

# **TEXTUAL CUES, VISUAL FICTIONS: REPRESENTATIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITIES IN THE WORKS OF DAVID HOCKNEY**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is concerned with representations of homosexual themes and subjects in the works of David Hockney (b. 1937). A male, homosexual British artist, Hockney came of age during a period in which homosexual acts between males remained criminalised in both Britain and the United States. Openly homosexual since the early 1960s, Hockney began to produce images concerned with homosexual themes during his Royal College of Art student years. This thesis explores Hockney's discovery of texts, languages, images and publications relating to homosexuality from the 1960s onwards, and his personal and creative responses to these sources. The concept of a homosexual creative 'canon' existed amongst homosexual men of this period, albeit in an unofficial capacity; this wider context of historical creative and cultural precedent within homosexual subcultures has not previously been the subject of sustained critical engagement in relation to Hockney.

In addition to the artist's works dealing with homosexual themes produced prior to the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in Britain in 1967, this thesis looks beyond that period, and also considers Hockney's personal self-fashioning and media engagements. Far from an anomalous maverick, Hockney and his works are shown to fit within a continuum of homosexual creative and cultural endeavour.

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There can be few people who are fortunate enough in life to meet their idols, but I have been one of them. I have found David Hockney and his work fascinating ever since I wrote my A-level art study on him as a teenager, and ten years later, I am handing in a PhD thesis that, in many ways, is a continuation of the intellectual concerns that began back then. It is fair to say that the assistance and insight that Mr Hockney personally has offered over the course of this research project has been invaluable, and I would like to offer him my heartfelt gratitude. Thanks are also due to John Fitzherbert, without whom there would have been no meeting, and possibly no interview transcript without the spare batteries he provided for my recorder. I would also like to thank the staff, in particular George Snyder, at the Hockney studio in Los Angeles for their help, access and forbearance.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A 2001 survey by the National Art Education Association in the United States questioned art teachers from pre-school to university level with regard to their knowledge and attitudes on the subject of gay and lesbian artists. The results revealed that while few respondents were aware that the nineteenth-century French painter and sculptor Rosa Bonheur is believed to have been a lesbian – that is, a woman who sexually or romantically desired other women – a majority were conscious of David Hockney's sexual orientation.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Hockney's works themselves have arguably become a form of 'visual shorthand' for homosexual<sup>2</sup> desires within the artist's own lifetime. Writing in 2005, Simon Ofield recalled his experiences as a gay adolescent in the 1980s, for whom 'homosexuality came to look like a David Hockney painting'.<sup>3</sup> This was a perception he describes as having been reinforced by the frequent choice of the artist's works as cover illustrations for volumes dealing with homosexual themes, notably, in the case of Ofield himself, a paperback edition of the 1965 revised version of Gore Vidal's novel *The City and the Pillar* (Figure 1). Published by Panther Books in 1972,<sup>4</sup> its cover features a reproduction of *In Despair* (Figure 72) from Hockney's 1966 etching series *Illustrations for Fourteen Poems by C.P. Cavafy*. The image depicts two young men, apparently naked, lying beside one another in bed; whilst the artist's use of line is spare, the bed sheets that envelop the pair are shown as clearly rumpled. Both men appear to lie relaxed, hands crossed behind their heads, the right-hand figure meeting the

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<sup>1</sup> Laurel Lampela, 'Lesbian and Gay Artists in the Curriculum: A Survey of Art Teachers' Knowledge and Attitudes', *Studies in Art Education*, vol. 42, no. 2, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> It will be noted that I have used the word 'homosexual' to refer to men with same-gender sexual and romantic desires, both here and in the title of this thesis. The reasons for this choice, rather than alternatives such as 'gay' or 'queer', will be explained subsequently in this introduction.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Ofield, 'Cruising the Archive', *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 351.

<sup>4</sup> Although Ofield does not provide an illustration of the exact volume in question in this article, it is clear from his footnotes that he is referring to the Panther Books paperback edition. He does provide a reproduction in his doctoral thesis; however, this edition was first issued by Panther in 1972, not 1967 as Ofield suggests.



viewer's gaze. It is clearly possible to infer a (homo)sexual element from Hockney's image.

Ofield certainly did so, stating that:

It is inevitable that this cover had something to do with why and how his paintings came to inform my fantasies. In the 1970s and 1980s Hockney's work was clearly the most appropriate illustration of homosexuality. (...) when I found Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar* (1967), I knew from the Hockney etching on its cover that it was a book I should buy, and pretty soon scenes from the 1965-revised edition of this novel began to inform my fantasies.<sup>5</sup>

In this same article, Ofield also refers to another volume that became for him 'a secret pleasure',<sup>6</sup> *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, published in 1986 (Figure 2), with his copy featuring a reproduction of Hockney's 1971 painting *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*. In contrast with the image chosen for the cover of *The City and the Pillar*, *Portrait of an Artist* contains no immediately discernable connection with homosexual relationships or practices, showing a young man dressed in a pink jacket and white slacks to the right of the canvas looking down on another male figure swimming in the pool below. Whilst less overtly concerned with the depiction of homosexual desires than *In Despair*, nonetheless Penguin's picture editors must have been convinced that their choice of image would have an appropriate resonance with an intended homosexual readership with regards to the subject matter of the volume at hand. This seemingly natural association between Hockney's works and homosexual themes, along with Ofield's notion that the artist's images were 'clearly the most appropriate illustration of homosexuality',<sup>7</sup> at this time, is significant. That Hockney's works coloured this individual's (pre)conceptions of homosexuality is clear from Ofield's statement. However, what may be less clear is how and why this artist's works

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<sup>5</sup> Simon Ofield, 'Cruising the Archive', p. 352.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

in particular, even those not explicitly concerned with same-gender desires, came to have such a strong identification with the interests and cultural products of these communities.

In the light of such questions as these, this thesis examines Hockney's engagements with homosexual themes and subject matter over the course of his career, as well as his evolving role as a gay man in the public eye. As Hockney is a living artist, who commenced his career at a time when homosexual acts remained criminalised in both Britain and the United States,<sup>8</sup> it is important to situate Hockney and his works within a wider context of homosexual cultural practice and creative production. It is also vital that contemporary legal and societal strictures surrounding homosexual practices are taken into account when assessing the life and works of Hockney and his contemporaries. This thesis explores Hockney's discovery of texts, languages, images and publications relating to male same-gender attraction from the 1960s onwards, and his personal and creative responses to these sources. Many of Hockney's earliest works exploring issues surrounding homosexuality take as a reference point literary texts concerned with these themes, notably the nineteenth-century American poetry of Walt Whitman, and the prose fiction of Christopher Isherwood; the significance of such linguistic and literary sources, not only in relation to Hockney's own life and works but also in the wider history of homosexual cultures and identity formation, is of central importance to this research project. Supported by oral histories, interviews and contemporary writings, I will argue that it is likely that the concept of a homosexual literary and creative 'canon' existed amongst homosexual men from the late-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, albeit in an unofficial capacity; the hermetic, layered and allusive nature

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<sup>8</sup> Sodomy law in the United States has historically varied on a state level. Until 1962, sodomy (including male homosexual activity) was criminalised in all states; Illinois was the first state to repeal its sodomy laws in this year. However, until the US Supreme Court judgment in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* in 2003, fifteen states continued to criminalise male homosexual activity in the United States. (David Morton Rayside, *Queer Inclusions, Continental Divisions: Public Recognition of Sexual Diversity in Canada and the United States*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2008, p. 128).

of many of the texts and images that might be included within such a canon can be attributed to prevailing legal and societal pressures, and will be shown to be symptomatic of much homosexual creative production of the twentieth century. David James Prickett has touched upon such dissemination in his assessment of homosexuality and aesthetics in relation to early twentieth-century Germany, and his findings remain pertinent to discussions of mid-twentieth-century Britain. One of his observations is that a ‘modernist homosexual aesthetic’ was “‘disseminated” among homosexuals via homosexual journals, homosexual literature, and homosexual film’.<sup>9</sup> Such a path of dissemination could be described as a form of homosexual canon, and would appear to apply in the case of Hockney. As a young man coming of age during a period in which male homosexuality came under increasing public scrutiny through police enquiries and the national press, Hockney, I would contend, was greatly influenced by literary and visual creative works drawn from his own version of a homosexual canon, both personally and professionally. With Hockney himself aware of such unofficial homosexual creative canons, it will be argued that his images of the 1960s concerned with homosexual themes and subject matter can be interpreted as amounting to an attempt on the part of the artist to situate himself and his works within such a canon.

What works might have been included in these homosexual canons, and what functions did they serve? Sources including the interview subjects of Kevin Porter and Jeffrey Weeks, the 1950s homosexual rights magazine *ONE*, and Hockney’s own reportage suggest that literary and non-fiction texts by authors such as Whitman, Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter, along with works of art by Michelangelo, Francis Bacon and others, can be seen to have constituted an unofficial homosexual canon, consumed by homosexual men in an era of criminalisation for purposes of both pleasure and affirmation. Conventionally, literary and

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<sup>9</sup> David James Prickett, *Body Crisis, Identity Crisis: Homosexuality and Aesthetics in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cincinnati, 2003, p. 39.

artistic canons are not the subject of secrecy, but on the contrary are widely disseminated. John Guillory has described the process of literary canon formation as ‘the institutional intervention by which the literary curriculum becomes the pedagogic vehicle for producing the distinction between credentialed and uncredentialed speech’.<sup>10</sup> Porter and Weeks’ subjects and Hockney himself have shown that works by homosexual artists and authors certainly provided such a ‘pedagogic vehicle’, with literature in particular playing a significant role in the lives of young homosexual men prior to decriminalisation, enabling them to discover that there were indeed others that shared their desires in an age in which support networks for such individuals were, by necessity, clandestine at best.<sup>11</sup> Both Porter and Weeks’ interview subjects and Hockney himself have remarked upon a process by which the inquisitive homosexual male of the pre-decriminalisation era might discover new texts and information, through a combination of contact with other like-minded individuals and self-referral.<sup>12</sup> Few, if any, anthologies or guides to homosexual texts and artworks were readily available at this time; however, it is clear that Hockney was able to orient himself quickly as a consumer of homosexual creative works in the early 1960s.

It could be argued that it is counter-intuitive to describe a non-institutionalised, privately promoted list of works as a canon; certainly the subcultural, word-of-mouth approach to dissemination that Hockney has related is very different from that described by Guillory. However, I would argue that the hermetic nature of the pre-decriminalisation homosexual creative canon is in keeping with prevailing trends within creative and cultural practice dealing with issues of homosexuality at a time in which legal and societal strictures necessitated such an oblique approach; as will be seen in the chapters that follow, such a

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<sup>10</sup> John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 63.

<sup>11</sup> Kevin Porter and Jeffrey Weeks (eds.), *Between the Acts: Lives of Homosexual Men, 1885-1967*, London, Routledge, 1991, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61; David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xi.

hermetic approach is shared by Hockney and his contemporaries in relation to works concerned with homosexual subjects in the 1960s.

When addressing the question of literary and art historical canon formation, particularly in relation to the artistic practices and interests of a minority, it is important to acknowledge the criticisms that previous scholars have levelled towards the institution of the canon. Although her critique of canons comes from a feminist position, Griselda Pollock's comments remain pertinent to this discussion. In *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories*, she argues that traditional literary and art historical canons constitute a 'closed library' to those outside the dominant cultural hegemony, and that rather than attempting to rectify the situation merely with 'another bookroom', the answer lies instead with a rejection of the canon as we know it, and the introduction of 'a *polylogue*: the interplay of many voices, a kind of creative "barbarism" that would disrupt the monological, colonizing, centric drives of "civilization"' (original emphasis).<sup>13</sup> Pollock's assertions, along with her rejection of the practice of 'recuperation' – whereby female artists are rediscovered and 'reinserted' into the canon with little consideration of the reasons for their initial exclusion – demonstrate her belief that the canon as it has traditionally been conceived is of little value to the construction of histories of creative production. In the present, I would certainly agree that to create separate canons of works by those formerly specifically excluded – such as women or homosexual artists – would not necessarily be desirable; indeed, it could be argued that such an action would serve to reinforce, rather than attenuate, longstanding distinctions and discriminations. However, it should be emphasised that the bodies of works that I have designated as unofficial homosexual creative canons in this thesis are not post-decriminalisation exercises in recuperation or revisionism, but constitute instead cultural

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<sup>13</sup> Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories*, New York, Routledge, 1999, p. 6.

phenomena that were created by, and for, members of a sexual minority in a context of legal and societal oppression, for reasons as varied as self-affirmation to the fostering of a sense of community identity. As such, I believe that it is important to consider them not simply as examples of a potentially outmoded form of creative classification, but to acknowledge a wider array of historical functions also. Simply put – we may find the concept of canons problematic in the present, but we cannot deny their having existed, and it is surely valuable to consider why (and how) they existed in the original context of their formation.

Hockney then was clearly not the only, or even the first, creative practitioner to have been homosexual, or to have addressed same-gender romantic and sexual relationships in his output. It is possible to trace Hockney's discovery, as a young man, of works by others within his personal version of a homosexual canon. The etching series from which the cover illustration of Ofield's copy of *The City and the Pillar* was drawn was itself a visual response to textual works dealing with homosexual themes. Composed by the homosexual Greek poet C. P. Cavafy whilst living in Alexandria in the early years of the twentieth century, the poems were initially translated into English, at least in part, through the assistance of another major figure in the history of homosexual creativity, E. M. Forster.<sup>14</sup> Hockney encountered Cavafy's poetry for the first time in the summer of 1960;<sup>15</sup> this was to prove a pivotal year in terms of Hockney's own engagements with homosexuality, both in relation to his personal life and his development as an artist. Both Hockney's own accounts and Peter Webb's 1988 biography of the artist suggest that he embarked upon a process that might now be described as a 'coming-out' during his first year of postgraduate study at London's Royal College of Art,<sup>16</sup> producing

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Jeffreys (ed.), *The Forster-Cavafy Letters: Friends at a Slight Angle*, Cairo, New York, The American University in Cairo Press, 2009, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> David Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, Nikos Stangos (ed.), London, Thames and Hudson, 1976, p. 63.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68; Peter Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney* (1988), London, Paladin, 1990, p. 35.

works that he described as ‘propaganda’ for homosexuality.<sup>17</sup> Hockney was also immersing himself in the works of other homosexual creative figures during this period, discovering Whitman for the first time, as well as more contemporary writers such as Isherwood and John Rechy.<sup>18</sup> In addition to these literary forays, Hockney also became familiar with the visual works of Bacon, attending the artist’s exhibition at the Marlborough Gallery in the Spring of 1960. Responding to this show largely composed of male nudes, Hockney was to note at the time that ‘you could smell the balls’.<sup>19</sup> As will be seen in the first two chapters of this thesis, many of these works – Hockney’s own, individual, unofficial homosexual canon – profoundly influenced the artist’s personal and professional decisions in the early years of his career.

### **1.1. A Review of Scholarship to Date**

Previous scholars have explored some aspects of Hockney’s engagements with homosexual themes and subject matter. Marco Livingstone’s eponymous monograph of the artist acknowledges Hockney’s homosexuality, and how a growing awareness of his orientation played a role in shaping his early artistic output.<sup>20</sup> Paul Melia meanwhile has considered the question of Hockney’s sexual preferences in some depth, notably in relation to his series of domestic scenes of the early 1960s.<sup>21</sup> However, as I will argue, previous considerations of Hockney’s representations of homosexualities in his artworks have been limited in their scope. Some, such as Livingstone’s, are somewhat cursory in their approach, while I would argue that Melia’s considerable reliance on psychoanalytical methods in his

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<sup>17</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 89-97.

<sup>19</sup> Gray F. Watson, *A Consideration of David Hockney’s Early Painting (1960-65) and its Relationship with Developments in British and American Art at That Time* (MA dissertation), London, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1972, unpaginated.

<sup>20</sup> Marco Livingstone, *David Hockney* (World of Art series), London, Thames and Hudson, 1996 (new enlarged edition), pp. 20-26.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Melia, *Images of men in the early work of David Hockney*, unpublished MPhil dissertation, University of Manchester, 1991.

thesis, for example, dependent upon a conceptual binary splitting between ‘male’ and ‘female’ behaviours, at times leads him to draw potentially unsatisfactory conclusions.

Hockney is certainly an establishment figure in the early twenty-first century, with a 2009 profile of the artist in *The Independent* going so far as to describe him as holding ‘national treasure’ status.<sup>22</sup> He also enjoys demonstrable popularity with the public at large, with his 2006 exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in London attracting 151,555 visitors, the gallery’s highest ever attendance for a ticketed painting exhibition.<sup>23</sup> However, this popularity with the general public is clearly not reflected in the amount of critical and scholarly attention directed towards his work. Whilst a wealth of glossy illustrated catalogues and coffee table volumes are available featuring full-colour reproductions of Hockney’s best-known paintings, drawings and prints, critical offerings are remarkably scant. A slim volume of seven essays was published by Manchester University Press in 1995, whilst in the United States, scholars such as Kenneth Silver and Jonathan Weinberg have also addressed some areas of Hockney’s oeuvre, including his homosexuality, in occasional essays and articles.

Recent catalogues, notably those for Hockney’s 1988 retrospective originating at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and his aforementioned 2006 show *David Hockney Portraits* at the National Portrait Gallery, contain a number of insightful essays on a variety of aspects of the artist’s practice. However, attention in these texts to Hockney’s engagements with homosexual themes and sources are limited, and like many of the extant writings on Hockney focus largely on formal and technical matters. In the *Portraits* catalogue, Edmund White offers an engaging potted history of the artist’s dealings with homosexual themes;<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> ‘David Hockney: Line of Beauty’, *The Independent*, 16 May 2009, URL (consulted March 2011): <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/david-hockney-line-of-beauty-1685738.html>

<sup>23</sup> ‘Visitor Figures 2006’, National Portrait Gallery press release, 20 February 2007, URL (consulted December 2010): <http://www.npg.org.uk/about/press/visitor-figures-2006.php>

<sup>24</sup> Edmund White, ‘The Lineaments of Desire’, Sarah Howgate and Barbara Stern Shapiro (eds.), *David Hockney Portraits*, exhibition catalogue, London, National Portrait Gallery, 2006, pp. 48-61.



however, the scope of his endeavour is hampered, stretching as it does to a mere fourteen (heavily illustrated) pages. In the catalogue for the 1988 retrospective, meanwhile, discussion of Hockney's homosexuality is condensed still further, occupying only three pages of Christopher Knight's essay 'Composite Views: Themes and Motifs in Hockney's Art'.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, in his *Burlington Magazine* review of the 1988 retrospective in its Tate Gallery incarnation, Julian Spaulding explicitly criticised the exhibition as a whole for its 'poor showing' of the artist's early works dealing with homosexual themes.<sup>26</sup>

It is perhaps significant to observe that frequently, authors of these catalogue essays – notably Henry Geldzahler, Mark Glazebrook, Marco Livingstone and Lawrence Weschler – are or were personal friends of the artist; indeed, portraits of each of these four authors appeared within the exhibition *David Hockney Portraits* itself.<sup>27</sup> Both Livingstone and Weschler have also produced books on the artist. As noted previously, Livingstone penned a 1981 monograph on Hockney, expanded in 1996. Subsequently, in 2008, Weschler issued a compilation volume of articles written on the artist for the *New Yorker* magazine, under the title *True to Life: Twenty-five Years of Conversations with David Hockney*. Whilst both books make interesting reading, and once again are lavishly illustrated, neither is a scholarly work, the journalistic style of Weschler's writings particularly apparent. The same can be said of a number of other volumes issued by authors claiming friendship with the artist, for example Paul Joyce's *Hockney on 'Art'*, consisting of transcribed interviews with Hockney over a period of years, and Jonathon Brown's honestly titled *I Don't Know Much About Art But I Know David Hockney*.

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<sup>25</sup> Christopher Knight, 'Composite Views: Themes and Motifs in Hockney's Art', Maurice Tuchman and Stephanie Barron (eds.), *David Hockney: A Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1988, pp. 28-30.

<sup>26</sup> Julian Spaulding, 'Review: David Hockney. London, Tate Gallery', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 131, No. 1030 (Jan., 1989), p. 51.

<sup>27</sup> Sarah Howgate and Barbara Stern Shapiro (eds.), *David Hockney Portraits*, exhibition catalogue, London, National Portrait Gallery, 2006, pp. 226-235.

Whilst not a scholarly text *per se*, Livingstone's monograph is a significant resource, comprising to date the only comprehensive textual overview of the artist's career. In it Livingstone acknowledges Hockney's homosexuality, and the significance of the theme to the artist's early output at the Royal College of Art. The author makes several pertinent observations regarding Hockney's engagement with homosexual themes, in particular his often humorous approach<sup>28</sup> – something which, as shall be demonstrated in chapters one and two, has been largely overlooked by many contemporary reviewers and commentators. However, Livingstone's consideration of Hockney's homosexuality is once again rather brief, occupying short sections of the book's first and second chapters. Even the author's consideration of Hockney's 1966 Cavafy etching series focuses predominantly on the formal qualities of the twelve prints,<sup>29</sup> and neglects to mention entirely the imminent passage of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. Indeed, Livingstone appears to underestimate the significance of Hockney's choice of homosexual subject matter in this case. Having dismissed the choice of Cavafy's poems dealing with same-gender desires as a merely practical issue of space,<sup>30</sup> he also argues that as early as 1963, with the production of Hockney's domestic scenes, the artist's overtly propagandistic tendencies had 'more or less disappeared, since in depicting a world in which homosexual relationships and feelings are taken for granted, there is no longer any need for proselytizing'.<sup>31</sup> This is a proposition that I would contest. In his assessment of Hockney's works dealing with these themes, Livingstone overlooks the significance of contemporary legal and societal strictures on homosexuals; indeed, it will be argued that Hockney's apparent promotion of homosexual monogamy, love and domesticity in images

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<sup>28</sup> Livingstone, *David Hockney*, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 85-89.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 85.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

such as the domestic scenes can be seen to constitute a specific form of proselytizing in itself, forwarding particular models of homosexual behaviour.

Whilst published scholarly assessments of Hockney's engagements with homosexual sources and subject matter are scarce, the artist and his works have been at the heart of a number of postgraduate research projects. The earliest of these is Gray Watson's unpublished MA dissertation *A Consideration of David Hockney's Early Painting (1960-65) and its Relationship with Developments in British and American Art at That Time*, completed in 1972. By nature of its chronological scope, Watson's dissertation concerns itself with Hockney's early images, and is frank in its acknowledgment of the homosexual subject matter explored in works such as *Adhesiveness* of 1960 (Figure 3). Watson's dissertation is of particular value as its author had access to Hockney in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with material derived from contemporary interviews between Watson and the artist included in the text, including information regarding Hockney's 'coming out' period at the Royal College. However, this work is necessarily limited in its scope as a Master's level dissertation, and is also, like so many texts assessing Hockney's works, predominantly concerned with the artist's formal and stylistic tendencies, and the relationship between these and prevailing tendencies within British and American Modernist painting of the period.<sup>32</sup>

Two projects have previously engaged with Hockney's use of textual elements in his work, a major concern of this thesis. Both Charles Ingham and Alexandra Schumacher have produced dissertations that look at this aspect of Hockney's practice, with Schumacher's doctoral work ultimately published as the German language volume *Zitate als Bildstrategie* (*Citation as Picture Strategy*); both authors draw pertinent connections between Hockney's formal approach and that of Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985). However, both also concentrate on

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<sup>32</sup> Gray Watson, *A Consideration of David Hockney's Early Painting (1960-65) and its Relationship with Developments in British and American Art at That Time* (MA dissertation), London, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1972, unpaginated.

textual elements as a formal and structural concern, with the potential of text as a bearer of meaning sidelined. Crucially, neither Ingham nor Schumacher concentrates on homosexual themes in Hockney's work, although they are mentioned briefly by both. Whilst his assessment of Hockney's use of text takes a very different line of enquiry than does my own, Ingham's project is appended by two transcribed interviews with the artist from the 1970s which provide a valuable resource, with Hockney's incidental observations on Californian anti-homosexuality campaigner Anita Bryant particularly notable.<sup>33</sup>

Simon Ofield's writings on Hockney, discussed earlier, are in part drawn from his 1998 PhD thesis, *An investigation of the resources available for interpreting visual cultural production related to male homosexuality in Britain; 1940 to the present*. However, whilst the author's recollections of his own personal experience provide a valuable insight into the reception of Hockney's works by a young, gay audience in the 1980s, beyond Ofield's introductory material, little attention is paid to the artist and his output in the remaining body of the text, with most of the author's discussion directed towards the works of Bacon. This is in contrast with perhaps the most sustained engagement to date with Hockney's homosexual themes and subject matter, Paul Melia's 1991 MPhil thesis *Images of Men in the Early Work of David Hockney*. Melia considers Hockney's production of images of males from the early, stylised figures of Royal College-era paintings such as *Doll Boy* (Figure 4), through to the artist's images of young men in swimming pools of the mid-1960s inspired by physique photography. Although again limited in breadth as a Master's level project, Melia's thesis makes many pertinent observations and, crucially, situates Hockney's production of these images against their historical and political contexts of legal and societal changes in the

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<sup>33</sup> Charles Ingham, *Words in Pictures: the Manifestation of Verbal Elements in the Work of Kurt Schwitters and David Hockney*, unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Essex, 1986, appendix pp. 67-68.

1960s.<sup>34</sup> The author also acknowledges the significance of literature in relation to the production of works such as *The Third Love Painting* (Figure 5) of 1960, with its textual insertions from the poetry of Walt Whitman. However, whilst Melia's thesis, and his published article 'Showers, Pools and Power' that is developed from this work, provide valuable starting points for research in this field, there are a number of aspects of his approach and analysis that can be interpreted as potentially problematic.

In Melia's introductory abstract to his thesis, he establishes his position with regard to those images that are explicit in their representation of homosexual men, and others in which the sexual orientation of the subjects is not clearly expressed. He writes:

unlike the images discussed earlier [the Royal College works and domestic scenes], these representations [produced in California and inspired by physique photography] contain no signs which indicate that the subjects are homosexual. This is an obvious yet important distinction. It follows that I cannot treat these paintings as images of homosexuals. Instead, I examine them as attempts to organise visual pleasure around the sight of the male body.<sup>35</sup>

Whilst I would not necessarily advocate the conflation of the works produced during these two phases of Hockney's career, and the subjects that they represent, as equivalent, Melia's distinction appears to understate the legal and societal circumstances surrounding the creation of homoerotic material during this period in time. As I will demonstrate, indirect and obfuscatory approaches, the creation of 'reasonable doubt' through a deliberate polysemy of significations, were (and to a certain extent remain) central to creative production dealing with homosexual themes and subject matter. Robert K. Martin has presented this case most succinctly, stating that '(g)ay literature has always, since the Greeks, been a literature of

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<sup>34</sup> Paul Melia, *Images of Men in the Early Work of David Hockney* (MPhil thesis), University of Manchester, 1991, pp. 44-69.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, unpaginated.

indirection'.<sup>36</sup> A similar indirectness can be discerned in the visual creative works of homosexual artistic contemporaries of Hockney, such as Jasper Johns, and certainly in the physique publications that served as source material for many of Hockney's works produced in California in the mid-1960s. That Melia should attempt to create such binary oppositions – the explicitly homosexual and the non-homosexual – is arguably encouraged by his methods, with psychoanalytic theories drawn upon particularly in his analysis of Hockney's domestic scenes and shower paintings. As discussed more expansively in chapter three, Melia's approach, with its emphatic reliance upon psychoanalytic methods, leaves him attempting to find binary oppositions of 'masculine' and 'feminine' roles amongst Hockney's figures where there may, in fact, be none.

