transcend the flux of existence, to regain the solidity that, according to his opening analysis, had been lost.³

Morgan has recently argued that Pater questions the idea of autonomy and that in his work “art reveals, perhaps tragically, that we are unfree”.⁴ Pater’s philosophy was always relative; he never abandoned the scepticism of Hume and Mill, or accepted completely Hegel’s view that art is a sensual manifestation of the absolute spirit.⁵ I would argue that Pater is not concerned with the *reality* of absolute autonomy, but its *possibility*. In “Winckelmann” he does not search for freedom, but a “rough sense of freedom” or “an equivalent for the sense of freedom”.⁶ Although Pater rejects the absolute, it nonetheless functions in his criticism as the standard by which all things are measured; absolute autonomy is represented by the image of the “horizon”. This metaphor can be found throughout his career; in the “Conclusion” we search for “a lifted horizon”, and later in *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), Marius searches for “a lifting, from time to time, of the actual horizon”.⁷ In “Coleridge”, the poet’s career is interpreted as “a disinterested struggle” against relativism, as a failed attempt “to apprehend the absolute; to affirm it effectively;” from this Pater draws the conclusion that “perhaps one day we may come to forget the horizon, with full knowledge to be content with what is here

¹ Iser, 1987, p.31

² Pater, 1873, p.213

³ Iser, 1987, p.31

⁴ Morgan, 2010, p.748

⁵ Wollheim, 1973, p.159

⁶ Pater, 1873, pp.205-206

⁷ Pater, 1885, Vol.2, p.109

and now”.¹ In “The School of Giorgione” it is not so clearly metaphorical. It sits in the background of a painted landscape, “the one peak of rich blue above the horizon”,² a suggestive reminder that, maybe, art can resolve the dualism between form and content, sense and intellect, material and spiritual realities.

Perhaps this is not as shocking as once it was, but for Victorian England the “Conclusion” was radical. It came back to haunt Pater in *The New Republic*, where Mr. Rose proclaims: “the aim of life is life; and life consists in the consciousness of exquisite living”.³ It also came back in a different form through Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), in which the character Lord Henry Wotton, “in his low, musical voice”, delivers some very similar advice to the young Dorian: “It is in the brain, and the brain only, that the great sins of the world take place”.⁴ This is the ethical implication of “Conclusion”, not necessarily intended, but certainly sanctioned by Pater’s anti-philosophy. The suggestion in *The Renaissance* is that ethical judgements should be made aesthetically,⁵ and Pater’s discussion of aesthetic judgement takes place in the “Preface”, and later in “The School of Giorgione”.

It would have been hard to predict the passionate ending of *The Renaissance* from its tranquil opening, the “Preface”, written four years later in 1872. Pater begins by defining the concept of aesthetic criticism after which, as has been mentioned, he explains his notion of Renaissance, excuses the study of Winckelmann, and forwards the idea of cultural unity. In the first two paragraphs of the “Preface”, Pater outlines his objectives by rejecting Ruskin’s attempts to define beauty, and by displacing Arnold’s critical ideal.⁶ Enshrining subjectivity,

¹ Pater, January 1866, pp.108, 132

² Pater, October 1877, p.537

³ Mallock, June 1876, p.527

⁴ Wilde, 2006, p.19

⁵ Bizot, 1973, p.136

⁶ Wallen, 1999, p.1034; Brake, 1994, p.30

the “Preface” draws analogies between idealist and positivist methods, between the function of the scientist and the aesthetic critic.

The first sentence signals an intertextual relationship with Ruskin’s *Modern Painters*:¹ “Many attempts have been made by writers on art and poetry to define beauty in the abstract, to express it in the most general terms, to find a universal formula for it”. Pater rejects this as a critical aim on the basis that: “Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness”. Instead, Pater stresses the singularity of beauty, “the aim of the true student of aesthetics” being to discover “the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it”.² Pater’s relativism did not permit him to accept Ruskin’s “Ideas of Truth” (that truth in art is fidelity to nature), or his “Ideas of Beauty” (that anything that gives pleasure is beautiful, and that “no further reason can be given” than it be the will of God).³ Instead, the aesthetic critic disavows any search for universal truth and “need not trouble himself with the abstract question what beauty is in itself, or what its exact relation to truth or experience, – metaphysical questions, as unprofitable as metaphysical questions elsewhere”.⁴ Although the “Preface” seems to reject much of *Modern Painters*, they share the subject of beauty in art, while the search for the “best thoughts” parallels Ruskin’s standard of criticism, “the greatest number of the greatest ideas”,⁵ and in general Pater stops short of a total renunciation.

Three years before Pater’s first essay, Arnold, then Professor of Poetry at Oxford, published his *Essays in Criticism* in 1865. This included “The Function of Criticism at the Present

¹ Hill, 1980, p.294

² Pater, 1873, p.vii

³ Ruskin, 1843, p.31

⁴ Pater, 1873, p.viii

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.xiv; Ruskin, 1843, p.14

Time” which argues that in France and Germany “the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is”. Arnold advocated an objective critical ideal through the method of “*disinterestedness*”, or “a free play of the mind”, the critic standing above “the absorbing and brutalising influence of our passionate material progress”.¹ In the “Preface” Pater directly quotes “The Function of Criticism”:

‘To see the object as in itself it really is’, has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever; and in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one’s object as it really is, is to know one’s own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly.²

This subjective and impressionist theory is opposed to Arnold’s self-effacing and disinterested critical ideal;³ Pater offers an ironic inversion, aligning his method with physics, ethics and mathematics:

What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to *me*? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? and if so what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence and under its influence? The answers to these questions are the original facts with which the aesthetic critic has to do; and, as in the study of light, of morals, of number, one must realise such primary data for one’s self, or not at all.⁴

Pater’s relationship with Arnold and Ruskin was complicated. All were interested in the quality of ideas, but Arnold, like Pater, rejects abstract metaphysical speculation. However, while Arnold and Ruskin both assume a level of objectivity in criticism, the “Preface” is devotedly subjective. This principle can be heard in a claim that strangely foreshadows

¹ Arnold, 1954, pp.351-353, 359-360

² Pater, 1873, p.viii

³ Brake, 1994, p.30

⁴ Pater, 1873, p.viii

Morellian-scientific ideas: “What is important, then, is not that the critic should possess a correct abstract definition of beauty for the intellect, but a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved”.¹ While some scholars have recently replaced the term “aesthetic criticism” with “subjective criticism”,² I feel this is a misrepresentation. First, both the “Preface” and the Giorgione essay attempt to emulate scientific method; second, Pater’s ideas are based on empiricist scepticism, and ironically like Morelli, the first step to objective results is therefore an acknowledgement of subjectivity.

In the “Preface” aesthetic objects are described as “receptacles of so many powers or forces”, containing, “like natural elements, so many virtues or qualities”. In fact, art works are themselves “powers or forces”, each of “a more or less peculiar or unique kind.”³ Aesthetic objects are understood as products of nature, and Pater therefore identifies the critic with the chemist, both seeking to disengage and distinguish.⁴ Pater uses the language of chemistry, “impressions” becoming “facts” and “data”, each art work having a unique “formula”.⁵ The aesthetic objects of *The Renaissance* are individual historical figures, Pater making the first question of aesthetic criticism: “In whom did the stir, the genius, the sentiment of the period find itself?” As an example of this type of analysis, Pater considers Wordsworth, arguing that in some of his poems the artist’s “genius” has been “crystallised”, and that its “active principle” is “that strange mystical sense of a life in natural things, and of man’s life as a part of nature”.⁶ Each of the biographies in *The Renaissance* represents a similar dialectic “formula”; the “Michelangelesque” is encapsulated in the combination of “sweetness and strength”, while “the two elementary forces in Leonardo’s genius” can be understood as:

¹ Pater, 1873, p.x

² Teukolsky, 2009, pp.104, 268 n.8

³ Pater, 1873, pp.viii-ix

⁴ Morgan, 2010, p.737

⁵ Hill, 1980, p.296

⁶ Pater, 1873, p.x-xi

“Curiosity and the desire of beauty”.¹ In “The School of Giorgione” it is a dialectic of form and content, Pater articulating the artist’s spirit, the Giorgionesque, in “*the condition of music*”.

Since “Coleridge” of 1866, Pater had expressed his principles of criticism by using scientific terminology, his aim being “to classify” artistic moments and “to test” the completeness of expression, which is understood as “the positive, or concrete side of criticism”.² However, Pater does not simply appropriate language, he also idealises scientific method, making it a process of the mind, seen most dramatically in the “musical law”. This sublation of positivism by idealism overcomes the “orthodoxy of Comte or of Hegel” and structures the definition of aesthetic criticism in “The School of Giorgione”.

The word which reveals this interaction between science and aestheticism is “conditions”; this is an idea that is essential to the “musical law”, but which Leighton has argued is also representative of “the shifting of possible meanings” in Pater’s work. In “Coleridge” it defines knowledge as contingent, while in “Poems by William Morris” it determines the aesthetic: “Here, under this strange complex of conditions, as in some medicated air, exotic flowers of sentiment expand”.³ In the “Preface” Pater’s analogy with the chemist demonstrates that “the function of the aesthetic critic” is to explain a sensation by analysing “under what conditions it is experienced”.⁴ This is a practical word for Pater, which I would argue manages to encapsulate complexity and serves as an epistemological qualification, “conditions” being simultaneously physical and intellectual, material and spiritual, as in “*the condition of music*”.

¹ Pater, 1873, pp.62, 102

² Pater, January 1868, p.123

³ Leighton, 2002, pp.14-20; Pater, October 1868, p.302

⁴ Pater, 1873, p.ix

Pater's Musical Law

In “The School of Giorgione” Pater redefines or re-expresses his concept of aesthetic criticism.¹ Although this theory is ahistorical, and therefore could be related equally to Victorian painting or Greek sculpture, I would like to keep in mind its importance for Pater's analysis of sixteenth-century Venetian painting and so his image of Giorgione. It should be recognised that aesthetic criticism, in this context, incorporates the scientific, technical analysis of Crowe and Cavalcaselle. The creation of a “musical law” can be seen as a reaction to positivist historical method, exemplified in England by Henry Thomas Buckle's (1821-1862) *History of Civilisation in England* (1857 and 1862), which followed the philosophy and historiography of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), in aiming “to discover laws in the historical process”.² In France, within the discipline of art history, Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893) also attempted to define deterministic laws in his *Philosophie de l'art* (1865), and Inman has briefly discussed the importance of this work in “The School of Giorgione”.³ By emulating science, Pater intellectually justifies his criticism, making it theoretically systematic, but still relativist and conditional.

In 1877 the essay began with a short, direct statement: “To regard all products of art as various forms of poetry is the mistake of much popular criticism”.⁴ In 1888, when the essay became part of *The Renaissance*, this was changed to a long, heavily qualified suggestion:

It is the mistake of much popular criticism to regard poetry, music, and painting – all the various products of art – as but translations into different languages of one and the

¹ Inman, 1990, p.384

² Fuchs, 2000, p.232

³ Inman, 1990, p.389-390

⁴ Pater, October 1877, p.526

same fixed quantity of imaginative thought, supplemented by certain technical qualities of colour, in painting – of sound, in music – of rhythmical words, in poetry.¹

Much of the impact has been lost as Pater combines the first two sentences of his 1877 article. The meaning has been retained, although the subject has been relocated from poetry to “imaginative thought”. The 1877 and 1888 texts return together in the metaphors of language and translation:

In this way, the sensuous element in art, and with it almost everything in art that is essentially artistic, is made a matter of indifference; and a clear apprehension of the opposite principle, that the sensuous material of each art brings with it a special phase or quality of beauty, untranslatable into the forms of any other, an order of impressions distinct in kind, is the beginning of all true aesthetic criticism.²

Again, this revolves around a sense-intellect dialectic, Pater emphasising the fundamentally different sensual “impressions” sculpture or painting produce. These are disregarded by “popular criticism” in favour of the intellectual, making all art necessarily linguistic and literary.

For Pater, this dialectic is synthesised in a cognitive faculty: “art addresses not pure sense, still less the pure intellect, but the ‘imaginative reason’”. However, the proviso that art reaches the intellect “through the senses”, implies that sense is primary. Next, artistic mediums are defined by their material limitations; each art, therefore:

...having its own peculiar and incommunicable sensuous charm, has its own special mode of reaching the imagination, its own special responsibilities to its material. One

¹ Pater, 1888, p.135

² Pater, October 1877, p.526

of the functions of aesthetic criticism is to define these limitations, to estimate the degree in which a given work of art fulfils its responsibilities to its special material...

Pater then gives examples of this type of discrimination; in painting the critic must distinguish “true pictorial charm”, which is more than “mere poetical thought or sentiment” or “technical skill in colour or design”; in music, it is “the musical charm, that essential music, which presents no words”.¹

Pater describes these ideas as “a philosophy of the variations of the beautiful”, and he directly cites as an important precedent in the “analysis of the spheres of sculpture and poetry” by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) in his *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766). However, “a true appreciation”, the reader is told, “is possible only in the light of a whole system of such art-casuistries”. In “*the condition of music*”, this is exactly what Pater does, creating a system of theories, combing ideas of limitation with the principle of *Anders-streben*, reaching for the truth of Giorgione. As “what may be called literary interest” dominates “popular judgements”, most people “have never caught sight” of “true pictorial quality”, by which is meant the “creative handling of line and colour only”. This is “quite independent” of literary content and exemplified by “Dutch painting, as often also in the works of Titian and Veronese”.² As we will see, the significance of formal qualities is central to Pater’s definition of Venetian painting.

Pater uses the Vasarian *disegno-colorito* dialectic in his definition of the formal aspect of painting. First is “the *drawing* – the design projected from that peculiar pictorial temperament” in which “all poetry, every idea however abstract or obscure, floats up as visible scene or image”. Second is “the *colouring* – that weaving as of imperceptible gold

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.526

² Pater, October 1877, pp.526-527

threads of light” which imbue “the whole fabric of the thing with a new, delightful physical quality”. This division is elaborated with specific Venetian examples: *drawing* is “the arabesque traced in the air by Tintoret’s flying figures, by Titian’s forest branches;” *colouring* is “the magic conditions of light and hue in the atmosphere of Titian’s *Lace-girl*”.¹ The word “conditions”, combined with “magic”, functions to overcome the complexity of optical effects and the difficulty of describing them. This *colouring* and *drawing*, Pater argues, must first “delight the sense; delight it as directly and sensuously as a fragment of Venetian glass”, and it is this “delight” that is the “medium” which communicates “whatever poetry or science may lie beyond it in the intention of the composer”. This observation suggests that:

In its primary aspect, a great picture has no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a moment, on one’s wall or floor, is itself indeed a space of such falling light, caught as the colours are caught in an Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself.²

To articulate sensuousness, Pater evokes fashionable, domestic Persian decoration; he also indirectly references *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, utilising Gautier’s comparison of a canvas by Giorgione with “Un des angles lumineux que le soleil dessinait sur le mur”.³ However, Pater argues that in art, the light of the sun is trapped and improved upon, changed from simple sense data, to the vehicle of thought. In this way, the critic “may trace the coming of poetry into painting by fine gradations upwards”. The reader is given the example of Japanese fan-

¹ This painting was exhibited at the Manchester Exhibition in 1857, at the British Institution in 1862, and at Burlington House in 1873. It was disattributed by Crowe and Cavalcaselle in 1877, and sold into a private collection in 1881 – Hill, 1980, p.386

² Pater, October 1877, p.527

³ Gautier, Vol.2, 1837, p.8

painting; “first, only abstract colour; then, just a little interfused sense of the poetry of flowers;” the ascent culminating in the true artistic expression of Titian’s *Bacchus and Ariadne* or *Presentation of the Virgin* (Figs.R12, R13).¹ Instead of using abstract language to describe the formal qualities in painting, Pater aligns Venetian masterpieces with the cultural trend of “Japonisme”, and therefore, notions of “exoticism, sensuality, novelty”.² Pater reevaluates Western traditions through an association with the experience of Eastern decorative art.

Pater then seems to contradict this medium-specific analysis by proposing a theory that undercuts ideas of artistic constraint:

...in its special mode of handling its given material, each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art, by what German critics term an *Anders-streben*, a partial alienation from its own limitations, by which the arts are able, not indeed to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally to lend each other new forces.

Here, as in the “Preface”, art works are “forces” defined by their “condition”; their reciprocity is “observed” by the critic, not a physical transmutation. That this is strictly rhetorical is shown by the subsequent list of comparisons in which one medium “aims at” or “seems to be” another. Music is analogous to imagery, while architecture also fulfils “the conditions of a picture”, yet Pater says these are “more than mere figures of speech”.³ Pater himself seems to strive beyond the limitations of language, these tropes denying their own “condition”.