Although it must be acknowledged that Melia does consider to a certain extent tendencies towards hermeticism and obfuscatory techniques in relation to homosexual cultures and creative products, it is my belief that his assessment does not take adequately into account the history of homosexual creative and cultural practice, and the significance and resonance of certain phenomena. A notable example is Melia's assessment of public lavatories, as explored by Hockney in works such as *The Third Love Painting*. Melia describes these places as "'polluted" social spaces',<sup>37</sup> reading a sense of degradation and alienation into Hockney's images that explore them. However, to do so, in my opinion, is to overlook the cultural significance of the public lavatory, or 'cottage', within British homosexual cultures in the early to mid-twentieth century. So nicknamed because of their resemblance to small dwellings (Figure 28), London's network of public conveniences were well known for their potential as 'cruising' sites, or places to meet and engage in sexual

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<sup>36</sup> Robert K. Martin, *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1998, p. 219.

<sup>37</sup> Melia, *Images of Men in the Early Work of David Hockney* (unpublished MPhil thesis), University of Manchester, 1991, p. 35.

encounters with other men. This was certainly the case by 1937, when a pseudonymously-penned volume appeared under the title *For Your Convenience: A Learned Dialogue Instructive to all Londoners and London Visitors*. With a map of London cottages illustrating its endpapers, the book utilises fictional reportage to provide a thinly-veiled description of a London cruising circuit. Author Pry writes:

You see, while the authorities of London look after its people on the whole in the most admirable and thoughtful fashion, in this particular matter they are a little shy. All the other services and amenities are easily found. Post-offices, police-stations, fire-stations, swimming-baths, taxi-ranks – these are obvious, or their situation may easily be located by the help of the Telephone Book. But, apart from the main streets, this other matter is left to individual and accidental discovery.<sup>38</sup>

This extract, and Pry's book as a whole, is notable for its humorous and obfuscatory approach to its subject matter. The homosexual subtext of the work is on a certain level obvious, but as with the physique photographs of Bob Mizer, this is veiled with an alibi. It is also significant that in no way is the public lavatory represented as a 'polluted' social space in Pry's work; indeed, it is afforded a remarkable degree of dignity, the book being presented in a format aping that of an eighteenth-century tract (Figure 6). Rather than constituting a symbol of oppression, the cottage is appropriated and assimilated, celebrated as a homosexual space. This is a context that I believe must be taken into account when considering Hockney's works dealing with these spaces.

Throughout this literature review I have attempted to delineate some of the gaps in scholarship that exist in this field. To date, enquiries have been made more widely into the role of literature in the process of identity formation in homosexual men, notably with Porter and Weeks' oral histories and studies such as Thomas S. Weinberg's *Gay Men, Gay Selves*:

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<sup>38</sup> Paul Pry (pseudonym of Thomas Burke), *For Your Convenience: A Learned Dialogue Instructive to all Londoners and London Visitors*, London, George Routledge and Sons Ltd, 1937, pp. 5-6.

*The Social Construction of Homosexual Identities*. However, so far no one has discussed in depth the role of literature in relation to Hockney's representations of homosexualities, or considered Hockney's relationship with literary and visual creative histories. Since the 1980s a number of publishers have attempted to forward the concept of a homosexual literary canon, with several anthologies produced featuring works by authors historically associated with same-gender desires, including one 1998 volume explicitly entitled *The Gay Canon: Great Books Every Gay Man Should Read*.<sup>39</sup> However, to date no connection has been made between Hockney as a consumer of works contained within a hypothetical homosexual canon, and the effects that this may have had upon his own practice as a creative producer.

Whilst some previous work on Hockney has acknowledged the legal and societal strictures faced by British homosexual men in the years prior to 1967, no sustained enquiry into homosexual cultures of concealment – and Hockney's part within them – has yet been produced. Webb devotes a chapter of his biography to Hockney's time as a student in London in the early 1960s, and alludes to his introduction to its gay subcultures. However, Webb does not connect these contemporary subcultures to a wider history of cultural practices in relation to men with same-gender sexual or romantic desires. It is also I believe significant that to date, no study of Hockney and his works has drawn a connection with Polari, a gay slang-dialect used amongst British homosexuals, particularly in London, from the early years of the twentieth century to approximately the 1970s. As will be demonstrated in chapter one, many of Hockney's earliest works utilising texts in relation to homosexual themes and subjects draw upon words from within the Polari lexicon. It will be argued that whilst the artist was not fluent in this dialect, his early works suggest him to have been at least familiar with some of its words and the ramifications of their use.

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<sup>39</sup> Such latter-day anthologies include *Calamus: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Literature* (1982), *Pages Passed from Hand to Hand: The Hidden Tradition of Homosexual Literature in English from 1748 to 1914* (1997), and *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (1998).



Furthermore, scholarship on Hockney to date has, I believe, failed fully to address questions of social class and its role in the (historical) dynamics of homosexual relationships. Melia, for example, has contended that had he been born half a century earlier, Hockney would have left for Capri rather than Los Angeles, and used German photographer Wilhelm Von Gloeden's photographs rather than Bob Mizer's.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, it will be argued that a contributing factor to Hockney's move to California in the mid-1960s was the potential to escape established class roles within the art world and homosexual relationships in Britain.

Finally, very little work has been produced which considers how Hockney's oeuvre and personal politics fit within a continuum of homosexual cultural development. Following his allusion to the use of Hockney's images as a visual shorthand for homosexuality, Ofield does not go on to consider the implications of the artist's apparent forwarding of a model of a monogamous, committed homosexual couple. The changing social and political landscapes surrounding questions of homosexuality in the second half of the twentieth century, and indeed into the twenty-first, have not been considered by Hockney scholars in any depth. This is a lack that the final chapter of this thesis in particular seeks to address. As a whole, this thesis represents an attempt to re-examine Hockney's engagements with homosexual themes and subject matter as a case study in the context of legal and societal reform from the 1960s to the present. It seeks to situate Hockney not as a lone maverick or originator, but as a member of an historical community of practice. I will examine Hockney's engagements with textual, literary and visual sources in an effort to demonstrate how his artistic practice and personal self-fashioning can be seen to locate him within a canon of homosexual creative achievement. Livingstone, in closing the 1996 second edition of his monograph on the artist, stated that '(s)ill badly needed is a more probing, analytical study of Hockney's work or a more in-depth

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<sup>40</sup> Melia, 'Showers, Pools and Power', *David Hockney*, ed. Paul Melia, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 52.

exploration of his development as a whole'.<sup>41</sup> This thesis represents an attempt to rise to this challenge.

## **1.2. David Hockney: His Career to Date and Encounters with Homosexual Themes and Sources**

One of my goals is to examine the development of creative practices focusing on issues of same-gender intimacies at a time in which legal and societal attitudes towards homosexuality were in a state of flux. As a homosexual artist beginning his career in the early 1960s, David Hockney presents an ideal case study for this project. Born in 1937 into a working-class family in Bradford, Yorkshire,<sup>42</sup> Hockney came of age in an era in which homosexual activities remained criminalised under the terms of section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, more commonly known as the Labouchère amendment. The young Hockney was the recipient of a scholarship to Bradford Grammar School in 1948,<sup>43</sup> and in 2009 acknowledged that he had 'benefitted enormously'<sup>44</sup> from the implementation of the 1944 Education Act, which had been promoted as offering 'Free Secondary Education for All', including grammar school places for the most academically able.<sup>45</sup> However, by the age of fourteen Hockney had become disenchanted with his grammar school environment as a result of its sidelining of art education, with only the bottom sets allowed to study the subject beyond their first year.<sup>46</sup> At age sixteen, Hockney succeeded in convincing his parents and teachers to allow him to transfer to the Bradford School of Art, where over the course of four

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<sup>41</sup> Livingstone, *David Hockney*, p. 274.

<sup>42</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, London, 1976, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>44</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. i.

<sup>45</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity*, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 96.

<sup>46</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 30; David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. i.

years he studied lithography and painting.<sup>47</sup> On leaving the School in 1957, Hockney applied to both the Royal College of Art and the Slade School of Art in London, before embarking on two years' national service, working as a hospital orderly on account of his status as a conscientious objector.<sup>48</sup>

In late 1959 Hockney began his studies at the Royal College of Art, studying painting under Carel Weight.<sup>49</sup> Although a failure to complete Art History and General Studies assignments meant that Hockney technically did not meet the requirements for his course, nonetheless in 1962 he was awarded both his Diploma and a gold medal for 'work of outstanding distinction' by college authorities.<sup>50</sup> It was during his time at the college that Hockney first began to produce works dealing with homosexual themes and subject matter, for example *Queer* of 1960 (Figure 7) and *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, produced the following year (Figure 8). Both of these early works are notable for their extensive use of textual elements in conjunction with technical tropes of abstraction, a combination that is a frequent feature of Hockney's images dealing with such concepts from 1960 to 1962. In the case of *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, the painting's title is drawn from a poem by Walt Whitman, whose 'Calamus' cycle of poems has been widely acknowledged for its foregrounding of emotional, and at times physical, intimacies between males.<sup>51</sup> Their significance to a homosexual readership was noted as early as 1902, when the early activist for homosexual rights, Edward Carpenter, included three poems by Whitman in his book *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship*. It could be argued that this volume amounts to an early attempt to disseminate a homosexual canon of creative works, a concept that, as has been

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<sup>47</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, pp. 39-40.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>51</sup> Byrne R.S. Fone, *Masculine Landscapes: Walt Whitman and the Homoerotic Text*, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1992, pp. 1-2.

stated previously, will be central to this thesis. There is no doubt that Hockney was greatly influenced in the early 1960s by literary texts with homosexual themes, from Whitman's poetry of the mid-nineteenth century through to Rechy's confessional novel *City of Night*, which Hockney read around the time of its publication in 1963.<sup>52</sup> The roles of homosexual texts and literatures in Hockney's works of the early 1960s are examined in detail in the first two chapters of this thesis.

It was whilst at the Royal College of Art that Hockney was exposed to the genre of physique photography for the first time.<sup>53</sup> Typically reproduced in periodicals such as *The Young Physique* and *Physique Pictorial*, both perused by the young Hockney, such photographs showcased the scantily-clad male figure, and have been described by Thomas Waugh as constituting '(t)he high point of gay erotic culture before Stonewall'.<sup>54</sup> The product of an era before the advent of gay liberation movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, these images are remarkable for their construction of what Waugh has referred to as 'alibis' – for example a pretence of a genuine concern in bodybuilding or exercise-related matters – as a means by which to avoid censure (and indeed censorship) by a heterosexist majority. That such alibis must have worked on some level at least is evidenced by Hockney's assertions that during his time in London in the early 1960s, he was able to purchase physique magazines at such mainstream outlets as the stationery chain W.H. Smith.<sup>55</sup> Hockney's appropriation of images from physique photography in his works can be seen as early as 1962 in the painting *Life Painting for a Diploma* (Figure 9), with the artist taking his source material directly from the cover of such a publication (Figure 10).<sup>56</sup> The visual tropes of physique photographs, in

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<sup>52</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 97.

<sup>53</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 35; David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix pp. x-xi.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Waugh, *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall*, New York and Chichester, Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 176.

<sup>55</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix pp. x-xi.

<sup>56</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xiii.

particular those of Bob Mizer, proprietor of *Physique Pictorial*, can be seen to have a marked influence on Hockney's works dealing with homosexual themes throughout the 1960s. Indeed, the artist's personal homoerotic photographs of the 1970s, discussed in chapter four, demonstrate that Hockney's fascination with the genre extended further than has been previously thought.

It was partly as a result of his encounters with physique photography that the artist chose to relocate to Los Angeles in 1964.<sup>57</sup> That this was the case was confirmed by Hockney himself in his 1976 volume of autobiography when he stated that 'California in my mind was a sunny land of movie studios and beautiful semi-naked people. My picture of it was admittedly strongly coloured by physique magazines published there'.<sup>58</sup> Hockney had produced his painting *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* (Figure 11), a visual fiction of homosexual domestic bliss in the city, in the previous year whilst still in London, and once in Los Angeles itself produced a large body of images dealing with the city and its inhabitants. Whilst images drawn from physique publications remain significant as sources into the mid-1960s, others such as *Building Pershing Square, Los Angeles* of 1964 (Figure 12) do not feature the 'beautiful semi-naked people' that Hockney had sought out, and have been interpreted as representing the 'brittle facade of middle-class life in Southern California', expressing 'subversion' or 'alienation'.<sup>59</sup> However, as will be demonstrated in chapter two of this thesis, such images can also be interpreted as 'souvenirs' of sites of homosexual interest in the city – Pershing Square, for example, is a site central to the segment of Rechy's *City of Night* that it set in Los Angeles.

Hockney was to return to the subject of homosexual literatures in 1966 with the completion of his etching series *Illustrations for Fourteen Poems by C.P. Cavafy*. These

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<sup>57</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 94.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 93.

<sup>59</sup> Paul Melia and Ulrich Luckhardt, *David Hockney: Paintings*, Munich, Prestel Verlag, 2000, p. 60.

etchings were produced for inclusion in a volume published by Editions Alecto, and were placed alongside new translations of the Alexandrian poet's work by Stephen Spender and Nikos Stangos. The fourteen poems included within the volume were of the artist's own choosing, and deal explicitly with homosexual themes and subject matter. Visually spare, these images combine sources drawn from physique imagery with Hockney's own compositions to create a series presenting a contemporary vision of a homosexuality based around loving, monogamous relationships alongside historical poems following similar lines. It is important to note that these etchings, and the wider volume editions consisting of both word and image, were issued in the year prior to the passage of the Sexual Offences Act of 1967 that partially decriminalised male homosexual activity in Britain. As such, whilst they may appear markedly tame and restrained to an audience of the early twenty-first century, at their time of publication the images were the subject of a great deal of hostile public and critical attention; these responses, as well as the illustrations themselves, will be considered in chapters two and four.

As has already been noted, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that Hockney was unique in being a male, homosexual artist producing artworks dealing with homosexual themes and subject matter at this point in time, or even that he was the first to do so. Nineteenth-century American artist Thomas Eakins produced images that could easily be construed as homoerotic, such as *The Swimming Hole* of 1893-1895 (Figure 41), whilst in the twentieth century Bacon and Keith Vaughan were both homosexual artists working in Britain and subject to the legal strictures that were the legacy of the Labouchère Amendment. More immediately contemporary with Hockney himself were American artists Andy Warhol and Robert Mapplethorpe. All of these men produced works dealing, more or less directly, with subjects of same-gender intimacies; it is also significant to note that Hockney was personally

acquainted with Bacon, Vaughan,<sup>60</sup> Warhol and Mapplethorpe. The works of these artists and others will be considered alongside those of Hockney throughout this thesis, and the possible reasons for the differences in approach taken by each discussed.

### 1.3. The Concept of 'Homosexuality' and its Relation to the Law: A Brief Overview

As its title would suggest, this thesis is concerned with representations of, and engagements with, homosexualities by David Hockney. However, until this point I have not offered any detailed explanation or possible definition of the concept of homosexuality, or, indeed, of the homosexual. The Oxford *English Dictionary* offers the following definitions:

homosexual, *adj.* and *n.*

A. *adj.* Involving, related to, or characterized by a sexual propensity for one's own sex; of or involving sexual activity with a member of one's own sex, or between individuals of the same sex.

B. *n.* A person who has a sexual propensity for his or her own sex; esp. one whose sexual desires are directed wholly or largely towards people of the same sex.<sup>61</sup>

So far as homosexuality is concerned, its meaning is directly related to the homosexual individual, and, indeed, what the dictionary refers to as a homosexual 'nature':

homosexuality, *n.* The quality of being homosexual, homosexual character or nature; also, homosexual behaviour or activity.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xviii.

<sup>61</sup> 'homosexual (a. and n.); heterosexual (a. and n.)', *Oxford English Dictionary*, Second edition, 1989; online version March 2011, URL: <http://www.oed.com:80/Entry/88110>; consulted December 2010. First published in *A Supplement to the OED* II, 1976.

<sup>62</sup> 'homosexuality, n.' *Oxford English Dictionary*, Second edition, 1989; online version March 2011, URL: <http://www.oed.com:80/Entry/88111>; consulted December 2010. First published in *A Supplement to the OED* II, 1976.

As the dictionary's etymological notes demonstrate, the word 'homosexual' and its binary opposite number 'heterosexual' are themselves remarkably recent constructions, certainly within the English language. Both are listed as having first appeared in C. G. Chaddock's 1892 English translation of Richard von Krafft-Ebing's German text *Psychopathia Sexualis* of 1886,<sup>63</sup> although the Hungarian doctor Karl Maria Benkert, writing under the pseudonym K.M. Kertbeny, has been attributed with having first coined the word 'homosexual' as early as 1868.<sup>64</sup> However, as Matt Cook has noted, neither word was widely used until well into the twentieth century,<sup>65</sup> with Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud's preferred term of 'invert'<sup>66</sup> and Karl Heinrich Ulrich's 'urning' remaining widely used.<sup>67</sup>

Given the comparatively short history of the word 'homosexuality' itself, it could be argued that the phenomenon that it describes is, in a sense, essentially a modern one. Michel Foucault famously argued along these lines in *The Will to Knowledge*, the first volume in his series *The History of Sexuality*. Foucault posited that the detailed specification and classification of peripheral sexualities in the nineteenth century, in particular that of the newly-coined homosexuality, led to the concept of the 'homosexual' as constituting a pathological identity, rather than being a mere enactor of proscribed activities. He states:

As defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)*, New York, Times Change Press, 1974, p. 6; Henning Bech, 'A Dung Beetle in Distress: Hans Christian Andersen meets Karl Maria Kertbeny, Geneva, 1860: Some Notes on the Archaeology of Homosexual and the Importance of Tuning', in Jan Löfström (ed.), *Scandinavian Homosexualities: Essays on Gay and Lesbian Studies*, Binghamton, NY, Haworth Press, 1998, pp. 139-140.

<sup>65</sup> Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. xiv.

<sup>66</sup> Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Sexual Inversion* (1897), in Chris White (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Sourcebook*, London and New York, Routledge, 1999, p. 104.

<sup>67</sup> Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan, *We Are Everywhere: A Historical Sourcebook in Gay and Lesbian Politics*, London, Routledge, 1997, pp. 63-64.



indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. (...) We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category was constituted from the moment it was characterized (...) The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.<sup>68</sup>

In this statement, Foucault clearly construes nineteenth-century events around the characterisation of same-gender intimacies as having constituted a paradigm shift in thinking. However, it is evident that sexual and romantic relationships between persons of the same gender, whatever appellation may be applied to them, have precedents as far back as the ancient world. The apparent prevalence of such relationships between males in ancient Greece has been the subject of frequent examination, certainly from the nineteenth century onwards, by parties interested in tracing the histories of same-gender relationships. In E. M. Forster's novel *Maurice*, first published in 1970 but composed in 1913, the title character's sometime lover Clive remarks upon the hypocrisy of their university tutor who instructs them to omit 'a reference to the unspeakable vice of the Greeks' when translating Plato's *Symposium*.<sup>69</sup> Maurice himself, meanwhile, first becomes aware that his own feelings and desires have precedent when as a teenager he discovers a copy of 'an unexpurgated Martial' at his grandfather's house.<sup>70</sup>

With regard to theoretical texts from the late-twentieth century to the present, in *The Use of Pleasure* Foucault moves his attention from the nineteenth century to antiquity, and is very much concerned with the social and sexual conventions of ancient Greece, and whether the enactors of such practices could be considered to inhabit a 'sexuality' in terms of the

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<sup>68</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: The Will to Knowledge* (1976), trans. Robert Hurley, London, Penguin, 1998, p. 43.

<sup>69</sup> E. M. Forster, *Maurice* (1971), London, Penguin, 2005, p. 42.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

modern understanding of this word.<sup>71</sup> As recently as 2010, Alastair J. L. Blanshard has argued that there exists a direct relationship between ancient Greek practices and modern western homosexuality, claiming that '(f)or most of its history, western culture has been content to regard Greece as central to any discussion of homosexual identity (and the acts that are associated with that identity)'.<sup>72</sup> However, other commentators would contest this position. David Halperin has offered a most amusing assessment of this situation, arguing that an ancient Greek audience would find little parity between modern conceptions of homosexual relationships and the complex social conventions governing the roles of the Classical *erastes*, a mature male lover, and the younger male *eromenos* whom he was expected to court. From the perspective of a Classical Athenian, he claims, to attempt to equate the two would be

no less bizarre than to classify a burglar as an 'active criminal', his victim as a 'passive criminal', and the two of them alike as partners in crime: burglary – like sex, as the Greeks understood it – is, after all, a 'non-relational' act.<sup>73</sup>

Halperin's statement demonstrates that 'homosexuality' should not be considered a constant, essentialised identity, but that same-gender desires and their definitions are subject to change, influenced by contemporary legal and societal norms.

To return to the Oxford English Dictionary definitions of the homosexual, it is significant to note that they place considerable emphasis on 'sexual desires' and 'sexual activity' as defining features of homosexual identity. The tendency to construe the performance of physical actions, specifically sexual, as central to the identification of an individual as homosexual is criticised by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. She also questions the

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<sup>71</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume Two: The Use of Pleasure* (1984), trans. Robert Hurley, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987, pp. 3-4.

<sup>72</sup> Alastair J. L. Blanshard, *Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity*, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, p. 91.

<sup>73</sup> David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*, New York and London, Routledge, 1990, p. 32.

usefulness of rigid binarisms opposing the ‘homosexual’ against the ‘heterosexual’, instead advocating a more flexible approach considering a continuum of desires.<sup>74</sup>

Although use of the word ‘homosexuality’ in the English language stems only from the last decade of the nineteenth century, legal and societal concerns regarding relations, sexual or otherwise, between men extended back much further. Biblical exhortations against same-gender sexual contacts, such as those found in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20, led to attempts across Western Europe to prohibit such activities. An early legal attempt to restrict sexual relations between men was the 1533 Buggery Act passed in England, which made the act of buggery – which included anal sex between men<sup>75</sup> – punishable by hanging.<sup>76</sup> It was not until 1861 that the death penalty was withdrawn and replaced by lengthy prison terms ranging from ten years to life.<sup>77</sup> However, it was the passage of the so-called ‘Labouchère amendment’ in 1885 that was to have lasting ramifications for homosexual men into the second half of the twentieth century. Introduced by Liberal Member of Parliament Henry Labouchère,<sup>78</sup> the legislation was attached to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1885, and enabled the punishment, by up to two years in prison, of ‘any male person who in public or private commits, or is party to the commission of or procures or attempts to procure the

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<sup>74</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (updated edition), Berkeley, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 2008, p. 11, pp. 82-83.

<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that the legal definition of buggery also encompassed anal sex between a man and a woman, as well as vaginal sex between either a woman or a man and an animal: the Oxford English Dictionary cites Giles Jacob’s *A New Law-Dictionary* of 1729 in which he writes: ‘*Buggery* is defined to be *carnalis copula contra Naturam, & hoc vel per confusionem Specierum, sc. a Man or Woman with a brute Beast; vel Sexuum, a Man with a Man, or Man with a Woman*’.

<sup>76</sup> Michael Matthew Kaylor, *Secreted Desires: The Major Uranians: Hopkins, Pater and Wilde*, Brno, Masaryk University Press, 2006, p. 45.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, David F. Greenberg has suggested that Labouchère inserted his amendment late in proceedings as a joke, and did not intend for his proposals to become law. For a time, it appeared the act would fail, and it is suggested that his amendment was designed as a gesture to discredit the act rather than reinforce it. Greenberg notes that Labouchère was a libertarian and friend of Oscar Wilde, and that he contemporaneously editorialised against the act in question. (David F. Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 16.)

commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person'.<sup>79</sup> The wording of previous legislation stemming from the original Buggery Act meant that guilt was difficult to prove, and cases were seldom brought to trial; in the first decade of the nineteenth century, fewer than five attempted sodomy cases per year reached criminal courts in London.<sup>80</sup> However, the comprehensive wording of the Labouchère amendment, with its emphasis on the criminality of both private and public acts, meant that a far wider array of male homosexual activities, from anal intercourse through to a mere embrace, were open to prosecution. As Nicholas Edsall has argued, the 1885 legislation criminalised not only relatively poorly-defined offences such as sodomy or buggery, but also male homosexuality and homosexuals themselves in the modern sense of all-inclusive categories.<sup>81</sup> The ramifications of the Labouchère amendment were to continue until at least 1967, when the passage of the Sexual Offences Act brought about partial decriminalisation. This Act, which introduced the term 'homosexual' into the law for the first time,<sup>82</sup> permitted private acts between consenting males over the age of twenty-one. In California in the United States, however, a state with which Hockney was to have a long-standing association, sodomy laws prohibiting sexual acts between males were not to be formally repealed until 1975.<sup>83</sup>

Having discussed differing historical approaches to the concept of same-gender intimacies, their naming and their definition, I would like to clarify the terminology that I have chosen to employ in this thesis, as well as my reasons for doing so. Any scholar attempting to examine an aspect of the history of homosexuality will encounter a potential

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<sup>79</sup> Nicholas C. Edsall, *Toward Stonewall: Homosexuality and Society in the Modern Western World*, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2003, p. 112.

<sup>80</sup> Charles Upchurch, *Before Wilde: Sex Between Men in Britain's Age of Reform*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009, p. 92.

<sup>81</sup> Edsall, p. 112.

<sup>82</sup> Leslie J. Moran, *The Homosexual(ity) of Law*, London and New York, Routledge, 1996, p. 170.

<sup>83</sup> William N. Eskridge Jr., *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 106.

problem with regards to terminology. As has been demonstrated, the history of the word ‘homosexuality’ itself is a comparatively brief one, with competing referents still used until well into the twentieth century. In the early twenty-first century, a range of terms are used to describe males who sexually and romantically desire other males, amongst the most prominent being ‘homosexual’, ‘gay’ and ‘queer’. Whilst the word ‘gay’ is now widely accepted by both such males themselves and heterosexuals, it has a history briefer still, certainly in Britain, where it did not become common parlance until the early 1970s.<sup>84</sup> The word ‘queer’ is one that is looked at in particular detail in the first chapter of this thesis, and from pejorative roots has subsequently become associated with a radical and anti-assimilationist stance.<sup>85</sup> In the present, it has been argued that the word ‘homosexuality’ is itself potentially undesirable, and should be replaced where possible by more modern terminology such as ‘gay’ and ‘queer’.<sup>86</sup>

I have chosen to use the words ‘homosexual’ and ‘homosexuality’ when describing these concepts, rather than ‘gay’ or ‘queer’. As Sedgwick has noted, there is no entirely satisfactory rule for choosing between these terms.<sup>87</sup> In her own introduction to *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick writes “‘homosexual’ and ‘gay’ seem more and more to be terms applicable to distinct, nonoverlapping periods in the history of a phenomenon for which there then remains no overarching label’”.<sup>88</sup> Sedgwick goes on to declare her intent to use each term appropriately in contexts where historical differentiation between periods is deemed significant. In an attempt to avoid anachronism in relation to historical epochs, this thesis takes a similar position. As such, I use the words ‘homosexual’ and ‘homosexuality’

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<sup>84</sup> Paul Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> Joshua Gamson, ‘Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma’, in Steven Seidman (ed.), *Queer Theory/Sociology*, Cambridge, MA and Oxford, Blackwell, 1996, p. 401.

<sup>86</sup> Bruce MacDougall, *Queer Judgments: Homosexuality, Expression, and the Courts in Canada*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2000, p. 23.

<sup>87</sup> Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

throughout to refer to males who sexually and romantically desire other males, and the associated acts and quality of holding these desires respectively. This is certainly the case in those sections of the thesis that encompass the 1950s and 1960s, as in these periods the terms ‘homosexual’ and ‘homosexuality’ were subject to a neutrality that was absent from ‘gay’ and ‘queer’. However, where texts or individuals prior to 1970 use these terms, they are preserved.