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.527

² Guth, 2011, p.110

³ Pater, October 1877, pp.527-528

From this, Pater argues that music is the art which all other arts *literally* want to be; “the object of the great *Anders-streben* of all art, of all that is essentially artistic”:

All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music. For while in all other works of art it is possible to distinguish the matter from the form, and the understanding can always make this distinction, yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it. That the mere matter of a poem, for instance, its subject, its given incidents or situation; that the mere matter of a picture, the actual circumstances of an event, the actual topography of a landscape, should be nothing without the form, the spirit of the handling; that this form, this mode of handling, should become an end in itself, should penetrate every part of the matter; – this is what all art constantly strives after, and achieves in different degrees.¹

The “typical, or ideally consummate art”, Pater argues, negates the mind’s distinction between *form* and *matter*, and thereby, in itself, unifies the sense-intellect dialectic.² Pater will go on to demonstrate that “*the condition of music*” is the “essence” of the Giorgionesque.

Pater says that his “abstract language will become clear enough” with specific examples, and he offers his reader “an actual landscape”, by Alphonse Legros (1837-1911):³

...we see a long white road lost suddenly on the hill-verge. That is the matter of one of M. Legros’ etchings: but in this etching it is informed by an indwelling solemnity of expression, seen upon it or half-seen, within the limits of an exceptional moment, or caught from his own mood perhaps; but which he maintains as the very essence of the thing throughout his work.

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.528

² This is particularly interesting in relation to Vasari having criticised the Fondaco frescoes for their lack of narrative content: “et io per me non l’ho mai intese, né anche, per dimanda che si sia fatta, ho trovato chi l’intenda”; Vasari, Vol IV 1976, p.44

³ Probably *Le Coup de Vent*, shown at the Salon of 1875 – Bullen, 2008, p.98

Again the emphasis is on the aesthetic instant, and Pater gives another example, isolating the way “a momentary tint of stormy light” may be expressive of “the deep places of the imagination”. The metaphor of weaving is reused, light effects being represented as “gold thread”. In this way Pater demonstrates how a real landscape may become “like a picture.”¹ The implication is that it is *not* like a poem.

Pater argues that the “material details” of these landscapes have “little salient character”, the representation being “easily absorbed, or saturated by that informing expression of passing light”. The relationship between “actual” and “painted” landscape, for Pater, is a *matter-form* relationship, and he argues that French riversides are superior to Swiss valleys in “conditions of the picturesque”, because the “mere topography, the simple material, counts for so little”. Therefore the artist’s use of light, the *form*, has “easy work in tuning and playing music” upon the *matter*. However, Pater explains that it was not so *easy* for Giorgione’s school, because the “material conditions” of the Venetian landscape are “hard and definite;” even so, this school was “little burdened” by their *matter*. Instead, the artists “retain certain abstracted elements only”, and so *form* in the colouring, transforms “its actual details” into “the notes of a music which duly accompanies the presence of their men and women”. These landscapes are described “as a country of the pure reason or half-imaginative memory”.² Giorgionesque painting “*aspires towards the condition of music*” in the way it unifies figure and landscape, form and content, sense and intellect, addressing itself to the “imaginative reason”.

Following this is a discussion of expression in poetry, defined by the fact that it “works with words” and so attends “in the first instance to the mere intelligence”. Pater argues that the “quite legitimate function” of poetry may be “moral or political aspiration”. In these cases “it

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.528

² *Ibid.*, pp.528-529

is easy enough for the understanding to distinguish between the matter and the form”. However, in the ideal type of poetry “this distinction is reduced to its *minimum*”. Lyrical poetry is therefore the most complete because the critic cannot “detach the matter from the form, without the deduction of something from the matter itself”. To achieve this reduction poetry requires a “suppression or vagueness” of subject matter so that “definite meaning almost expires, and reaches us in ways not distinctly traceable by the understanding”. Pater offers William Blake (1757-1827) as an example, but also a song from *Measure for Measure*, in which “the whole play seems to pass for a moment into an actual strain of music”.¹ This is also a reflexive reference, making “*the condition of music*” ethically significant; Pater considers the complex subject of the play, the “intricacy and subtlety of the moral world”, is best expressed by music.

The “musical law” becomes implicitly a moral law when Pater writes that this “principle” applies to anything “artistic”: furniture, dress, “life itself”. The value “of gesture and speech” is therefore “a mysterious grace and attractiveness in the doing of them”. They have become “ends in themselves”, underlining that aesthetic criticism should be understood in a philosophical context.² The inclusion of “the details of daily intercourse” and “what is called the fashion of a time”, could be read as being determined by Grosvenor Aestheticism, but is equally compressible when related to Kugler and Burckhardt. These art historians paid attention to costume in their interpretation of Giorgione’s subject matter as a reflection of contemporary Venetian life,³ ideas developed by Pater. The aspiration to “the condition of music” as found in Giorgionesque painting has become, therefore, an ethical condition, a

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.529 – It should be acknowledged that Rossetti took this as the subject of his 1870 painting *Mariana* (Aberdeen Art Gallery) – Prettejohn, 2007, p.321, n.88

² Pater, October 1877, pp.529-530

³ Kugler, 1837, pp.301-302; Burckhardt, 1855, pp.960-961

state of freedom, in which *means* are *ends*, and *ends* are *means*, where *form* is *matter*, and *matter* is *form*, a “condition” that exists not in the object itself, but the mind of the observer.

Pater repeats – there is a lot of repetition in “The School of Giorgione” – that art strives to be independent of the intelligence, to be pure perception, to be free of its responsibilities. This is then related to the same cognitive faculty described in the “Preface”, as in complete poetic or pictorial expression:

...the constituent elements of the composition are so welded together that the material or subject no longer strikes the intellect only; nor the form, the eye or the ear only; but form and matter, in their union or identity, present one single effect to the imaginative reason, that complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol.¹

This “complex faculty” in the mind of the observer parallels the “the pictorial temperament” in the mind of the artist, described earlier when Pater considered *drawing* in painting. In this we can recognise links to Vasari’s *disegno*, defined in the technical introductions to the *Vite* as almost a cognitive faculty.² While the “imaginative reason” is sensual or non-literary, it is also intellectual, and from Giorgione’s art Pater will define two modes of subject matter that parallel this mode cognition.

In the final paragraph the argument is repeated; music is the medium that “most completely realises” the interrelation of form and content, so that the “end is not distinct from the means”, or rather “the subject from the expression”. It is this “condition” to which all art aspires. After this Pater returns to his opening contention: “Music, then, and not poetry, as is often supposed, is the true type or measure of consummate art”. Again Pater repeats; each art,

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.530

² Vasari, Vol.I, 1966, pp.111-121

despite being uniquely limited, “may be represented as continually struggling after the law or principle of music”. Although this is shown to be metaphorical, “one of the chief functions of aesthetic criticism”, Pater argues, “is to estimate the degree” in which any work of art “approaches in this sense to musical law”.¹ With the undeniable emphasis on law and principle, rule and measure, in this seemingly axiomatic theory, Pater has laid the foundation for his intellectual justification and moral absolution of Giorgione and the *Concert Champêtre*.

The Intertextual System

To support his analysis of Giorgione, Pater created a system of art theories; this network was also intertextual. Although “the law or principle of music” was genuinely original, the philosophy on which it was based dates back to the eighteenth-century, and these ideas had influenced Pater since the early 1860s. To understand Pater’s system, I will discuss an immediate source in Symonds’ volumes on the Renaissance, while remembering that Mallock’s satire was also influential. “The School of Giorgione”, like *The Renaissance*, engaged with the intellectual authority of Ruskin and Arnold, while the theory of *Anders-streben* develops the ideas of Goethe and Baudelaire. Although Pater directly references Lessing’s *Laocoön*, and is generally influenced by Hegel, the most important German source was Schiller’s *Aesthetic Education*.

The way that Pater, at this particular time, elevates music to the measure of all art, should be considered alongside Symonds’ ideas in the *Renaissance in Italy* (1875-1886). The first

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.530

volume, “Age of the Despots” (1875), Pater had reviewed in the *Academy*, while the third volume, “The Fine Arts”, was published in March 1877. Symonds argued that in the sixteenth century music replaced painting as the art form which gave expression to “the soul in all its manifold feeling and complexity”, because painting relied on Christian and Pagan literature, whereas music’s subject is “emotional activity”.¹ Importantly, Mallock chose to emphasise music as a principle element in his caricature of Pater, Mr. Rose arguing that “the aim of culture, if Mr. Leslie will lend me his nice metaphor, is indeed to make the soul a musical instrument”, and after listing a series of aesthetic objects – “a beautiful face, a rainbow” – he explains that they are “like a breath of wind amongst the chords of his soul, touching note after note into soft music, and at last gently dying away into silence”.² The result was a feedback-loop, in which Pater accentuated aspects already present in his work, ones that had been ridiculed in *The New Republic*.

In this theory of “*the condition of music*”, Ruskin’s ideas are also significant. By elevating music as an ideal, Pater is commonly understood to have valued sense over intellect, and therefore advocated abstraction in art; this is a consequence of the polemic with *Modern Painters*. Pater’s rhetoric, Coates explains, “shows in minute particulars, often in the choice of a single word”;³ in this case the words are “mere” and “merely”. They occur throughout the essay, and Symonds argued they raise form above content, as Pater discusses the “mere subject”.⁴ Ruskin used this adjective to articulate his position, insisting that colouring is “mere sensual pleasure of the eye”. This demands a separation between decorative and expressive, which Pater tries to annul this in “*the condition of music*”. When in 1888 the

¹ Symonds, 1904, p.27

² Mallock, October 1876, pp.440-441

³ Coates, 2004, p.9

⁴ Herzog, 1996, p.123; Symonds, 1888, p.47

subject was changed from “poetry” to “imaginative thought”, Pater was aiming more directly at Ruskin, for whom “all colour, all finish, all execution” are subordinate to “thought”.¹

Pater is not trying to contradict Ruskin; rather than valuing form over content, he in fact denigrates them both, “mere technical acquirement” is nothing, as “mere poetical thought” is nothing,² they only become something when combined as expression. In attempting to redress Ruskin’s overly intellectual understanding of art, Pater’s suggestive argument can be read as plain contradiction; however, the polemic is more subtle than this, as seen in the discussion of actual landscapes. In *Modern Painters* we hear that Turner was more successful in painting French valleys than Swiss mountains, and that Ruskin cannot explain the cause;³ in “The School of Giorgione” Pater rationalises this discrepancy according to “*the condition of music*”, which also allows him to defend Giorgionesque landscapes as “abstracted”, against Ruskin’s denunciation that they are “magnificently impossible”.⁴ Here Pater has subsumed Ruskin’s ideas, correcting his dialectic imbalance, therefore offering a more complete standard of criticism.

When Pater explains his theory that different artistic mediums “pass into the condition of some other”, he refers to nameless “German critics” who describe this as *Anders-streben*. Although there seems to be no source for this exact phrase, it appears to be a combination of Goethe, Baudelaire, and also Richard Wagner (1813-1883).⁵ In his introduction to *Propyläen* (1798), Goethe wrote that artistic mediums have a tendency “sich zu vereinigen, ja sich ineinander zu verlieren” and in this way all plastic art strives (“strebe”) towards painting.⁶

¹ Ruskin, 1843, pp.9-10

² Pater, October 1877, p.526

³ Ruskin, 1846, p.127; Hill, 1980, p.390

⁴ Ruskin, 1846, p.146

⁵ Hill, 1980, p.388 – These sources have all been previously noted; Hegel may also be an influence

⁶ Goethe, 1896, p.22

Similar ideas were discussed by Baudelaire in his 1861 essay on Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*, in which he translates the composer's *Lettre sur la musique* (1860); rhythmic language takes the poet "jusqu'à la limite de son art, limite que touche immédiatement la musique", meaning the most complete poetry "serait une parfaite musique".¹ In "Dionysus", Pater had argued that the history of Greek art "is a struggle, a romantic *Streben*, as the Germans say, between the palpable and limited human form, and the floating essence it is to contain".² In 1877 this "struggle" becomes a universal action, the definition of which is an unacknowledged translation from Baudelaire's 1863 essay on Delacroix: "les arts aspirent, sinon à se suppléer l'un l'autre, du moins à se prêter réciproquement des forces nouvelles".³ From this quote the verb "aspirent à" became particularly significant in the *Giorgione* essay as a whole. The concept of *Anders-streben* was drawn from various sources, which Pater unified into a general principle that explained Giorgionesque paintings as *paragone*.

In 1863, Pater first read Hegel's posthumously published *Ästhetik*, after which it was a general influence on his thinking, especially concerning the function of intellect in art and culture.⁴ However, it seems that one of Hegel's own sources, Schiller's *Aesthetic Education*, was more significant in the construction of Pater's intertextual system. The reference to Lessing's *Laocoön* shows that the argument in "The School of Giorgione" replicates the twenty-second letter of the *Aesthetic Education*. Here Schiller builds on Lessing's categorisation of the plastic arts; painting and sculpture are spatially expressive, in opposition to poetry and music which are temporally expressive.⁵

¹ Baudelaire, 1868, p.227; Hill, 1980, p.391

² Pater, December 1876, p.764

³ Baudelaire, 1868, p.5

⁴ McGrath, 1986, p.119; Inman, 1981, p.49

⁵ Wellbery, 1984, pp.114-115

That Schiller was a theorist *and* an artist is shown by the structure of the *Aesthetic Education*, which Pater read in 1865; letters divided into vignettes, they employ dialectic arguments through balanced paragraphs and sentences that mirror the ideal harmony of the holistic aesthetic. Through Schiller, Pater gained a Kantian sanction for the relations of sense and intellect, however, rejecting any notion of autonomy that is not relative and conditional.¹ In “The School of Giorgione” the definition of “*the condition of music*” seems to be partly a translation of this passage from the *Aesthetic Education*:

And it is not just the limitations inherent in the specific character of a particular art that the artist must seek to overcome through his handling of it; it is also the limitations inherent in the particular subject-matter he is treating. In a truly successful work of art the contents should affect nothing, the form everything; for only through form is the whole man affected, through the subject-matter, by contrast, only one or other of his functions. Subject-matter, then, however sublime and all-embracing it may be, always has a limiting effect upon the spirit, and it is only from form that true aesthetic freedom can be looked for. Herein, then, resides the real secret of the master in any art: that he can make his form consume his material [*dass er den Stoff durch die Form vertilgt*].²

Schiller moves from limitation, to non-limitation, into a synthetic harmony, as does Pater’s argument in “The School of Giorgione”, which develops the claim in the *Aesthetic Education* that “perfect style in each and every art” requires the artist “to remove the specific limitations of the art in question without thereby destroying its special qualities”.³

Pater’s originality is found in the way he developed these arguments so that they justify the idea that music is “the true type or measure of perfected art”. This differs from Schiller who

¹ McGrath, 1986, p.96

² Schiller, L22:5, 1967, pp.156-157 – I will follow Wilkinson and Willoughby’s translation, which is published alongside the original German

³ *Ibid.*, pp.154-155

argues that “Music at its most sublime, must become sheer form”, whereas for Pater music is a metaphor for the ideal assimilation of form and content. Similarly, Schiller does argue that painting and sculpture “at their most perfect, must become music”, but unlike Pater, they therefore “move us by the immediacy of their sensuous presence”.¹ In this way, the *Aesthetic Education* provides the framework for Pater’s “musical law”, allowing for his critique of Giorgione.

German idealist thinking also provided the grounds for Pater’s moral absolution of himself and the *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1). This was achieved by the creation of an autonomous ideal, as with Kant and Schiller, who argue that by necessity art should be free from extraneous interests.² I would suggest that autonomy in “The School of Giorgione” is relative and conditional; it functions to absolve not because it is *actual*, but because it is an *ideal*, the object of aspiration. Nevertheless, Pater’s theory is based on Schiller’s paradoxical reasoning which, as has been shown, is not always consistent, particularly in the movement from sensuality to morality, which creates contradictions that Pater consequently inherits.³

The *Aesthetic Education* also explains Pater’s phrase the “imaginative reason”. In later versions of the Giorgione essay, this phrase is given as a quotation; the “imaginative reason” having been taken from Arnold’s “Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment” of 1864: “the main element of the modern spirit’s life is neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; it is the imaginative reason”. In “The School of Giorgione” Pater modifies Arnold’s meaning: “art addresses not pure sense, still less the pure intellect, but the ‘imaginative reason’”.⁴ McGrath explains that the sense-intellect dualism is central for Pater,

¹ Schiller, L22:4, 1967, pp.154-155

² Wilkinson and Willoughby, 1967, p.xxiiiv; Murray, 1994, p.240

³ McGrath, 1986, pp.99, 105

⁴ Qtd. in Hill, 1980 p.386

appearing as oppositions like Christian and Hellenic, Apollonian and Dionysian, Positivist and Idealist.¹ The phrase “imaginative reason” functions to create a unity from these dialectics, subsuming them within a harmony of form and content.

The twelfth letter of Schiller’s *Aesthetic Education* describes humanity as divided between two elementary natures, rational and sensuous, each of which is dominated by its own drive (*Triebe*). The sense-drive (*sinnliche Trieb*), “proceeds from the physical existence of man” and aims “to set him within the limits of time”; the form-drive (*Formtrieb*), “proceeds from the absolute existence of man” and understands only that “which is binding upon it to all eternity”. In the thirteenth letter, these two drives are defined by mutual limitation, “one pressing for change, the other changelessness”.² The fourteenth letter explains how these reciprocal parts of the whole are unified in the play-drive (*Spieltrieb*); “directed towards annulling time within time, reconciling becoming with absolute being and change with identity”. The consequence is that “man only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being”. Aesthetic experience engages the play-drive and “will, therefore, since it annuls contingency, annul all constraint too, and set man free both morally and physically”.³

Echoes of Schiller can be heard in “The School of Giorgione” by the way *play* functions as a metaphor for freedom: with the “true child-like humour” in Titian’s *Presentation of the Virgin* (Fig.R13) or the way Giorgionesque subject matter is described as “moments of play”. As in the *Aesthetic Education*, this is significant “because play is in many instances that to which people really apply their own best powers”. In fact, Pater equates music and play in his analysis of the Giorgionesque, which “passes often to the play which is like music”.⁴

¹ McGrath, 1986, p.74

² Murray, 1994, p.107; Schiller, 1967, L12:1, pp.78-79; L12:4, p.80-81; L13:1, pp.84-85

³ Schiller, 1967, L14:3, pp.96-97; L14:5, pp.96-97

⁴ Pater, October 1877, pp.527, 531, 536

However, the “musical law”, *Anders-streben*, and the “imaginative reason” are all founded on paradoxes which are not resolved in any absolute, universal truth, as they were for Schiller and Hegel. Instead, “*the condition of music*”, as a metaphor for autonomy, remains contradictory and conditional, an impossible ideal, but one that we can approximate to in the *Concert Champêtre*.

Pater’s Music

What is strikingly original about Pater’s theory is how the metaphor of music functions in his analysis of the Giorgionesque. The key to understanding the essay is to explain what Pater meant by a musical interrelation of form and content. To begin I will look at how the “musical law” has been received; these responses generally fall into three groups: those that emphasise a *paragone*, those that discuss Pater’s theory of expression, and those that consider “*the condition of music*”, teleologically, as a formalist or abstractionist aesthetic. After this I will discuss Pater’s definition of music as essentially paradoxical and delineated by its critical and ethical function. Although combining positivism with idealism, his theory is suggestive not prescriptive.¹ The “musical law” is itself musical, and provides the “conditions” for Pater’s redemptive ekphrasis of the *Concert Champêtre*. In conclusion, I will briefly discuss the essay’s musical style, suggesting this is perhaps the most subject-appropriate approach to Pater’s music.

Renaissance *paragone* was an important part of Pater’s “system of art-casuistries”, and later in the essay, Pater refers to Vasari’s ekphrasis of the reflected male nude in which Giorgione

¹ Wollheim argues that Pater’s theoretical writing is often read with “inappropriate literalness” – Wollheim, 1973, pp.155

resolved “that casuistical question whether painting can present an object as completely as sculpture”.¹ An early response from Symonds, in 1888, concentrates on *paragone* and seeks to replace music with painting as “the true type or measure of perfected art”.² Although no longer taking part in the debate about which art is most ideal, recent scholarship has considered *paragone* as implying ideas of “difference”. Dellamora interprets *Anders-streben* as an attempt “to theorise difference within culture”, while Poueymirou has read the phrase as a theoretical as well as linguistic striving towards “otherness”.³ Three responses in 2010 also centre on *paragone*. Williams suggests a comparison with theatrical “tableau” and characterises Pater as a film theorist; Clements discusses musical-architecture while Eastham also concentrates on theatre.⁴ I would argue “*the condition of music*” is strictly metaphorical; music is the metaphor for a *condition* in the mind when intellect and sense are not disassociated. In this way, the recognition of “difference” and the aspiration to “otherness” are necessary dialectic steps towards unity and identity.

McGrath follows Wollheim by understanding the Giorgione essay as part of the continuing evolution of Pater’s “Hegelian theory of expression”; however, he goes on to argue that the “emphasis on technique is misleading” and the relation of “form” and “matter” in the essay is “confused and inconsistent”.⁵ Approaching the essay from a Hegelian perspective, Pater does confuse form and content, inverting the philosopher’s distinctions. For Pater, *form* is both the sensuous material and the informing spirit; *matter* both physical and subject matter. This could be understood as “resourceful puns”,⁶ but I would argue it is a deliberate piece of dialectic which conflates the two distinctions in order to demonstrate their inseparability,

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.535

² Symonds, 1888, p.42, 45, 50

³ Dellamora, 1991, p.139; Poueymirou, 2008, pp.63

⁴ Williams, 2010, pp.135-136; Clements, 2010, p.154; Eastham, 2010, p.169

⁵ Wollheim, 1973, pp.166-171; McGrath, 1986, pp.195-203

⁶ Leighton, 2005, p.69

while also allowing Pater to unify various discourses, art history, science, epistemology, and aesthetics. It is important not to confuse Hegel's "objective idealism" with Pater's "subjective idealism",¹ and to acknowledge that "*the condition of music*" is only Hegelian in the way it enables the critic to see the object as expressive of the individual mind.

Ever since Clement Greenberg's (1909-1994) ingenious appropriation of Pater's "musical law" in his "Towards a Newer Laocoon" (1940),² "The School of Giorgione" has been interpreted as leading towards formalist criticism and abstract art. However, this teleological argument is based on a common misrepresentation which interprets Pater as valuing sense over intellect, or even as desiring "the emptying of matter from form".³ Reading the essay with hindsight, it does seem to predict the development of twentieth-century aesthetics and the formalism of Roger Fry (1866-1934). Kenneth Clark, for instance, argued that by rejecting the concept of *Ut pictura poesis*, Pater invented "a revolutionary doctrine".⁴ More recently, it has been suggested that Pater embraced formalism; Barolsky arguing that he "forecasts and influences the development of a modernist art criticism", his ideas should be related to Whistler's paintings, and that his sense of abstraction is Platonic. However, Barolsky acknowledges the problems with this interpretation. He describes Pater's "double rootedness" within a tradition of mimetic representation as well as "an implicitly radical avant-garde aesthetics".⁵ However, as Leighton argues, if Pater believed music was "pure form", then he fails to support this, and instead, the "condition" is represented as a "nervy confusion" of form and content.⁶

¹ Wollheim, 1973, p.170; Whitley, 2010, p.22

² Greenberg, 1986, p.32

³ Laurence Binyon complained about this in 1910; qtd in. Seiler, 1980, p.413

⁴ Clark, 1961, p.22

⁵ Teukolsky, 2009, p.102; Barolsky, 2010, p.43-45

⁶ Leighton, 2005, pp.67-8

The question has been asked what particular type of music had Pater in mind when he wrote “The School of Giorgione”, and what type of content was it intended to have? The conclusion reached by Herzog is that Pater’s music was “purely instrumental”, being therefore the “absolute music of the nineteenth century”. Absolute music is defined with reference to Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) and Kantian aesthetics, the content being therefore “too fragmentary to constitute a determinate object of the understanding”.¹ However, Pater rejected transcendentalism; if he did have a particular music in mind, I would suggest it was the music of the harpsichord and lute in the Pitti *Concert* and *Concert Champêtre*. In fact, music itself is very briefly defined, Pater simply writing that it “presents no words”.² The question should then be, not what music, but why music?

Music had been used as an expressive ideal by earlier critics, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century was elevated to the highest art form by some German idealist writers who understood it as the medium most resistant to representational interpretation. In this way, music overcomes the Kantian noumenal and phenomenal dualism, being capable of “articulating the dynamics of the inner life without the intermediary of either concepts or images”.³ This sense-intellect dialectic determined Pater’s ideas; the inability of the critic of music to make a distinction between content and form came to represent autonomy. However, music was important for Pater in another sense, as it “transcends referential or lexical meaning”,⁴ providing the basis for Pater’s non-literary criticism of Giorgionesque subject matter.

¹ Herzog, 1996, pp.122, 131

² Pater, October 1877, p.526

³ McGrath, 1986, p.200; Bowie, 2000, p.240-241

⁴ Bucknell, 2001, p.1

It is crucial to emphasise that in elevating music to the measure of all art, Pater was not valuing form to the detriment of content. Whatever his sources, Pater's music enabled him to express a distinctive position on the relation of form and content in art, allowing him to articulate his fundamental intellectual and ethical position. In "Coleridge" Pater had rejected the Kantian notion of synthetic a priori judgements, in which "matter nor form can be perceived asunder, they unite into the many-coloured image of life". Instead, form and matter are essentially disassociated. They can only be reconciled by the individual's "power of association". Subjectivity, therefore, is expressed through "the creative acts of the imagination" and these "creative acts" are a synthesis of physical form and intellectual content.¹ The relationship between form and content is not simple, it is infinitely complicated, but conversely, Pater argues, this offers the possibility of complex human expression.

Pater's music, by representing autonomy, has ethical significance. According to Hegel and Schiller, the idea of didactic art is self-contradicting; in the *Ästhetik*, it is "ein in ihm selbst gebrochenes, in welchem Form und Inhalt nicht mehr als ineinander verwachsen erscheinen", while in the twenty-second letter of the *Aesthetic Education*, "nothing is more at variance with the concept of beauty than the notion of giving the psyche any definite bias".² Between 1866 and 1877, Pater repeatedly asserts that art should not be created or interpreted according to abstract rules of conduct. In *The Renaissance*, Botticelli is "undisturbed by any moral ambition", while Leonardo would have never raised "political ends above the ends of art".³ This was because, following Schiller, Pater believed that art is ethical when form and content, or sense and intellect, are identical; music is moral because it represents this equilibrium. Rather than being a last consideration of *l'art pour l'art*, "The School of Giorgione" can be

¹ Pater, January 1866, p.121

² Hegel, 1971, p.103; Schiller, L22:5, 1967, p.157

³ Pater, 1873, p.46, 110

read as a development in Pater's ethics of pleasure, seen later in *Marius*, where pleasure is "not merely sensuous, but intellectual, ethical, and moral".¹

This ethical justification for Giorgione parallels Lübke's arguments in defence of sensuousness in the Venetian school; for both writers the paintings are "die Ausstrahlung einer innerlichen Harmonie".² However, there are problems, as Pater's music, by taking on some of Schiller's ideas, leads to a contradictory position on the relationship between sensuality and social morality. A particularly good example of this is Pater's use of the word "responsibilities", which is employed because it implies both material and moral obligation. In this way, each art was said to have "its own special responsibilities", yet in aspiring to *be* music, each art must "get rid of its responsibilities".³ While for Hegel and Schiller contradiction was necessary and resolved in an absolute, Pater's paradoxes remain paradoxical; music is conditional, freedom through unity an unattainable ideal.

Whatever the contradictions, music is crucial for Pater's explanation of the Giorgionesque mode of subject matter, allowing temporal values to be introduced into the "synchronic moment".⁴ In his famous ekphrasis of the *Mona Lisa*, Pater utilises Vasari's anecdote that Leonardo had music played so that "the subtle expression was protracted on her face". Although two-thousand years of history were resolving themselves in Lisa's image, Pater tells us "all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes".⁵ Music here both manifests and annuls time, and this idea is the basis for the later interpretation of

¹ Hale, E., 1896, qtd in. Court, 1980, p.46; McGrath, 1986, p. 69

² Lübke, 1868, pp.601-602

³ Pater, October 1877, pp.526, 530

⁴ For music as "a paradoxical idealisation", see Bucknell, 2001, pp.37-38, 43, 49

⁵ Pater, 1873, pp.117, 119; for a detailed discussion Pater's interpretation of the image as an antinomian historiography, see Bullen, 1995, pp.290-295

Giorgionesque “animated instants”. Pater’s *music*, like Schiller’s *play*, represents temporal paradox; this is the vital element in the ekphrasis of the Pitti *Concert*.

“The School of Giorgione” has been seen as Pater moving towards a new objective focus, and therefore the essay contradicts, or “disobeys” the “Preface”.¹ The “musical law”, because it functions as a “measure”, seems objective and axiomatic, even scientific. However, it is founded upon unresolved paradoxes, enshrines conditionality, and in fact, Pater’s music is literally indefinite, the intransitive verb “to aspire” implying an unrealised state. Nevertheless, “*the condition of music*” is the basis of Pater’s claim for the authority of his “new” Giorgione, in competition with Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s scientific *New History*.

In the “Function of Criticism” Arnold proposed “elementary laws”.² Pater does the same in both “The School of Giorgione” and the “Preface”, systematising his critical practice in line with the principle that aesthetic objects can only be judged according to subjective standards. He never imposed any arbitrary, abstract rule, as this would be opposed to the “relative spirit”; the “complex of conditions” is always too complicated. Instead, in the dialectic between aestheticism and science, Pater “perpetually turns objective reality into subjectiveness”.³ This is shown by the analogy between critic and chemist which was repeated in a cancelled passage from the 1877 version of the Giorgione essay. In the final paragraph of the opening theoretical section, Pater describes “*the condition of music*” as “this strange chemistry, uniting, in the integrity of pure light, contrasted elements”.⁴ The aesthetic chemist-physicist may then proceed with an ethical-artistic analysis of the *Concert*

¹ Inman, 1990, p.387; Bizot, 1973, p.138; Teukolsky, 2009, p.110

² Arnold, 1954, p.370

³ Monsman, 1980, p.42

⁴ Pater, October 1877, p.530

Champêtre, describing: “impurities burnt out of it, no taint, no trace or floating particle of aught but its own clear elements, allowed to subsist within it”.¹

It is safe to say that Pater’s theory is always reflexive, and that the *Giorgione* essay participates “within the very methodologies it advocates”, resulting in the debate about how, or if, his style is musical.² Pater’s writing has been described as using rhythm and tone for synaesthetic “*expressive imitations*”, producing a “concert of synaesthesia” with its multiple “synaesthetic metaphors”.³ In “Pater’s Music”, after assessing “*the condition of music*” as “possible nonsense”, Leighton demonstrates that grammar, syntax and punctuation are a means of producing rhythm for Pater, and this is seen as “one of the main carriers of his philosophical scepticism and relativism”. Rhythm marks temporality, and the metaphor of “listening” to “time as it flies” is taken from the *Giorgione* essay and equated with Pater’s self-conscious grammatical pauses: “To listen to punctuation is to listen to the prose listening to the sound of its own voice”.⁴

“The School of Giorgione” has been seen as a rhetorical privileging of sensuousness over rigour, prescribing a “‘purely perceptive’ approach to critical discourse”, meaning that Pater’s criticism is “uncritical”.⁵ In contrast, I would like to suggest that while Pater’s theory may be anti-theoretical, his criticism *is* critical, if we read style as reflecting on the subject. In the *Giorgione* essay rhythm is generated by repetition, for instance the recurrence of the idea of “*the condition of music*”: “I have spoken of a certain interpenetration of the matter or

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.537

² Stein, 1975, p.216; Poueymirou, 2008, p.77; examples of this in the years 1909, 1920, 1957, 1967 – qtd in. Court, 1980, pp.78, 104, 250, 296

³ Strange, G. R., 1968, qtd in. Court, 1980, p.314; Buckler, 1987, p.93; Poueymirou, 2008, p.70

⁴ Leighton, 2005, pp.67-71

⁵ Poueymirou, 2008, p.77

subject of a work of art with the form of it...”¹ In Pater’s example of linguistic music – a song from *Measure for Measure* – its musicality is also based on repetition: “bring again, / bring again; [...] seal’d in vain, / seal’d in vain”.² This is echoed in the Giorgione essay: “music, music”, “Giorgione’s school. It is the school”, “listening – listening”, “music, music”.³ By this type of repetition words gradually lose their literal meaning, becoming shapes and sounds, replicating Pater’s non-literary interpretation of Giorgionesque subject matter. Style in “The School of Giorgione” supports the art history by creating a “medicated air”, producing hypnotic “conditions” for the reader.⁴ Again, this should be compared with what Pater calls the “abstracted elements” of Giorgionesque landscapes, especially the “tranquillising line”.⁵ Giorgione’s music, Pater seems to say, is subconsciously intoxicating.