#### **1.4. Approaches, Methods and Resources**

As has been stated throughout this introduction, this assessment of Hockney’s life and works dealing with homosexual themes and subjects seeks to situate them within the context of legal and societal attitudes towards homosexuality prevailing in Britain and the United States at the time of their production, whilst also acknowledging their position within a wider history of creative and cultural homosexual practices. This approach has necessitated research into the history of social and legislative actions surrounding same-gender romantic and sexual contacts in both countries, as well as cultural practices amongst members of homosexual subgroups themselves. In addition to these areas, this project has also followed more conventional lines of art historical enquiry, with much focus placed on the close visual analysis of artworks by Hockney and other artists, as well as other visual artefacts such as physique photographs. In contrast with previous scholars’ analyses of these works, which have concerned themselves largely with the formal and stylistic aspects of Hockney’s practice, my own use of visual analysis takes a different approach. Through a consideration of these formal and stylistic elements alongside an assessment of the contemporary legal, social and personal significance of certain figurations and visual and textual forms, I seek to produce a more comprehensive analysis than has previously been performed of Hockney’s works that

fully relates them to historical contexts and attitudes surrounding the subject of male homosexuality.

The reader will note that the concepts of text and the textual are of central importance to this thesis – indeed, ‘textual’ is the first word of its title. However, it is important to clarify the context in which I utilise these terms. Poststructuralist and Deconstructionist discussions of ‘the text’ are extremely broad in their ideation of the concept; Roland Barthes conceived of objects as disparate as the ‘painting (...) stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation’<sup>89</sup> as constituting narratives or texts, whilst in *Of Grammatology* Jacques Derrida famously stated that ‘there is nothing outside of the text’ (‘il n’y a pas de hors-texte’).<sup>90</sup> Whilst this thesis does not seek to deny these interpretations of the concept of text as referring to a hypothetical all-encompassing object, open for interpretation unfettered by a notional transcendental signified, for the most part my interpretation of ‘text’ and the ‘textual’ is in relation to written and linguistic forms, as epitomised by Hockney’s appropriation and literal quotation of literary and linguistic sources as disparate as nineteenth-century poetry to lavatory wall graffiti. An interdisciplinarity of approach has been necessitated by the centrality of such textual sources to many of Hockney’s earliest works dealing with homosexual themes, to the extent that at times in this thesis, art historical methods and approaches are utilised equally alongside those of literary criticism. Once again it should be stressed that whilst several of Hockney’s sources are indubitably literary in so far as they constitute works of fiction or poetry, as in the case of the writings of Isherwood and Whitman, others are drawn from other fields, including popular culture, advertising and an emerging gay press. Since this study is concerned with the works of a homosexual artist that address

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<sup>89</sup> Roland Barthes, ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’ (1966), Susan Sontag (ed.), *A Roland Barthes Reader*, New York, Noonday Press, 1982, p. 251.

<sup>90</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (1967), trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 158.

homosexual subjects, it necessarily deals with issues of personal sexual identity. As such, psychobiographical methods are also drawn upon.

Previous engagements with Hockney and his works have, as noted above, most frequently concentrated on the formal and stylistic aspects of his practice, with the artist's sexual orientation presented as of brief significance or passing interest. Where Hockney's homosexuality has been seriously considered by Melia, a strongly psychoanalytical position has been taken. Significantly, no major study on Hockney to date has drawn upon the theoretical insights afforded by the field of queer theory. This introduction has already referred to the writings of several of its most prominent thinkers, including Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and David Halperin. As its appellation might suggest, queer theory is an area of intellectual enquiry that concerns itself particularly with the interests, actions, needs and history of those whom we would now refer to as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. However, this is by no means an all encompassing definition. Halperin has argued that 'Queer is by definition *whatever* is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. *There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers*' (original emphases).<sup>91</sup> Halperin's very broad, and inscrutable, statement arguably demonstrates how queer theory remains to a certain extent indebted to historical tendencies within western homosexual cultures towards the inexact, the polysemous. From the nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth, the word 'queer' was itself a highly loaded term, with two distinct meanings. One, which remains familiar, was used as a pejorative reference to homosexuals;<sup>92</sup> the other, now largely obsolete, was used to refer to the odd, the surprising. Queer theorists and activists today capitalise on this multiplicity of meaning, at the same time re-appropriating a word formerly the preserve of the pejorative for positive action. With many of its early theorists profoundly influenced by

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<sup>91</sup> David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 62.

<sup>92</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, p. 7.



poststructuralist thought,<sup>93</sup> queer theory is a relatively young discipline that first began to flourish in the late 1980s, and in part because of this its boundaries remain indistinct. As such, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to offer a single, authoritative definition of queer theory and its concerns<sup>94</sup> – indeed, to do so would be to contradict assertions such as Halperin’s that that which is queer is essentially indefinable, unrooted in a single identity. Whilst queer theories are not the primary methodological approach employed in this thesis, they are a valuable tool, combined with more conventional art historical methods including close visual analysis, in the examination of Hockney’s works dealing with homosexual themes, and indeed in the assessment of Hockney’s own self-fashioning as a man with same-gender desires since 1960.

A wide range of primary and secondary resources has been drawn upon in the course of this research project. So far as accounts of the artist’s life are concerned, Hockney has issued two volumes of autobiography, *David Hockney by David Hockney* of 1976 and *That’s the Way I See It*, first published in 1993. Alongside these there is also the comprehensive biography *Portrait of David Hockney* (1988) by Peter Webb, an author who had previously collaborated with Hockney on another book, *The Erotic Arts*, first published in 1975. In addition to these biographies, Hockney has also participated in numerous media interviews from the early 1960s to the present day, with many of these preserved in scrapbooks kept by John Kasmin, Hockney’s first dealer. Now located at the Getty Research Institute archives in California, they date back to 1963, and are referred to throughout this thesis. Other repositories of media interviews with Hockney consulted in the course of this project include the British Library, the Tate Library and Archive and Birmingham Central Library. The *ONE* National Gay and Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles has also provided a valuable resource,

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<sup>93</sup> Seidman (ed.), *Queer Theory/Sociology*, p. 11.

<sup>94</sup> Tim Dean, *Beyond Sexuality*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 23.

housing a complete collection of issues of *ONE* magazine, a publication which Hockney consulted, as well as a number of rare periodicals, publications and products associated with the artist from the United States.

In contrast with many other subjects of art historical enquiry, there is no shortage of general interest publications on David Hockney and his works, or indeed reproductions of these images. Exhibition catalogues and volumes such as Melia and Luckhardt's *David Hockney: Paintings*, which provides many annotated reproductions of the artist's works, have provided useful rare visual material for study. Still more useful was the day that I was able to spend at Hockney's Los Angeles studio in 2009, where I was granted access not only to a computer archive of unrivaled comprehensiveness, but also to Hockney's personal collection of original drawings and photographs. The Kasmin Limited Records at the Getty Research Institute have also been invaluable in this respect.

Given that this thesis has as its central focus the life and work of a living individual, Hockney himself must be considered a resource also. As has been noted above, Hockney has assisted a number of student research projects in the past, providing interviews to both Gray Watson and Charles Ingham that have been drawn upon here. I was also fortunate enough to secure a personal interview with the artist at his home in Bridlington in 2009; this has been transcribed and forms an appendix to this thesis. This interview contains many new and valuable insights into Hockney's life, art practice and personal values, and is referred to throughout this text.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure**

Since this thesis is concerned with responses to, and representations of, homosexualities across a period of time spanning from the late 1950s to the present, it is

essential that one considers the legal and societal strictures and prejudices of the time periods in question. I have chosen to take a broadly chronological approach, as legislative changes, as well as prevailing social attitudes, must be taken into account, which themselves evolve in a diachronic fashion. However, I have organised the chapters thematically, considering aspects of Hockney's engagements with textual, literary and visual sources in separate chapters, but the four chapters of this thesis should not be considered as discrete and separate entities. A number of key concepts recur, demonstrating how Hockney's approaches to homosexual themes in his life and work have developed, and been sustained, over the course of his career. The concept of a homosexual creative canon, along with the allied notion of artistic legacy, is obviously of major significance. Hockney's emphasis on the domestic in relation to homosexual relationships and individuals, demonstrated early in his career by the 1963 series of domestic scenes and later by such images as *Joe Macdonald in his Apartment, New York, Dec 1982* (Figure 217), is a key underpinning theme. Likewise, Hockney's light-hearted approach to homosexual subjects, and his willingness to treat them with humour, is repeatedly emphasised in opposition to the tendency by commentators to attempt to inscribe conventional dialogues of homosexuality as tragic and unfulfilling upon Hockney's works. Finally, the artist's frequent recourse to hermetic messages in his representation of homosexual themes and concerns is discussed throughout this text. Whilst the reasons for obfuscation are obvious in a pre-decriminalisation era, Hockney's hermeticism can, I will argue, be discerned several decades after the passage of the 1967 Sexual Act. Why the artist has chosen to continue in this vein is a question that this thesis will address.

Before delineating the specific focus of the individual chapters, I would like to address briefly some of the potential pitfalls of the methodology and structure that I have chosen. Whilst this thesis is largely centred around the works of a white, male, homosexual artist, I

am writing from the position of a non-white, heterosexual woman. Like Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Carol Mavor before me, I do not believe that my ownership of a very different personal identity from that of my dominant subject precludes me from producing a valid contribution to knowledge in this area. However, I do believe that it is important to acknowledge the possibility that one might, even unknowingly, produce a text that actually reinforces certain stereotypes and discriminations, rather than attenuating them. In her essay 'How To Bring Your Kids Up Gay', Sedgwick refers to a variety of medical texts of the 1980s concerned with homosexual males which appear to privilege certain models of behaviour above others; as she writes, the authors 'seem prepared to like some male homosexuals, but [for them] the healthy homosexual is one who (a) is already grown up, and (b) acts masculine'.<sup>95</sup> Such a position is one that Sedgwick describes as 'effeminophobic', and may be assumed by an otherwise seemingly well-intentioned commentator. As this thesis focuses predominantly on a single artist, and his efforts at presenting particular models of homosexual behaviours throughout a career prior to decriminalisation and beyond, it could be argued that the text I have produced constitutes a heterosexually-strengthened, muscular 'hero narrative', well-intentioned but potentially misguided. Obviously this is an interpretation that I would seek to contest, not least through my attempts to demonstrate that Hockney's works and life choices are those of an individual, but not a lone maverick, and part of an historical continuum of homosexual creativity of many kinds. However, the extent to which I have been successful in this aim, and in avoiding the trap of effeminophobia, is open to question, and I would invite readers to make their own judgements.

To return to the organisation of this thesis, the first chapter looks to the works produced by Hockney incorporating textual elements during his years as a student at the

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<sup>95</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'How to Bring Your Kids up Gay', *Social Text*, no. 29 (1991), p. 19.

Royal College of Art. It considers the role of words, and language more widely, in the construction of personal identities by homosexual men, as well as conventions of concealment within homosexual subcultures. The potential for language to designate and reclaim spaces, as for example with the obfuscatory dialect of Polari, or graffiti on toilet walls, is explored here, as is Hockney's appropriation of such language in works such as *The Third Love Painting*. This chapter also begins discussions around the concepts of performativity and gender binarisms in relation to homosexual self-fashionings that are continued in the second and third chapters.

Chapter two continues to focus on linguistic elements within Hockney's works, but here emphasis is shifted towards literary languages. The literal quotation and appropriation of texts such as Whitman's poetry on the surface of images is discussed, as well as the implications of the choice of literary works that forward particular models and ideals of homosexual behaviour and relationships; it will be argued that these works, as do the domestic scenes that follow, serve to promote a homosexual ideal of monogamy and domestic bliss. Hockney embarked on a number of travels inspired by works of literature in the early 1960s, resulting in a series of 'souvenir' works commemorating these visits. In the latter years of the decade, Hockney entered the social circle of Christopher Isherwood in California, and produced a collection of portrait drawings of a wide variety of luminaries of the homosexual creative sphere, including Cecil Beaton, W. H. Auden and Isherwood himself. It will be contended that both of these series of works can be interpreted as a visual record of the originators of a modern homosexual creative canon, with Hockney arguably forwarding himself as a possible member.

The third chapter moves from literary sources to the visual, and with it from Britain to the United States, which Hockney was to visit for the first time in 1961. Hockney's conscious

self-fashioning, with his adoption of bleached hair and an idiosyncratic mode of dress, is addressed in this chapter in relation to his first major etching series, the semi-autobiographical *A Rake's Progress*, produced between 1961 and 1963; the history of a homosexual aesthetic is considered as part of this analysis. Hockney's consumption and appropriation of physique photography in the 1960s is also a major concern in this chapter, in particular in relation to the domestic scenes of 1963 and the images centred around swimming pools and showers from the mid years of the decade. I will show that Hockney forwards ideals of bourgeois homosexual domesticity and monogamy in these images. Melia's reading of these images as aping heterosexual partnerships, with figures representing binary oppositions of 'male' and 'female' behaviours, will be contested, and instead Hockney's forwarding of a desirable gender symmetry within same-sex relationships will be proposed.

The fourth and final chapter of this thesis focuses on the reception of Hockney's works either explicitly or implicitly associated with themes of homosexuality, as well as public conceptions of Hockney himself as a gay man. Whilst concerned with much of the span of Hockney's career, particular attention is paid to the years from 1970 to the present day; this is a period that has been hitherto neglected by investigations relating to the artist's works dealing with homosexual themes. It begins with an analysis of director Jack Hazan's 1974 feature film focused on Hockney, *A Bigger Splash*, together with a close examination of contemporary mainstream press coverage. It seeks to examine how and why public conceptions of Hockney and his works have evolved, and what effect this may have had on his potential legacy as a 'serious' artist. The representation of Hockney by a newly-reinvigorated gay press in the years following the foundation of gay liberation movements in the late 1960s is also assessed here. The context of these movements and the increasingly politicised radicalism of campaigns for homosexual rights in the 1970s are highly significant

when considering the reception and perception of Hockney and his works from the 1970s to the 1980s. Hockney's representations of monogamous, homosexual domestic bliss of the late 1960s, such as the painted double portrait *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* (Figure 83), are compared with the highly sexualised, confrontational photographic images of Robert Mapplethorpe, produced over a decade later in the late 1970s. In the years following the advent of gay liberation, but in a pre-AIDS epidemic era, Rosser has noted that 'monogamy was presented politically as "mimicking heterosexual lifestyles" and so was seen by some at least as anti-liberation and thus "politically incorrect"'.<sup>96</sup> I will argue that in this period, Hockney's emphasis on domestic, monogamous and normalising representations of homosexual persons and relationships was considered old-fashioned and insufficiently radical by figures within the gay liberation movement. By contrast, as the AIDS epidemic began to pose a serious health risk amongst communities of gay men, it will be posited that Hockney's images apparently forwarding committed homosexual monogamy became newly politically relevant, resulting in the widespread resurgence in the use of Hockney's images to illustrate the covers of books dealing with subjects of homosexual interest.

The AIDS epidemic itself, which emerged in the early 1980s, was, and indeed remains, highly significant to homosexual men. Hockney has been criticised by commentators for his apparent failure to confront the 'anguish of AIDS'<sup>97</sup> in his work. However, I would argue that Hockney has in fact addressed AIDS in his oeuvre, but that these images have hitherto gone unrecognised by commentators. It will be proposed that several of Hockney's works of the late 1980s representing floral subjects should be considered as memorial images. In a parallel with the hermeticism with which Hockney articulated his homosexual desires in

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<sup>96</sup> B. R. Simon Rosser, *Male Homosexual Behavior and the Effects of AIDS education: A Study of Behavior and Safer Sex in New Zealand and South Australia*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1991, p. 100.

<sup>97</sup> Michael Bronski, *Out-standing Lives: Profiles of Lesbians and Gay Men*, Detroit, Visible Ink Press, 1997, p. 190.

works such as *The Third Love Painting*, so too does he employ codification in his representation of loss.



## CHAPTER ONE

### 2. HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: HOMOSEXUALITIES, LANGUAGE, AND SUBTERFUGE IN THE EARLY WORKS OF DAVID HOCKNEY

*Sexual intercourse began  
In nineteen sixty-three  
(which was rather late for me) -  
Between the end of the Chatterley ban  
And the Beatles' first LP.*

*Philip Larkin, 'Annus Mirabilis'*<sup>1</sup>

There can be little doubt that Hockney's works of the early to mid-1960s have much to do with literature, and indeed language itself. The presence of textual elements can be seen most clearly in pieces such as the 1961 painting *We Two Boys Together Clinging* (Figure 8); produced during Hockney's time in London as a student at the Royal College of Art, it takes its title from the first line of a poem in Walt Whitman's 'Calamus' cycle, and indeed features this line of text prominently within the composition itself. Consisting of forty-five short pieces of verse first published in the 1860 third edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, the Calamus poems explicitly foreground emotional and physical intimacy between males,<sup>2</sup> and are now almost universally recognised as being homoerotic in focus, albeit having been composed almost a decade before the coining of the word 'homosexual' itself.<sup>3</sup>

However, beyond the quotation of the overtly literary, many of Hockney's works of the early 1960s demonstrate a sustained engagement with language in terms of its potential for referential codification and subterfuge. In *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, for example, Hockney borrows from Whitman not only by quoting the words of his poem but also through his appropriation of the poet's simplistic code replacing letters with numbers, which Hockney

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Larkin, 'Annus Mirabilis', *High Windows*, London, Faber, 1979, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> M. Jimmie Killingsworth, 'Whitman and the Gay American Ethos', David S. Reynolds (ed.), *A Historical Guide to Walt Whitman*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Fone, *Masculine Landscapes: Walt Whitman and the Homoerotic Text*, pp. 1-2.

employs in order to indicate the intended identity of his stylised figures in a manner that is not obvious to the uninformed viewer. I will argue that in so doing, Hockney aligns himself with tropes of multiple meaning and obfuscation that are themselves typical of homosexual social and cultural conventions of the first half of the twentieth century. The analysis of Hockney's engagements with language pertaining to same-gender attractions raises a number of major questions: how and why are linguistic elements used within the artist's early works? What is the significance of Hockney's adoption of both textual form and content? What are the implications of these appropriations for his engagements with, and representations of, homosexualities in these images? To what extent were his appropriations novel, and indeed what were the motivations for the production of these pieces? Largely concerned with Hockney's output of the early 1960s, especially works produced whilst the artist was studying at the Royal College of Art, this chapter will address these questions through an interpretative study of some of the artist's early paintings, drawings and prints, from the abstracted visual and textual forms of *Queer* (1960) to the uniform but playful use of transfer text in *Picture Emphasizing Stillness* (1962). By way of comparison, works by other homosexual artists working in this period and the years preceding will also be considered.

## **2.1 Homosexual Panic, Cultures of Concealment and Explorations of Identity through Language**

As Quentin Crisp famously stated in his 1968 memoir *The Naked Civil Servant*, for homosexuals in post-1945 Britain, 'the horrors of peace were many'.<sup>4</sup> The subject of male homosexuality was one that ignited huge – and often hostile – media and public interest in the two decades following the end of the Second World War. In *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis 1918-1957*, Matt Houlbrook describes the 'electric

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<sup>4</sup> Quentin Crisp, *The Naked Civil Servant*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1968, p. 168.

resonance’<sup>5</sup> of newly reinvigorated narratives of sexual danger and corruption after a period in which, due to the necessities of military service for young men and women replacing them in the labour force, traditional gender roles had been disrupted. Following the declaration of peace and the beginnings of demobilisation in 1945, renewed emphasis was placed upon the nuclear family unit and pressure was exerted on men and women from a variety of quarters to conform to strictly delineated binary gender roles. Those perceived as failing to do so were singled out for public censure. Queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick delineates her concept of ‘homosexual panic’, its name appropriated from a highly dubious legal defence strategy used by attackers of homosexual men, which is the term she applies to ‘a structural residue of terrorist potential, of *blackmailability*, of Western maleness through the leverage of homophobia’<sup>6</sup> (original emphases). The years from 1945 through to the passage of the Sexual Offences Act in 1967 could clearly be seen as ones profoundly affected by this. As early as 1948 the American researcher Alfred Kinsey published the landmark volume *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*; this study of 88,000 individuals claimed that as many as one in ten married men in the United States was involved in homosexual activities, with even higher rates amongst other demographics;<sup>7</sup> however, such forward thinking was by no means that of the mainstream. High profile trials in Britain such as the so-called ‘Montagu affair’ of 1954, in which the Conservative peer Edward Montagu and two others were convicted of ‘consensual homosexual offences’, garnered extensive and lurid press coverage. Porter and Weeks’ interviewee Barry recalled deliberately purchasing the *News of the World* in order to keep abreast of such prosecutions,<sup>8</sup> whilst the teenage Hockney was certainly himself aware

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<sup>5</sup> Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis 1918-1957*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 236.

<sup>6</sup> Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, Philadelphia and London, W.B. Saunders, 1948, pp. 610-666.

<sup>8</sup> Porter and Weeks, p. 127.

of these stories.<sup>9</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s newspapers routinely published sensational features such as the *Evil Men* series of 1952 in the *Sunday Pictorial* (Figure 13) and the *Sunday Mirror*'s now-legendary 1963 article 'How to Spot a Possible Homo', which claimed to be 'a short course on how to pick a pervert' – a fondness for suede shoes and sports jackets was apparently a sure sign.<sup>10</sup> The risks of publicly confirming one's homosexuality at this time were significant, with the threat of imprisonment or blackmail omnipresent;<sup>11</sup> as such, cultures of concealment developed in areas of gay cultural life from speech and writing to everyday behaviour, with many men (particularly those in positions of visibility, power and authority) finding it necessary to 'pass' as heterosexual.<sup>12</sup> Hugh David notes that in Britain in 1961, the number of indictable homosexual offences reported reached a peak of 2513, compared with 1405 reports in 1948 and a mere 178 in 1921 (Figure 14).<sup>13</sup> It was in these hostile social and political climes that the young Hockney spent his formative years and produced his earliest works.

However, the artist's politically astute images of the early 1960s did not emerge fully-formed. During his first term at the Royal College, Hockney spent much of his time drawing skeletons in a studied academic fashion (Figures 9 and 15), before deciding that 'there were two groups of students there: a traditional group who simply carried on as they had done in art school, doing still life, life painting and figure compositions; and then what I thought of as the more adventurous lively students, the brightest ones, who were more involved in the art of their time. They were doing big abstract expressionist paintings on hardboard.'<sup>14</sup> His own

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<sup>9</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. v.

<sup>10</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> For more on the fear of blackmail, see Kinsey, p. 259; Hauser; Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, pp. 64-66, Weeks, *Coming Out*, pp. 21-22; the blackmail of homosexuals was also the focus of the 1961 British film *Victim* starring Dirk Bogarde.

<sup>12</sup> See the case of Labour MP Tom Driberg as detailed in Hugh David, *On Queer Street*, London, HarperCollins Publishers, 1995, pp. 105-109.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>14</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 40.

practice soon followed suit. It was the influence of a fellow student, the American R.B. Kitaj, that first inspired the artist to add a political dimension to his practice, with Kitaj encouraging Hockney to express his personal beliefs and values in his artworks.<sup>15</sup> Hockney has been well known throughout his time in the public eye for his spirited defence of issues regarding civil liberties that are close to his heart.<sup>16</sup> In 1960, he was a non-smoking vegetarian, and it was his vegetarianism that he first promoted through non-figurative paintings such as *Two Cabbages*, *Bunch of Carrots* (now lost) which were amongst Hockney's earliest works to include textual elements, with the names of different vegetables painted directly onto the image;<sup>17</sup> he also produced a number of works on the subject of animal rights, such as the 1961 drawing *Pigs Escaping from a Hotdog Machine* (ink on paper; image unavailable). A slightly later, but at least surviving, example of such a work can be seen in *The Cruel Elephant* (Figure 16), in which the elephant of its title, loaded down with a man sitting on his back, crushes the grass and a carpet of innocent 'crawling insects' underfoot. Although defending the rights of animals rather than those of homosexual men, Hockney's favouring of text is clearly apparent in this work. Questioned on his decision to include textual elements within his paintings, he has stated:

One reason for using writing on paintings is that it makes you go back and look at the picture in another way (...) as you walk a little closer to the picture, because you notice a line of type, you read the type first; in a sense this robs the picture of its magic, because you interpret the picture in terms of the written message (...). My intention was to force you to go and look closely at the canvas itself (...) If you put a real message on a painting it is meant to be read, and it will be read.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Livingstone, p. 36; David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. i.

<sup>16</sup> Please see appendix for examples of Hockney's vigorous stance on smokers' rights in the early twenty-first century.

<sup>17</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 61.

In Hockney's very earliest works dealing with the subject of homosexuality, textual elements are crucially important. Indeed, in an image such as *Queer* of 1960 (Figure 7), text – that within the painting itself and that of the title – is all that viewers have to inform themselves that this could in fact be the painting's intended import. In this small work of only 25 by 18 centimetres, the word 'queer' can just barely be discerned in pale pink letters against a background of yellow abstraction (the traditional colour of cowardice) and dark, child-like figurations. However, when the painting was shown at the Piccadilly Gallery in London in 1965, it was entered into the catalogue by the exhibition organisers instead as the far more innocuous *Yellow Abstract*.<sup>19</sup> The papers of Hockney's dealer John Kasmin clearly demonstrate that *Queer* was the work's original and intended title,<sup>20</sup> only restored for the 1970 retrospective exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery after decriminalisation had taken place. From this it is clear how this single word, which had remained in popular use since the First World War,<sup>21</sup> was deemed to be too emotive to be aired even in the decade of sexual revolution.

The word 'queer' has a very different resonance in the twenty-first century than it did when Hockney produced this work, having since been reclaimed by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender activists for their own. The rise, and naming, of queer theories in the late 1980s and early 1990s from such figures as Sedgwick and Judith Butler are testament to this. However, in 1960, the word was used at best in a patronising fashion, at worst downright pejoratively.<sup>22</sup> As with so many maligned minorities, language has played a large part historically in the oppression of those with same-gender desires. However, I would contend that it has also played a fundamental role in the self-fashionings of individuals within these

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<sup>19</sup> Mark Glazebrook, *David Hockney: Paintings, Prints and Drawings 1960-1970*, exhibition catalogue, London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1970, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 114.

<sup>21</sup> Cook et al., 156.