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.535

² Ac.4, Sc.1 – Hill, 1980, p.391

³ Pater, October 1877, pp.528, 535, 536

⁴ For the theme of mesmerism in Pater’s writing, see Wallen, 2002, p.73

⁵ Pater, October 1877, p.529

PART 2

Antithesis: Scientific Criticism

It is surprising that the role of Crowe and Cavalcaselle in “The School of Giorgione” has been understated; even though Pater’s essay openly engages with the *New History*, the language of connoisseurship has never been considered. Despite being Pater’s “chief source of information about Giorgione”, it is minimally discussed by Hill; because of Hill’s discussion, Inman does not include the connoisseurs in her exemplary survey of Pater’s reading, while I will suggest that Teukolsky misrepresents the relationship.¹ The structure of “The School of Giorgione”, I believe, demonstrates the importance of Crowe and Cavalcaselle for the shape and contents of the essay. I would like to explain, therefore, Pater’s conditional acceptance of the *New History*, but also his desire for a more complete understanding than is provided by this scientific study, what he calls his “essential truth”. By appropriating and idealising Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s language, analysis and method, I argue that Pater sublates their text within his “new” Giorgione. It is a dialectic polemic, so that the traditional image of the artist is preserved, but also the scientific problematisation; however, like “*the condition of music*”, Pater transcends these limitations in his discussion of the Giorgionesque.

Although Pater’s aestheticism might seem the binary opposite of positivist science, like a textbook definition of scientific method,² Pater emphasises “observation” and “data”, with the criteria of “truth”. So much so, McGrath can argue that the “Preface” implies a system that is not strictly subjective, aesthetic “facts” being values that allow for shared

¹ Hill, 1980, p.384; Inman, 1990, p.384; Teukolsky, 2002, pp.152-158; Teukolsky, 2009, p.122

² Gower, 1997, p.18

discriminations.¹ Yannis has recently discussed the idea of the *aesthete* as *scientist*, considering this “paradoxical convergence” and arguing that “Pater transubstantiated science into an aesthetic ideal”.² Early in the twentieth century it was argued that the natural sciences were fundamental for Pater, as like many other nineteenth-century thinkers, he believed “the purely empirical method” was “the unique path to such tentative knowledge as mortal man may hope to attain”.³ Yet for Roberto Longhi, Pater served as “an anti-positivist” model, while “The School of Giorgione” has been read as attacking or resisting the science of art history.⁴ My view is that Pater respected the intellectual authority of science, but he also considered positivist knowledge as somehow deficient.

We can again return to 1866 and “Coleridge” to clarify Pater’s relativist position; the Hegelian formula “Was ist, das ist vernünftig; was vernünftig ist, das ist”, should be understood as simply “an intellectual aspiration”, and in fact, “the formula of true science is different”. The result of the scientist’s emphasis on *vernünftig* is that: “The positive method makes very little account of marks of intelligence in nature; in its wider view of phenomena it sees that those incidents are a minority, and may rank as happy coincidences; it absorbs them in the simpler conception of law”.⁵ Science, Pater argues, disregards evidence of “intelligence” and is therefore reductive, the reality of the human mind being more complex than any universal “law”. Pater’s “musical law” is an attempt to understand complexity, functioning to recover the artist from Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s “simpler conception”.

In 1877, Pater reacted to the disruption of his original Giorgione with the ironic lament: “The accomplished science of the subject has come at last, and, as in other instances, has not made

¹ McGrath, 1986, pp.35-36

² Yannis, 2010, pp.88-89

³ Shafer, 1922, p.208

⁴ Carrier, 2005, p.533; Teukolsky, 2002, p.152; Teukolsky, 2009, p.122

⁵ Pater, January 1866, p.119

the past more real for us...”¹ In this lamentation, what Pater calls “the past” is the individual artist himself, while “science” means Crowe and Cavalcaselle; the type of knowledge the *New History* offers, therefore, is defined as negative and limiting. In his criticism of the Giorgionesque, Pater aspires beyond these restrictive standards, attempting to make “the past” more real through the experience in the present of the Pitti *Concert* and the *Concert Champêtre* (Figs.A12, A1). The essential criticism begins in this second section:

By no school of painters have the necessary limitations of the art of painting been so unerringly though instinctively apprehended, and the essence of what is pictorial in a picture so justly conceived, as by the school of Venice; and the train of thought suggested in what has been now said is, perhaps, a not unfitting introduction to a few pages about Giorgione, who, though much has been taken by recent criticism from what was reputed to be his, still, more entirely than any other, sums up, in what we know of himself and his art, the spirit of that school.²

This single-sentence paragraph is a microcosm of the essay; Pater attempts to write his original response to the artist, but is prevented by “recent criticism”, by the *New History*.

“The School of Giorgione” has been read as an extended critique of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, as fighting the professionalisation of art history, and as “a deliberate refusal to participate in a scientific discourse of art”, Pater arguing that criticism should not be like science, but an art form itself.³ Although the essay is a polemic, this is a consequence of the problematisation of the artist, Pater’s dialectic strategy being a more subtle conflict with his antagonist. In general, Williams described the “ingeniously ironic absorption of scientific method by Pater’s aestheticism”.⁴ Although, like irony, Pater’s thinking is dialectical, I would argue his

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.532

² *Ibid.*, p.530

³ Teukolsky, 2002, pp.152-162

⁴ Williams, 1989, p.49

aspiration to objectivity is sincere. In his 1873 review of *The Renaissance*, Symonds was correct to say that although Pater's "criticism is not a science", yet he wants the critic to be "rational".¹ The Giorgione essay is a clash of intellectual authorities; on the one hand, the collaborative strength and scientific weight of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, on the other Pater's subjectivity. Pope-Hennessy argued that the Giorgione essay is a response to the *New History's* "resolute concentration on fact".² Ten years after "The School of Giorgione", in his essay "Style" (*Fortnightly Review*, December 1888), Pater would argue that "facts" are just another example of self-expression.³ In 1877, Pater was contrasting Crowe and Cavalcaselle's "strictly deducible facts" with his "essential truth", or *expression* of Giorgione.⁴

Giorgione: The Spirit of Venetian Painting

After presenting Giorgione as manifesting the "spirit" of Venetian painting, Pater traces the development of this school, from "the last, stiff, half-barbaric splendours of Byzantine decoration" to which the earlier painters afford "a little more of human expression".⁵ Venetian painting is understood as "always subordinate to architectural effect", primarily concerned with formal problems, and in opposition to the Florentine school, being "unperplexed, by naturalism, religious mysticism, philosophical theories":

¹ Qtd in. Hill, 1980, p.292

² Pope-Hennessy, 1969, p.103

³ Pater, 1889, pp.31-32; Bullen, 1994, p.156

⁴ Pater, October 1877, p.530

⁵ The *History of Painting in North Italy* begins with the idea that modern style arrived late in Venice because they "preferred the barbaric splendour of the Orientals to the sober but refined taste of the Tuscans" – Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.1, 1871, p.2; Ruskin, in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, proclaims that painting was "a glorious gift to architecture, and the walls of Venice", and that these walls "had received colour only in arabesque patterns" before they "were lighted with human life by Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese" – Ruskin, 1846, pp.107-108

Carpaccio and the Bellini, seem never for a moment to have been tempted to lose sight of the scope of their art in its strictness, or to forget that painting must be before all things decorative, a thing for the eye, a space of colour on the wall, only more dexterously blent than the marking of its precious stone or the chance interchange of sun and shade upon it – this, to begin and end with – whatever higher matter of thought, or poetry, or religious reverie might play its part therein, between.

Pater characterises the Venetian school as having a greater degree of autonomy than Florentine painting, while its concentration on material limitation and the relation to architecture places the idea of *Anders-streben* at the centre of the tradition. Finally, he again recalls Gautier's "angles lumineux", but reverses the original image; because Venetian painting is expressive, it becomes more than a "chance interchange" of light.¹

Pater places Giorgione within this tradition, arriving "with somewhat more than a spark of divine fire to his share". His role within the school is as "the inventor of *genre*"; recalling Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Kugler and Burckhardt, these works are described as "those easily movable pictures which serve for uses neither of devotion nor of allegorical or historic teaching". The subject matter of *genre* is "little groups of real men and woman, amid congruous furniture or landscape", however "refined upon and idealised till they come to seem like glimpses of life from afar". The analysis of the reciprocity between architectural decoration and painting, combined with this explanation of *genre*, follows the synesthetic pattern:

Those spaces of more cunningly blent colour, obediently filling their places hitherto in a mere architectural scheme, Giorgione detaches from the wall; he frames them by the hands of some skilful carver, so that people may move them readily and take with

¹ Pater, October 1877, pp.530-531

them where they go, like a poem in manuscript, or a musical instrument, to be used at will for all the subtle purposes of culture, stimulus or solace, coming like an animated presence, into one's cabinet, as we say, to enrich the air as with a personal aroma, and, like persons, live with us, for a day or a lifetime.¹

Pater personifies *genre*, the relationship between subject and object being described like a romance; the analysis is anthropomorphic, building upon the significance of Venetian painting's "human expression"; *genre* might therefore be Giorgione himself.

Contemporary painting is included within *genre*, while Pater retains the emphasis on the individual artist: "Of all art like this, art which has played so large a part in men's culture since that time, Giorgione is the initiator". In making this statement he expands upon Burckhardt's interpretation that the artist's work "in der ganzen modernen Malerei eine so grosse Rolle spielt."² Pater continues that Giorgione still preserved "that old Venetian clearness or justice in the apprehension of the essential limitations of the pictorial art". Therefore it is necessary to describe his pictures using musical metaphors and poetic analogies, so the artist "interfuses his painted work with a high-strung sort of poetry, caught directly from a singularly rich and high-strung sort of life". As in Burckhardt's interpretation, contemporary existence is the subject of Giorgione's paintings, Pater understanding both art and life tropologically as stringed instruments. The artist expresses himself through "his selection of subject or phase of subject", through his relation of this *matter* to visual *form*. Being "typical of that aspiration of all the arts towards music", Giorgione's paintings or *genre*, therefore, often demonstrate "the subordination of mere subject to pictorial design".³

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.531

² Burckhardt, 1855, p.961

³ Pater, October 1877, p.531

Defining Giorgione in relation to Titian, Pater notes that they are born very close, both study under Bellini, Titian then becomes a pupil of Giorgione, although lives much longer “and with such fruit that hardly one of the greater towns of Europe is without some fragment”. His master, however, “with his so limited actual product” – and Pater suggests it could be reduced to just one picture – “expresses quintessentially, in elementary suggestion and effect, that spirit, itself the final acquisition of all the long endeavours of Venetian art, which Titian spreads over his whole life’s activity”. Giorgione’s paintings are seen as embodying the history of Venetian painting, being its ultimate expression; Titian is presented as simply a member of his master’s school, as perpetuating “that spirit”.¹

As a consequence, “something fabulous and illusive has always mingled itself in the brilliancy of Giorgione’s fame”. It is at this point, however, that Crowe and Cavalcaselle interrupt Pater’s chapter:

The exact relationship to him of many works – drawings, portraits, painted idylls – often fascinating enough, which in various collections went by his name, was from the first uncertain. Still, six or eight famous pictures at Dresden, Florence and the Louvre, were undoubtingly attributed to him, and in these, if anywhere, something of the splendour of the old Venetian humanity seemed to have been preserved. But of those six or eight famous pictures it is now known that only one is certainly from Giorgione’s hand.²

This reproduces the problematisation of attribution, citing vaguely six or eight disattributed works, Pater suggesting a little later what these might be. The real focus is on the subsequent loss of the famous, romantic, traditional image of Giorgione, who conserved and communicates “the splendour of the old Venetian humanity”.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp.531-532

² *Ibid.*, p.532

The painter's "immediate fame", Pater tells us, was based on works that "in all probability passed away almost within his own age", like his frescoes on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the remains of which "still give a strange additional touch of splendour to the scene of the Rialto". He continues to personify Giorgione's paintings, which like their creator, died young. Between us and the artist, however, "there is a barrier, or borderland, a period about the middle of the sixteenth century, in passing through which the tradition miscarries, and the true outlines of Giorgione's work and person obscure themselves". Pater's interest is in the man himself, the phrase "true outlines" recalling the "clear perpetual outline of face" that is washed away in the "Conclusion". Crowe and Cavalcaselle's demythicisation has dissipated the traditional image of the artist; the metaphor of miscarriage giving a human intensity and drama in this sacrifice to science. Pater then follows the *New History* by focusing on the issue of attribution:

It became fashionable for wealthy lovers of art, with no critical standard of authenticity, to collect so-called works of Giorgione, and a multitude of imitations came into circulation. And now, in the 'new Vasari,' the great traditional reputation, woven with so profuse demand on men's admiration, has been scrutinised thread by thread; and what remains of the most vivid and stimulating of Venetian masters, a live flame, as it seemed, in those old shadowy times, has been reduced almost to a name by his most recent critics.¹

This recalls Rio's "Le fil de la tradition" that once broken "n'a pu être renoué".² In "The School of Giorgione" the traditional image of the artist is described as a tapestry in the critic's mind, one that Crowe and Cavalcaselle had unmade. However, Pater suggests that Rio was wrong, all is *not* lost; the images of "flame" and "weaving" again take us back to the

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.532

² Pater had read the expanded edition of Rio's *De l'art chrétien* in May-June 1869 – Inman, 1981, p.196

metaphors in the “Conclusion”. From the *New History* Pater salvages one reliable connection and can therefore reweave a “new” Giorgione.

To introduce the ekphrasis of the Pitti *Concert* (Fig.A12), Pater argues that “enough remains to explain why the legend grew up above the name, why the name attached itself, in many instances, to the bravest work of other men”. To describe the picture he wrote:

The *Concert* in the Pitti Palace, in which a monk with cowl and tonsure touches the keys of a harpsichord, while a clerk placed behind him grasps the handle of the viol, and a third with cap and plume seems to wait upon the true interval for beginning to sing, is undoubtedly Giorgione’s. The outline of the lifted finger, the trace of the plume, the very threads of the fine linen, which fasten themselves on the memory in the moment before they are lost altogether in that calm unearthly glow, the skill which has caught the waves of wandering sound, and fixed them on the lips and hands for ever...

This moves from mimetic details to an expression of the visual experience, ending in an account of artistic skill and intention. The list of details is accurate, but comparison between image and text shows some slight inconsistencies. The central figure, described as “a monk”, does not wear a cowl and have a tonsure; the figure to the right however does have these monastic attributes. These errors demonstrate clearly how Pater was working primarily from Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s description, as among other formal similarities, the connoisseurs also call the central figure a monk, while the phrase “grasps the handle” is a direct quote from the *New History*.¹ After the ekphrasis, Pater concludes that the two connoisseurs, “while dismissing so much”, by authenticating this one painting, have therefore “left it among the most precious things in the world”.²

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.144-145

² Pater, October 1877, pp.532-533

Pater suggests that the *Concert* functions as a “standard” of authenticity in the *New History*, and then proceeds to list the resulting disattributions, the “six or eight famous pictures at Dresden, Florence and the Louvre”. From the Louvre is of course the *Concert Champêtre*, but also the *Holy Family* (Fig.A29), which was evocatively described by Pater but had been attributed by Crowe and Cavalcaselle to Pellegrino.¹ Next, the *Accademia Storm at Sea* (Fig.A9) is considered “less of a loss, perhaps”; from Dresden there is the *Jacob and Rachel* (Fig.A26), but also “the *Knight embracing a Lady*” (*Embrace of Lovers*, Fig.A40) which Crowe and Cavalcaselle described as “Brescian” and in 1880 Morelli would call a “triviale Bild”.² Finally, Pater suggests that the connoisseurs had also disattributed the two Uffizi panels, *The Trial of Moses* and *The Judgement of Solomon* (Figs.A23, A24); Hill thinks he must have misunderstood, but I will argue that the way these attributions are presented explains Pater’s critique of the *New History*.³

Giving a biography and characterisation of Giorgione based on “facts” taken from Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Pater begins by complaining:

Nor has the criticism which thus so freely diminishes the number of his authentic works added anything important to the well-known outline of the life and personality of the man: only, it has fixed one or two dates, one or two circumstances, a little more exactly.