<sup>22</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, p. 7.

communities. The French queer theorist Didier Eribon expressed this situation most clearly in his 1999 book *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self*, when he declared:

‘Faggot’ (‘dyke’) – these are not merely words shouted in passing. They are verbal aggressions that stay in the mind. They are traumatic events experienced more or less violently at the moment they happen, but that stay in memory and in the body (for fear, awkwardness, and shame are bodily attitudes produced by a hostile exterior world). One of the consequences of insult is to shape the relation one has to others and to the world and thereby to shape the personality, the subjectivity, the very being of the individual in question.<sup>23</sup>

One could interpret the phenomenon that Eribon describes as a form of linguistic ‘Stockholm Syndrome’, in so far as words and insults from external sources become internalised by their targets, playing a part in the shaping of identities and self-perceptions and conceptions, whether positively or negatively. Such an interpretation is supported by the findings of Thomas S. Weinberg, who asserts that a profound effect on self-definition and identification can occur when a gay person is confronted with being referred to by sexual epithets or labels such as ‘queer’, ‘faggot’, ‘fairy’, or even simply as ‘homosexual’.<sup>24</sup>

The exploration and reinterpretation of linguistic signifiers of same-gender desires, and the anxieties around them, are a recurrent concern in Hockney’s works from approximately 1960 to 1962. The beginnings of this can be seen in a canvas contemporaneous with *Queer – Shame* of 1960 (Figure 17). Still heavily influenced by the Abstract Expressionist leanings of his Royal College contemporaries at this point, Hockney once again includes the single word of the title within the painting itself, but this remains a mere palimpsest, almost obscured by scumblings of white. Considering that this painting was produced around the time in which Hockney was first coming to terms with his own sexuality

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<sup>23</sup> Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self* (1999), trans. Michael Lucey, Durham NC, Duke University Press, 2004, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas S. Weinberg, *Gay Men, Gay Selves: The Social Construction of Homosexual Identities*, New York, Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1983, pp. 60-78.

and its disclosure to his peers, it can be postulated that this work is a visual articulation of the 'fear, awkwardness' and indeed 'shame' of which Eribon speaks. However, it is arguably significant that these very earliest works dealing with same-gender desires are frequently heavily abstract in nature. Whilst abstract expressionism was perceived to be the most progressive mode of working at the Royal College of Art in the early 1960s,<sup>25</sup> it also seems probable that the intellectual opacity afforded by abstraction in comparison with the figurative was also a strong motivation for Hockney's use of the style in these early paintings. This opacity was, I would argue, taken advantage of contemporaneously by the homosexual American artist Jasper Johns, as in his 1961 painting *In Memory of My Feelings – Frank O'Hara* (Figure 18). Johns' painting, like Hockney's *We Two Boys Together Clinging* (Figure 8) of the following year, takes its title from a poem by a homosexual author, in Johns' case actually naming the poet cited. However, unlike Hockney's working of the themes of Walt Whitman's poem, *In Memory of My Feelings* contains no figurative elements, with the sole internal textual element being the faintly stencilled title that appears at the bottom of the painting. A hinged diptych, it consists of heavily-worked oil hatchings, with found objects – a spoon and fork – suspended from the top of the left-hand panel. Commentator Kenneth Silver has argued that 'for all that Johns freights his work with signs of concealment, *In Memory of My Feelings – Frank O'Hara* is notable for how much it reveals'.<sup>26</sup> He emphasises that the work was produced in the final, turbulent years of Johns' relationship with fellow New York artist Robert Rauschenberg, and cites the prominence of Frank O'Hara himself as having achieved 'near-legendary underground status in the New York art world',<sup>27</sup> in part on account of the extent to which he was open about his own homosexuality in the repressive political

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<sup>25</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 40.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth Silver, 'Modes of Disclosure: The Construction of Gay Identity and the Rise of Pop Art', Russell Ferguson (ed.), *Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition 1955-1962*, exhibition catalogue, Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, 1992, p. 183.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 184.



climate of the day.<sup>28</sup> However, one could argue that along with its (quite literally) opaque, abstracted style, the very self-referential nature of this and other works by Johns, its layers of meaning inextricably bound to the incestuous nature of the 'New York art world' that Silvers repeatedly mentions, make it potentially very difficult for those outside that realm to comprehend its significance as far as its homosexual themes are concerned. Indeed, many of O'Hara's writings most explicitly concerned with same-gender desires, such as the poem 'Homosexuality' of 1954, were not published until after his death in 1966,<sup>29</sup> although as Johns' reference of his work shows, they were circulated amongst his own circle. This sense of secrecy was not without cause; as Michael S. Sherry has demonstrated, in Cold War-era America, a hostile discourse of the 'homintern', or a perceived cabal of homosexual power within the arts, came into play.<sup>30</sup> The phrase itself a portmanteau of 'homosexual' and 'Comintern', the international Communist organisation, it crystallised two of post-war Western society's greatest fears. In the case of Johns himself, Sherry remarks that while 'the secretive, gay-coded art of Johns and Rauschenberg became, by the end of the 1950s, the most celebrated artistic expression of a culture intrigued by well-kept secrets... few probably got the message at the time'.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, whilst Hockney's earliest works are often heavily abstracted, textual elements are inherent from the outset, rendering meaning more readily discernible than is the case with Johns' works, albeit still very much couched in the concealing terms of an abstract matrix.

Hockney's earliest images drawing upon textual elements continually refer to particular words, phrases or concepts, for example that of love in the associated series of

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 184.

<sup>29</sup> Mark W. Turner, *Backward Glances: Cruising the Queer Streets of New York and London*, London, Reaktion, 2003, p.148.

<sup>30</sup> Michael S. Sherry, *Gay Artists in Modern American Culture: An Imagined Conspiracy*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2007, pp. 42-44.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

paintings. However, others refer to less neutral terms, with the word ‘queen’ being one that recurs frequently in Hockney’s early works, in various forms. The use of the word in the context of the ‘drag queen’ – a man who dresses as a woman, often in flamboyant style – is one that is almost certain to be familiar to readers in the twenty-first century. Hockney himself is known to have toyed with this definition in his own search for personal and sexual identification as this photograph (Figure 19) attests, with the young artist singing the Rodgers and Hammerstein number ‘I Cain’t Say No’, from the musical *Oklahoma*, in full feminine attire as part of the Royal College of Art revue in 1961.<sup>32</sup> However, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the word ‘queen’, alternatively spelled ‘quean’, was used with relative frequency to refer to any male homosexual, both by heterosexuals<sup>33</sup> and homosexuals themselves.<sup>34</sup> The effeminate connotations of the word were by no means accidental. The assumption of the presence of an innate degree of femininity in any individual with homosexual leanings was long-standing, as voiced by Krafft-Ebing in his treatise *Psychopathia Sexualis* of 1886,<sup>35</sup> whilst Otto Weininger’s book *Sex and Character* of 1903 argued that all individuals exist along a continuum of male and female, with homosexual men closer to the female than their heterosexual fellows.<sup>36</sup> Effeminacy as a symptom of underlying homosexual desires in men remained a common assumption into the mid-twentieth century, even on the part of medical authorities. In 1948 Kinsey wrote:

It is quite generally believed that one’s preference for a sexual partner of one or the other sex is correlated with various physical and mental qualities, and with the total personality which makes a homosexual male or female physically, psychically, and perhaps spiritually distinct from a heterosexual individual. It is generally thought that

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<sup>32</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 60.

<sup>33</sup> Eric Partridge, *The Routledge Dictionary of Historical Slang*, London, Routledge, 1973, p. 742.

<sup>34</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, p. 187.

<sup>35</sup> Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), trans. Franklin S. Klaf, New York, Little, Brown and Company, 1998, pp. 198-199.

<sup>36</sup> Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles* (1903), trans. Ladislaus Löb, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2005, pp. 58-59.

these qualities make a homosexual person obvious and recognizable to any one who has a sufficient understanding of such matters. (...) It is commonly believed, for instance, that homosexual males are rarely robust physically, are uncoordinated or delicate in their movements, or perhaps graceful enough but not strong and vigorous in their physical expression. Fine skins, high-pitched voices, obvious hand movements, a feminine carriage of the hips, and peculiarities of walking gaits are supposed accompaniments of a preference for a male in a sexual partner.<sup>37</sup>

Such thinking was also popular in Britain, having undergone a long historical genesis. In terms of linguistic signifiers, Rictor Norton notes that the use of feminine names and phrases in relation to men who romantically and sexually desired other men was a common feature of the eighteenth-century 'molly house' culture of London – 'molly houses' being specific drinking and social establishments patronised by consciously effeminate, often cross-dressing men.<sup>38</sup> Norton refers to a molly slang contemporaneously known as the 'Female Dialect', with mollies themselves originating such terms as 'queen' and 'fairy', which only later came to be adopted by heterosexual outsiders as terms of abuse.<sup>39</sup>

However, the potential import of the word 'queen' and its use in Hockney's works is, I would argue, more complex than simply as a signifier of abuse. The word was one that possessed a multiplicity of meanings within the lexicon of the dialect known as Polari, a form of 'secret language' utilised by homosexual men, predominantly in London, until the late 1960s.<sup>40</sup> A simple dialect with a relatively limited body of vocabulary, Polari consisted of word borrowings from Italian and Romany alongside neologisms, puns and simple 'backspeak' (for example, 'ecaf' is the Polari word for 'face'); these words would be used in conjunction with standard English in everyday conversation.<sup>41</sup> Thus the language allowed its speakers to communicate with one another without fear of eavesdropping by outsiders or,

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<sup>37</sup> Kinsey, p. 637.

<sup>38</sup> Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700-1830* (1992), Stroud, Chalford Press, 2006 (second revised edition), pp. 144-169.

<sup>39</sup> Norton, *The Myth of the Modern Homosexual: Queer History and the Search for Cultural Unity*, London, Cassell, 1997, pp. 118-123.

<sup>40</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-62.

crucially, the police. Certainly the word ‘queen’ was a versatile one within the vocabulary; not only did it alone signify any male homosexual (although often, as within the heterosexual world, with implications of effeminacy and thus an individual’s role within sexual acts), but in conjunction with other words, it served to delineate various different ‘types’. A ‘size queen’, for instance, was a man who sought partners who were particularly well endowed; a ‘seafood queen’ was a man with a proclivity for sailors.<sup>42</sup> It has been argued, for example by Paul Baker in his comprehensive study *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, that the dialect should be considered an ‘anti-language’, in so far as it facilitated the existence of an ‘anti-society’ – a community of practice outside of a hostile mainstream society, with a shared language acting as a bonding mechanism and source of identification.<sup>43</sup> For those entering the scene from outside, unfamiliar with the dialect, Matt Houlbrook notes that a glossary of queer slang was published as early as 1932.<sup>44</sup> Hockney did become familiar with aspects of London’s homosexual subcultures in the early 1960s thanks to an initiation at the hands of Mark Berger, an American fellow student at the Royal College of Art who also introduced his protégé to the phenomenon of physique photography, a genre that was to have a profound effect on Hockney’s work later in the decade (see chapter three).<sup>45</sup> However, whilst Hockney never became fluent in this language of the homosexual underground, it seems very likely that he was aware of it, or at least parts of its vocabulary, through its associations with homosexuals and their spaces, in 1960.<sup>46</sup> This was the year in which he produced the painting *Going to be a Queen for Tonight* (Figure 20). This large image features the blocked areas of colour and gestural brushstrokes seen previously in *Shame*, but here, the textual elements of the painting quite literally take centre stage. Alongside stylised phallic protuberances, two

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 187.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>44</sup> Houlbrook, p. 65.

<sup>45</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>46</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author, see appendix p. vii.

large, full versions of the word 'queen' can be discerned, whilst a third leaves off its last letter, arguably exploiting the simple one-letter difference between 'queen' and 'queer'. The language of the title itself, *Going to be a Queen for Tonight*, is loaded with the suggestion of 'trying out' an identity on a continuing road of self-discovery, just as Hockney himself, for one night at a college revue, had become 'a girl who can't say no'.

The artist plays once again with the layered significations of the word 'queen' in another painting of 1960, *I'm in the Mood for Love* (Figure 21). Produced a year before Hockney was to visit the United States for the first time, the large work ostensibly represents a space in New York, with the city's name hand-written beneath the central figure, and the initials 'NY' at the bottom right of the painting. The bottom portion of the canvas is left bare except for a sequence of dates in brush work and transfer lettering, with focus clearly placed on 9 July, Hockney's own birthday. Against a black, smeary sky, the central figure sports spectacles like its creator but also a pair of devilish horns and a vermillion-lipsticked mouth, its right arm serving as a signpost reading 'to QUEENS UPTOWN' placed above a stylised red heart. Meanwhile above the text 'NO SMOKING/B.M.T.' is placed in tiny, white lower-case letters the epithet 'orbachs is only for sissies/who go in drag' (sic). As with Polari, this painting, and its linguistic signifiers, is a mass of double, sometimes triple entendres. On one level the use of the word 'queens' can be interpreted as signifying the New York borough of that name; however, the devilish, effeminate qualities of its standard bearer, leaving aside the painting's title, clearly suggest that a homosexually significant meaning is also intended. Two small, embracing figures, appear in a window of the right-hand, phallically-suggestive tower. These figures, comparable in appearance to conventional graphical motifs used to designate

male lavatories (Figure 23),<sup>47</sup> can be construed as signifiers of ‘maleness’, suggesting that through his engagements with literature and the gay press the artist construed New York, and by extension the United States, as a Shangri-la for gay men.

Having spoken of queens, it seems only natural to move on to the subject of kings. The word is one that appears in small capitals at the top right of the painting *Going to be a Queen for Tonight*. ‘Kings’ is a word universally associated in the mind with ‘queens’, in so far as the word ‘mister’ is linked with ‘missus’, gender oppositions construed as naturally belonging together. Polari is a dialect that depends upon misdirection and subterfuge for its success, a fact exploited to humorous effect by Kenneth Williams in the ‘Julian and Sandy’ sketches of the BBC Radio comedy series ‘Round the Horne’ of 1965 to 1968, which brought Polari to nationwide attention for the first time. The word ‘queen’ within the lexicons of Polari and gay slang is itself subject to interpretation, and Hockney appears to exploit this when he plays with both words and the concept of gender identities in the drawing *Three Kings and a Queen* (Figure 24). Here the artist seizes upon the alibi of the playing card opposition of kings and queens as cause to revisit the term. In this preparatory drawing for an etching of the same title, four stylised figures are depicted, spilling out of their respective rectangular boxes. However, in this drawing, arguably one of its most significant aspects is the way in which labelling – literally, in this case – affects viewers’ perceptions. The three kings of the title are indicated by their accompanying ‘K’s; however the remaining letterless ‘queen’ is near-identical in appearance to the figure on the far left. One could go so far as to suggest that in depicting his ‘queen’ as simply a form of ‘K’-less ‘king’, the artist points viewers towards the idea of gender identities as constructions – a central tenet of the theory of

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<sup>47</sup> These signifiers of ‘maleness’ can be seen elsewhere in Hockney’s early works, for example in *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian Style* (1961, Figure 23); one could go so far as to interpret the small number of darkly-shaded figures amongst a sea of paler ones as a visual articulation of a homosexual minority.

performativity, which has come increasingly to the foreground in gender and queer studies in recent years. In *Gender Trouble*, first published in 1990, Judith Butler asserts that gender, and indeed sexual desires, are not essential or fixed, but are rather fluid states, the attributes of which one selects from pre-existing models. Indeed, Butler recognises the power of language, and its ability to construct seemingly binary oppositions, in such situations when she states:

If it is possible to speak of a ‘man’ with a masculine attribute and to understand that attribute as a happy but accidental feature of that man, then it is also possible to speak of a ‘man’ with a feminine attribute, whatever that is, but still to maintain the integrity of the gender. But once we dispense with the priority of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as abiding substances, then it is no longer possible to subordinate dissonant gendered features as so many secondary and accidental characteristics of a gender ontology that is fundamentally intact. If the notion of an abiding substance is a fictive construction produced through the compulsory ordering of attributes into coherent gender sequences, then it seems that gender as substance, the viability of *man* and *woman* as nouns, is called into question by the dissonant play of attributes that fail to conform to sequential or causal models of intelligibility.<sup>48</sup> (original emphases)

According to Butler, an individual’s apparent gender or sexual role is not pre-determined or innate, but rather a cohesive ‘performance’ of a role that pre-exists the performer, a repetition of stereotypical signifiers. Homosexual subcultures, like all subcultures, are in a constant state of flux, with expected behaviour from their members differing from generation to generation. Houlbrook describes a 1930s scene in which individuals identifying themselves as ‘queer’ would frequent clubs such as the West End’s ‘Caravan’ exhibiting tendencies we would now recognise as ‘camp’,<sup>49</sup> with plucked eyebrows and made-up faces, referring to themselves and others with feminine pronouns and nicknames such as ‘the Countess’.<sup>50</sup> Three decades later, John Rechy’s *City of Night* (a novel that was to have a profound effect on Hockney from 1963 onwards) has its hustler protagonist classifying a wide variety of homosexual types, from ‘the

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<sup>48</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990), New York and London, Routledge, 2008, p.33.

<sup>49</sup> Whilst camp personal and aesthetic tendencies are considered throughout this thesis, a more sustained engagement with the concept can be found in the final chapter.

<sup>50</sup> Houlbrook, p. 6.

Professor', a lonely elderly intellectual who pays young men for both their company and sexual favours,<sup>51</sup> to the flamboyant young drag queen Miss Destiny, continually searching for her next 'husband'.<sup>52</sup> This proliferation of conventions across time is remarked upon by Butler when she states:

The 'presence' of so-called heterosexual conventions within homosexual contexts as well as the proliferation of specifically gay discourses of 'butch' and 'femme' as historical identifiers of sexual style, cannot be explained as chimerical representations of originally heterosexual identities. And neither can they be understood as the pernicious insistence of heterosexist constructs within gay sexuality and identity (...) gay is to straight *not* as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy. The parodic repetition of 'the original' (...) reveals the original to be nothing other than a parody of the *idea* of the natural and the original.<sup>53</sup> (original emphases)

Here Butler articulates her thesis that in order to gain acceptance or recognition from a particular community of identity, subjects fashion themselves along received notions of that identity – a reflexive system in which the performative aspects anticipate the 'performer' him or herself.<sup>54</sup> However, whilst the decision to perform a particular role suggests a degree of deliberation, it could be contended that Butler's theories to a certain extent minimise the role of personal choice and self-determination, implying that individuals are fated to follow a particular cultural path, with true originality of action essentially impossible. On the other hand, as has been demonstrated, there is not, nor has there ever been, a single 'gay' performative identity that supersedes all others. Dominant stereotypes may emerge within a period, from the effeminate aesthete or gay physique enthusiast of the mid-twentieth century,<sup>55</sup> to the camp, bitchy queen typified by the character of Jack McFarland from the

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<sup>51</sup> John Rechy, *City of Night*, New York, Grove Press, 1963, pp. 58-80.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94-199.

<sup>53</sup> Butler, p. 43.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Waugh, pp. 176-283.



1990s American situation comedy *Will and Grace* (see chapter four); however, others still remain as viable options. For example, Hammack and Cohler stress that history and discourse play crucial roles in the process of identity development.<sup>56</sup> They cite Foucault's thesis in *The Will to Knowledge* that historical factors produce subjects existing within a particular identity space, and that these subjects in turn influence their appropriated discourse in an attempt to 'make meaning of their lives'.<sup>57</sup> Whilst Foucault's theories are certainly not infallible (with Sedgwick notably, and persuasively, questioning Foucault's assertion of a direct relationship between sexual acts and identities),<sup>58</sup> as Hammack and Cohler suggest, taking the life course perspective into account is valuable for its potential 'to transcend the insidious and intellectually inhibiting schism between *essentialist* and *constructionist* views of sexual identity development' (original emphases).<sup>59</sup> Within the spectrum of roles, an individual is free to explore and adopt identities from a range of signifiers, creating something at once new and appropriated. As such I would argue that in these explorations of contemporary signifiers of homosexual identities, whether visual, behavioural or linguistic, we see Hockney exploring, creating and experimenting with his own identity, or rather identities, conscious not only of historical and cultural precedent but also of his status as a denizen of both the homosexual sphere and a heterosexist mainstream society.

## 2.2 'You and I are outlaws':<sup>60</sup> Outsider Imagery, Gay Spaces and Artistic Alibis

The outsider status afforded by his identification as a gay man can be discerned in a number of Hockney's earliest images. The multimedia work on paper *Hero Heroine Villain* of

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<sup>56</sup> Phillip Hammack and Bertram Cohler, *The Story of Sexual Identity: Narrative Perspectives on the Gay and Lesbian Life Course*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>59</sup> Hammack and Cohler, pp. 4-5.

<sup>60</sup> E.M. Forster, *Maurice*, p. 112; these words are famously spoken by the eponymous protagonist to his then-lover Clive.

1961 (Figure 25) depicts three rudimentary watercolour figures atop a giant etched head. The two leftmost figures are quite literally joined at the hip; that they are male and female is suggested by the beard, heavy brow and muscular arm of the left figure, and the stylised breasts and clownish painted face of the right. A simple numerical code appropriated from Walt Whitman identifies the characters. This highly simplistic code substitutes numbers for letters of the alphabet – ‘A’ becomes ‘1’, ‘B’ becomes ‘2’, and so on. The figure on the far left is labelled ‘16.3’ or ‘P.C.’, the initials of Peter Crutch, a fellow (heterosexual) student at the Royal College of Art on whom Hockney had a crush at the time and whose presence is implied in a number of the artist’s works of the early sixties; Peter Webb suggests persuasively that the central figure, dubbed a ‘HEROINE’, represents Crutch’s then-girlfriend, Mo.<sup>61</sup> The figure on the far right, meanwhile, is designated ‘4.8’ or ‘D.H.’, the artist’s own initials. He is clearly labelled in neat, typewritten capitals as the titular villain of the piece, despite his childishly drawn, blandly smiling face suggesting to the contrary. Webb interprets Hockney’s presence as a dividing force, seeking to separate the couple.<sup>62</sup> However, it is also possible to read this image in a number of different ways. Although Hockney has claimed that the ‘bohemian’ environment of the Royal College of Art meant that he never felt at risk of blackmail or prosecution himself, he was certainly aware of this risk for others.<sup>63</sup> He was also conscious of the hostile and often sensationalist representations of homosexuals by public figures and the media at this time.<sup>64</sup> As such, it could be argued that in *Hero Heroine Villain*, Hockney casts himself in the performative role of ‘villain’ or ‘male degenerate’,<sup>65</sup> the dominant assignation of a heterosexist society for any man with same-gender desires. His crime therefore may be as slight as his desires, or at least his failure to attempt to suppress

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<sup>61</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 51.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix pp. v-vi.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid; see appendix pp. iv-vi.

<sup>65</sup> Douglas Warth, ‘Evil Men’, *Sunday Pictorial*, 25 May 1952, p. 6.

them. Hockney's terminology in this work of black and white binary oppositions between good and evil recalls the rigid morality of the fairy tale, with the heroine princess inevitably saved by a hero prince. Whilst Hockney was to produce an extensive series of prints illustrating the stories of the Brothers Grimm towards the end of the 1960s, his first engagement with the codes and structures of the fairy tale came some years earlier, in the narrative etching *Gretchen and the Snurl* of 1961 (Figure 26). Inspired by an original story composed in a letter to a friend by Hockney's own friend and fellow student Mark Berger,<sup>66</sup> the work consists of five plates printed side by side on the same sheet of paper, reminiscent of a crude comic strip. The protagonists of the piece are the eponymous Gretchen and the 'Snurl', a rather lumpen, and seemingly male, creature. Although notionally conventional in their union of oppositional gender, it is implied that their love, like that of homosexuals, is yet proscribed and endangered, in particular by the 'Nasty Snatch' of plate four. This use of a slang word for the vagina as signifier of unpleasantness is surely not accidental, nor indeed its toothed, seemingly *vagina dentata*-inspired appearance. This same toothed figuration is seen in several works from this period, for example *Nasty* of 1960 (ink on paper, 50.8 x 40.6cm, image unavailable) and a working drawing for *Queer* from the same year (charcoal on paper, 40.6 x 50.8cm, image unavailable), both of which contain similarly threatening, fanged, concave spaces. However, in plate five of *Gretchen and the Snurl*, all is resolved; although the Nasty Snatch has seemingly consumed the city and all within it, our heroine and her Snurl, we are told, manage to live 'happily ever after', arguably presaging Hockney's subsequent fascination with domesticity (see chapter three). In their final embrace, the shapes of the protagonists are remarkable for their similarity in appearance to the figures within the painting *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, produced in the same year. Both this painting and *Gretchen*

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<sup>66</sup> Mark Glazebrook (ed.), *David Hockney: Paintings, Prints and Drawings 1960-1970*, exhibition catalogue, 1970, p. 78.

*and the Snurl* can be interpreted as visual explorations of proscribed loves; whilst not homosexual, Gretchen and her monstrous lover could certainly be counted as ‘queer’ in so far as they deviate from the emotional and sexual norm, with David Halperin arguing that:

Queer is by definition *whatever* is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. *There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers*. It is an identity without an essence. ‘Queer’ then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality *vis-à-vis* the normative.<sup>67</sup> (original emphases)

In art at least, as we shall see was attempted by other practitioners in literature, Hockney attempts to allow a ‘happy ending’ for the ‘unorthodox lover’, the label he applies to his ciphered love interest in *Study for Doll Boy* (Figure 27).

If Polari and gay slang provided a means through which homosexuals could communicate and identify with one another in relative secrecy, then there also existed a variety of spaces in which this was possible. Men romantically and sexually interested in other men ‘cruised’ one another in cafés, cinemas, bars and baths,<sup>68</sup> with Cook et al. noting that such an Establishment enterprise as the Lyons Corner House restaurant near Piccadilly Circus had a section that staff reserved at certain times for homosexual customers.<sup>69</sup> However, amongst the best known of these spaces, for gay men and the public at large alike, was the public lavatory, or ‘cottage’. So-called for their dwelling-like appearance (Figure 28), Houlbrook has argued that ‘this simple renaming – urinal equals cottage – marked a symbolic appropriation of everyday urban space’.<sup>70</sup> He refers to the remarkable work of literature that he suggests might qualify as ‘the first queer city guide’, *For Your Convenience: A Learned Dialogue Instructive to all Londoners and London Visitors*, published in 1937. The

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<sup>67</sup> Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, p. 62.

<sup>68</sup> Cook et al., pp. 150-156; Houlbrook, pp. 43-67.

<sup>69</sup> Cook et al., p. 151.

<sup>70</sup> Houlbrook, p. 65.

pseudonymous work of a Thomas Burke under the pen name Paul Pry, the book is Polari-like in so far as it veils its primary function – a map of cruising sites for those in the know (Figure 29) – in the comically poor alibi of a young provincial traveller being informed by a knowledgeable local as to where one might go ‘if one were walking through Wigmore Street after three cups of tea’.<sup>71</sup> Whilst Houlbrook asserts that these spaces served purposes for homosexual men other than simply as places for anonymous sexual encounters, it was in this capacity that they were arguably most acknowledged, both by homosexuals themselves and those on the outside.

The anonymity of the cottage could act as a great social leveller; the Labour MP and subsequent life peer Tom Driberg wrote of his preferred cruising circuit in his posthumously published memoir *Ruling Passions*,<sup>72</sup> whilst the award-winning actor John Gielgud was famously convicted on charges of ‘persistently importuning for immoral purposes’ in a Chelsea public lavatory.<sup>73</sup> Tipped off by the police, an increasingly prurient press leapt upon the opportunity to delve into this apparently sordid practice, with every national paper and many local ones carrying details of the case. Certainly in London from the 1940s through to the 1960s, the use of *agents provocateurs* in public lavatories by the Metropolitan Police was widespread (if itself illegal), alongside elaborate and expensive surveillance equipment.<sup>74</sup> Patrick Higgins, in his comprehensive study of British policing techniques aimed at homosexual behaviours, claims that in the London area, the Metropolitan Police force was often simply too busy to attempt to prosecute homosexual offences in private, unlike in the provinces; instead, in order to assert their moral stance with the greatest visibility, the police

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

<sup>72</sup> Tom Driberg, *Ruling Passions*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1977, pp. 147-148.

<sup>73</sup> Patrick Higgins, *Heterosexual Dictatorship: Male Homosexuality in Post-War Britain*, London, The Fourth Estate, 1996, p. 268.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 146.

concentrated their attentions on public conveniences and public spaces.<sup>75</sup> By the 1950s, plain-clothes policemen were routinely deployed across the capital's network of public lavatories, in particular patrolling eighteen sites identified by the force as deserving of particular attention. Whilst many arrests were made, the numbers were not so great as were suggested by either legal quarters or the press. In 1953, the year of Gielgud's conviction, 374 arrests took place in London, a little more than one man a day; however, the magistrate involved in the Gielgud case claimed that some 600 similar cases had passed through his own court alone in a single year, and these grossly inflated figures were widely reported elsewhere.<sup>76</sup> Higgins suggests that whilst police activity may have deterred some men from the cottages, many more chose to take their chances, or even saw the possibility of arrest as adding a frisson of excitement to the process.<sup>77</sup>

Although Hockney has claimed that the only time in his life that he was ever truly promiscuous himself was in his first months in Los Angeles in 1964,<sup>78</sup> the knowledge that such opportunities existed, and were a notable part of London's homosexual subcultures of the day, certainly seems to have made an impact on the artist. The language of the lavatory appears in a number of his works from the early 1960s, whilst his fascination with these spaces can be seen clearly in his decision to write a satirical review of drawings on the lavatory walls of the Royal College itself, entitling the piece 'The La Trine Gallery'.<sup>79</sup> Drawings and paintings demonstrate that at least as early as 1960 Hockney was incorporating textual elements appropriated from toilet walls. The drawing *Figure with Phone Numbers* of that year (Figure 30) contains linguistic constructions that appear to prefigure works such as *The Third Love Painting* (Figure 5), also of 1960. A private sketch, this work is remarkable

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 163.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p. 164.