The romantic elements of the story are retained; the artist’s peasant mother and the connection to the court at Asolo; the tragic amorous death in two versions. With Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s positive attributions Pater creates an image of the artist; *The Castelfranco*

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.147

² *Ibid.*, p.166; Morelli, 1880, p.182

³ Pater, October 1877, p.533; Hill, 1980, p.394

Altarpiece and *The Man in Armour* (Figs.A10, A21) because “as in some other knightly personages attributed to him, people have supposed the likeness of his own presumably gracious presence”.¹

The final paragraph of this section begins again by reminding the reader of the problematisation, yet offers reason for hope: “But although the number of Giorgione’s extant works has been thus limited by recent criticism, all has not been done when the real and the traditional elements in what concerns him have been discriminated”. Pater argues that “over and above the real Giorgione” there is “*the Giorgionesque*”. Described as “an influence, a spirit” that can be found in paintings by various artists, “unknown and uncertain workman”, this is Pater’s “new” Giorgione, “a sort of impersonation of Venice itself, its projected reflex or ideal, all that was intense or desirable in it”.²

Kenneth Clark offered a negative assessment of this intertextual relationship, insinuating that any weakness in “The School of Giorgione” is because “Pater has let his fine intuition be overruled by the ‘science’ of Crowe and Cavalcaselle”.³ Tucker describes the *New History* as representing “the most advanced stage” in philological reassessment of Vasari, and that in “Botticelli” Pater showed himself indifferent to the gap modern scholarship had created between the received and evidenced narrative, referring to both as “legends”.⁴ In the same vein, it has been argued that in contrast to Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s scientific “attitude” that made them distrust myths, Pater cherished traditions and used them as documents in themselves.⁵ However, in the case of Giorgione the *New History* does not fundamentally problematise the Vasarian characterisation: in fact it reproduces biographical traditions. It is

¹ Pater, October 1877, pp.533-534

² *Ibid.*, pp.534-535

³ Clark, 1961, p.20

⁴ Tucker, 2002, pp.119-121

⁵ Teukolsky, 2002, pp.152-154

not philology that matters here, but connoisseurship; by disattributing the *Concert Champêtre*, Crowe and Cavalcaselle had removed the visual evidence for the accuracy of the romantic image. Instead of being “overruled”, Pater adopts the language and methodology of “science”, creating his “new” Giorgione from the problematisation itself. I will discuss the way Pater idealises or aestheticises the *New History’s* analysis, arguing that the essay undermines yet emulates, and therefore sublates, scientific criticism.

Pater and the “New Vasari”

In 1978 at an international convention in Castelfranco, Denys Sutton refrained from extensively analysing Pater’s Giorgione essay, believing it would be “akin to pulling off the wings of a gorgeous butterfly”. However, he made an important point about the significance of Crowe and Cavalcaselle: Pater “was indebted to the two great experts rather more than is realised”. Sutton’s conclusion was that although the connoisseurs were not “literary artists”, their interpretation “foreshadowed” Pater’s, even though “his words were richer and his understanding greater”.¹ I will argue that rather than foreshadow “The School of Giorgione”, the *New History’s* technical analysis and problematisation of attribution determined Pater’s discussion. In Sutton’s conclusions we can also see a bias against Crowe and Cavalcaselle that seems to be a common sentiment, one expressed by Kenneth Clark, who thought that Pater must have read their work “with reluctance, being repelled, no doubt, by the flat footed ugliness of its prose”.² In fact, language is an important aspect of the relationship between the two texts, and although Pater sardonically refers to the two connoisseurs by their journalistic epithet the “New Vasari”, this is rhetorical, functioning to gently undermine their authority.

¹ Sutton, 1978, p.340

² Clark, 1961, p.16

Instead, Pater's intertextual engagement with the *New History* is as serious, intricate, and as significant as the relationship with any other site of authority, such as Hegel or Ruskin.

Reading the connoisseurs' chapter on Giorgione, Pater would have been struck not only by the quantity of paintings with musical subjects, but also the importance of *paragone*. Pater had read Robert Browning's (1812-1889) narrative poem *Sordello* (1840) in 1865;¹ it is referenced twice in his essay of 1877: "Giorgione stands to Titian in something like the relationship of *Sordello* to Dante, in Mr. Browning's poem".² This formulation echoes Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who had written that "Giorgione played the same part in Titian's life as Antonello played in the life of Bellini".³ While the connoisseurs' comparison is strictly art historical, Pater has aestheticised their analysis, linking painting to literature, art to life. Although the main *paragone* in "The School of Giorgione" is with music, the relationship between painting and poetry is still crucial. Both Pater and Crowe and Cavalcaselle connect Giorgione to the writer Matteo Bandello (1480-1562), following Kugler and Burckhardt who used the adjective "novellistische" to describe the mode of subject matter.⁴ For the connoisseurs Bandello's *novelle* provide a possible source, for Pater it is not the literal meaning but the experiencing of listening to the words that matters. Finally, in the *New History* we read that Giorgione's *paragone* painting solved "a problem which had occupied the minds of casuists",⁵ and as we know, it is from these "casuistries" that Pater constructs his "musical law".

Sutton correctly acknowledged how the connoisseurs' argument that Giorgione was famed "for producing park scenery" is directly quoted from the *New History*; however, Pater

¹ Inman, 1990, p.393

² Pater, October 1877, p.531; Browning, 1840, p.15-16 "Sordello, thy forerunner, Florentine!"

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.120

⁴ *Ibid*, p.149; Pater, October 1877, p.536; Kugler, 1837, p.301; Burckhardt, 1855, p.961

⁵ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.157

undermines authority by implying cultural inaccuracy, so that Giorgione's "scenery is such as in England we call 'park scenery'".¹ Pater's emphasis on actual landscape, as we have seen, also follows the connoisseurs, particularly in his description of Castelfranco, "where the last crags of the Venetian Alps break down romantically, with something of park-like grace, to the plain".² Although Pater again creates doubt about the park analogy, his sentence is an aestheticised version of Crowe's Castelfranco, "a town on the plain at the foot of the Alps".³ In the *New History*, the topography of actual landscapes allows for connoisseurial discrimination, while in "The School of Giorgione", Crowe's "towers" and "turrets" conjure a whole historical epoch, Tuzio Costanzo himself becoming a "strange, picturesque remnant of medieval manners, in a civilisation rapidly changing".⁴

Crowe and Cavalcaselle's Giorgione is the "inventor" of "conversational pieces", while in the *New History* it is Bellini who invents *genre*.⁵ Pater manipulates his source, ignoring Bellini and generalising "conversational pieces" into pure *genre*. Again though, Pater has aestheticised these ideas, as unlike "conversational pieces", *genre* is not simply secular and contemporary but non-literary. Often, as here, he builds upon the connoisseurs' language. When discussing synchronic and temporal values in the images, Pater adopts the *New History's* praise for Giorgione's "spirited and easy reproduction of instant motion", which is almost directly quoted; one of Giorgione's characteristics being: "the resolution, the ease, and quickness with which he reproduces instantaneous motion".⁶

¹ Sutton, 1978, p.340; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.122; Pater, October 1877, p.537

² Pater, October 1877, p.533

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.121

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.126-127; Pater, October 1877, p.534

⁵ Sutton, 1978, p.340; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.1, 1871, p.180

⁶ Pater, October 1877, p.535; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.136

Although it has been suggested that with the term “modulated” Pater is “contextualising pictorial elements within musical terminology”, this diction too was part of Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s vocabulary. In the *New History*, the connoisseurs discuss the “subtle modulations” in the Pitti *Concert*, while in *The Tempest* (Fig.A3): “The air swims with modulations of density over every part of the background”.¹ As we will see, Pater’s use of “modulated” is part of a direct engagement with Crowe and Cavalcaselle.² In 1888, Pater added another reference to *modulation*, so that in some landscapes “light and shade have such easy work in modulating it to one dominant tone”;³ once again the *New History* has been aestheticised, the word “tone” referring not to colour, but the musical content of the painting, the inner vision of the artist.

From the *New History*’s technical ekphrasis of *The Tempest*, Pater also takes the metaphor of “air”, which Crowe uses to evoke an aesthetic, for instance in the *Concert Champêtre* “the air is balmy”.⁴ In “The School of Giorgione” this painting is described as having the effect of “fresh rain newly passed through the air”, an image Pater takes from Crowe’s description of the Uffizi *Trial of Moses*, in which “the rain has cooled the air and filtered it”.⁵ For both writers this metaphor describes formal values that are typical of Giorgione, and in lamenting the loss of the *Holy Family* in the Louvre, Pater describes its “fine air” and “wind-searched brightness”, seeing in the canvas a “liquid air”.⁶ For Pater, the phrase “liquid air” functions as a metaphor for “*the condition of music*”; the image is understood as existing in a scientifically impossible condition, being at the same time all three *states of matter*: solid, liquid, gas. This

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.146, 137

² Poueymirou, 2008, p.76; Pater, 1888, pp.142, 160 ; Pater, October 1877, p.537

³ Pater, 1888, p.142

⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.146

⁵ Pater, October 1877, p.537; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.125

⁶ Pater, October 1877, p.533; in the *New History* the picture from the Royal Academy recalling *Concert Champêtre* is disattributed partly because of “a liquid washiness of touch” – Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.160

metaphor demonstrates how Crowe and Cavalcaselle's language has been aestheticised, Pater using it to reconnect disattributed paintings, an idealisation that undermines their material analysis.

Pater's emphasis on technique is sometimes attributed to Hegelian influence, but Crowe and Cavalcaselle must surely be the main source. This can be seen in the word "handling", found five times in the Giorgione essay in 1888, as compared to only twice in the first edition of *The Renaissance*.¹ Strangely, Pater does not discuss technique, but instead suppresses it, so that Giorgione simply masters the "technical secrets of his art".² Detailed formal analysis is absent, yet Crowe and Cavalcaselle's investigation into Giorgione's technique complemented Pater's theories. Balance is the most common of Crowe's descriptive tropes, itself connected to music, the paintings being a "harmonious melody"; he also uses colour-music metaphors repeatedly, for instance discussing Giorgione's "melody of tone".³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle see consistency in their attributions, and so the descriptions of Giorgione's paintings are uniformly balanced; by contrast, Pater apes the method of the *New History* to create correspondences between disattributed works.

This linguistic subversion can be seen in the use of the quasi-scientific "standard" and connoisseurial "distinction". Pater follows his usual polemic strategy by subverting the language of authority:

It is noticeable that the "distinction" of this *Concert*, its sustained evenness of perfection, alike in design, in execution and in choice of personal type, becomes for the "new Vasari" the standard of Giorgione's genuine work. Finding here enough to explain his influence, and the true seal of mastery, it assigns to Pellegrino da San

¹ Both in "Winckelmann" – Pater, 1873, pp.151, 194

² Pater, October 1877, p.531

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.136, 152, 154

Daniele the *Holy Family* in the Louvre, for certain points where it comes short of that standard...¹

The difference between critic and connoisseur is that for the latter the *distinction* is a *standard* of authorship, while for the former it is aesthetic evidence of “influence”. Although we may talk of a connoisseurial “distinction”, Crowe conflates this with the idea of social, aristocratic “distinction”; Giorgione’s “intercourse with aristocratic company” gives his work “a peculiar breath of distinction”.² Pater comments on this by referring back to his previous use of the word in his biography of the artist, when Giorgione is “initiated into those differences of personal type, manner, dress even, which are best understood there, that ‘distinction’ of the *Concert*”.³

For Crowe and Cavalcaselle the Pitti *Concert* was Giorgione’s masterpiece because it exhibited “a perfect harmony”, a metaphor that Pater idealised in his “musical law”. After his description of the painting’s aesthetic “moment”, the way the artist has captured sound-waves, Pater turns this analysis into a sign of Giorgione’s authorship: “these are indeed the master’s own”.⁴ The difference is that while the connoisseurs describe a material harmony of technique, for the aesthetic critic the balance that is characteristic is between physical and spiritual, sense and intellect, the “standard” that the *Concert* has set being the perfect identification of form and content.

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.533

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2 , 1871, p.123

³ Pater, October 1877, pp.533-534

⁴ *Ibid*, p.533

The Man and the Myth

In this second section of “The School of Giorgione”, Pater reproduces the attributions and biography of the artist as they are apparently found in the *New History*. However, there is something “artful”, or manipulative, in the way that Pater presents this information.

We have seen that as a result of major disattributions the two connoisseurs redistribute the credit for the innovation between Bellini, Giorgione, Titian and Palma, arguing that it has “too exclusively till now been called the Giorgionesque”.¹ However, in Pater’s essay, Giorgione is the “elementary motive and principle” of Venetian painting. This is at variance with the *New History* in the sense that Bellini is simply his master, while Titian just follows Giorgione for “his whole life’s activity”. In this way Venetian painting is reduced to one artist, a process which is replicated in the attributions, Pater discussing Giorgione’s “limited actual product (what remains to us of it seeming when narrowly examined to reduce itself to almost one picture, like Sordello’s one fragment of lovely verse)”.² This is a self-conscious *narrowing* of the “new” Giorgione; it is not Crowe and Cavalcaselle who limit the artist to one painting. Instead, Pater is creating the sense of masterpiece we find in “Joachim du Bellay”, whose “whole fame has rested on one poem”.³ This one picture is the Pitti *Concert*; I would suggest that in the putative original version it would have been the *Concert Champêtre*, but the *New History* compelled Pater to make this change.

Although Pater *narrows* his Giorgione, this seems implicit in Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s having regarded the Pitti canvas as the only painting that gives us “a just measure of his skill,

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.459

² Pater, October 1877, p.532

³ Pater, 1873, p.143

and explains his celebrity”.¹ In this way, Pater accentuates tendencies that were already present in the *New History*; the connoisseurs’ even create doubt about “what we are fond of attributing”. For instance, when listing the “six or eight” disattributed works, the uncertainty over authorship is exploited by Pater in the attribution of the *Storm at Sea*, “to Paris Bordone, or perhaps to ‘some advanced craftsman of the sixteenth century’”. Crowe had used the hierarchical term “craftsman” to distance the picture from the “master” Giorgione, before then attributing it “in part at least” to Bordone; Pater twists the order of the words to increase the anonymity of the attribution. The disattributions obviously affected Pater, who seems particularly upset by the loss of the *Embrace of Lovers* (Fig.A40) which “is conceded to ‘a Brescian hand’”.² Again this is a misquote, in the *New History* the picture had been generically described as “Brescian”, but in “The School of Giorgione” by highlighting the connoisseurial metonym *hand*, Pater deepens the obscurity of the problematisation.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle had successfully created an uncertainty that for Pater becomes functional, and may explain why he chose to conclude his list of disattributions with the claim that, “whatever their charm, we are called on to give up the *Ordeal*, and the *Finding of Moses* [...] perhaps to Bellini” (Figs.A23, A24).³ It could be that Pater “misunderstood”, the attribution forming part of a long paragraph that also attributes the *Sacred Allegory* to Bellini.⁴ However, I would argue that this is another “artful” manipulation, implying that all Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s attributions are conditional. Pater represents the connoisseurs as having authenticated only one painting, and leaving the remainder with anonymous authors, thereby reducing Giorgione “almost to a name”.

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.144

² Pater, October 1877, p.533

³ *Ibid*

⁴ Hill, 1980, p.394

It has been said that, in comparison to Crowe and Cavalcaselle, for Pater the “anecdote, the incidental myth, the curious story, all carry more weight than the documented fact of biography”.¹ However, it is important to recognise that Pater does not contradict the “new Vasari” on any points of biographical fact, and instead, with poetic brevity, repeats their life of Giorgione. We can see this in the phrase: “Born so close to Titian, though a little before him”, which echoes Crowe’s heavily worked sentence: “Giorgione was born before 1477, Titian after 1480”.² Pater stays within the connoisseurs’ factual prescriptions, without however providing dates, making it more historically indefinite. Crowe and Cavalcaselle aimed at precision, but in Pater’s words their work becomes vague, “six or eight famous pictures”, while in the biography they have simply “fixed one or two dates, one or two circumstances, a little more exactly”. In the *New History* the connoisseurs attempted to create a cohesive narrative of the artist’s career; Pater builds upon this foundation. However, while following Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s explanation of Giorgione’s origins, character, and career, especially the contextualisation within Castelfranco, in Pater’s hands these “facts” become more indeterminate, the artist’s life more mythical.

Pater’s syncopated, rhythmic biography notes Giorgione’s final return to Castelfranco: “Thither, at last, he is himself brought home from Venice, early dead but celebrated”. It is crucial to this romantic characterisation that the *New History* had not explicitly corrected the “legends” of the artist’s death. Instead, Crowe and Cavalcaselle had compared Vasari’s and Ridolfi’s narratives, and Pater does the same:

It happened, about his thirty-fourth year, that in one of those parties at which he entertained his friends with music, he met a certain lady, of whom he became greatly enamoured, and ‘they rejoiced greatly, the one and the other, in their loves.’ And two

¹ Teukolsky, 2002, p.154

² Pater, October 1877, p.531; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.119

quite different legends concerning it agree in this, that it was through this lady he came by his death; Ridolfi relating that being robbed of her by one of his pupils he died of grief at the double treason; Vasari, that she being secretly stricken of the plague, and he making his visits to her as usual, he took the sickness from her mortally, along with his kisses, and thus briefly departed.¹

Pater distorts their balanced construction; based on the three sites of authority, and directly translating from Vasari,² the tragic love story is corroborated. However, the romantic quality is also greatly elaborated, from Crowe and Cavalcaselle's laconic: it "is probably true that he was fond of gallantry". Unlike the connoisseurs, Pater offers no intimation of moral judgement.