<sup>78</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68.

<sup>79</sup> Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix pp. vi-vii.

amongst Hockney's works from this period in its synthesis of the overtly figurative and the textual. Occupying only the far right of the relatively large 39.4 x 49.5cm paper, the long face of the figure, maleness suggested by a receding hairline, is observed with relative mimetic accuracy, in contrast, for example, with the heavy stylisation to be observed in paintings such as *We Two Boys Together Clinging*. However, the heavily hatched visage sits atop a more hurriedly sketched body, with a single stumpy arm and the beginnings, at the base of the image, of a pair of voluptuous buttocks encased in the skimpiest of undergarments. At the figure's mouth is what appears to be an anatomically correct erect penis, anticipating the oral fixations of works such as *Adhesiveness* (Figure 3) and *Teeth Cleaning, W. 11* (Figure 31). Written over and around the figure are segments of text of varying length and letter size, all apparently culled from toilet walls. These phrases include 'WANTED', 'cunt', 'my brother is 17' and 'ring anytime' – the presence of these latter two in particular suggest that this drawing served at least in part as a study for *The Third Love Painting*, as very similar word formations appear within the later work. Appropriated graffiti, from crude one-word epithets to florid doggerel, appears in several of Hockney's earliest drawings from the 1960s. Examples of this can be seen in the *Fuck* series of drawings of 1961, including *Fuck (my Brother)* (Figure 32), *Fuck (Cliff)* (Figure 33) and *Fuck (Cunt)* (Figure 34), the latter of which appears to show a stylised self-portrait ambling through the tube stations, and the language contained within them, that are his sources.

Hockney's personal papers from this period demonstrate that the artist collected such phrases on a variety of ephemera. One such item is an annotated invitation to the 1961 Young Contemporaries preview exhibition (unsigned, illustration unavailable). This small card is covered with rough sketches and phrases scrawled in the artist's characteristic handwriting, including:

Oh for a gentile (sic) lover  
There's only one for me  
Three's a crowd  
And anyway I cannot cope<sup>80</sup>

A short verse also appears on the card, significantly demonstrating that Hockney himself was personally aware at this time of the use of the word 'gay' with connotations of homosexual behaviours:

he's never been to Gay Paris  
but he's as gay as hell,  
and when he brings his friends to tea  
it's just like Fairydel!<sup>81</sup>

This brief passage, riven with puns and double entendres, appears alongside phrases such as 'orthodox and unorthodox lovers', 'gay' and the first two lines of Walt Whitman's rather more rarified poem 'We Two Boys Together Clinging', all of which can likewise be found applied to other finished works. With the word 'fairy' in the Polari lexicon referring to an effeminate homosexual man,<sup>82</sup> this document shows clearly that the artist was at this stage identifying and assimilating literary and linguistic signifiers of homosexual behaviours and environments from a variety of different spaces and social strata.

It is arguably in *The Third Love Painting* that we see Hockney's use of appropriated graffiti at its most successful. Once again text and abstract expressionist modes of paint application sit side by side; however, whilst from a distance textual elements may appear smaller and less significant than in other works such as *Going to be a Queen for Tonight*, viewed at closer quarters, they are far richer and more complex. Speaking of *The Third Love Painting* in the 1970s, Hockney asserted that

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<sup>80</sup> Untitled, annotated exhibition invitation (unsigned), c. 1961, collection of David Hockney, Los Angeles.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, p. 174.



you are forced to look at the painting quite closely because it is covered with lots of graffiti, which makes you go up to it. You want to read it. (...) When you first look casually at the graffiti on a wall, you don't see all the smaller messages; you see the large ones first and only if you lean over and look more closely do you get the smaller, more neurotic ones.<sup>83</sup>

Textual elements, drawn from a variety of sources, shape this work. The digits '6' and '9' at centre right are an obvious sexual allusion, whilst lines culled from the walls of the toilets at Earl's Court tube station, close to where Hockney was then living, are reproduced in small, hand-written, white letters. These phrases range from the mildly suggestive – for example 'my brother is only 17' – through to 'ring me anytime' (both seen previously in *Figure with Phone Numbers*), 'here at 7.30' and the unequivocal 'cum'. Alongside these, the artist has made his own addition in the inclusion of the phrase 'come on david admit it'. Playground rhyming appears once again in the following:

His father is a bugger<sup>84</sup> [indistinct]  
And his mother is a bitch  
I often stop and wonder  
If he'll turn out a witch

It could be argued that in utilising childish, spiteful vernacular such as this, the artist expresses the alienation and loneliness felt by an isolated young man coming to terms with the growing recognition of his own sexuality. One could go so far to suggest that this seemingly simple rhyme about a boy's parents could symbolise the common contemporary belief that homosexuality in males came about in part as the result of having a more dominant

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<sup>83</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 44.

<sup>84</sup> This word is indistinct, and could read either 'bugger' or 'beggar'.

mother than father<sup>85</sup> – a situation that Hockney himself identifies as having experienced<sup>86</sup> and which he posited as a potential source of his own homosexuality in a 1972 interview.<sup>87</sup>

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Paul Melia has also considered Hockney's images that engage with the public lavatory, including *The Third Love Painting*. However, in his assessment of these works, Melia does not appear to acknowledge the potential of the cottage within contemporary homosexual subcultures as a site for positive experiences and interactions. Instead, he reads a sense of degradation and alienation into Hockney's images that explore them, describing these works as 'fixing (...) a homosexual orientation with marginalised and "polluted" social spaces'.<sup>88</sup> Certainly one could construe the drab, mouldy greens of the background to *The Third Love Painting* as indicative of the often less than sanitary state of the public lavatory. However, I would argue that whilst Hockney might be seen to interpret these spaces as 'polluted', this is merely at a literal level, and that his engagements with these spaces are, like the graffitied texts they assimilate, more layered and nuanced in this respect.

In *Word's Out: Gay Men's English*, William L. Leap produces an erudite analysis of the heterogeneous, conversive nature of lavatory graffiti. Although his case study is taken from the walls of a restroom in an American university in the 1990s, many of the points he raises remain pertinent to a reading of graffiti from earlier periods and differing locales. In the case of Leap's example, as with the toilets of Earl's Court underground station in the early 1960s, the space in which graffiti dealing with homosexuality appears is within a public facility used by men of all sexual orientations. Indeed, Leap stresses that whilst some graffiti

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<sup>85</sup> Eva Bene, 'On the Genesis of Male Homosexuality: An Attempt at Clarifying the Role of the Parents', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 111, 1965, p. 803.

<sup>86</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xl.

<sup>87</sup> Anon., 'Profile: David Hockney', *Lunch*, no.12, September 1972, pp. 4-8.

<sup>88</sup> Melia, *Images of Men in the Early Work of David Hockney* (unpublished MPhil thesis), University of Manchester, 1991, p. 35.

in these environments is sympathetic to homosexuals and their actions, still more is hostile. He also highlights a significant feature of such graffiti that can often be overlooked by a viewer of the ‘finished product’, so to speak, in that it is most often the work of a number of different authors, each writing in different language styles and each presenting their contributions in a different visual manner.<sup>89</sup> The result is a palimpsest, in which prior words and phrases invite the response of others, creating a layered narrative from individual statements. In the context of the young Hockney’s priorities, the presence of sexually explicit statements referring to homosexual acts within a public forum once again can be seen to offer the affirmation of a sense of a community of practice, yet one with the option of anonymity. Leap asserts that writing – and reading – such graffiti foreshadows the consequences of speaking gay language within public domains.<sup>90</sup> He also argues that whilst public toilets are ostensibly not solely ‘gay spaces’, language acts such as reading and writing graffiti with homosexual concerns within these environments can transform their purpose. He writes:

If gay-related graffiti facilitates learning gay men’s language and culture, then the places where graffiti occur become *spaces* for learning gay language and culture – and, thereby, become *gay spaces* in their own right. ‘Gay space’ in this sense means something more than merely ‘an area where gay people congregate’. Particulars of site-specific practice are always central to the transformation of place into space. In this case, these practices involved expressions of gay assertiveness and gay persistence in the face of heterosexually controlled, contested dialogue. This is not ‘gay space’ in the sense suggested by an outdoor cruising area or a trendy, glitterati dance club; but gay space – like gay culture – does not need an erotic foundation to be a viable, authentic construction.<sup>91</sup> (original emphases)

Extracted themselves from the ‘gay space’ of the cottage, the textual elements of *The Third Love Painting* transform the picture surface itself, and by extension the art gallery, into further

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<sup>89</sup> William L. Leap, *Word’s Out: Gay Men’s English*, Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 74-89.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 88.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p. 89.

gay spaces. Aside from the protuberant red phallic shape that occupies much of the bottom right quadrant of the canvas, viewed from a distance there is little in the painting to suggest any particular relationship between the work and homosexual desires. The largest letters on the canvas, spelling out the 'love' of the title, are themselves partially obscured, as seen also in the contemporaneous *Shame* and *Queer*. By employing such small text for the majority of his inclusions, Hockney replicates for the viewer the experience of reading graffiti messages on the original toilet walls themselves – one is indeed forced to 'lean over and look more closely' in order to see 'the smaller, more neurotic ones'.<sup>92</sup> Alexandra Schumacher draws an obvious stylistic parallel between these works and the textual insertions of Jean Dubuffet, famous for his origination of the concept of 'art brut' or outsider art. Certainly the surface textures of works such as *Mur aux Inscriptions* (1945, Figure 35) with their scratched, graffiti-laden surfaces seem to have at least in part influenced Hockney here.<sup>93</sup> The handwritten quality of the text, in comparison with the mechanical uniformity of transfer lettering or typewritten text used elsewhere by the artist in works such as *Picture Emphasizing Stillness* (1962; Figure 36), contributes to the authentic sensation of graffitied space.

Hockney's apparent quotation of the words of other homosexual men could also be interpreted as a further distancing factor. Although *The Third Love Painting* does include the text 'come on david admit it', this too is meted by the artist's referral to himself in the third person. The artist today claims to have felt little personal risk of blackmail or legal censure at the time on the grounds of his not having been 'a respectable person';<sup>94</sup> however, this belies the fact that the majority of individuals prosecuted for homosexual offences were in fact ordinary members of the working class. Following his own prosecution in the infamous Montagu affair in 1954, Peter Wildeblood published the remarkable book *Against the Law* in

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<sup>92</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 44.

<sup>93</sup> Alexandra Schumacher, *David Hockney: Zitate als Bildstrategie*, Berlin, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2003, p. 23.

<sup>94</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. v.

1955, with the 1957 Penguin edition boasting on its cover that it constituted ‘a first-hand account of what it means to be a homosexual, and to be tried in a controversial case and imprisoned’.<sup>95</sup> In it, Wildeblood offers a breakdown by professional background of the plaintiffs in 321 contemporary court cases involving homosexuality, in order to support his contention that it was not ‘a kind of fashionable vice restricted to decadent intellectuals and degenerate clergymen’.<sup>96</sup> He provides his evidence thus in the form of a table:

Shop and clerical workers	16%
Artisan (factory workers)	15%
Transport and Post Office	11%
Unskilled labourers	10%
Armed forces	10%
Hotel and domestic servants	7%
Students, trainees, schoolboys	6%
Schoolmasters	4%
Agricultural workers	4%
Clergymen	2%
Mentally deficient	2%
Independent means	2%
Unclassified	11% <sup>97</sup>

Although this scheme of classification will strike the modern reader as archaic, the data, taken only five years prior to the artist’s producing *The First Love Painting*, demonstrates that it was not merely the ‘respectable person’ of whom Hockney speaks that was at risk of prosecution. It is also significant to note that when he did display works overtly concerned with homosexual desires, this was picked up and remarked upon unfavourably by commentators. Hockney did show *Domestic Scene, Notting Hill* (Figure 37) and *Domestic Scene, Broadchalke, Wiltshire* (Figure 38), both of 1963, in his first exhibition ‘Pictures with People In’ at the Kasmin Gallery in December of that year;<sup>98</sup> however, neither work contains

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<sup>95</sup> Peter Wildeblood, *Against the Law* (1955), London, 1957, front cover.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, pp. 29-30.

<sup>98</sup> Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 25.

explicit literary content, and whilst on a certain level overtly homoerotic in focus, there remains, in comparison with works such as the Cavafy etchings, room for obfuscation. Nonetheless, in reviewing the exhibition, the *Southern Evening Echo* remarked:

His peculiar speciality is in pictures of young men in compromisingly domestic poses set against various parts of London. His 'Cleaning Teeth in W.C.2' (sic) is, I suppose, a closely observed piece of normal daily routine in that part of London.<sup>99</sup>

The reviewer's assessment of Hockney's engagement with the domestic in this work is significant, providing an early example of a reviewer mapping their own preconceptions and prejudices of homosexuality as tragic and debased onto a work by the artist (Figure 31) that is so clearly humorous in its approach. One could argue that Sedgwick's concept of homosexual panic remains in play here. When considering reviews such as this, however, it is important to bear in mind that, as Philip Larkin famously alluded in his poem 'Annus Mirabilis', the high-profile obscenity trial regarding the publishing of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by Penguin had occurred only three years earlier, Kenneth Tynan's use of the word 'fuck' on national television was two years away,<sup>100</sup> and that censorship of the theatre remained in place until the passage of the Theatres Act in 1968.<sup>101</sup> The risk at this time to artists producing works deemed to be obscene was by no means insignificant, although as the 'not guilty' verdict of the Chatterley trial demonstrated, this was a time of great flux. As such, I would argue that despite Hockney's admittedly courageous efforts to 'propagandize' homosexuality through his works,<sup>102</sup> and his latter-day claims not to have been overly concerned at the

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<sup>99</sup> 'A.A.M.B.', *Southern Evening Echo*, 10 December 1963.

<sup>100</sup> Geoffrey Hughes, *An Encyclopedia of Swearing: The Social History of Oaths, Profanity, Foul Language, and Ethnic Slurs in the English-Speaking World*, New York, 2006, p. 472.

<sup>101</sup> David Thomas, David Carlton and Anne Etienne, *Theatre Censorship: From Walpole to Wilson*, Oxford, 2007, p. 62.

<sup>102</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68.

possibility of public censure, the veiling effects of quotation and referral to himself in the third person in *The Third Love Painting* cannot be dismissed as merely accidental.

However, having said that this publicly exhibited work is on a certain level obfuscatory, there can be little doubt as to the intent of the *Fuck* series of drawings, discussed previously, this word featuring prominently within each composition. Hockney's private drawings and sketchbook studies of this period often make their intended import quite plain, as is the case for example with the drawing *Sam Luv* of 1960 (Figure 39). The work is allied with *The Third Love Painting* in so far as it is a largely abstract piece augmented with appropriated graffiti, but where *Sam Luv* differs from the painting is in its level of explicitness. The graffiti of *The Third Love Painting* clearly alludes to homosexual desires through its language, but is remarkably tame in comparison with that seen in the drawing, which features, in tiny script, the lines 'I luv sam' and 'I am 19 years old and want somebody to suck me'. The directness of Hockney's drawings can be compared with the private sketchbooks of Keith Vaughan (1912-1977), a homosexual artist from an earlier generation, and one with whom Hockney himself later became acquainted.<sup>103</sup> Whilst Vaughan shared with the younger artist a similar fascination with the nude male form, in his paintings this is often meted through the alibi of athletic pursuits, as seen for example in *Landscape with Two Bathers (The Diver)* of 1954 (Figure 40). Although stylistically more aligned with the post-impressionism of Cézanne, the scenario recalls the similarly couched scenes of American artist Thomas Eakins (1844-1916), who also happened to be a neighbour of Walt Whitman and knew of his work.<sup>104</sup> Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* of 1893-1895 (Figure 41), based on nude photographs taken of himself and his own art students (Figure 42), is charged with an implicit homoeroticism, centred on the full buttocks of the youth that occupies the heart of the

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<sup>103</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xviii.

<sup>104</sup> Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West* (second edition), London and New York, Routledge, 1994, p. 31.

canvas; one could go so far as to argue that the raised arm of the elder man to the left represents a penetrative metaphor in an otherwise seemingly chaste image. Vaughan's painting similarly obscures the penises of the young men it portrays, leaving once again only an implicit homoeroticism. However, this is in contrast with the many drawings of the fully nude – and often aroused – male body to be found within Vaughan's private drawings and sketchbooks. An image contemporaneous with *Sam Luv* is an untitled sketchbook study from 1960 (Figure 43). There can be no mistaking the intended import of this image; the two coarsely drawn figures are locked into an embrace, their large, erect penises, perched atop well delineated scrota, rubbing against one another. It is no stretch to suggest that the private nature of the sketchbook, versus the publicly exhibited painting, allowed homosexual artists of the period a greater freedom to express their desires without the risk of censure. It is significant to note that in the case of Hockney, Kasmin's records show a considerable trade in unexhibited drawings of an erotic nature. One collector, a Christopher Taylor, owned not only *Hero Heroine Villain* but also purchased several drawings of a more overtly erotic nature, including *Buttocks* of 1963 (Figure 44).<sup>105</sup> Homosexual collectors formed a significant if seldom-recognised market for the artist's early works, with Taylor also purchasing *Queer* and a portrait drawing of himself (Figure 45),<sup>106</sup> whilst famed photographer Cecil Beaton – who was himself drawn by Hockney and in turn photographed the artist – bought *Adhesiveness* (Figure 3).<sup>107</sup> One particularly remarkable purchase record is that for *Peter in Bed* of 1966 (ink on paper, dimensions unknown; image unavailable), which shows Hockney's then-lover Peter Schlesinger sitting up, naked apart from a necklace; this drawing was bought by the Prince Ayn al-Ara Khan, which Kasmin recorded alongside the official attribution of 'private

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<sup>105</sup> Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 121.

<sup>106</sup> Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 114.

<sup>107</sup> Glazebrook, p. 19.



collection, Switzerland'.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, Kasmin himself remarked that from a commercial point of view, 'his [Hockney's] open homosexuality and use of gay imagery would be to his advantage since gay people always have money to spend on art'.<sup>109</sup>

As well as appropriating texts from the sources already considered, Hockney also drew some of his insertions from the realm of commercial advertising. Although this was to be a fleeting phase for the artist, it was nonetheless a practice that was to ally him, for many, with pop art<sup>110</sup> – an association that he has consistently attempted to downplay.<sup>111</sup> Whilst the most prominent displays of such appropriation can be seen in the series of Tea paintings executed from 1960-1961, other works, such as *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* (1961, Figure 46), which combines a replica of Alka-Seltzer packaging alongside the enticing body of a boy, and *Teeth Cleaning, W.11* (1962, Figure 31) demonstrate an altogether more explicitly homosexual emphasis to this practice. Whilst in some respects stylistically similar to *The Third Love Painting* in its use of muted background shades and some graffiti-style text inclusions, *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* also features a large, bright blue, rectangular area bearing the famous Alka-Seltzer brand name. Beneath, painted with a degree of naturalism in delicate pinks and mauves, is a male torso drawn from the pages of a physique magazine. Clothed in the ghostly outlines of a stylised 'baby-doll' night dress, the figure's head remains a distorted, impossibly-small circle equipped with what appears to be simply a toothy mouth and a single eye. From another large, cartoonish red heart protrudes a flesh-coloured phallic form in the direction of the figure's lips. The body is labelled 'D.Boy' in white letters at its throat, signifying 'Doll Boy', a fantasy figure conceived by Hockney and referred to in a number of his earliest works. In this painting, the appropriation from

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<sup>108</sup> Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 123.

<sup>109</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 45.

<sup>110</sup> Keith Roberts, 'London', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 106, no. 730, p. 46.

<sup>111</sup> See Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 64.

advertising is prominent, yet adds little to the composition in terms of literary significance or even pictorial cohesion. A case could be made that it amounts instead to a conscious imitation of then-fashionable forms in order the better to mask somewhat the clear homoerotic focus of the image, yet at the same time present it as a relevant – and commercial – artwork of the day.

The intended import of the textual appropriations in *Teeth Cleaning, W.11* could scarcely be more apparent. Two amorphous figures, in contrasting blue and red, are engaged in the ‘sixty-nine’ position; the larger, uppermost figure sports a tiny dark blue top hat. However, in the place in which their penises should be, Hockney has substituted tubes of Colgate-brand toothpaste; indeed, the smaller prone figure, chained to his support, is shown to be receiving the tube’s contents into its mouth. At the far right of the painting, a tiny blue shape contains the incomplete yet instantly recognisable logo of the Vaseline brand of petroleum jelly, then, as now, widely-known for its use as a lubricant in anal sex.<sup>112</sup> In 1968 Charles Harrison published in *Studio* an account of the painting that Hockney and the 1970 Whitechapel retrospective organisers saw fit to reproduce in the exhibition’s catalogue. He wrote:

But just occasionally Hockney has made paintings of a really painful nature. In one of these, dated 1962, two embryonic figures are locked in mutual fellatio, their giant mouths exposed to disclose carnivorous teeth. Their sexual organs are replaced by toothpaste tubes carrying a well-known brand name. The humour provides only the flimsiest of veils for the desperate situation implied, whether we read it as an allegory or not, by the nightmare treatment of the subject.<sup>113</sup>

Harrison’s implication seems to be that Hockney’s painting is an articulation of the supposedly desperate, furtive lifestyle of the homosexual before decriminalisation, the visual

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<sup>112</sup> Basil L.Q. Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Magistrate: Thoughts on the Work of the Juvenile Court*, London, George G. Harrap and Company Limited, 1950, p. 155; Neal Cassady, *The First Third and Other Writings*, San Francisco, City Lights Books, 1971, p. 193: (writing of an episode in 1949) ‘I had some Vaseline for my chapped lips and the desk copper leered and asked if we punked [anally penetrated] each other’.

<sup>113</sup> Charles Harrison in *Studio*, January 1968; reproduced in Glazebrook, p. 26.

pun between toothpaste and semen a form of ‘gallows humour’. However, I would argue that these humorous elements alongside such stylised forms amount to a very much conscious effort once again to render their significance with regards to homosexuality recognisable, yet at the same time sufficiently non-threatening to a heterosexual majority audience. Hockney himself has confirmed his political intent for these images, stating:

What one must remember about some of these pictures is that they were partly propaganda of something I felt hadn’t been propagandized, especially among students, as a subject: homosexuality. I felt it should be done. Nobody else would use it as a subject, but because it was a part of me it was a subject that I could treat humorously.<sup>114</sup>

The artist’s mention of humour here is significant. A case can be made that Hockney’s often lightly humorous treatment of homosexual subject matter in these early paintings serves a similar function to the alibi of athleticism in either Eakins’ or Vaughan’s works – their intended meaning is on one level clear, yet meted with just sufficient wry humour to convince a potentially heterosexist audience that what is being presented is acceptable, or indeed even fashionably ironic. Further humorous, innuendo-laden appropriations from commercial texts can be seen in two of Hockney’s paintings from 1961, *The Cha Cha that was Danced in the Early Hours of 24<sup>th</sup> March* (Figure 47) and *Your Weight and Fortune* (Figure 48). In the former, alongside another representation of Peter Crutch, appears an incomplete quotation apparently lifted from advertising copy for some form of ointment, with the words ‘penetrates deep down/gives instant relief from(...)’. In the latter painting meanwhile, a longer tract of text appears, reading ‘the more effort you put into recreation, the more you enjoy it. You can greatly improve your favourite game by additional practice and concentration’. The potential sexual allusions within these quotations are obvious. In both cases, the placement of text is relatively discreet, without the instant recognition of branded imagery; both also bear the

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<sup>114</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68.

hallmarks of abstract expressionist and pop art stylings. With these two paintings, the result is a work that would have appeared fresh and commercial to a contemporary market, whilst at the same time presenting (homo)sexual themes in a manner that would be obvious to interested parties.

One can compare Hockney's appropriation of advertising text in this manner with that of Andy Warhol (1928-1987), famous not only for his mass-produced paeans to commercialism, but also, in the period before gay liberation emerged in Britain as a major political force in 1971, as 'one of only a handful of cultural exemplars who represented a public face of queerness'.<sup>115</sup> Whilst some of Warhol's later works were to become highly and explicitly sexualised – from *Blow Job* of 1963 (Figure 49), a thirty-five minute film focusing solely on the face of a young man purportedly receiving this sexual favour, to the unashamedly anal-erotic *Sex Parts* screenprint series of 1978 (Figure 50) – he also produced a number of pieces in the early 1960s that combine his well-known fondness for advertising imagery with the implicitly homoerotic in a similar manner to Hockney. Originally a graphic artist, in the 1950s Warhol had produced several works featuring overtly figurative representations of homosocial/sexual associations and sultry male beauties, for example *Reclining Male Nude* of 1956 (Figure 51), in which the artist replaces the urethral opening of the subject's circumcised penis with a cartoonish heart. However, these pieces, with their markedly camp overtones, were deemed too dangerous by the Establishment; when Warhol submitted images of kissing boys to the Tanager Gallery in New York, the gallery's staff refused to exhibit them.<sup>116</sup> However, by the early 1960s Warhol too had adopted a wryly humorous approach to his works dealing with homosexuality, leaving a margin for obfuscation that had previously been absent. As Kenneth Silver has remarked,

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<sup>115</sup> Simon Watney, 'Queer Andy', in Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley, and José Esteban Muñoz (eds.), *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1996, p. 21.

<sup>116</sup> Doyle et al., *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, p.3.

(In contrast to the relatively direct ‘boy drawings’ of the 1950s, full appreciation of Warhol’s early Pop paintings and silkscreens required at least a certain gay-attuned sensibility and a sense of humor. A case in point is the *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* mural which Warhol created for Philip Johnson’s New York State Pavilion at the 1964 World’s Fair, which was – for those who could decipher it – a punning reference not only to the FBI’s desire, but to Warhol’s own. That ‘wanting men’ was here synonymous with criminal activity must have made the joke all the better to Warhol.<sup>117</sup>

Clear examples of Warhol’s use of this method of partial concealment can be seen in two paintings from 1960, *Strong Arms and Broads* (Figure 52) and *Where is Your Rupture?* (Figure 53). Both of these canvases are drawn from cheap periodical advertisements of the time, the former for a home exercise programme, the latter for a truss. The titles of both images, as with Hockney’s *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, appear within the paintings themselves. However, it is Warhol’s selective inclusion and deletion of elements of the originals that constructs the innuendoes on which these images rely. The title *Strong Arms and Broads* is created through the erasure of the phrase ‘broad shoulders’ from the original; whilst the naked male torso and selected textual remains clustered around the crotch area suggest a homoerotic focus, the use of the word ‘broads’ – a slang phrase for women – provides a facetious double meaning. In *Where is Your Rupture?*, all text but the title has been removed, save for numbered arrows clustered around the groin of the illustrated mid-section. Through use of quoted textual and visual forms, found in everyday life, both Hockney and Warhol render these images simultaneously loaded with meaning yet harmlessly playful.

In the light of Warhol’s works, it would be fallacious to assert that Hockney’s enterprise of the early 1960s was a purely original one, although Warhol’s approach to textual appropriation differs from Hockney’s on a number of levels. Textual quotation was a method employed not only by pop artists in this period, but it also became a prominent feature of

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<sup>117</sup> Silver, ‘Modes of Disclosure: The Construction of Gay Identity and the Rise of Pop Art’, Russell Ferguson (ed.), *Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition 1955-1962*, exhibition catalogue, Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, 1992 p. 194.

much conceptual art of the decade, notably that of Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945), one of the movement's foremost theorists and practitioners. Pieces such as *One and Three Chairs* (1965, Figure 54) and *Four Colors Four Words* of 1966 (Figure 55) exemplify this practice, with text at the heart of both works – indeed, in the case of the latter, there is no other figurative element at play. In his three-part treatise 'Art after Philosophy' of 1969, Kosuth establishes the principles upon which his tautological approach to art is founded, stating:

(T)he propositions of art are not factual, but linguistic in *character* – that is, they do not describe the behaviour of physical, or even mental objects; they express definitions of art, or the formal consequences of definitions of art. Accordingly, we can say that art operates on a logic. For we shall see that the characteristic mark of a purely logical enquiry is that it is concerned with the formal consequences of our definitions (of art) and not with questions of empirical fact. To repeat, what art has in common with logic and mathematics is that is it a tautology; i.e. the 'art idea' (or 'work') and art are the same and can be appreciated as art without going outside the context of art for verification.<sup>118</sup> (original emphases and parentheses)

According to Kosuth's conception, the only truly radical art is that which questions the nature of what it is to *be* art – something which he would argue can only be achieved once form and content are eradicated as concerns. Kosuth's use of text is merely as a reference to language systems which, as Liz Kotz has suggested succinctly, represented to conceptual practitioners 'a degree of precision, certainty, and continual self-presence only possible when any external referent has been abandoned'.<sup>119</sup> The eradication of external referent, and meaning, then, is the motive for Kosuth's use of text within his art. This, I would argue, is at odds with that of Hockney, in so far as the expression of externally referential 'meaning' is the entire point of

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<sup>118</sup> Joseph Kosuth, 'Art after Philosophy', in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (eds.), *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2003, p. 857.

<sup>119</sup> Liz Kotz, *Words to be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), MIT Press, 2007, p. 227.

Hockney's efforts, as can be seen most clearly in his images referencing the literary works of others.

## 2.3 Conclusion

As commentators such as Eribon, Weinberg and Weeks have shown, languages, both spoken and textual, have historically played a significant role in the development of personal and sexual identities of homosexual men coming to terms with their developing desires. As this chapter has demonstrated, whilst hostile (or even clinical) words and language may have a detrimental effect on homosexual individuals, communities of practice such as the Polari and homosexual slang speakers of early to mid twentieth-century London have the potential to undermine aggressive linguistic practices and provide previously offensive words such as 'queen' and 'queer' with new and subversive meanings. The heterogeneity and obfuscatory properties of linguistic cultures and traditions pertaining to same-gender desires, as well as their inherent (and often exploited) potential for humour, are of great importance when considering cultural products, such as Hockney's works of this period, that engage with language in their articulation of homosexual themes. The polysemous nature of homosexual linguistic conventions is harnessed to full effect by Hockney in his early works. In images such as *The Third Love Painting*, the artist utilises signifiers of personal and sexual identities harvested from the 'gay space' of the public lavatory, as described by Leap. A space with multiple functions, patronised by homosexual and heterosexual men alike, Hockney appropriates disparate snatches of language and text that present (literally) layered levels of significance.

In addition to the protective aspect of the obfuscatory properties of homosexual linguistic practices, shielding users from heterosexist censure, this chapter has also

highlighted the potential of such languages and texts as bonding mechanisms for homosexual men, providing a means of affirming one's role as a member of a community of cultural – and sexual – practice. One can see language employed in this capacity across Hockney's creative output during his years at the Royal College of Art. Works such as *Queer* and *Going to be a Queen for Tonight* take loaded words, used with differing signification by both heterosexuals and homosexuals, to create images expressly produced to 'propagandize' homosexuality. The layered significations of words within the Polari lexicon such as 'queen' are also exploited by the artist to examine concepts surrounding gender binarisms and performative identities, ideas that will be seen to remain significant in Hockney's later works dealing with homosexual themes and subject matter, as well as in his own self-fashioning. Through the images considered, Hockney explores and creates his own identities as a homosexual man with a growing awareness of historical and cultural precedent in relation to homosexual creativity and cultures, whilst also acknowledging his dual positions within both a homosexual social sphere and a heterosexist mainstream.

Whilst by no means unique in his adoption of textual and linguistic elements in his visual creative works, Hockney's images of this period harness words associated with homosexuality in such a way that whilst on a certain level their significance as engagements with homosexual themes and subjects is clear, on another they remain visually and intellectually opaque. Forms such as abstract expressionism and modish pop art mannerisms are combined to create images that are at once loaded with homoerotic content yet sufficiently veiled to provide room for obfuscation for a potentially hostile, heterosexual majority audience. This can be contrasted with later works such as the etching series *Illustrations for Fourteen Poems by C.P. Cavafy* of 1966, which represents the themes explored in its homoerotic source material in a direct, figurative context. This chapter has largely concerned



itself with textual and linguistic forms at their most basic level, from individual words to graffitied phrases gleaned from the walls of a public lavatory. However, as has been noted, in works such as *The Third Love Painting* and *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, these basic textual forms appear alongside more complex literary compositions, such as the poetry of Walt Whitman. The artist's quotation and appropriation of texts and concepts from homosexual literary sources is something that can be seen to develop from the early images discussed in this chapter, incorporating texts literally upon their surfaces, through to works such as the figurative series *Illustrations for Fourteen Poems by C.P. Cavafy*. It is Hockney's engagement with these more complex literary sources dealing with homosexual themes and subject matter that is the subject of the chapter that follows.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 3. TRUTHS IN FICTION: HOCKNEY AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LITERATURE IN HOMOSEXUAL IDENTITY FORMATION

*Urning men and women, on whose book of life Nature has written her new word which sounds so strange to us, bear such storm and stress within them, such ferment and fluctuation, so much complex material having its outlet only towards the future; their individualities are so rich and many-sided, and withal so little understood, that it is impossible to characterise them adequately in a few sentences.*

Otto de Joux<sup>1</sup>

That Hockney engaged with the writings of homosexual men is well known, with the artist himself disclosing this to readers of his first volume of autobiography, *David Hockney* by David Hockney, published in 1976.<sup>2</sup> In it Hockney describes how he first encountered the works of the Alexandrian Greek poet Constantine Petrou Cavafy, much of whose later oeuvre is concerned with same-sex intimacies:

I found the John Mavrogordato translation in the library in Bradford, in that summer of 1960, and I stole it. I've still got it, I'm sure. I don't feel bad now because it's been redone, but you couldn't buy it then, it was completely out of print. Mind you, in the library in Bradford you had to ask for that book, it was never on the shelves. If you had the intelligence to look it up on the catalogue and ask for it, then it would be all right. But if you were just a casual person who took it down off the shelves and read one of the poems, well it might be too wicked and you might go home and jerk off with poetry. That's what they thought. Anyway, when I found the book I read it from cover to cover, many times, and I thought it was incredible, marvellous.<sup>3</sup>

Hockney's anecdote serves to demonstrate not only typical contemporary public attitudes towards literature dealing with same-gender desires, but also the influential role of such writings in the formation of the personal and sexual identities of homosexual males in the first

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<sup>1</sup> Otto de Joux, cited in Edward Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex* (1908), Middlesex, The Echo Library, 2007, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney* by David Hockney, pp. 62-63.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 63.

half of the twentieth century. Whilst the local and national press in Britain frequently produced (often highly sensationalised) reports on homosexuality in the 1950s and early 1960s,<sup>4</sup> oral histories, such as those collected by Porter and Weeks in their book *Between the Acts: Lives of Homosexual Men 1885- 1969*, suggest that certainly in the provinces, a sense of isolation was often felt by homosexual youth. Several of those interviewed by Porter and Weeks emphasise the importance of literature, whether fiction, non-fiction or poetry, in making them aware that they were not the only such individuals in the world.<sup>5</sup> With homosexuality remaining listed as a mental disorder under the International Classification of Diseases until as late as 1992,<sup>6</sup> such texts could also serve to affirm for readers that to be a man who romantically and sexually desired other men was not simply to be a ‘menace’ or practitioner of an ‘unnatural sex vice’,<sup>7</sup> but to be part of a community of practices with a history spanning millennia.

Just as Porter and Weeks’ subjects reported being subtly alerted to the existence of a body of literature through encounters with like-minded individuals, so too, it will be shown, was Hockney introduced to such works and the concept of a homosexual literary and creative canon. In a 2009 interview conducted as part of this research project, Hockney went into hitherto unprecedented detail with regard to his own discoveries of, and engagements with, publications and texts dealing with homosexual themes and subject matter; the insights afforded by this interview will be drawn upon here.

Where the previous chapter has focused on Hockney’s engagements with linguistic and textual elements at their most basic level relating to homosexual themes and subjects, this

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<sup>4</sup> Matt Cook, Robert Mills, Randolph Trumbach, and H. G. Cocks, *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex Between Men Since the Middle Ages*, Westport and Oxford, Greenwood World Publishing, 2007, p.168.

<sup>5</sup> Porter and Weeks, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Glenn Smith, Annie Bartlett, and Michael King, ‘Treatments of homosexuality in Britain since the 1950s – an oral history: the experience of patients’, *British Medical Journal* (online edition), doi:10.1136/bmj.37984.442419.EE (published 29 January 2004), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Warth, ‘Evil Men’, *Sunday Pictorial*, 25 May 1952, p. 6.

chapter seeks to address his encounters with the explicitly literary. From *The Third Love Painting* of 1960 through to the etching series *Illustrations for Fourteen Poems by C.P. Cavafy* of 1966, Hockney produced a number of works influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the writings of these homosexual authors; indeed, as will be seen, in a number of cases quotations from such literary texts are incorporated within the artist's images of the period alongside the more basic textual elements considered previously. This chapter will address the significance of Hockney's adoption of literary materials, and the implications of these appropriations for his engagements with, and representations of, homosexual individuals and relationships.

In addition to works of poetry, Hockney's own accounts demonstrate that he was also a keen reader of prose texts, including Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*<sup>8</sup> and Rechy's *City of Night*.<sup>9</sup> It will be demonstrated that these prose works, alongside the poetic texts already considered, played a fundamental role in shaping the artist's personal and professional decisions of the early 1960s, including his choosing to settle in Los Angeles in 1964. The concept of a homosexual canon of 'great literature', conceived to inspire and guide homosexual readers, as well as to normalise same-gender desires for a potentially heterosexist majority, was proposed in the 1950s by homosexual rights activists such as those at the Mattachine Society and its press organ, *ONE* magazine.<sup>10</sup> It will be argued that Hockney's works of the 1960s, influenced by his consumption of literary works dealing with homosexual themes, can be interpreted as constituting an attempt on the part of the artist to enter – or at least engage with – such a 'great' homosexual creative canon, and, like his friend Christopher Isherwood's novel *A Single Man* of 1964, seek to normalise and forward homosexual

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<sup>8</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 89.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 97.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur B. Krell, 'We Need a Great Literature', *ONE* magazine, May 1954, p. 19.

behaviours and relationships against a background of heterosexist legal and political adversity.

### **3.1 Lyrical Encounters: Poetic Quotation and Appropriation in Hockney's works of the 1960s**

Whilst *The Third Love Painting* is remarkable for its appropriation of 'low' textual forms such as toilet wall graffiti, it is also significant in so far as it contains some of the earliest direct references in Hockney's oeuvre to the poetic works of Walt Whitman. A small but dense portion of text at the bottom right hand corner of the picture contains the final three lines of the poem 'When I Heard at the Close of the Day' by the poet, drawn from the 'Calamus' cycle of works included in the 1860 third edition of *Leaves of Grass*. The title of the cycle itself refers to the Greek mythological tale of Calamus, the son of the river god Meander, who is deeply in love with the youth Carpus. One day the two engage in a swimming race, but Carpus is drowned. Calamus, overcome with grief, withers away until he becomes a reed at the river's edge.<sup>11</sup> *Acorus calamus*, or simply 'calamus', is also the name of a species of wetland grass common in the northern United States,<sup>12</sup> which may account for a layered, obfuscatory meaning to the volume's title. Certainly the significance of the poems was clear to their intended readership; a 1954 article in *ONE* magazine, a branch of the 'homophile' Mattachine Press, stated that '(w)e already have in American tradition a world-esteemed foundation stone for a homosexual literature – the CALAMUS section of Whitman's LEAVE OF GRASS (sic)'.<sup>13</sup> Hockney's first quotation from Whitman in *The Third Love Painting* reads:

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<sup>11</sup> Pierre Grimal, 'Calamus', *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (1956), Oxford, Blackwell, 1986, p.84. Interestingly, John Lemprière's influential *Bibliotheca Classica*, first published in 1788, incorrectly states that Carpus was female, as do subsequent editions until at least the early twentieth century.

<sup>12</sup> Ivor H. Evans, 'Calumet', *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (revised edition), London, 1959, p. 185.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur B. Krell, 'We Need a Great Literature', *ONE* magazine, May 1954, p. 21.

For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover in the cool night,  
In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face was inclined toward me,  
And his arm lay lightly around my breast – and that night I was happy.

Meanwhile, in the top right hand corner, slanted upwards in almost imperceptibly small letters, Hockney quotes from the three line poem ‘I am He that Aches with Love’ by the same author, which states:

I am he that aches with amorous love;  
Does the earth gravitate; does not all matter, aching, attract all matter?  
So the body of me to all I meet or know.

The sentiments of both of these poems seemingly elevate the ideal of spiritual, emotional connection above the purely physical. These sentiments appear to be echoed by Hockney himself; not only does the word ‘love’ appear on the picture surface in at least two instances, but it is the professed concern of the painting’s title, and of the series of paintings from which it comes. One might argue that such concerns amount to the privileging of monogamy, and a performative homosexual ‘aping’ of heterosexist societal norms – certainly, this was a widespread attitude amongst those at the forefront of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s and early 1980s, many of whom saw the practicing of sexual freedoms to their full extent as essential to true liberation and assertion of gay identity.<sup>14</sup> However, in 1860 – and indeed a century later – for a man to aspire to a monogamous, loving relationship with another man was arguably just as revolutionary as it was for him to seek furtive, anonymous sex with another man in a public lavatory; both were just as illegal. Although it remained unpublished until the year after the author’s death in 1970, E. M. Forster’s 1913 novel *Maurice*, dealing explicitly with homosexuality and tellingly dedicated to ‘a happier year’, was conceived with

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<sup>14</sup> Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic* (updated edition), New York, Penguin Books USA, 1988, pp. 23-24.

a similar intention to Whitman's poetry. In his terminal note to the novel, composed in 1960, Forster stated that:

a happy ending was imperative. I shouldn't have bothered to write it otherwise. I was determined that in fiction anyway two men should fall in love and remain in it for the ever and ever that fiction allows.<sup>15</sup>

Hockney takes this theme still further in his painting of 1961, *We Two Boys Together Clinging* (Figure 8), its title drawn from another of Whitman's poems. Here the figure re-emerges decisively as a concern following the abstract expressionist leanings of works such as *Shame* (Figure 17), albeit still intentionally crudely depicted. The two boys of the title appear to be kissing, the right arm of the left extended around his companion. Short, tentacle-like protrusions serve to tie the figures together; a more phallic interpretation is also possible. Whilst a large, red, cartoonish heart appears to the right of the painting, three more purple ones appear in the blue margin on the left hand side. These purple hearts can be construed as a punning visual reference to the drug Drynamil; a prescription anti-anxiety medication, it was prized by members of the 'Mod' subculture as well as gay men in the 1960s for its amphetamine-like effect, and owing to their appearance the pills were referred to in Polari and gay slang as 'purple hearts'.<sup>16</sup> As with *The Third Love Painting*, textual elements abound. Echoing closely the shapes of the eponymous couple in the final plate of *Gretchen and the Snurl*, the viewer is left in no doubt that the figures depicted are male; the words 'boy' and 'man' are scrawled in large letters along the left hand side of the image, along with the 'q-u' form once again, with its many implications. Not only this, but the title of the painting itself is written out and draped across the boys' shoulders like a scarf, the white, single digit '2' contrasting with the accompanying black letters serving to emphasise the nature of this union.

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<sup>15</sup> Forster, *Maurice*, p. 236.

<sup>16</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, p. 36.

The first two lines of the second stanza of Whitman's poem are again reproduced in Hockney's distinctive handwriting at the far right of the painting, reading:

Power enjoying, elbows stretching, fingers clutching,  
Arm'd and fearless, eating, drinking, sleeping, loving...

However, rather than sporting the smiling mouth of his companion, enticingly painted with the word 'yes', the left figure wears a frown made from the word 'never'. This painting, then, is clearly one of wishful thinking. This is borne out yet further when one considers the numerical codes hidden once again within the image, a further borrowing from Whitman, which Schumacher suggests acts as a means of protecting the identities of the persons depicted.<sup>17</sup> In this image, Hockney uses the code actually to identify the individuals represented by the cipher figures, as seen in this detail (Figure 56): '4.8' on the left stands for D.H., or David Hockney himself, whilst '16.3' stands for 'P.C.' or Peter Crutch. The large '4.2.' to the left of the composition meanwhile again signifies 'D.B.' or 'Doll Boy' (Figure 4), the figure of sexual fantasy that the artist had created in part as a cipher for another crush, the pop singer Cliff Richard, whose initials are similarly codified beneath his 'baby doll' nightie. This numerical code, like the reflexions of Polari, provides a further means of subterfuge, albeit a simplistic one.

But why did Hockney take such inspiration from Whitman, and broadcast it, in the first place? To read the sentiments that the poet expresses, one might argue that the reason is obvious. However, in order to realise fully the significance of his choices, one must consider the historical importance of literatures to homosexual individuals and communities. Whilst as previously stated the local and national press frequently issued alarmist reports on homosexuality, oral histories, such as those collected by Porter and Weeks, demonstrate that

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<sup>17</sup> Schumacher, p. 26.



certainly in provincial areas, such as the Yorkshire of Hockney's boyhood, a sense of isolation and confusion was often felt by young men coming to terms with a growing awareness of their sexual orientation. A number of those interviewed emphasise the importance of literature, whether, fiction, non-fiction or poetry, in making them aware that they were not the only such individuals in the world,<sup>18</sup> and in establishing that their desires for other men were authentic and, indeed, not simply a modern phenomenon. In their introduction to the book, the authors write:

Several of the interviewees refer to the small body of writing on homosexuality that was then available: the work of the socialist and supporter of homosexual rights (and himself homosexual), Edward Carpenter; the writings of the pioneering sexologist, Havelock Ellis, and of his co-author in the first 'scientific' study of homosexuality, the poet and essayist J.A. Symonds. Writers such as these provided a vocabulary through which homosexually-inclined people could give meaning to their feelings, and recognise that they were not the only such individuals in the world. The explanations offered in such books (for example, that homosexuals constituted a third or 'intermediate' sex, or were a biological anomaly) may not accord with contemporary assumptions, but at the time they provided for some a way of understanding difference that proved potent in shaping emergent sexual identities.<sup>19</sup>

This role for homosexual literatures, as sources of guidance to readers young and old alike, was recognised by the fledgling 'homophile rights' groups of the 1950s such as the Mattachine Society. In only its second year of publication, its magazine *ONE* carried an article entitled 'We Need a Great Literature', whose author Arthur B. Krell stated:

Generations of tribal effort have superimposed on our geographic landscape a friendly psychic landscape, to surround at least a majority with an atmosphere conducive to their best work. (...) The homosexual has no such guidance, not even a romantic literature to suggest ideals, nor any suitable biographical literature relating to his self-knowledge to the lives of others. At first, he assumes he is like the tribe in his needs, capacities, desires. Awakening from this error, he may stumble on for the

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<sup>18</sup> Porter and Weeks, p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

rest of his days trying to develop piecemeal the patterns that may help him live in society as a whole man.<sup>20</sup>

Krell significantly goes on to highlight the writings of both Whitman and Cavafy as potential templates for this new 'Great Literature'.<sup>21</sup> Just as Porter and Weeks' subjects reported being subtly alerted to the existence of a (modest) body of homosexual literature through encounters with books and like-minded individuals, so too was Hockney introduced to Whitman, and the concept of a homosexual literary canon, by published anthologies<sup>22</sup> and individuals such as Mark Berger.<sup>23</sup> Hockney recalled in 2009 the process by which homosexual young men of the time, such as himself, became aware of the existence of such works, saying:

(of *physique magazines*) I could see 'this isn't just bodybuilding', this is, you could see that. And you then find out, I mean, you, you know, you start exploring, take a bit of trouble, somebody'll tell you something, all young gay people must do that. They must be exploring something. (...) When they become aware. When you're becoming self... I mean the beginning of really quite strong self-awareness there. I think you simply start looking things up. (...) there would have been, been times when somebody would tell you something, 'oh well, go there, go to that shop' or something, I mean, somebody might just mention anything... I mean, and certainly I would tell people 'oh, you can get them in there'...<sup>24</sup>

Hockney himself clearly acted in this fashion, discovering homosexually-themed literatures through a combination of contact with others and self-referral. It was after having read Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandrian Quartet* that the artist became aware of the poetry of Constantin Cavafy,<sup>25</sup> going so far, as I have shown, as to steal a copy of the John Mavrogordato translation of his works from a Bradford library in the summer of 1960.<sup>26</sup> Writing in the early years of the twentieth century, an Alexandria native of Greek extraction,

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<sup>20</sup> Arthur B. Krell, 'We Need a Great Literature', *ONE* magazine, May 1954, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix pp. iii-iv.

<sup>23</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xi.

<sup>25</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. iii.

<sup>26</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 63.

Cavafy produced poetry that shifts between lyrical fictions from the days of the Ptolemys and his own reflections on the attractions of young men of his own time. These latter, and indeed later, poems document what, in many respects, are remarkably mundane situations; ‘He Enquired After the Quality’, for example, concerns a pair of young men who pretend to discuss the quality of handkerchiefs in a shop as an excuse to touch hands in public. This was one of the poems that Hockney chose to illustrate as part of a collaborative project with Nikos Stangos and Stephen Spender (Spender himself being a notable figure in homosexual literary circles in the early decades of the twentieth century) in 1966. However, Hockney’s first engagements with Cavafy’s poetry in 1960 and 1961 were very different from those of 1966, centring instead on the poet’s representations of Kaisarion, son of Cleopatra and Julius Caesar, in both ‘Alexandrian Kings’ of 1912 and the eponymous ‘Kaisarion’ of 1918. Hockney produced two early works in response to these poems, the painting *Kaisarion* of 1960 (Figure 57) and the etching *Kaisarion and all his Beauty* of 1961 (Figure 58). Cavafy’s ‘Kaisarion’ is a paean to the power of fantasy in the hands of the artist. The poem begins domestically, with the narrator describing how on the previous night, he happened to pick up a volume of Ptolemaic inscriptions. He soon begins to elaborate in his mind on a mention of the young Kaisarion, exclaiming, in the Mavrogordato translation:

Ah, there you come with your indefinite  
Enchantment. In the history a few  
Only are the lines to be found about you,  
So I have fashioned you more freely in my mind.  
I have fashioned you beautiful and sensuous.

My art gives to your countenance  
A dreamlike and attractive loveliness.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> C.P. Cavafy, *Poems by C.P. Cavafy*, trans. John Mavrogordato, London, Chatto and Windus, 1971 (new impression edition), pp. 92-93.

In Hockney's hands, Kaisarion is likewise transformed. His young prince is a confection in pink, a baby doll nightgown topped by a blank face and blue hair, a pre-Christian 'doll boy'. His 'beauty' is what is celebrated in the print, with a retinue of tiny etched figures twisting around the picture plane to catch a glimpse of the young prince. Hockney's representation of Kaisarion can be compared with that of a young assistant to Michelangelo, Francesco 'Cecchino' de' Bracci, in his 1962 print *In Memoriam Cecchino Bracci* (Figure 59); in the same year the subject was also to be inspiration for a painting of the same title. 'A boy of rare and surpassing beauty',<sup>28</sup> Bracci's untimely death inspired Michelangelo to write forty-eight love poems dedicated to his memory,<sup>29</sup> something noted by John Addington Symonds who produced an English translation of the Renaissance artist's writings. As Porter and Weeks have remarked, Symonds was himself a well-known advocate of same-gender desires in the late nineteenth century. One of these forty-eight poems, in translation, appears literally within Hockney's etching. The text reads:

If, buried here, those beautiful eyes are closed  
 Forever, this is now my requiem.  
 They were alive and no one noticed them,  
 Now everyone weeps them, dead and lost.

With white, glove-like hands folded across his boyish face, Hockney's Bracci is showcased in his coffin like a doll in a box. His physical appearance here is Hockney's fantasy, but the words are those of Michelangelo, just as the texts of *We Two Boys Together Clinging* are the writings and sentiments of Walt Whitman. As such, I would argue that these literary and textual appropriations from an historical canon of works concerned with same-gender desires are consciously conceived to lend an historical 'legitimacy' to these, Hockney's own

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<sup>28</sup> John Addington Symonds, *The Sonnets of Michael Angelo Buonarroti and Tommaso Campanella* (1878), Middlesex, 2007, p. 91.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

contemporary desires. The legitimacy, or veil of it, afforded by historical precedent was one practiced by other interested parties during this period. A clear example of this can be seen in the cover of the Winter 1954 edition of *Physique Pictorial* (Figure 60). A publication that flirted with the law on account of its containing titillating photographs of scantily-clad young men, this cover image, and indeed design, is clearly intended to lend gravitas and authenticity to the magazine. The serified capitals, Roman numerals and Italian inscription all contribute to this; by way of comparison, the cover of the following issue is very much different, and far more contemporary, in appearance (Figure 61).

In terms of contemporary adaptations of historical works concerned with issues of homosexuality, there can be few more striking examples within Hockney's oeuvre than his second major engagement with the work of Cavafy, his etching series *Illustrations for Fourteen Poems by C.P. Cavafy* of 1966 (Figures 62 to 74), which was produced for inclusion in the limited edition book *Fourteen Poems by C.P. Cavafy* of the following year. In this edition, translated from the original Greek by Stephen Spender and Nikos Stangos, the final selection was of Hockney's own choosing.<sup>30</sup> Friends of the artist, both Spender and Stangos were themselves both also familiar with homosexual practices and desires in their personal lives.<sup>31</sup> Aside from the illustrations of the poet himself, *Portrait of Cavafy in Alexandria* and *Portrait of Cavafy II* (Figures 62 and 74), the etching series is for the most part couched in remarkably contemporary trappings; in *To Remain* (Figure 65), for example, a solitary figure emerges from a storefront advertising dry cleaning services (which do not feature at all within the poem itself, which is set within a wine shop), whilst in *One Night* (Figure 71), the two

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<sup>30</sup> C.P. Cavafy, *Fourteen Poems by C.P. Cavafy: Chosen and Illustrated with Twelve Etchings by David Hockney*, trans. Stephen Spender and Nikos Stangos, London, Editions Alecto, 1967, unpaginated.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Spender was a member of Christopher Isherwood's circle in the 1930s, and engaged in homosexual relationships, although he later claimed to be 'choking in this world of pederasts', and married the first of two wives in 1936 (Tamagne, p. 132, Paul A. Robinson, p. 86). Nikos Stangos was in a relationship with author David Plante that lasted four decades, ending only with Stangos' death from cancer in 2004; Plante's 2010 volume *The Pure Lover: A Memoir of Grief* is concerned with this relationship.

young men that are the focus of the etching are clad in modern Y-front underpants. The world that Hockney presents in this series is one entirely devoid of women; it is only men that appear and interact, from financial transactions in *He Enquired After the Quality* (Figure 63), to the domestic in *Beautiful and White Flowers* (Figure 73), and the bedroom, which is the focus of a remarkable six etchings in total. One could describe these bedroom scenes as relaxed; in all, the participants are represented as clearly comfortable with one another. In both *According to the Prescriptions of Ancient Magicians* (Figure 66) and *In the Dull Village* (Figure 69), it appears as though Hockney's respective pairs of bedfellows are caught mid-conversation, whilst in the two etchings *The Beginning* (Figure 70) and *In Despair* (Figure 72), both sets of participants meet the gaze of the viewer, unfazed, and certainly lacking any sense of intrusion or impropriety.