Having reduced Giorgione to one painting and portrayed his life as a romantic tragedy, to explain the man himself, Pater uses the image of *fire*: "a live flame, as it seemed, in those old shadowy times". This image again takes us back to the "Conclusion", the idea of our "flame-like" life, or the "gem-like flame" of the aesthetic moment, and I would argue that the image of *fire* idealises Giorgione and the Pitti *Concert*. Later, Pater discusses "that vivacity which Vasari has attributed to him, the *fuoco Giorgionesco*, as he terms it".³ Although this exact phrase is not found in the *Vite*,⁴ Vasari does praise Giorgione's *colorite vivacissimamente*;⁵ Settis acknowledges that Zanetti had discussed "il gran fuoco di Giorgione" in his 1760 analysis of the artist's "fiammeggiante" colouring.⁶ However, presumably Pater encountered the *Varie Pitture* through Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who themselves paraphrase Zanetti; Titian "avoids Giorgione's fire". They also disattribute a painting because it does not show "the fire and

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.534

² "e molto goderono l'uno e l'arta de' loro amori" – Vasari, Vol IV 1976, p.47

³ Pater, October 1877, pp.532, 535

⁴ Hill, 1980, p.396

⁵ Vasari, Vol IV 1976, p.45

⁶ Settis, 1990, p.168; Zanetti, 1760, pp.v-vii

spirit of an original creator”.¹ There is an exact source for the phrase that has not been commented upon, although it is reproduced by Dédéyan; the 1859 *Galleries publiques de l'Europe* describes “cette chaleur de coloris” as “*il fuoco Giorgionesco*”.² Pater is creatively and deceptively intertextual: Giorgione’s *fire* or “spirit” can be found not only in the Pitti *Concert*, but also in the traditions, legends, and myths that surround him. As with Botticelli and the story of his supposed heresy, be it “true or false”,³ in the Giorgione essay the mythical reputation, in an indefinite but truth-like way, reflects the individual. Although Pater may take pleasure from the legend, he also creates a theoretical justification for their historical value.

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.143, 150

² Qtd. in Dédéyan, 1981, p.719

³ Tucker, 2002, p.123

PART 3

Synthesis: The “New” Giorgione

In my analysis so far I have been restricting myself to the sections of the essay Pater himself defined with breaks in the text. However, the final paragraph of the second section functions to move beyond the opposition of aesthetic and scientific; it defines Pater’s *idea* of Giorgione and so allows for the critical judgements that follow in the third section.

Giorgione’s “School” and the *Giorgionesque*

The paragraph begins with the idea that, despite the reduction in the number of attributions: “in what is connected to a great name much that is not real is often very stimulating;”

...and for the aesthetic philosopher, over and above the real Giorgione and his authentic extant works, there remains *the Giorgionesque* also, an influence, a spirit or type in art, active in men so different as those to whom those supposed works are really assignable – a veritable school, indeed, which grew, as a supplementary product, out of all those fascinating works rightly or wrongly attributed to him; out of many copies from, or variations on him, by unknown or uncertain workmen...¹

For Pater, the multiple anonymous attributions can still be presented as a coherent whole given that they all share an “active” principle, the *Giorgionesque*. The emphasis remains on the individual, as the repetition “to him [...] on him” demonstrates; Giorgione is expressed in these disattributed paintings, by the *Giorgionesque*, and by his “school”. The exact mechanics of this expression, whether it is a matter of “spirit” or “influence”, are left unclear.

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.534

Nevertheless, Pater continues by arguing that this “product” is a result of the “immediate impression” Giorgione made in his lifetime. Pater overcame Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s problematisation by concentrating on traditions “that really descend from him to our own time, and by retracing which we will fill out the original image”. Finally, in this return to the artist himself, Pater combined positivist and idealist understanding, scientific and aesthetic descriptions: “Giorgione thus becoming a sort of impersonation of Venice itself, its projected reflex or ideal, all that was intense or desirable in it thus crystallising about the memory of this wonderful young man”.¹

To understand this *idea* of Giorgione we need, therefore, to discuss what Pater meant by “school” and “*Giorgionesque*”. Siegel considers Pater’s concept of “school” to be a “radical notion of self-expression”, the provocation of imitation becoming “a *characteristic* of Giorgione’s style and achievement.”² In Pater’s Leonardo essay, “technical criticism” is acknowledged to have disattributed many important works; however:

...a lover of strange souls may still analyse for himself the impression made on him by those works, and try to reach through it a definition of the chief elements of Lionardo’s genius. The *legend*, corrected and enlarged by its critics, may now and then intervene to support the results of this analysis.³

Siegel argues that Pater salvages the value of paintings attributed to the artist’s pupils, pederastic relationships functioning to make their work a “manifestation of Leonardo’s genius”, the beauty of reattributed paintings being “the beauty of influence”; this is considered a “more complex and richer” idea of “school” than art historians have managed to create. Siegel suggests the Giorgione essay works differently; the lack of biographical

¹ Pater, October 1877, pp.534-535

² Siegel, 2002, pp.133-135

³ Pater, 1873, p.92

information meaning Pater “cannot tell the same story of the passionate disciple”.¹ There are, however, two more substantial differences between the two essays. First, Pater does not use the word “school” with reference to Leonardo; second, connoisseurship had not disattributed what Pater considered Leonardo’s “masterpiece”, the *Mona Lisa*, as it had for Giorgione with the *Concert Champêtre*.

Although there are differences between the Leonardo and Giorgione essays, the similarity is clear: science has disrupted Pater’s relationship with genius. In “The School of Giorgione”, there is a much more concentrated attempt to overcome scientific connoisseurship, in which the concept of “school” is indistinguishable from the idea of the “*Giorgionesque*”. Although both these words seem to take the discussion away from the individual artist, I will show that Pater’s attention is squarely on Giorgione himself. It has been recently argued that Crowe and Cavalcaselle “inadvertently provided an appealingly fresh model of artistic identity” and that Pater made indefiniteness “a term of celebration”.² This is true to an extent; however, I would argue that the concepts of “school” and the “*Giorgionesque*” have a specific function: they are designed to reconnect the *Concert Champêtre* with the Pitti *Concert*, and therefore Giorgione himself. Again, it is important to recognise that the language used by Pater to achieve this aim – school, Giorgionesque, influence, spirit – is art historical and can be found in the *New History*. To reconnect disattributed paintings with the artist, Pater exploits the anonymity of *school* and the idealism of *Giorgionesque*; in this way the *Concert Champêtre* is attributed an aestheticised *idea* of Giorgione.

For Crowe and Cavalcaselle the term Giorgionesque is defined with reference to various artists, communally contributing to the development of Venetian painting. Pater reverses this

¹ Siegel, 2002, pp.141-150

² O’Gorman, 2006, p.178

process, reconnecting all paintings that might loosely be described as Giorgionesque with Vasari's individual genius Giorgione. Another word found in both the *New History* and *The Renaissance* is "spirit", the connoisseurs describing the Castelfranco frescoes (Figs.A34, A35) as "certainly in the Giorgionesque spirit". Although the connoisseurs do not use "spirit" in a Hegelian sense, it is still something incorporeal, a sensation, or mental impression. This shows that there is not a huge gap between scientific art history and Pater's idealisation; therefore the reader should not be surprised to find the words "fire and spirit" in both texts.¹ Aligned with "spirit" is the idea of "influence", a vague word which has been shown to be an active force in Pater's history.² However, this word is also common in connoisseurship, and we will hear Morelli castigate Crowe and Cavalcaselle for their slippery "theory of influences".³ Pater wanted to re-establish his relationship with Giorgione, and "influence" is a word that for him describes relationships between individuals.

In the *Concert Champêtre* Cavalcaselle noted "il principio anche ciò detto giorgionesco".⁴ For the connoisseurs the Giorgionesque was something external, a material sign of influence; for Pater, the Giorgionesque was internal, being an intellectual perspective, a moral position, an artistic attitude, and therefore, a sign of spiritual influence. The "school" of Giorgione is a social and cultural manifestation of this influence; the artist being expressed by "the bravest work of other men". Both Pater and the "new Vasari" begin by discussing Venetian painting in general; in the *New History* it is the story of "schools" plural, while for Pater, despite this reevaluation, Giorgione is the progenitor "of that school".⁵

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.134, 150

² Wallen, 1999, pp.1033-1051; Wallen, 2002, pp.73-89; Williams, 1989, p.130

³ Morelli, 1893, p.153; 1891, p.202

⁴ Qtd. in Moretti, 1973, p.107

⁵ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.119; Pater, October 1877, p.530

At this point in Pater's essay the aesthetic critic becomes the "aesthetic philosopher", the Giorgionesque a "veritable school"; this suggests an epistemological interpretation. For Crowe and Cavalcaselle the word Giorgionesque was a practical way of describing a particular school within sixteenth-century Venetian painting; for Pater it was a form of spiritual knowledge revealed in Giorgione but found in the work of other artists. The conclusion of Pater's aesthetic-science of art history is that Giorgione should be understood as a personification of Venice and represented by the Giorgionesque. This is a logical judgement, and Pater repeats "thus [...] thus"; it is a scientific reaction, "projected reflex", and a natural process, "crystallising". However, it is also "ideal", and so a thing of the mind, Pater arguing that Giorgione exists within our cultural and collective "memory". Although this may seem far from the materialism of the *New History*, yet even here Pater sublimes the connoisseurs' language, for just as his paintings are "impersonations", so Giorgione is "a sort of impersonation".¹

I have tried to show that Pater's emphasis was on the individual artist himself; however, this does not mean a historically specific figure, but something more sublime and elusive – an impersonation, personification, reflection, a disembodied sentiment, or "something like this". Pater defined this ideal individual within "Diaphaneité" in 1864, and was then consistent with the imagery he used to describe it. In this early lecture Pater spoke of this "character" as having "the clear ring, the eternal outline of the antique", which returns in the "Conclusion", and twice in the Giorgione essay: as the "true outlines of Giorgione's work and person" and "the well-known outline of the life and personality of the man".² In "Diaphaneité" we also find this type of individual described as "this clear crystal nature"; in the "Preface" it is Wordsworth who is "crystallised" in his poems, while Pater argues that the traditional,

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.123; Pater, October 1877, pp.534-535

² Pater, 1900, p.219; Pater, 1873, p.208; Pater, October 1877, pp.532-533

romantic idea of Giorgione formed by “crystallising about the memory”.¹ Individual words are loaded with meaning and suggestion in Pater’s writing; the reader may notice variations of *dexterous* appear several times in *The Renaissance*, and three times in “The School of Giorgione”; in “Diaphaneité” the genius is marked by their “dexterously seizing that one chance”.² Most significantly, the genius described by Pater in 1864 shows no “unmusical predominance”, they are a “just equipoise”,³ it might be argued that this is exactly what Pater perceives in Giorgione and the Giorgionesque.

This definition of the individual genius as an aesthetic object works through suggestive metaphor; it is therefore obscure, even vague, but it was Pater’s vision of his subject, and it allowed him to reconnect the *Concert Champêtre* with the Pitti *Concert*. Pater has accepted the *New History*; it is a “fact” that “the real Giorgione” might not, perhaps, have painted the Louvre canvas. Therefore he does not directly attack this site of authority, but subtly diminishes it; his aesthetic criticism subsumes scientific analysis, taking it to a philosophical level. In this way, Pater has intellectually justified the resumption of his relationship with the artist through the *Concert Champêtre*; although Giorgione may not be the *material* author, he is truly the *spiritual* author.

Pater’s Giorgione

The third section of Pater’s Giorgione essay properly begins: “And now, finally, let me illustrate some of the characteristics of this *school of Giorgione*”. In line with his idea of

¹ Pater, 1900, p.220; Pater, 1873, p.x; Pater, October 1877, p.535

² Pater, October 1877, pp.531, 535, 537; Pater, 1900, p.220

³ Pater, 1900, p.220

Anders-streben, and based on Giorgionesque imagery, in this section of the essay Pater gives a written picture of his Giorgione. This ekphrasis starts by identifying itself with disattributions, “those famous pictures at Florence, Dresden, and Paris”. As Pater says, this is working against Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s “negative criticism”, and therefore shows a dialectic movement towards his “new”, positive explanation. Pater repeats that in these disattributed paintings an “artistic ideal” is “defined”, described here as “a peculiar aim and procedure in art” called the Giorgionesque, “wherever we find it”. This transhistorical “ideal” is not limited to a particular time or place; however, it is rooted in the experience of a specific painting, the Pitti *Concert*, “that undoubted work of Giorgione”. This picture “is the typical instance” of the Giorgionesque ideal, functioning as a *standard*, and therefore “authenticates the connexion of the school with the master”.¹ At this point Pater completes his synthesis of positivist and idealist methods, re-establishing his direct relationship through the Giorgionesque to Giorgione.

Pater then repeats his concept of the “interpenetration” of *matter* and *form*, “a condition realised absolutely only in music”. In the opening theoretical section, perfect poetry required a “suppression or vagueness” of subject matter; in painting “the attainment of this ideal condition” depends upon the “dexterous choice of that subject, or phase of subject; and such choice is one of the secrets of Giorgione’s school”. This “phase of subject” has already been partially defined, and Pater repeats that this school is “the school of *genre*”, which “employs itself mainly with ‘painted idylls’”. The word “idyll” refers to a species of pastoral poetry; to be like music, painting must transcend its limitations in an *Anders-streben*; the *Giorgionesque* therefore becomes a “pictorial poetry”. Furthermore, Pater argues the school

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.535

of Giorgione “exercises a wonderful *finesse* in the selecting of such matter as lends itself most readily and entirely to pictorial form, to complete expression by drawing and colour”.¹

Significantly, although these images “are painted poems, they belong to a sort of poetry which tells itself without an articulated story”. This is essential to make *matter* suitable for visual expression in *form*, and Pater articulates the type of non-narrative subjects he means: “the lacing-on of armour, with the head bent back so stately; the fainting lady; the embrace rapid as the kiss caught with death itself from dying lips; the momentary conjunction of mirrors”. This is a list of allegorical half-lengths like the *Knight and Page* or the *Embrace of Lovers* (Figs.A22, A40), but caught in the middle of these Giorgionesque subjects there is a macabre romantic encounter in which Pater begins to sound like his caricature Mr. Rose, echoing and exaggerating the erotic morbidity of Giorgione’s death. These motifs are then generalised and related back to the individual personality: “The sudden act, the rapid transition of thought, the passing expression – this he arrests with that vivacity which Vasari has attributed to him, the *fuoco Giorgionesco*”.²

Pater then places these subjects in relation to “the ideality of the highest sort of dramatic poetry”, which is established on “profoundly significant and animated instants”; the reader is given examples: “a look, a smile, perhaps”. Their *ideality* is the same as in Pater’s ekphrasis of the *Mona Lisa*: “a brief and entirely concrete moment, into which, however, all the motives, all the interest and efficacy of a long history, have condensed themselves, and which seem to absorb past and future in an intense consciousness of the present”. This musical mode of poetic subject negates temporality, and Pater argues that:

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.535

² *Ibid*

Such ideal instants the school of Giorgione selects with admirable *finesse* from that feverish, tumultuously coloured world of the old citizens of Venice; phases of subject in themselves already volatilised almost to the vanishing point, exquisite pauses in time, in which, arrested thus, we seem to be spectators of all the fulness of things for ever, and which are like an extract, or elixir, or consummate fifth part of life.¹

This interpretation of the allegorical half-lengths describes a mode of subject matter that exactly meets the requirements for the perfect art as defined in the “Conclusion” and “Winckelmann”; *Giorgionesque* images represent moments of contemporary Venetian life, but idealised, made autonomous. Following the “Preface”, the analysis is also aesthetic-scientific: the images are *volatilised*, changed from liquid to gas; they are an alchemical substance that promises immortality; they are a negation of temporal and spatial values and so create a fifth dimension, or “part of life”.

In the next paragraph Pater describes the aesthetic experience of Giorgionesque painting; this passage was removed from the 1888 version of the essay and will be discussed below. Pater continues by reasserting the “law or condition of music”, after which he explains that “in the school of Giorgione those perfect moments of music itself, the making or the hearing of it, song or the accompaniment of song, are themselves prominent as subjects.” Again, the Pitti *Concert* becomes the standard of judgement, described as “typical of all that Giorgione [...] touched with his influence”. Disregarding authorship, in “various collections” and “intricate variations” we can see the expression of this *influence*, and from these works Pater draws a general description of the Giorgionesque:

...men fainting at music, music heard at the pool-side while people fish, or mingled with the sound of the pitcher in the well, or heard across running water, or among the

¹ Pater, October 1877, pp.535-536

flocks; the tuning of instruments; people with intent faces as if listening, like those in Plato, to detect the smallest interval of musical sound, the smallest undulation in the air, as it is said ears may catch the note of the bat; feeling for music in thought on a stringless instrument, ear and finger refining themselves infinitely in the appetite for sweet sound;

Pater ends his list of subject matters and metaphors with a sleepily erotic innuendo: “a momentary touch of an instrument in the twilight, as one passes through some unfamiliar room, in a chance company”.¹ This description of the Giorgionesque begins in recognisable pastoral scenes, and then moves into the imagery of the two “Concerts”, ending with Pater’s paradoxical analogies that combine intellectual (Plato) with sensual (touch), explaining the appearance of “*the condition of music*”.