However, despite this preponderance of bedroom scenes in the etching series, homosexual activities remain implicit rather than explicit. Whilst we see the curvature of naked buttocks in *Two Boys aged 23 or 24* (Figure 63), the two figures lie rather chastely side by side; this is in marked contrast with Hockney's later *An Erotic Etching* of 1972-3 (Figure 75), in which a man handles his own erect penis, generously enlarged by the image's foreshortening, whilst apparently fellating his faceless companion. As such, it might be argued that Hockney's Cavafy series should be viewed as representative of the homosocial, rather than of the homosexual. However, in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Sedgwick argues that rather than thinking of the homosocial and homosexual as two opposing concepts, we should instead consider them part of a continuum of desires. She writes:

‘Male homosocial desire’: the phrase in the title of this study is intended to mark both discriminations and paradoxes. ‘Homosocial desire,’ to begin with, is a kind of oxymoron. ‘Homosocial’ is a word occasionally used in history and the social

sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously formed by analogy with 'homosexual,' and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from 'homosexual.' In fact, it is applied to such activities as 'male-bonding,' which may, as in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality. To draw the 'homosocial' back into the orbit of 'desire,' of the potentially erotic, then, is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual – a continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society, is radically disrupted. It will become clear (...) that my hypothesis of the unbrokenness of this continuum is not a *genetic* one – I do not mean to discuss genital homosexual desire as 'at the root of' other forms of male homosociality – but rather a strategy for making generalizations about, and marking historical differences in, the *structure* of men's relations with other men.<sup>32</sup> (original emphases)

Cavafy's poems, and Hockney's etchings which seek to illustrate them, foreground homosocial behaviours as prerequisites for homosexual intimacies. *The Shop Window of a Tobacco Store*, for example, composed by the poet in 1917 and one of the works illustrated in the 1967 Editions Alecto volume, concerns the chance meeting of two men in the crowd around the shop window of the title, which leads to sexual contact. Whitman's poetry too is characterised by a foregrounding and celebration of the homosocial – or 'adhesiveness', as Whitman himself referred to male closeness – as an implicit prelude to the homosexual, as seen in poems such as 'We Two Boys Together Clinging' and 'I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing', both titles later appropriated by Hockney. Indeed, Sedgwick seizes upon the example of Whitman's poetry, and its English readers, in *Between Men*, saying of the poet:

A louche and pungent bouquet of the sheepish and the shrewd, Whitman's individuality is most expressive in half-concealment. In fact, the play of calculation with haplessness in Whitman's self-presentation is so intricate, so energizing that that itself, more than the material concealed or revealed, creates an erotic surface, 'Ebb stung by the flow, and flow stung by the ebb'. In this reading, not Whitman himself but the ideological uses made of his reticence will be the subject: Whitman not as a poet, but as a magnetic figure in the history of English sexual politics.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1985, pp. 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 202.

The ‘half-concealment’ and ‘ideological uses made of his reticence’ of which Sedgwick speaks are certainly pertinent to Hockney’s own engagements with literature, not only that of Whitman himself but also of other writers. As Sedgwick argues, it is Whitman’s apparent caution, his willingness to create ‘reasonable doubt’ with regard to his homosexual themes at the same time as he makes them quite plain to his intended readers, that renders him so attractive as a figure for those involved in matters of homosexual liberation. To return to Hockney’s Cavafy etchings, I would argue that the artist’s jointure in these works of the oblique and the direct, the homosocial and the homosexual, is conscious and enacted with intent, namely to normalise homosexual behaviours and relationships. Whilst *Beautiful and White Flowers*, taken at face value, appears to show nothing more than two (clothed) men inhabiting the same interior space, Hockney also appears implicitly to invite a more intimate interpretation. The right-hand figure lolls upon a sofa, the neck of his shirt comfortably unfastened, with his companion placing an amiable hand upon the cushions that support him. Whilst Hockney provides a possible cover story of mere friendship in his etching – as indeed might a most conservative reading of the poem that it illustrates – there remains the implication of domestic space, of comfort with one another, and of monogamy. Indeed, it is notable that Hockney’s illustration bears no trace of the sorrow inherent to Cavafy’s poem, which describes a man placing ‘beautiful and white flowers’ on the coffin of his lover, dead tragically young. Whilst many of Cavafy’s poems are themselves tinged with a sense of sadness, pleasures recounted vicarious or those of by-gone days, Hockney’s illustrations, expressly designed to accompany them (Figure 76), appear consciously to focus instead upon pleasures as they are immediately experienced. As has been shown, their trappings are decidedly contemporary, with the artist using a combination of personal friends and American



commercial physique photographs as models;<sup>34</sup> preparatory drawings such as *Dale and Mo* of 1966 (Figure 77) demonstrate that Hockney toyed with an even greater degree of explicitness. Here the two figures are intertwined in an embrace, and unlike their counterparts in *Two Boys aged 23 or 24*, they are not covered by bedclothes, nor are they fully nude; whilst both bare their buttocks, the sports socks and vest of the right hand figure suggest the slightly seedy sexual accoutrements of the American physique photograph. By contrast, one could argue that the final illustration creates an image of male homosexuality that veers just close enough on the spectrum towards the homosocial to assuage the collective conscience of a heterosexist majority, in a society in which, as noted in the previous chapter, censorship of creative products persisted.

The concept of homosexual domesticity is considered in some detail in the chapter that follows, particularly in relation to Hockney's representations of men showering inspired by Californian physique photographs from the early 1960s, but the domestic is clearly a concern also in the later Cavafy etching series. In the post-decriminalisation era, a version of homosexual domesticity centred around a committed couple in their own private space has been dismissed by some within the radical gay liberation movement as 'assimilationist',<sup>35</sup> with heterosexual norms and thus politically incorrect; however, Houlbrook has shown that for male British homosexuals from the beginnings of the twentieth century through to partial decriminalisation in 1967, access to such a domestic space was not something to be taken for granted. He points to contemporary discontinuities in relation to the dominant definition of 'domestic space', which effectively excluded male homosexual partnerships or living arrangements from being considered as indeed 'domestic', stating that

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<sup>34</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xii.

<sup>35</sup> Eva Pendleton, 'Domesticating Partnerships', Ephraim Glenn Colter (ed.), *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*, Boston, MA, South End Press, 1996, p. 375.

(...) the residential spaces occupied by queer men existed in an antagonistic relationship to Bone's definition of the home as castle. Indeed, in the 1950s the Law Society defined the queer as a potent challenge to normative domesticity: an attack on marriage, a barrier to demographic stability, and a threat to the nation's youth. This was an evil that the state could not tolerate. Until 1967, the prohibition of private 'homosexual offences' enshrined hegemonic notions of the family home within the law. (...) The Law Society saw no contradiction between the criminalization of men's private sexual behaviour and the legal convention that evidence should be secured without impairing the privacy and confidence of domestic life since 'male persons living together do not constitute domestic life'. Residential space was only legally private if it were domestic space. When domesticity was defined to exclude queer men, the privileges of privacy – the freedom from official surveillance – were nominally afforded only to those who conformed to bourgeois notions of family life.<sup>36</sup>

Houlbrook's observations point to an environment in which societal, and – as the above quotation demonstrates – legal, convention dictated that the life choices of homosexual men were disqualified from recognition as constituting domesticity; as such, it should be recognised that to attempt to create a personal, homosexual domestic space prior to 1967, in defiance of prevailing pronouncements to the contrary, was in itself an act potentially fraught with risk. Nonetheless, as Houlbrook's references to documents and oral histories in the National Sound Archive and London Metropolitan Archive attest,<sup>37</sup> it was possible for some homosexual men prior to 1967 to create domestic spaces in which a degree of privacy, and thus autonomy, was achievable; however, this was to a considerable degree dependent on the social class and income level of the individuals in question.<sup>38</sup> Certainly the interior environment represented in *Beautiful and White Flowers* suggests the private space afforded by a self-contained flat or apartment, with its comfortable sofa and tasselled blinds. However, the remaining domestic interiors are more ambiguous, Hockney's spartan etching style recording only the outlines of beds and bedclothes; in *One Night* alone (Figure 71) does the

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<sup>36</sup> Houlbrook, p. 110.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp.109-134.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 113-114.

artist go further, with the two central figures framed by a slatted window blind, a bare light bulb hanging over their heads. This representation of a simple, austere domestic environment echoes that found in the text of the poem that it illustrates, reading (in the accompanying Stangos and Spender translation):

The room was cheap and common  
obscure above the dubious looking tavern.  
From the window you could see the filthy  
narrow lane. The voices of some workers  
playing cards and having fun  
came from below.

There, on the common, humble bed  
I had the body of love, I had the sensual  
red lips – intoxication –  
red lips – intoxication – so that even now  
as I write, after so many years,  
in my solitary home, I feel again the intoxication.<sup>39</sup>

The references to a ‘common, humble bed’ in a room itself ‘cheap and common’ beg comparison with the domestic conditions Houlbrook describes as being available to homosexual males from lower income levels and working-class backgrounds in cities such as London in the first half of the twentieth century. Unable to afford the self-contained, private apartments accessible to middle- to upper-class homosexual males, such individuals would instead have resorted to furnished rooms, hotels or even cubicled dormitories in which many men might sleep alongside one another.<sup>40</sup> In spite of the apparent lack of privacy such communal arrangements might suggest, Houlbrook asserts that it remained possible for homosexual males who utilised them to enjoy romantic or sexual encounters with other men –

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<sup>39</sup> C.P. Cavafy, *Fourteen Poems by CP Cavafy, Chosen and Illustrated with Twelve Etchings by David Hockney*, trans. Nikos Stangos and Stephen Spender, London, Editions Alecto, 1967, unpaginated.

<sup>40</sup> Houlbrook, pp. 114-122.

although some prosecutions did result.<sup>41</sup> As such, it is clear that homosexual males of the pre-decriminalisation era did succeed in creating a variety of domestic spaces, despite the aforementioned double-standard in relation to the definition of domesticity from heterosexist quarters. Hockney's Cavafy etchings clearly lean towards a particular and personal homosexual aesthetic, centred as they are on young, white, athletic, male bodies. However, it can be argued that in their representations of domestic space(s), their lack of specificity, the very scarcity of identifiable individual appointments, allows them to be interpreted as a range of spaces, from the comparative bourgeois comfort suggested by the interior of *Beautiful and White Flowers* to the implied 'common, humble bed' of *One Night*. Although produced only a year before partial decriminalisation took place, and indeed published in the year in which the Sexual Offences Act was passed into law, Hockney's etchings can be seen to represent visually the relatively modest domestic aspirations of a pre-decriminalisation era male homosexual constituency, for whom the freedom to live, as well as love, as one chose was not always safely achievable.

As with the partly-concealing, partly-revealing poetries of Whitman and Cavafy, Hockney's etchings of 1966 – completed just one year before the passage of the Sexual Offences Act which finally brought about partial decriminalisation – borrow from their techniques of reticence in order the more safely to forward a homosexual agenda. This was certainly a policy with merit; as late as 1969 a London screening of the Warhol film *Lonesome Cowboys*, produced in 1968, was raided by the Metropolitan Police and its audience arrested.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the authors of *Pop Out: Queer Warhol* argue that critics of the artist have 'aggressively elided issues around sexuality' in a effort to make Warhol's work

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, pp. 119-120.

<sup>42</sup> Simon Watney, 'Queer Andy', Doyle et al. (eds.), *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, pp. 20-21.

more readily acceptable as ‘high art’ to a heterosexist establishment.<sup>43</sup> Even with his more constrained representations of homosocial/homosexual relationships in the Cavafy etchings, Hockney was denigrated by a number of contemporary critics, both implicitly and explicitly, for his choice of inspiration and his reinterpretation of its content. Reviewing Hockney’s 1966 exhibition ‘Drawings and Etchings’ at the Kasmin Gallery, which featured both the Cavafy etching series and the artist’s designs for a 1966 stage production of Alfred Jarry’s Surrealist farce *Ubu Roi*, David Thompson of *The Observer* makes a number of pointed remarks regarding the artist’s sexuality, and by extension, his perceived sensibility. Thompson dismisses the *Ubu Roi* designs in less than a paragraph, writing:

Without yet having seen how they transfer to the stage, I would have thought that David Hockney’s set designs for the Royal Court production of ‘Ubu Roi’, which are on show at Kasmin’s, were altogether too sophisticated for the gross and loud-voiced anarchy of Jarry’s schoolboy shocker. They are exceedingly attractive, within their neat toytown convention, but hardly a celebration of vulgarity; Hockney just doesn’t go in for that sort of unbridled energy.<sup>44</sup>

Illustrated by a large photograph of a smiling Hockney, smoking a cigarette whilst sporting a matching polka-dotted tie and trilby and cradling a framed print of *In Despair* from the Cavafy series (Figure 78), the message of Thompson’s review is clear: Hockney is deemed too gay to be able to deal adequately with non-gay material. The language of his account of the Cavafy portion of the exhibition appears to damn with faint praise and pointed language, with Thompson writing, under the subtitle ‘Cool Limpidity’:

His rather dandified taste as a draughtsman is much better suited in the other half of the exhibition, which consists of a suite of etchings to the poems of Cavafy. These are, perhaps unexpectedly, perfectly ‘straight’ drawings of street scenes in Beirut or boys in bed, done with a cunningly spare, delicate line and great areas of white. Cool, as it were, in a half world dazed with light and heat, they translate Cavafy’s peculiar

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<sup>43</sup> Doyle et al., *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>44</sup> David Thompson, ‘Natural Wonders’, *The Observer*, 24 July 1966.

limpidity well enough, although they barely touch his underlying ache and nostalgia.<sup>45</sup>

Thompson's lexical choice in this review is most telling with regards to his own personal agenda. The use of words such as 'dandified', 'limpidity' and indeed 'straight' are clearly designed to pigeonhole the artist, as it were, and deemed just reason to dismiss his work. An internal transcript of an unedited episode of the BBC's series *The Critics*, in which Hockney's 'Drawings and Etchings' exhibition was reviewed, can be found in the Kasmin papers at the Getty Institute archives in Los Angeles, and it too makes for interesting reading. Apparently taking the form of a round table discussion between several panellists, including Richard Findlater and Edward Lucie-Smith, certain sections of the typewritten text have been blacked-out with marker pen, yet perhaps with age remain legible. Whilst both Findlater and Lucie-Smith make some defence of Hockney's work and subject matter, other panellists make remarks that are as pointed, if not more so, as Thompson's. John Weightman complains significantly that the works appear too ambiguous in their meaning, and contends that '(t)here was no real eroticism. What was represented was the terrible tragic isolation of homosexuality';<sup>46</sup> these sentiments are echoed by several speakers. However, some of the most noteworthy statements come from the panellist Harry Craig. Tellingly complaining early on in proceedings that Hockney 'treats his boys as natural, they're removed, for me, from the decadence and the guilt of the forms', a later portion of Craig's contribution is blacked-out, but remains legible. The transcript states (with italics here denoting blacked-out text):

CRAIG: Well, I – I think that he – he's not involved in the poems, he's making his own statement, his own detachment, (*– you know, like in – in fact a very good artist can remove themselves from their subject and re-enter it in different terms and in a*

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> BBC Transcript of *The Critics*, 3/1, 1966, unpaginated, Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 34.

*different way and this was the interesting thing about them as illustrations of the poems, but aren't you going to say something about the other drawings, about the UBU? Er –the – the serious designs.*

*CHAIR: We shall get on to that when we talk about the theatre.)*<sup>47</sup>

Whilst taking the form of a throwaway remark, Craig's dismissal of the Cavafy etchings is total when he attempts to steer the conversation away from them and instead direct it towards the 'serious designs' of *Ubu Roi*. From reviews such as these it is clear that in spite of Hockney's apparent attempts to tread the fine line of acceptability between the homosocial and the homosexual, the implicit and the overt, he still faced significant prejudice from a heterosexist Establishment.

### **3.2 Literatures and Lifestyles: Towards a View of a Homosexual Creative Canon**

Thus far in this thesis most focus has been placed on Hockney's engagements with appropriated linguistic forms such as graffiti and the poetry of men from epochs other than the artist's own, namely Whitman and Cavafy. However, it is indubitably the case that the artist also associated closely with contemporary writers of both poetry and prose dealing with issues of homosexuality, indeed, going so far, in a number of cases, as to enter their social circles. Hockney's encounters with homosexual writers such as W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood and Gene Baro have gone largely unexamined by critical commentators on the artist, arguably as they are far less obvious than his engagements with the works of either Whitman and Cavafy, which as has been shown are often flagged by the artist's own titles, or textual incorporations within works themselves.

The concept of a homosexual literary canon is something that has received some attention in recent years, with a number of editors attempting to compile physical volumes

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

serving a similar purpose in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to the ‘word of mouth’ referral to which both Porter and Weeks’ interviewees and Hockney himself have pointed.<sup>48</sup> The editors of one such book, *Pages Passed from Hand to Hand*, suggest in their introduction that possibly the first instance of such an effort came as early as 1902 with Edward Carpenter’s *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship*, which featured extracts from a diverse range of writers from Plato to Byron.<sup>49</sup> However, as Mitchell and Leavitt point out, Carpenter’s choices were (necessarily) very much meted through the terms of the homosocial end of the spectrum of desire, rather than the strictly homosexual. As has been shown in relation to Arthur B. Krell’s subsequent exhortations in *ONE* magazine, dialogues surrounding the concept of a homosexual creative canon of ‘great literature’ had been present since the mid-1950s.<sup>50</sup> Himself a reader of publications aimed at a homosexual readership, including *ONE* magazine,<sup>51</sup> Hockney, in the early years of his professional success, was very much aware of the idea of a homosexual literary and artistic canon. Indeed, one could go so far as to argue that inclusion within such a canon was something to which he personally aspired.

As has been seen, literature has often been cited by homosexual men growing up in the early decades of the twentieth century as a means of discovering, and coming to terms with, both their own developing sexualities and the existence of a body of men sharing their same-gender desires. Whilst this was evidently the case for Hockney, I would argue that he took this purpose further, going so far as to use works of literature as a ‘guidebook’ to areas of interest to the young homosexual, with his paintings, drawings and prints serving as

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<sup>48</sup> For examples of such anthologies, see *Calamus: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Literature* (1982), *Pages Passed from Hand to Hand: The Hidden Tradition of Homosexual Literature in English from 1748 to 1914* (1997) and *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (1998).

<sup>49</sup> Mark Mitchell and David Leavitt (eds.), *Pages Passed from Hand to Hand: The Hidden Tradition of Homosexual Literature in English from 1748 to 1914*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1997, p. xiii.

<sup>50</sup> Arthur B. Krell, ‘We Need a Great Literature’, *ONE* magazine, May 1954, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 67.



‘souvenirs’ of his experiences. Amongst the earliest of these is the 1961 painting *Sam Who Walked Alone by Night* (Figure 79), which the artist produced shortly after his first trip to New York earlier that year.<sup>52</sup> Representing a heavily stylised human figure on a canvas that roughly follows the contours of the body, the painting is executed in a limited palette of pinks and purples against the stark white of the canvas. The motif of the pink baby doll dress appears once again, whilst a lipsticked mouth is represented by a slick of bright red paint. An inverted black card-suit spade appears where the figure’s heart should be, alongside the lower-case label ‘sam’, whilst a series of six circular stains, numbered in reverse order, appear at the hem of the figure’s dress, resembling either scientific chromatograms or bullet holes. Hockney has stated that the source for the work was a story found in an issue of *ONE* magazine that he bought during this first New York trip, about ‘Sam, a little transvestite who every night put on his little pink dress and took a little walk’.<sup>53</sup> Certainly the magazine was remarkably open in its promotion and defence of homosexuality, to the extent that for several years in the mid-1950s it was embroiled in legal battles against the United States Post Office, which had declared the publication obscene, and as such refused to carry it within the public mail system.<sup>54</sup> However, to a British homosexual reader abroad, the presence of such a publication for purchase at all would have made New York, and by extension the United States, seem like a bastion of free expression. An editorial from the February 1961 issue of *ONE* commented that ‘England, we should observe, doesn’t even have a homophile publication. One Londoner recently remarked that considering the need there, what with the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 67. Despite Hockney’s claims, a search through the entire back catalogue of *ONE* magazine, from 1953 through to 1967, did not reveal a story specifically entitled ‘Sam Who Walked Alone by Night’. However, a number of the publication’s stories from the early 1960s focus on similar themes, for example ‘Bertha’ from the February 1961 issue, so it is feasible that Hockney drew from either this or a similar publication in producing the painting.

<sup>54</sup> C. Todd White, *Pre-Gay LA: A Social History of the Movement for Homosexual Rights*, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2009, pp. 76-78.

failure of the Wolfenden legislation, ONE should be very popular in England'.<sup>55</sup> *Sam Who Walked Alone by Night*, then, can be interpreted as a work referencing perceived freedoms for homosexuals abroad, although like Jasper Johns' *In Memory of My Feelings* – Frank O'Hara it remains insular in its frame of reference. *ONE* magazine itself was certainly vocal in its forwarding of the need for a strong body of homosexual literature. A slew of articles from the 1950s and early 1960s all point to the need for homosexual writers to provide positive examples for their readers, and to avoid the tragic stereotypes that had hitherto been a requirement for a book dealing with homosexual themes to be published. Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar* was hailed as remarkable for its frank portrayal of scenes from a homosexual *demi-monde* when it was first published in 1948; however, despite the unusual survival of its then-atypical, masculine protagonist, Jim, comfortable with his own sexuality, this survival is only allowed through a tragic act, in which Jim murders Bob, the man on whom he has been sexually transfixed for the best part of a decade.<sup>56</sup> In his article 'Literature and Homosexuality' of 1955, *ONE* writer David L. Freeman argued:

We homosexual writers must portray our lives as they are really lived – not jumping off cliffs on the French Riviera or committing suicide with jeweled sabres in the Taj Mahal or nurturing delicate neuroses at elegant cocktail parties on Park Avenue. We must show homosexuals as human beings, as very like their neighbours – working at dull jobs with inadequate wages, struggling to meet the payments on furniture from Sears for the sixty- or seventy-a-month apartment on unromantically-named streets like Sixth or Central or Main. (...) The material is there; the ability is available or can be developed. If we believe in ourselves we can produce a healthy, new homosexual literature in the interest of our minority and all of society.<sup>57</sup>

Freeman's statement is notable for its emphasis upon the domestic and the ordinary. His model of a homosexual 'great literature' appears to be one that normalises homosexual

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<sup>55</sup> Don Slater, 'Editorial', *ONE* magazine, February 1961, vol. IX, no. 2, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> When he issued a revised edition of *The City and the Pillar* in 1965, Gore Vidal replaced the original murder of Bob by Jim with his rape; however, neither situation could be described as a positive example to readers.

<sup>57</sup> David L. Freeman, 'Literature and Homosexuality', *ONE* magazine, January 1955, p. 15.

behaviours, relationships and environments, one that in its modest, Sears-furnished comfort would be remarkably familiar to a heteronormative audience. One could compare Freeman's vision with Hockney's visual articulations of the domestic in his paintings of 1963 onwards, for example the tellingly titled *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* (Figure 11), with its representation of daily routine amidst bourgeois comfort; these representations of domesticity are discussed at length in the following chapter.

A writer who did much to forward Freeman's posited 'healthy' incarnation of literary homosexuality was Christopher Isherwood (1904-1986). Amongst his earliest and most widely known works, *Goodbye to Berlin*, first published in 1939, features amongst its narrative strands the story of Peter and Otto, a homosexual couple facing problems against a backdrop of the rise of the Third Reich. The story is, once again, not a particularly happy one – the young, 'animal' Berliner Otto, who initially seems so healthy a match for the mentally fragile Peter, has a weakness for girls on the side and finally leaves his older lover to return to Berlin, having stolen some of his belongings and two hundred Marks in cash. However, in no way does the segment, entitled 'On Reugen Island', suggest that homosexuality is anything out of the ordinary. Although the word is never explicitly used, Isherwood's narrator – who shares his own name – makes it clear to the reader that the two are lovers. Although in some respects the relationship is a dysfunctional one, so too are many of the heterosexual ones described in the book, not least the serial affairs of Sally Bowles. The breakdown of Peter and Otto's relationship is not through an inherent failure of homosexuality itself, but because the two are so physically and intellectually mismatched.

Hockney himself was certainly aware of Isherwood's Berlin stories during his time at the Royal College of Art, stating in *David Hockney by David Hockney* that it was these texts that attracted him to visit the city in the summer of 1962. One product of this trip was the

painting *Berlin: A Souvenir* (Figure 80), painted directly on Hockney's return to London in the autumn.<sup>58</sup> Large, blue capitals alert the viewer to the space being represented, with the main focus of the painting concentrated into a horizontal band of paint wedged between two expanses of pale canvas. The work is perhaps reminiscent of Otto Dix's depictions of the dense, smoke-filled clubs of Weimar Germany, with brightly coloured figures seemingly shifting against the darkness of the ground. Whilst one female figure appears to be depicted at the far right of the canvas, sporting the incongruous, prosthesis-like breasts of the woman in *The First Marriage: A Marriage of Styles* (Figure 81), and another tiny, Egyptian-inspired character at the base of the painting, the remainder of the figures are seemingly male; at the far left of the canvas one features the athletic figure and highlighted buttocks of an American physique model, the sexually suggestive numbers '69' applied in transfer lettering above his head. A similar figuration can be seen in *Untitled (Egypt 69)* (Figure 82) of 1963. This drawing is one of many the artist produced on a trip to the country for the newly-founded *Sunday Times* colour supplements. The *Times*' editors had initially asked Hockney to return to Bradford, but he instead managed to convince his commissioners to send him further afield.<sup>59</sup> Hockney's expectations of these early trips abroad certainly seem to have been coloured by his encounters with literature; in 1976, looking with hindsight on his earlier adventures, the artist stated:

And then we took a train to Munich and from Munich to Berlin, which I was a bit attracted to by Christopher Isherwood's Berlin stories. You never quite believe places change; when I went to Alexandria I thought it would be like Cavafy.<sup>60</sup>

Hockney was again to be inspired to travel by literature in 1963 when, having read John Rechy's *City of Night*, a seamy, fictionalised exposé of American homosexual subcultures, he

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<sup>58</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 89.

<sup>59</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 94.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p. 89.

determined to visit Los Angeles, the city in which many of Rechy's protagonist's encounters occur. One could go so far as to interpret Hockney's many studies of sexy, bare-buttocked Californian boys of the mid-1960s, discussed in the chapter that follows, as an extended 'souvenir' of his literature-inspired stay in the state. Certainly some of his drier landscape studies such as *Building Pershing Square, Los Angeles* (Figure 12) of 1964 can be interpreted as private 'souvenirs' of places referenced by Rechy's novel. Pershing Square, a prominent public space in downtown Los Angeles, is an important site within the novel, with the author describing it as '(t)he world of Lonely-Outcast America squeezed into Pershing Square, of the Cities of Terrible Night, downtown now trapped in the City of Lost Angels'.<sup>61</sup> Rechy's Pershing Square is populated by a colourful cast of characters, with masculine 'trade' such as Chuck and the novel's protagonist hustling older homosexual men, whilst elaborately dressed 'fairyqueens' preen themselves in public. This was clearly a space that the young Hockney felt he must visit. He recounts in his autobiography the chain of events that led him there in early 1964:

I had read John Rechy's *City of Night*, which I thought was a marvellous picture of a certain kind of life in America. It was one of the first novels covering that kind of sleazy sexy hot night-life in Pershing Square. I looked on the map and saw that Wilshire Boulevard which begins by the sea in Santa Monica goes all the way to Pershing Square; all you have to do is stay on that boulevard. But of course, it's about eighteen miles, which I didn't realize. I started cycling. I got to Pershing Square and it was deserted; about nine in the evening, just got dark, not a soul there. I thought, where is everybody?<sup>62</sup>

*City of Night*, whilst published in 1963, was obviously written before this date, and by the time Hockney arrived in Pershing Square in 1964, the gay scene had already moved on. Paul Melia has argued persuasively that the significance of *Building Pershing Square, Los Angeles*

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<sup>61</sup> Rechy, p. 93.