Next, Pater analyses these “favourite incidents” of the school of Giorgione: “music or the music-like intervals in our existence”. First, life is imagined “as a sort of listening—listening to music, to the reading of Bandello’s novels, to the sound of water, to time as it flies”. Second, echoing Schiller, Pater relates these “moments” with “play” which is “like music”, and in which we gain a sense of freedom or autonomy:

...we are surprised at the unexpected blessedness of what may seem our least important part of time; not merely because play is in many instances that to which people really apply their own best powers, but also because at such times, the stress of our servile, everyday attentiveness being relaxed, the happier powers in things without us are permitted free passage, and have their way with us.²

These ideas are recognisably connected to Schiller’s *Spieltrieb*; for Pater, “play” is the harmony of form and content, sense and intellect, interior and exterior realities; we are

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.536 – The reference to Plato’s *Republic* (Hill, 1980, p.396) and the macabre imagery suggests a relation with Mallock’s *The New Republic*.

² *Ibid.*, pp.536-537

blessed, relaxed, happy, and again Pater ends on a possible innuendo. Giorgionesque subjects can literally be “the play which is like music”:

...those masques in which men avowedly do but play at real life, like children “dressing up,” disguised in the strange old Italian dresses, parti-coloured, or fantastic with purfling and furs, of which the master was so curious a designer, and which, above all the spotless white linen at wrist and throat, he painted so dexterously.¹

Here Pater idealises a traditional image of Giorgione’s subject matter, one which Crowe and Cavalcaselle had described as “erroneous”.² This is *genre*, in which contemporary moments are “idealised, till they come to seem like glimpses of life from afar”. With the idea of Venetian masquerade, Pater introduces the *strange, fantastic, and curious*, before ending on the sinister image of “spotless white linen at wrist and throat”. In this way, like the *Mona Lisa*, the images become antinomian and so autonomous.

From this image we suddenly move back to the language of pleasure with an ekphrasis of the *Concert Champêtre*:

And when people are happy in this thirsty land, water will not be far off; and in the school of Giorgione the presence of water – the well, or marble-rimmed pool, the drawing or pouring of water, as the woman pours it from a pitcher with her jewelled hand in the *Fête Champêtre*, listening, perhaps, to the cool sound as it falls, blent with the music of the pipes – is as characteristic, and almost as suggestive, as that of music itself. And the landscape feels and is glad of it also – a landscape full of clearness, of the effects of water, of fresh rain newly passed through the air, and collected into its grassy channels; the air, too, in the school of Giorgione, being as vivid as the souls who breathe it, and literally empyrean, its impurities burnt out of it,

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.537

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.156

no taint, no trace or floating particle of aught but its own clear elements, allowed to subsist within it.¹

This is less visually specific than Pater's description of the Pitti *Concert*, identifying the female nude to the left as the main element. Isolated from the central group in the image, this figure leans over a basin emptying water from a glass vessel. Pater has also isolated her, taking the act of listening to water as a metaphor to explain the image, the sound of water being mixed with "the music of the pipes". Pater does not discuss the colouring, or the central group, but instead reduces narrative and locates meaning in visual metaphors. The evocation of the landscape uses images of *air* combined with *water*, ending in the *earth* of "grassy channels" and the *fire* of "empyrean". This elemental imagery affects the music of the canvas, creating a sense of balance and harmony, of movement yet continuity, and allows Pater to reject Crowe and Cavalcaselle's accusation that the *Concert Champêtre* is "on the verge of the lascivious".²

After the multiple synaesthetic metaphors and transcendental imagery of "empyrean", in the next paragraph we are brought back down to earth with Crowe and Cavalcaselle's "park scenery". Pater then moves on to discuss "some undefined refinement" in Giorgionesque landscapes "about the rustic buildings, the choice grass, the grouped trees, the undulations deftly economised for graceful effect". Reflecting on the earlier discussion of actual landscape, he infuses his text with colours, and repeats the metaphor of weaving:

...in Italy all natural things are woven through and through with gold thread, even the cypress revealing it among the folds of its blackness. And it is with gold dust or gold thread that these Venetian painters seem to work, spinning its fine filaments through the solemn human flesh, out away into the white plastered walls of the thatched huts.

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.537

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, pp.125, 147

The harsher details of the mountains recede to a harmonious distance, the one peak of rich blue above the horizon remaining but as the visible warrant of that due coolness which is all we need ask here of the Alps, with their dark rains and streams.¹

Giorgionesque landscapes represent the perfect identity of *form* and *matter*, and this justifies them against Ruskin's claim that "it is difficult to imagine anything more magnificently impossible than the blue of the distant landscape" in Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (Fig.R12).² For Pater, the landscape has been *refined* or *abstracted*, the artist has worked in harmony with "that strange perpetual weaving and unweaving" from the "Conclusion", and again, the "horizon" functions as an image of this freedom.³

In these landscapes, as in Schiller's *Spieltrieb*, man's spiritual and material worlds are brought into musical agreement. The "harmonious distance" Pater describes recalls "Diaphaneitè" of 1864, in which the ideal individual is a revolutionary, but in them "revolutionism is softened, harmonised, subdued as by distance"; Giorgione's landscapes "recede to a harmonious distance" while *genre* is "glimpses of life from afar".⁴ In Giorgionesque painting Pater also observes a reciprocity between figures and landscape: "spinning its fine filaments through the solemn human flesh, out away into the white plastered walls". As the ideal example, the reader is taken back to that famous picture in Dresden, "through the long-drawn valley in which Jacob embraces Rachel, the fiery point of passion". Pater finishes with the claim that *Jacob and Rachel* (Fig.A26) shows "that balance, that modulated unison of landscapes and persons [...] already noted as characteristic of the Venetian school".⁵

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.537

² Ruskin, 1846, p.146

³ Pater, 1873, pp.210-211

⁴ Pater, 1900, pp.219-220; Pater, October 1877, p.537, 531

⁵ Pater, October 1877, pp.537-538

I would like to briefly acknowledge two sources for this “new” Giorgione. First, it again seems Pater had read Symonds’ the *Renaissance in Italy: The Fine Arts* following its publication in March 1877. In this work, like Pater, Symonds reacted to “Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s negative criticism” by upholding the value of disattributed works: “Nothing proves the greatness of the Venetian masters more than the possibility of attributing such compositions to obscure and subordinate craftsman of the school.” Despite the problematisation, *Jacob and Rachel* is discussed for its “striking Giorgionesque qualities” and is employed as evidence of “the ascendancy of [Giorgione’s] imagination over the Venetian school.”¹ Second is Ruskin, who also seems to have *idealised* Giorgione in the final volume of *Modern Painters* (1860), O’Gorman arguing that Pater “appropriated the Ruskinian language of fragmentary continuance”.² I would suggest that the relationship between the two texts can be heard in Ruskin’s description of Venice as “sad and silent”, which Pater critiques: “On that background of the silence of Venice, which the visitor there finds so impressive, the world of Italian music was then forming”.³ Like Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Ruskin disassociated Venetian colour from the taint of sensuality;⁴ Pater re-sensualises the Giorgionesque, and thereby reconnects Venetian painting with its traditional and attractive reputation. Venice is no longer silent and sad, but “happy” and “tumultuous”, full of the music of the *Concert Champêtre*.

¹ Symonds, 1904, pp.268-270, 279-280

² O’Gorman, 2006, p.177

³ Ruskin, 1846, pp.338-339; Pater, 1888, p.157

⁴ Bullen, 1992, p.107-108

The Ideality of Genre

Although “The School of Giorgione” seems to emphasise technique, it has been recognised that Pater does not produce a formalist criticism.¹ Before the Formalism of the early twentieth century, the only language Pater could turn to was Vasari’s line and colour, or the technical vocabulary of Eastlake, Crowe and Cavalcaselle. If the reader had searched for a formal analysis in the *New History*, they would have found a description of Giorgione’s paintings which might resemble Pater’s Giorgionesque: form, blending, drawing, impasto, glazing, tints, and light, all these total a “melodious harmony”.² Despite being friends with practising painters, Pater it seems had little interest in technique, and this is one of the ways he differs from Ruskin.³ However, the absence of technical description also dramatically distances Pater from the two connoisseurs. In “The School of Giorgione” the author attempts to explain the mode of subject matter in *genre*, or rather, Giorgionesque pastorals and allegorical half-lengths. Instead of writing about how a painter expresses content through form, Pater discusses the way content is made appropriate for formal expression.

Consequently, it is important to define the content of *genre*; from Pater’s description we can see he intended contemporary life and actual landscape, material not conceptual images. From the two “Concerts” Pater defines two modes of subject matter, each of which performs a different function. The first is *pause*, resulting from a combination of musical temporality and pictorial synchronicity; this detaches the paintings from *Ut pictura poesis*, signifying content that is non-linear and non-discursive. The second is *harmony*, being equilibrium in the sense-intellect dialectic; this unity serves to absolve the paintings and allow for the

¹ McGrath, 1986, p.194

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1876, p.136

³ Rawlinson, H. G., 1927; qtd in. Court, 1980, pp.187, 122

expression of Giorgione's "spirit". It has been said that Pater was "combating the aesthetic of mimesis" and advocating content that cannot be "representationally fixed";¹ however, *genre* is defined by "*the condition of music*", meaning form and content are indistinguishable; the subject of Giorgionesque painting – *pause* and *harmony* – is therefore idealised materiality.

This idea of *pause* is exemplified by the Pitti *Concert* and Pater's ekphrasis quoted above. In this painting the figure to the left stares out of the canvas, not directly involved in the interaction between the other two figures, who touch and make eye contact with one another. Pater focuses on this isolated figure, who is described as *waiting*, choosing not to mention the more visibly communicative gestures. This therefore reduces any possible narrative, concentrating the story within a musical *moment*. The figure to the left is *waiting* for "the true interval", a very specific designation, although not visually, the words "wait" and "interval" introducing temporal values, meaning the subject matter becomes "the moment before".² Pater's description of a transient *interval* or *moment* replaces *Ut pictura poesis* with musical *pause*. This relates to the other descriptions of Giorgionesque subjects – "the lacing", "the fainting", "the embrace", and "the kiss"³ – all minimal actions that are somehow rich in significance; in this way the Pitti *Concert* becomes "the waiting". Pater explains the image with analogies between visual and aural, sight and sound, music and painting, while combining temporal with synchronic values, including the past and the future within the unity of the present. From the glance of the figure to the left, Pater creates a sense of expectation, the painter has *arrested* or *caught* this moment, so the music implied by image has been "fixed [...] on the lips and hands for ever". To understand this *pause*, strangely like a Morellian scientific analysis, Pater has isolated representations of anatomical details and idealised them. The clearest example of this is when Pater mentions the *Embrace of Lovers*

¹ Herzog, 1996, pp.126-128

² Pater, October 1877, pp.532-533

³ *Ibid.*, p.535

(Fig.A40), “where the knight’s noticeably worn gauntlets seem to mark some well-known pause in a story”.¹

Inman has related the Giorgionesque “instant” or “moment” to Hegel and Browning,² but it is very important to see that Pater, when explaining this idea of *pause*, idealises Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s analysis, giving it aesthetic significance. In their discussion of Giorgione’s representation of movement they describe an “easy reproduction of instant motion”. For Pater this becomes a metaphor which fulfils an idealist function; “the resolution, the ease and quickness, with which he reproduces instantaneous motion”. Rather than being strictly technical, as in the *New History*, for Pater this is a description of subject matter: “The sudden act, the rapid transition of thought, the passing expression – this he arrests”.³ Temporal values – suddenness, rapidity – are contained within an aesthetic moment, becoming therefore “animated instants”, an inversion of “instant motion”. In the “Conclusion”, *time* is a “negative factor”, dialectically overcome with aesthetic synchronicity.⁴ In the Giorgione essay, images of temporal-stasis are understood through Schiller’s *Spieltrieb*, becoming paradoxes that annul time within time. Therefore, in Giorgione’s *pause* is the “resolution” of the sense-intellect dualism, *matter* and *form* having been consummated.

To express how exceptional the *Concert Champêtre* is, Pater describes it with the metaphor of “empyrean”, giving the work cosmological, almost theological significance. This is then combined with the scientific imagery of “particles”, meaning that physical and spiritual are brought into *harmony*. Concentrating on the female figure to the left, Pater isolates another minimal action, “the drawing or pouring of water”, and rather than look, the reader is asked

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.533

² Inman, 1990, pp.395-396

³ Pater, October 1877, p.535

⁴ Iser, 1987, p.30

to listen. The viewer “listens” to the *Concert Champêtre*, therefore partaking in its musical equanimity, and as in Schiller’s *Aesthetic Education*, the resolution of oppositions creates symmetry between artist and critic.

This is the second mode of Giorgione’s subject matter: *harmony*. The Louvre canvas could easily have been described as one of these “exquisite pauses in time”, but Pater chooses not to describe the central group. As in the Pitti *Concert*, these three figures represent a limited moment of interaction, the position of their hands suggesting that music will soon be made, or that the last notes still hang in the air. They fit perfectly the idea of musical *pause*, being a negative narrative which ends with the beginning; however, this element of the *Concert Champêtre* is ignored by Pater, demonstrating that this ekphrasis serves a different function. Instead, Pater ethically absolves the Louvre painting by representing it as a perfect balance; this *harmony* is also a sign of Giorgione’s “influence” and therefore contains his “spirit”.

The *music* of the canvas is the *spirit* of the Giorgione, and in the description of the *Concert Champêtre*, this is what Pater is trying to convey. The symmetrical relationship between artist and critic was more pronounced in 1877, but a whole paragraph was removed from the essay when it was included in *The Renaissance* in 1888. After the general description of the Giorgionesque, in 1877 Pater asks:

Who, in some such perfect moment, when the harmony of things inward and outward beats itself out so truly, and with a sense of receptivity, as if in that deep accord, with entire inaction on our part, some messenger from the real soul of things must be on his way to one, has not felt the desire to perpetuate all that, just so, to suspend it in every particular circumstance, with the portrait of just that one spray of leaves lifted just so high against the sky, above the well, for ever? – a desire how bewildering with the question whether there indeed be any place wherein these desirable moments take

permanent refuge. Well! in the school of Giorgione you drink water, perfume, music, lie in receptive humour thus for ever, and the satisfying moment is assured.¹

Giorgione is the “messenger from the real soul of things”, the *condition* of the relationship between artist and critic being the *harmony* of interior and exterior worlds. This passage directly addresses the reader and shows Pater at his most polemical. It also clearly relates back to the “Conclusion”, which may be the reason for Pater cancelling the paragraph in 1888. The desire to “perpetuate” this sensual pleasure relates the canvas to the “lifted horizon”; the *ideality* of the Giorgionesque produces a state of “receptivity”, the perfect *harmony* becoming a “refuge”, providing an equivalent of individual freedom. This is imaged by “that one spray of leaves lifted just so high against the sky, above the well”, indicating the branches seen in the top left corner of the *Concert Champêtre*. However, Pater does not repeat his early description of “the arabesque traced [...] by Titian’s forest branches;”² instead, this isolated detail is a “portrait”, meaning a representation of Giorgione, an expression of his “spirit”.

The Ideality of Giorgione

Pater’s illustration “of this *School of Giorgione*” may not seem particularly scientific, yet it has been intellectually and ethically justified. Poetry is the critical tool, and I would like to argue that Pater creates metaphors from visual observations, isolating details that are then idealised and seen as expressive of “spirit”. Pater’s “new” Giorgione has a strong literary dimension, as can be seen by the relation to Swinburne’s criticism and Rossetti’s poetry; from this I have been led to the conclusion that Keats is the true poetic model for the

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.536

² *Ibid.*, p.527

Giorgionesque. Using poetry in this way does contradict the notion that the ideal painting is non-literary, and should aspire towards “*the condition of music*”. However, simply by writing about the artist, Pater made this a necessary and inevitable contradiction. Also, as we will see, the synecdochic investigation is non-narrative, non-discursive, being suggestive and affective. Finally, to be like music, painting must transcend its limitations and achieve reciprocity with other mediums including poetry. If we were to argue that Pater contradicts himself we would simply be acknowledging that the “musical law” is paradoxical. Instead, I would like to see how symbolism and association function as an idealisation, producing Pater’s image of Giorgione.

Pater’s ekphrases reduce narrative in favour of highlighting specific visual details and using them as metaphors for the effect of the image. Music is clearly the most important image, but as we have seen, Pater also idealises physical details. Elemental metaphors of water and air are employed within his descriptions of the *Concert Champêtre* and the *Holy Family* (Figs.A1, A29), the images becoming “liquid air” and “wind-searched”. Earth is represented by the image of a gemstone; the *Concert Champêtre* is almost a “precious” stone, containing the female figure “with her jewelled hand”, and this recalls the image of “jewel-like pools of water” in the Uffizi *Trial of Moses* and *Judgement of Solomon*. Pater’s *image* of the artist is actually a diamond, the *memory* of him “crystallising”, while fire, of course, is Giorgione himself. The balanced elemental metaphors equate to the identity of form and content, idealising the images; in this way visual details, such as “the blue peak” are understood as expressive of Giorgione’s “spirit”.¹

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.533, 535, 537

Pater uses the metaphor of music to explain the concord of *form* and *matter*; on one level this can be understood as the relation of landscape and figures, the first being primarily aesthetic in significance, the second having greater iconographic potential. Metaphor is therefore used as a critical tool, specifically resolving a problem left open by Crowe and Cavalcaselle. In the *New History* there is an uncertain relationship between person and place in *The Tempest* (Fig.A3), so that the landscape “seems at one moment a pretext for the figures, whilst these at other moments look like a filling for the landscape”. The connoisseurs admit defeat, concluding there “may be some deeper meaning in the scene”. Pater replies directly, using Crowe’s own language against him, seen specifically in the word “pretext”. At the end of this third section, after praising the *Jacob and Rachel*, Pater argues that there is no “truer instance of that balance, that modulated unison of landscape and persons” and that in Giorgione’s school, “neither personage nor scenery is ever a mere pretext for the other”.¹ Here the metaphor of music is used to understand what scientific connoisseurship cannot, explaining the relation of figures to landscape by minimising the distinction between *form* and *matter*.

Poetry not only explains the expression of Giorgione’s “spirit”, it also functions as a mechanism of “influence”. The image of the artist Pater creates is based on the *Concert Champêtre*, and therefore should be associated with the painting’s appearance in his essay “Dionysus” at the end of 1876.² Pater’s romanticised image of the Greek god engages with “the comparative science of religions”, and as in “The School of Giorgione”, he uses dialectic to overcome a strictly positivist method that ignores “marks of intelligence”, incorporating “science” with the “aesthetic sense”. The subtitle of “Dionysus” is “The Spiritual Form of

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol.2, 1871, p.136; Pater, October 1877, pp.537-538; an additional clause was removed from this sentence in 1888: “the earth being here but a ‘second body,’ a garment as exactly conformed to and spiritually expressive of the human presence on it, of the ‘first body,’ as that ‘first body’ is of the soul”. This passage may have been cancelled because it is stylistically awkward, but also because it demonstrates clearly that Giorgionesque landscapes are “spiritually expressive” of Giorgione.

² This essay relates to the Classical-Romantic dialectic, defending a relationship between nature, language and imagination – Evangelista, 2002, p.110

Fire and Dew”; the *Concert Champêtre* functions as resolution of this elemental dialectic, illustrating “not the heat only but the solace:”

And who that has ever felt the heat of a southern country does not know this poetry, the motive of the loveliest of all the works attributed to Giorgione, the *Fête Champêtre* in the Louvre; the intense sensations, the subtle, far-reaching symbolisms, which in these places, cling about the touch, and sound, and sight of it?¹

Through synaesthetic harmony and suggestive symbolism the painting embodies “fire-born” Dionysus, whose “second birth is of the dew”. In this context Pater’s “new” Giorgione becomes like a deity, Pater using the myths and traditions of god and artist, “unchecked by positive knowledge”, as expressions of their diaphanous individuality. Pater bases his image of Dionysus and Giorgione on what he considers *facts*; positive but subjective observations: “a given object, or series of objects” that through “outward qualities” or “visible facts”, can be seen to represent “something like the identity of a human personality”. He implores his reader to use their poetic imagination, to think “if you could associate, by some trick of memory, a certain group of natural objects, in all their varied perspective, their changes of colour and tone in varying light and shade, with the being and image of an actual person”. Through *poetry*, *imagination*, and *memory*, Pater uses formal *facts* to generate “the idea of Dionysus”;² a year later, using the same method, and with an expanded elemental imagery, he creates an image of Giorgione.

When Pater lists the “six or eight famous pictures” the science of connoisseurship had disattributed, he directly references Rossetti’s paintings, but also his sonnet “For a Venetian Pastoral By Giorgione (In the Louvre)”, first published in 1850 and revised for *Poems* in

¹ Pater, December 1876, pp.752, 763, 761

² *Ibid.*, pp.760-761

1870. The *Concert Champêtre*, Pater writes, is a “beloved picture in the Louvre, the subject of a delightful sonnet by a poet whose own painted work often comes to mind as one ponders over these precious things”.¹ This is the poem as it appeared in 1870:

Water, for anguish of the solstice:– nay
 But dip the Vessel slowly, – nay, but lean
 And hark how at its verge the waves of sighs in
 Reluctant. Hush! beyond all depth away
 The heat lies silent at the brink of day:
 Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
 That sobs, and brown faces cease to sing,
 Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
 Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep
 And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
 Is cool against her naked side? Let be:–
 Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
 Nor name this ever. Be it as it was, –
 Life touching lips with Immortality.²

There is a thematic relation to “The School of Giorgione” and Pater’s description of the Louvre *Concert* in the imagery of water and lips, the idea of heat and thirst, the musical pause, the escape from temporality. The insistence on the senses and placing the scene in summer also links Rossetti’s poem with the description of the painting in “Dionysus”. There are echoes too of Browning and “Sordello’s one fragment of lovely verse”, which contains the line: “Sun-blanch’d the live-long summer”.³ Therefore, with the references to Shakespeare’s song and “the most imaginative compositions of William Blake”,⁴ we can see

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.533

² Rossetti, 1870, p.258

³ Inman, 1990, p.394

⁴ Pater, October 1877, p.529

Pater building a matrix of poetic associations, creating a situation in which his “new” Giorgione can originate.

In the essay, images of “lips and hands”, or “eyes and lips”, or “dying lips”, or “kisses” show the influence of Rossetti’s poem.¹ The sonnet, like the essay, emphasises pause and silence, and therefore, it seems to me, they share a common source in Keats’ “Ode to a Grecian Urn” (1820). With its paradoxes and sensuality, its “silence and slow time”, with its “unheard” melodies that play “Not to the sensual ear”, the ode must have influenced Rossetti’s original poem, and certainly Pater’s Giorgione essay. Keats’ “Cold Pastoral!” is based on the concept of eternal stasis (“never, never shalt thou kiss”), and so provides a model for both Rossetti and Pater’s interpretation of the *Concert Champêtre*.²

Since Pater’s first reference to Giorgione in 1867, the Venetian painter had been associated with Keats, and it can be no coincidence that Swinburne made the same connection in his “Notes” of 1868. Specifically referencing the “Ode to Melancholy” (1819), Swinburne claims that Keats has translated into poetry Giorgione’s “pathos of pleasure”.³ Especially significant for “The School of Giorgione” was Swinburne’s review of Rossetti’s *Poems* in the *Fortnightly Review*, May 1870; here it is argued that “poetical reason is as evident in his most lyrical and fanciful paintings as in Giorgione’s”. Swinburne argues in that Rossetti’s sonnet on “Giorgione’s divine and transcendent pastoral” the poet “actually attains to the transfusion of a spirit that seemed incommunicable”. Both sonnet and canvas are about “inexpressible things”, showing “the supreme pause of soul and sense at the climax of their consummate noon and high tide of being”.⁴ In this way Swinburne maintains the connection to Keats,

¹ Pater, October 1877, pp.533-535

² Keats, 1976, pp.344-346

³ Swinburne, July 1868, p.35

⁴ Swinburne, May 1870, pp.559-560, 568

while also considering ideas that Pater would develop in his essay. It is debatable how close Swinburne was to Pater, but they certainly were acquainted in Oxford around 1870; the poet later played down this connection after the arrest of their mutual friend Solomon.¹ Rossetti did not explicitly compare Keats to Giorgione, but the 1850 sonnet implies this; it is quite plausible that this text led Swinburne and Pater to share a similar view on the poetic associations of Giorgionesque sensuality.

In conclusion, it has been suggested that Pater anoints Rossetti as the “modern Giorgione”. Head of a “school”, in the 1860s Rossetti produced “Venetian” paintings, divested of legible narrative.² However, I would argue that there are differences to Pater’s view of Giorgione, and that Rossetti should not be considered as part of “the school of *genre*”. Marsh questions which particular work by Rossetti came to Pater’s mind when he pondered the *Concert Champêtre*, suggesting it could have been *The Bower Meadow* (Fig.R14), painted and exhibited in 1872.³ This image demonstrates that Rossetti was not painting contemporary life, as even Prettejohn admits;⁴ although formally expressive and idealised, it is also historicised. For Pater, “*the condition of music*” was about existing in the present moment; his definition of *genre* stresses “real men and woman”, modern-day furniture and fashion. Therefore, the comparison of Pater’s essay with Manet and his *Déjeuner sur l’Herbe* (Fig.R2) is more revealing, because as we can see, they share an interest in contemporary life and non-literary subject matters. If Pater and Manet did contribute to the trajectory of modern art, they achieved self-consciousness through art history, and through Giorgione.

¹ Evans, 1970, pp.xxxviii-xxxix; Swinburne’s “Notes” were a major influence on the first edition of *The Renaissance* and Bullen has shown Pater therefore “suppresses the descriptive and stresses the affective” in his response to visual art (Bullen, 1991, p.164). Both writers focus on anatomical details, the phrase “eyes and lips” appearing in Swinburne’s “Notes” and the Giorgione essay (Swinburne, July 1868, p.18). This is a synecdochic mode of criticism (Carrier, 1991, p.9); however, for Pater, it is also observational and therefore scientific.

² Teukolsky, 2002, p.153; Teukolsky, 2009, pp.120-123

³ Marsh, 1999, p.501

⁴ Prettejohn, 2007, p.212

PART 4

Conclusion: The Essential Truth

It seems, by this point in “The School of Giorgione”, that Pater has said everything he had wanted to say. However, there is more, the final section being a single paragraph in which the author steps back, offering a reflective and reflexive assessment on what has just been achieved:

Something like this seems to me to be the *vraie vérité* about Giorgione, to adopt a serviceable expression by which the French recognise those more liberal and durable impressions which, in respect of any really considerable person or subject, anything that has at all intricately occupied men’s attention, lie beyond and must supplement the narrower range of the strictly ascertained and numerable facts about it.¹

Pater has given his reader the real truth, the sincere truth, the truer truth. This *truth* is described as an “impression” and is therefore subject to the relative and conditional reality of the “Conclusion”. Even so, this *truth* is “liberal”, meaning free or moral, and also “durable”, being a strong and lasting intellectual conclusion. It is a *truth* of Giorgione that does not contradict, but uses poetry to *strive* beyond strict “facts”. The “*vraie vérité*” therefore expands upon, or supplements, Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s “narrower” *truth*. Pater is not quoting a French writer with “*vraie vérité*”, he is emulating Arnold, who used the phrase to describe “the vital truth” which is beyond “the rhetorical truth”.² This is why, for Pater, the *Concert Champêtre* (Fig.A1) can be described as “literally empyrean”.

¹ Pater, 1888, p.160

² Qtd. in Inman, 1990, p.399

Pater continues by considering the relationship of his essay to the problematisation of the artist in the *New History*:

In this, Giorgione is but an illustration of a valuable general caution we may abide by in all criticism. As regards Giorgione himself, we have indeed to take note of all those negations and exceptions by which, at first sight, a new Vasari seems merely to have confused our apprehension of a delightful object, to have explained out of our inheritance from past time what seemed of high value there.¹

Although the problematisation of Giorgione teaches us a general lesson, the focus is squarely upon “Giorgione himself”, who is the “delightful object” of aesthetic criticism. Pater does not dismiss Crowe and Cavalcaselle, but defines them within his dialectic as an antithesis: “negations and exceptions”. It seems the author, from the disruption of the early putative essay, has learnt the importance of scepticism. Nevertheless, while problematisation can seem like a confusion, or loss of value, Pater has revealed a path to the *truth*:

Yet it is not with a full understanding even of those exceptions that one can leave off just there. Set in their true perspective such negations become but a salt of genuineness in our knowledge; and beyond all those strictly deducible facts, we must take note of that indirect influence by which one like Giorgione, for instance, enlarges his permanent efficacy, and really makes himself felt in our culture; and in a just impression of that is the essential truth, the *vraie vérité*, concerning him.²

The *vraie vérité*, Pater argues, is that an individual genius, one like Giorgione, can be known through *indirect influence*. Rather than being *strictly deduced*, “our knowledge” of Giorgione can be drawn from the anonymous author of the *Concert Champêtre*, or even from Rossetti. In this way, the traditional image of the artist, as expressed by Vasari and Ridolfi, Byron and Burckhardt, is “the essential truth” of, and Pater’s justification for, his “new” Giorgione.

¹ Pater, October 1877, p.538

² *Ibid*

Judged by his own standards Pater achieves his aims of ethically absolving romantic art and vindicating his renewed relationship with Giorgione through the *Concert Champêtre*. However, he desires more than this, the concluding paragraph defending the authority of his highly subjective, but rational, “new” Giorgione. The author wants his personal *truth* to be considered the communal *truth*, “our apprehension”, “our inheritance”, “our knowledge”, “our culture”. This has been read as Pater moving away from individualism to more “collectivist ideologies”;¹ however, the paragraph begins in the first person singular (“me...I”), after which it moves to the plural (“we...our”). This shift shows a rhetorical appeal for the reader to empathise with a subjective vision, and as we will see, similar tactics are employed by Morelli to gain authority for his “new” Giorgione. Pater’s final statement of authority is solipsistic in that it validates a relationship between individuals; as always the focus is on the artist himself, so that after repeating his name four times, the author finishes on the personal pronoun.

Pater’s claim to authority in this final section is complicated; it is a subjective claim, and might be placed in the context of institutional professionalisation.² It is based on a principled position of empiricist scepticism, in which the criticism of Giorgione demonstrates the conditionality of all knowledge. The need to be endorsed by his readership was intensified by the reception of *The Renaissance* and Mallock’s satire. In this way, authority became a very personal issue for Pater. In 1906 Symons remembered how his friend “was fond of saying” *vraie vérité* and that this phrase showed Pater’s work to be “a confession”;³ the “essential truth” about Giorgione is a sincere subjectivism. However, this *idea* of the artist is empirical, and so throughout the essay Pater offers his evidence as if it were a promise. He wrote of “the

¹ Teukolsky, 2009, p.103

² Small, 1991, p.92

³ Symons, 1906, p.16

pledge of the pictorial gift”, of how the blue peak on the horizon is a “material pledge” and “visible warrant”, and finally, of how the Pitti *Concert* (Fig.A12) is the authenticating “pledge” for Giorgione’s school.¹

Pater’s dialectic changed Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s “negations”, or problematisation, into “but a salt of genuineness”. Connoisseurship is concerned with “genuineness” and the science of the *New History* does not definitively attribute paintings to Giorgione “without proof of their absolute genuineness.”² In Pater’s dialectic, positivist and idealist knowledge undermine each other; however, the consequence is an aesthetic *truth*. In his late essay “Style” (1888) Pater argued that “the one indispensable beauty is, after all, truth”; this could mean “truth there as accuracy, truth here as expression, the finest and most intimate form of truth, the *vraie vérité*”.³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle may desire to be scientifically accurate, but the aesthetic critic is expressive; Pater’s authority is based on poetry and again we are taken back to Keats’ “Ode to a Grecian Urn”, which concludes: “Beauty is truth, truth beauty”.⁴ The *truth* of this “new” Giorgione is the *beauty* of that famous painting in the Louvre.

“The School of Giorgione” may seem to celebrate the artist’s indefiniteness,⁵ but I would argue this was necessitated by the *New History*. Instead, the essay is concerned with the finite individual. Conversely, although Pater can be read as having a “regard for exactness, for the utmost clarity of meaning”,⁶ his thinking often embraces uncertainty, especially his response to the exactitude of Crowe and Cavalcaselle. Pater’s general polemic is “against closed

¹ Pater, October 1877, pp.527, 533, 537, 535

² Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 1871, pp.156, 154

³ Pater, 1889, pp.31-32

⁴ Keats, 1976, p.346

⁵ O’Gorman, 2006, p.178

⁶ Coates, 2004, p.2

systems”;¹ the “musical law” is relative and subjective, the rhetoric not exacting, but suggestive and associative. He repeats his basic concept several times: absolute autonomy, in art and life, can be represented by “*the condition of music*”, meaning the perfect interrelation of form and content, material and spiritual, sense and intellect. I believe that *music* is what Pater had wanted to say about Giorgione in 1872, this *paragone*, the ideas of *pause* and of *harmony*, being such a convincing explanation of the *Concert Champêtre*. However, Crowe and Cavalcaselle had prevented Pater from proclaiming his *truth*, the essay as it came down to us is therefore the “new” Giorgione, being romantic, but also fundamentally problematic.

¹ Iser, 1987, p.17