<sup>62</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 97.

can only be fully comprehended in relation to the inspiration of Rechy's novel.<sup>63</sup> The Pacific Mutual Life insurance building, which encompasses the south-west edge of Pershing Square, is a well-known local landmark, and in Hockney's painting serves as a visual metonym for the square itself. Like *Berlin: A Souvenir* and *Untitled (Egypt 69)* before it, the painting serves as a permanent reminder of its creator's literary-inspired adventures.

Whilst it was Rechy's racy and highly sexualised novel that led Hockney to California in the first place, it was ultimately another writer connected with Los Angeles that was to have the greater effect on his time there. A fellow English expatriate, Christopher Isherwood had settled in California as early as 1939, becoming a naturalised United States citizen in 1946.<sup>64</sup> Isherwood was at the centre of a highly distinguished circle of homosexual writers, artists and creators, which Hockney was later to join. Just as the New York art world of Jasper Johns maintained a select and self-referential sphere of homosexual artists and writers, so too did Isherwood's circle have a sometimes insular bent. His novel *A Single Man* of 1964, for example, is dedicated to another celebrated homosexual author, Gore Vidal. Isherwood's third-person autobiography *Christopher and his Kind*, safely published in 1976 almost ten years after the passage of the Sexual Offences Act, situates the author very firmly within a broad network of luminaries of homosexual creativity. As a young man, Isherwood embarked on a close friendship with Wystan Hugh Auden<sup>65</sup> which was later to become a literary collaboration, and it was through his relationship with Auden that Isherwood made the acquaintance of Stephen Spender, with whom he spent a considerable amount of time in Germany in the 1930s;<sup>66</sup> Spender, of course, was later to work with Hockney on the Editions Alecto Cavafy translation. Isherwood was also close to the elder E.M. Forster, who too was a

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<sup>63</sup> Melia, 'Showers, pools and power', Melia (ed.), *David Hockney*, p. 54.

<sup>64</sup> Peter Parker, *Isherwood*, London, 2004, p. 554.

<sup>65</sup> Christopher Isherwood, *Christopher and his Kind: 1929-1939* (1976), London, Methuen, 1978, p. 9.

<sup>66</sup> Isherwood, *Christopher and his Kind*, p. 47.

significant figure in the history of homosexual literature. In an interview with David J. Geherin in 1972, Isherwood disclosed that he and Forster had discussed the as-yet unpublished *Maurice* as early as 1933.<sup>67</sup> In another case of an alliance between homosexual writers, Forster was also a long-time correspondent of Cavafy himself, and indeed was instrumental in bringing about the first English translation of his poems, albeit after Cavafy's death<sup>68</sup> (incidentally, the very edition that Hockney stole as a young man).

Isherwood's lifestyle and his writings, as well as those of his associates, were very different from those of Rechy. Interviewed in 1980, Rechy stated that *City of Night* grew out of his own experiences as a hustler, or male prostitute, in the late 1950s.<sup>69</sup> His protagonist drifts through more or less temporary liaisons, often for money, and at the novel's conclusion is caught in a spiritual crisis, left wondering if he has the power to love another. Hockney's lifestyle on first arriving in Los Angeles in 1964 could be compared with that presented by Rechy in so far as he has claimed that this was the first and only time in his life that his was truly promiscuous, sampling the gay bars on which *City of Night* focuses so frequently.<sup>70</sup> However, by 1968, when the artist produced his large double portrait *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* (Figure 83), of the author and his artist partner, both Hockney's lifestyle and his representations of homosexual relationships in his works were very different and, I would argue, forward once more an ideal of homosexual monogamy.

Such an ideal is in evidence in Isherwood's semi-autobiographical volume *A Single Man*, described by James Levin in *The Gay Novel* as 'arguably one of the very finest novels ever written about male homosexuality in the United States'.<sup>71</sup> Set in 1962, it describes a day

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<sup>67</sup> Christopher Isherwood, James J. Berg, Chris Freeman, *Conversations with Christopher Isherwood*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2001, p. 85.

<sup>68</sup> Jeffreys (ed.), p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with John Rechy, *Bachy 17: A Journal of the Arts in Los Angeles*, 1980.

<sup>70</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68.

<sup>71</sup> James Levin, *The Gay Novel*, New York, Irvington, 1983, p. 240.

in the life of George, an English expatriate college professor in his sixties. It becomes clear in the course of the text that his long-term partner, Jim, has recently been killed in a car accident. Whilst his suburban neighbours have their suspicions about the nature of the couple's relationship, they are unaware of Jim's death. A platonic encounter with a young student from his class, Kenny Potter, reawakens George's desire to live; however, in a final, cruel twist, on the final page George suffers a heart attack and dies in his sleep. Isherwood's text is a poignant portrayal of loss and the domestic homosexual sphere; although it is evident that George and Jim were not without their problems, Isherwood is at pains to emphasise to his readers that homosexuality is as real and acceptable a lifestyle choice as heterosexuality. This is clear in the following episode, when Isherwood's protagonist ponders the heterosexist, popular psychology-influenced pity of his housewife neighbour, Mrs. Strunk:

But your book is wrong, Mrs. Strunk, says George, when it tells you that Jim is the substitute I found for a real son, a real kid brother, a real husband, a real wife. Jim wasn't a substitute for anything. And there is no substitute for Jim, if you'll forgive my saying so, anywhere.<sup>72</sup>

The ideal of homosexual domestic partnership promoted by the author in this text was mirrored in his personal life. Despite his partner Don Bachardy being thirty years Isherwood's junior, the couple remained together from 1953 until the author's death in 1986.<sup>73</sup> Hockney's portrait of the two (Figure 83), seated in adjacent chairs within their comfortably-appointed Santa Monica home, arguably amounts to a visual form of the positive example called for by *ONE* magazine's proponents of a homosexual literature. In contrast with earlier works by Hockney dealing with homosexual themes or subjects, the figures are neither sexualised nor abstracted; both sitters are clearly recognisable as well as named in the painting's title.

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<sup>72</sup> Christopher Isherwood, *A Single Man*, New York, Michael di Capua Books Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1964, p. 29.

<sup>73</sup> Peter Parker, *Isherwood*, Picador, 2004, p. 831.



Isherwood and Bachardy are presented as equal partners, each occupying an equal amount of space within the composition.

If association with Isherwood amounted to a statement of choice with regards to literature as well as lifestyle, it also provided Hockney with access to the author's distinguished social circle. The artist's accomplished line drawings of the latter half of the decade feature a remarkable number of portraits of homosexual men occupying important positions within the creative sphere. Besides Isherwood himself (Figure 84), an array of sitters distinguished within the literary world can be identified amongst these works, including W.H. Auden (Figure 85) and Gene Baro (Figure 86), whilst representatives of other creative worlds include photographers Cecil Beaton (Figure 87) and Robert Mapplethorpe (Figure 88), choreographer Frederick Ashton and ballet dancer Wayne Sleep (Figure 89). Several of these relationships were to prove fruitful for Hockney on a professional level, as well as social; Beaton was amongst the earliest collectors of Hockney's work,<sup>74</sup> whilst into the 1980s writer and art critic Baro was to promote the artist's portrait of another major homosexual celebrity, the cross-dressing performer Divine (Figure 90).<sup>75</sup> These drawings can be interpreted as serving a similar function to his 'souvenir' travel pieces – both are testament to a 'collection' of figures of homosexual interest, and, in the case of the portraits, bear witness to Hockney's place within a circle of homosexual social and creative luminaries. One could go so far as to suggest that in the case of the portrait drawings, Hockney literally creates a visual pantheon of creative figures, a visual record of the originators of a modern homosexual artistic canon, as it were. It seems likely that Hockney himself was very much aware of the significance of the canon and, indeed, it could be argued that his works of the 1960s amount to an attempt to join it. In 1961, whilst still a student, Hockney produced an etching entitled *Myself and my Heroes*

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<sup>74</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p.36.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, pp. 245-246.

(Figure 91). The title is proudly displayed in contrasting white letters, with its figures presented, like words on a page, from left to right in chronological sequence. On the far left appears a bearded, haloed Walt Whitman, inscribed with his own words 'for the dear love of comrades'. In the centre is Mohandas Karamchand 'Mahatma' Gandhi, above whose similarly haloed head appears the word 'love', and in a small box the observation that he is 'vegetarian as well' (Gandhi's dim views on sexuality of any kind are glossed over here). On the right of the etching is Hockney himself, flat-capped and bespectacled and labelled simply 'David' and 'I am 23 years old and wear glasses'. Whilst the sentiments here are self-deprecating, Hockney is clearly and consciously aligning himself with a particular brand of political activism, and arguably forwarding himself as a successor to Whitman's own creative mantle.

### 3.3 Conclusion

Through his engagements with literary works Hockney can be seen to forward homosexuality and homosexual relationships. The writings of historical authors such as Whitman and Cavafy are presented by Hockney in his works as both a source of positive reinforcement – the homosexual 'great literature' for which contemporary activists called – and also as a means of lending an historical legitimacy to works dealing with same-gender desires, and by extension what might now, in the post-Krafft-Ebing age, be referred to as 'homosexual acts'. However, whilst works such as *In Memoriam Cecchino Bracci* borrow very directly from historical literary sources, often going so far as to inscribe them directly upon the picture surface, Hockney's visual interpretations of these textual cues are very much contemporised; this, I would argue, has the effect of presenting homosexual desires as at once timeless and modern.

The concept of an unofficial gay literary and artistic canon is a significant one, I believe, when considering the artist's works of this period. Hockney's own early reliance on literary sources in seeking to define his own sexuality is clear,<sup>76</sup> whilst his associations with luminaries of the homosexual creative spheres such as Beaton and Isherwood are surely not coincidental; indeed, his series of pen and ink portraits of the late 1960s could be interpreted as a visual 'who's who' of gay figures of the period active in the arts. Hockney's affinity with the literary world can be seen in a 1972 interview for *Lunch* magazine, produced by the London-based Campaign for Homosexual Equality, in which the artist was asked what he would do if he were ever to lose his sight; he replied, 'if I went blind I suppose the only thing I could do would be a poet'.<sup>77</sup> Hockney's works of this period serve the same purpose as his friend Isherwood's novel *A Single Man* – namely, to forward same-gender desires as real and acceptable. An artist with a strong sense of the literary, Hockney's early works take textual cues from a variety of sources to create visual fictions that represent an attempt, I would argue, both to forward a greater cause of normalisation of homosexual desires and lifestyles, and to insert their creator within a homosexual artistic canon – however artificial that construction may be.

Whilst textual and literary sources of some kind obviously connect all of the works considered in these first two chapters, by no means all of Hockney's pieces concerned with (homo)sexual themes are dependent on such sources. It is to be noted that the role of texts within compositions themselves diminishes as the decade progresses. The Cavafy etchings, for example, clearly refer to a literary source, but it is the figure, observed with relative mimetic realism, that predominates; text is physically absent. This is in strong contrast with the earlier *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, where textual inclusions are inherent to the work.

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<sup>76</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xi.

<sup>77</sup> 'Brush with a homosexual painter: David Hockney', *Lunch*, number 12, Sept. 1972, pp. 4-8.

This move towards the figurative can be seen to advance progressively from the *Domestic Scenes* of 1963, and is most evident in the works inspired by American physique photography produced after the artist's move to California in 1964. Having considered the continued legal and critical obstacles faced by artists dealing with homosexual themes even after 1967 (for example the Metropolitan Police raid of Warhol's *Lonesome Cowboys* in 1969),<sup>78</sup> this raises a number of questions with regard to Hockney's increasing privileging of the figurative in his considerations of, and engagements with, homosocial/homosexual themes; these are questions that will be delineated, and addressed, in the next chapter.

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<sup>78</sup> Simon Watney, 'Queer Andy', Doyle et al., *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, pp. 20-21.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 4. 'TO A HAPPIER YEAR': VISUAL QUOTATION, DOMESTICITY AND HOCKNEY'S EXPLORATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

*The director senses the Craving in Skipper's eyes – which he knew would be there even from the photographs – as he has sensed it many times before in others; and he looks around at his house, his garden, his pool, owning every inch of it, possessing it. Now he looks at Skipper the same way. 'Would you like to take a swim?' he asks Skipper. And Skipper, in his early 20s then, goes swimming in the director's pool, and the water embraces him as if he, too, were meant for all this luxury.*

*John Rechy, City of Night<sup>1</sup>*

It was in the summer of 1961 that David Hockney visited the United States for the first time.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-three years old,<sup>3</sup> he had, as has been shown in the previous chapter, already been exposed to a number of aspects of American culture imported to Britain. Having been offered a cheap aeroplane ticket, he set off for New York, spending three months in the city and exploring the country's east coast.<sup>4</sup> It was on this on this trip that Hockney had his initial first-hand experiences of New York's burgeoning homosexual subcultures, with its bars, nightclubs and meeting-places;<sup>5</sup> this was an initiation that the artist subsequently re-interpreted and transformed into the etching series *A Rake's Progress* (1961-63; Figures 92-107). Inspired by – and expanded from – the painting and print series of the same name by William Hogarth, Hockney's suite of etchings has been described by Jonathan Weinberg in his book *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art* as recounting 'Hockney's first trip to

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<sup>1</sup> Rechy, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. vi.

<sup>4</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix pp. vii-viii.

the United States and the role it played in the artist's imagined rise and fall'.<sup>6</sup> Visually spartan with its use of a limited palette of black ink on white paper, augmented with occasional red highlights, Hockney's version is undoubtedly autobiographical to a certain extent; however, the degree to which it can be considered – like Hogarth's – to be a 'cautionary tale',<sup>7</sup> is a matter of conjecture. In *A Rake's Progress*, we find an early example of Hockney's shift from literature towards pictorial references. American literary sources, whether historical in the case of Whitman's poetry or contemporary with John Rechy's novel *City of Night*, clearly had a profound influence upon Hockney in the early years of his career; however, it is the influence of visual sources that can be seen progressively to predominate through the 1960s, particularly in the mid-years of the decade. Hockney became familiar with American-style physique photography through fellow homosexual student Mark Berger, who adorned his Royal College workspace with such images.<sup>8</sup> The influence of the genre is manifest in Hockney's works from as early as 1961 in plate 3a of *A Rake's Progress* (Figure 97), in which the runners that pass Hockney's beleaguered protagonist sport the prominent, rounded buttocks of the physique model. Works such as *Life Painting for a Diploma* (1962; Figure 9) and *Boy About to Take a Shower* (1964; Figure 109) meanwhile are both clearly generated from identifiable physique magazine images, whilst others such as *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* of 1963 (Figure 11), produced in London six months before Hockney was to visit the titular city for the first time, borrow from the visual lexicon and value systems of physique publications.

Where the previous chapters have been concerned with Hockney's frequent deployment of textual and literary sources in his works of the early 1960s, here Hockney's

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<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Weinberg, 'A Rake Progresses: David Hockney and Late Modernist Painting', *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2001, p. 139.

<sup>7</sup> Livingstone, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 35.

use of visual sources, both contemporary and historical, will be considered in relation to his representations of homosexual persons and themes from the mid to late years of the decade. From his years at the Royal College in London, Hockney had been aware of the existence of contemporary American magazines and photography aimed towards a homosexual client base;<sup>9</sup> it was these images and publications that in part inspired the young artist to visit first New York and subsequently California in 1964, a state with which he was to have a close connection for many decades. Indeed, one of several ‘pilgrimages’ Hockney made was to the home and studio of the producer of *Physique Pictorial* magazine, Bob Mizer. In *David Hockney by David Hockney*, the artist recalled his visit thus:

I went to visit the place where *Physique Pictorial* was published in a very seedy area of downtown Los Angeles. It’s run by a wonderful complete madman and he has this tacky swimming pool surrounded by Hollywood Greek plaster statues. It was marvellous! To me it had the air of Cavafy in the tackiness of things.<sup>10</sup>

In this quotation, the explicit connections that Hockney himself drew between his historical literary sources and contemporary visual ones are clearly evident. That his 1966 series of etchings illustrating the poems of Cavafy borrows from the visual lexicon of physique imagery is surely not accidental. As with the earlier *A Rake’s Progress*, in the Cavafy etchings, Hockney utilises canonical sources, reworking historical themes to present updated, personal messages forwarding and normalising homosexual behaviours and relationships; at the same time, it will be argued, this use of historical sources, alongside more contemporary ones, can be seen as an attempt on the part of the artist to engage with an unofficial homosexual creative canon, and subsequently to ease his own passage into a visual path of such a canon.

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<sup>9</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. viii.

<sup>10</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 98.

The physique photography industry was one that depended on the construction of what Thomas Waugh refers to in his comprehensive study of the genre as ‘alibis’, that could be used to explain away any apparent homoeroticism in its content.<sup>11</sup> In spite of this, and a number of legal challenges faced by producers and distributors of such images, a sub-genre of domestic scenes featuring physique models began to arise in the late 1950s and early 1960s, typified by this spread from the April 1961 issue of *Physique Pictorial* (Figure 108). The influence of these rather camp<sup>12</sup> explorations of homosexual domestic bliss, it will be argued, can be keenly felt in Hockney’s own works engaging with the concept of a gay domesticity, for example *Two Men in a Shower* of 1963 (Figure 111). The privileging of such domestic, monogamous models of homosexual behaviour by Hockney and by other practitioners, along with potential motivations for this, are questions that have been raised in preceding chapters, and they remain pertinent here. It is notable that of the extant scholarly writings on Hockney and his works, it is his time spent in California in the 1960s, and the images he produced that were inspired by what he found there, that have been the focus of particular critical attention.<sup>13</sup> These texts will be considered in the course of this chapter, whilst discussions of theories surrounding the concepts of performativity and self-fashioning, commenced in chapters one and two, will be continued.

This chapter considers two fundamental issues. Firstly, Hockney’s transition not only from the textual to the visual, but from historical framings of homosexuality to more contemporary ones, is increasingly evident during this period. Secondly, the place of the domestic sphere within Hockney’s representations of homosexuals – and homosexual

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<sup>11</sup> Waugh, pp. 219-227.

<sup>12</sup> Whilst camp personal and aesthetic tendencies are considered in this chapter, a more sustained engagement with the concept can be found in the chapter that follows.

<sup>13</sup> For examples, please see Cécile Whiting’s ‘The Erotics of the Built Environment’ in *Pop L.A.: Art and the City in the 1960s*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006, pp.107-138; and Melia’s ‘Showers, Pools and Power’ in *David Hockney*, Manchester, 1995, pp. 49-67.



relationships – in his works is clearly apparent. These observations give rise to a number of questions. How and why are visual sources utilised by Hockney in his representations of homosexuality? How does Hockney's appropriation of visual sources fit within a continuum of gay creativity? Is it necessary, as Paul Melia suggests, to differentiate between images that represent homosexuals and those that merely present men as erotic objects?<sup>14</sup> As has been shown in the previous chapter, New York was at this time home to a critical mass of homosexual artists and writers, including Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol and Frank O'Hara. Hockney made the acquaintance of some members of this circle – notably Warhol – on his second trip to the United States in early 1964;<sup>15</sup> however, he made the decision to settle instead in Los Angeles, where by comparison art world infrastructures were considerably less well-established. Why did Hockney make this seemingly counter-intuitive career move? I will argue that contemporaneous legal, cultural and political shifts, not only with regards to homosexuals but also to members of the working-class, must be recognised when considering the artist's life and practice throughout the 1960s. It will be argued that in his use of visual quotation and appropriation, and his sustained emphasis on the domestic, Hockney's works of this period pursue a normalising agenda with regards to the representation of homosexuals and same-sex partnerships, as well as strengthening the artist's own claim to be included within a homosexual creative canon.

#### **4.1 A Yorkshireman in New York: *A Rake's Progress*, Self-Fashioning and the Media**

A semi-autobiographical etching series, transferring William Hogarth's original eighteenth-century morality tale to twentieth-century America, *A Rake's Progress* (Figures

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<sup>14</sup> Melia, *Images of men in the early work of David Hockney* (unpublished MPhil dissertation), University of Manchester, 1991, p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, pp. 81-83.

92-107) was commenced by Hockney on his return from his first visit to the United States in the autumn of 1961, completing the plates two years later in 1963.<sup>16</sup> Although the work takes its basic form from that of Hogarth's painting series of the same name of 1734, and the set of engravings he produced from the same material the following year (Figures 112-119), Hockney's version affords insights into the artist's developing personal and sexual identity, as well as the beginnings of his appropriations from visual sources, such as physique photography, in his works.

Hogarth's prints present a classic cautionary tale, distilled into eight plates, warning viewers against the potential perils of profligacy and vice. In the first (Figure 112), the young and pointedly-named Tom Rakewell is shown taking possession of his miserly father's effects, ordering a new suit of clothes as he resolves to leave his old life – and love – behind him. Through the course of the series, the viewer is presented with Rakewell's increasing profligacy as he slips first into debt and then depravity, until in the final plate, *Bedlam* (Figure 119) he is reduced to a madman, stripped of both his fine clothes and his sanity. Where Hogarth's original etching series presents its narrative in eight plates, Hockney's version runs to twice this length at sixteen, albeit labelled in a fashion echoing Hogarth's (Plate 1, Plate 1a, etc.). The artist claims in his 1976 autobiography that this expansion was at the behest of the then-Principal of the Royal College, Robin Darwin; he proposed issuing the completed series as a volume from the College's Lion and Unicorn Press, with the proviso that the number of plates be significantly increased.<sup>17</sup> However, in his astute if at times cynical analysis of the etching cycle, Weinberg argues that this doubling of the number of images, along with the novel addition of red highlights, can be seen to amount to an attempt to 'trump Hogarth'.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 91.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Weinberg, *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2001, pp. 149-150.

Whilst clearly modern in terms of style and execution, Hockney's *A Rake's Progress*, like his works inspired by the poetry of Walt Whitman, make their historical homage plain to the viewer. This is clear not only in the repetition of the basic conceit and arrangement of Hogarth's narrative cycle, but also in the borrowing of the title and original numbering system. As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, appropriation from historical literary sources dealing with homosexual themes was typical of Hockney's practice in the early 1960s, in part as a method of lending a historical 'legitimacy' to the concepts at hand. Whilst in no way does Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* deal with homosexual themes – and, indeed, neither does Hockney's retelling in any overtly explicit manner – I would argue that in drawing upon such a familiar art historical subject, Hockney can again be seen to attempt to render his version non-threatening to a conventional, potentially heterosexist audience, or at least to toy with the expectations of such an audience. At the same time, the use of a conventional, and celebrated, canonical source can be seen as an effort to bolster the legitimacy not only of his personal convictions with regard to homosexuality, but also his personal artistic practice and identity.

The concept of art historical quotation was one that the artist had been introduced to earlier in 1961, in an assignment at the Royal College. Charged with the task of transcribing a work by another artist, Hockney selected Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* of 1855 (Figure 120). An unusual art object with its circular form enclosed within a gilded frame, the painting depicts an emigré couple, modelled on Madox Brown himself and his wife Emma.<sup>19</sup> They are huddled together on a boat, many other families behind them, leaving England for other shores.<sup>20</sup> Hockney's reworking of the painting is at once markedly similar yet radically

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Bendiner, *The Art of Ford Madox Brown*, University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> Madox Brown is believed to have produced this work in response to two events in particular – the critical rejection and market failure of his own work, and the departure for Australia of pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas

different from the original. The work of an artist keenly aware of the power of language, Hockney's *The Last of England?* (Figure 121) adds only a question mark to Madox Brown's own title, yet this single punctuation mark, inscribed on the replica of the original mount, changes the image from one of resignation to one of defiance. Executed in a palette similar to that used in *We Two Boys Together Clinging* (Figure 8), also of 1961, Hockney's version removes all but one of Madox Brown's jostling background figures, concentrating on the central couple. Unlike the original, there is little attempt at verisimilitude on Hockney's part in their observation; both faces and garments are represented in broad impasto, the left figure sporting the dark hat and overcoat of its inspiration, while its companion appears to be dressed in top-to-toe pink. Where gender identities are made clear in the 1855 painting, they remain ambiguous in Hockney's, and while both couples clasp hands, the tiny baby's grip visible in Madox Brown's image is absent from its successor. However, Hockney makes clear the intended identities of his figures once again through codification. '4.8' standing for Hockney's initials designates the left as representing the artist himself, whilst tiny black capitals 'DB' identify the right-hand figure as embodying 'Doll Boy', the now-familiar cipher for Hockney's homosexual desires. Both of these figures, then, are male – although of course such identification depends upon the viewer's familiarity with Hockney's methods of hermetic codification. Like Madox Brown's original, *The Last of England?* is the work of an Englishman contemplating the possibility of leaving the country; however, where his predecessor comments on economic migrants seeking a more secure future,<sup>21</sup> Hockney's image is clearly concerned with the plight of the English homosexual. Where Emma's pink bonnet ribbon blows across her husband's body in the original painting, an object resembling

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Woolner (Tim Barringer, Angela Thirlwell, and Laura MacCulloch, *Ford Madox Brown: The Unofficial Pre-Raphaelite*, London, 2008, p. 16); however, the destination of the migrants in *The Last of England* is not explicitly revealed to the viewer.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

nothing so much as a bloody knife protrudes from the fictive Hockney's chest in the transcription, a most violent symbol of oppression. In his assessment of the painting, Melia argues that the artist's decision to follow closely the original framing and presentation 'suggest(s) that each couple is an icon of their time, implicating the viewer in a condemnation of poverty and injustice'.<sup>22</sup>

Hockney's version of *A Rake's Progress* clearly deals more freely with its art historical source than does *The Last of England?*. Whilst the etching series does broadly follow Hogarth's original scheme of events, there is a strongly autobiographical gloss. Indeed, one could go so far as to argue that in *A Rake's Progress*, one finds a case study for Hockney's experiences of, and engagements with, the United States in the 1960s; certainly it distils many of the tropes of the artist's visual practice and engagement with visual sources into a single early series. Its skinny, bespectacled protagonist is first seen in plate 1 *The Arrival* (Figure 92), apparently just embarked from a 'Flying Tyger' aircraft – 'Flying Tiger' was the name of the air charter company that brought the artist from London in July 1961,<sup>23</sup> whilst Hockney's choice of spelling almost certainly alludes to William Blake's much-anthologised poem 'The Tyger' of 1794.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, in plate 1a *Receiving the Inheritance* (Figure 93), the artist transposes Hogarth's original scene of the young Tom Rakewell receiving his late father's legacy (Figure 112) to one representing Hockney's own sale of etchings to William Lieberman, then director of prints at New York's Museum of Modern Art.<sup>25</sup> Whilst Hockney received the then-sizeable sum of two hundred pounds from the sale of copies of *Kaisarion with All His Beauty* (Figure 58) and *Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall* (Figure 122), in *Receiving the Inheritance* the artist shows Lieberman haggling over prices, offering

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<sup>22</sup> Melia, 'Showers, Pools and Power', *David Hockney*, Manchester, 1995, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup> Glazebrook, p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> Morris Eaves, *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 207.

<sup>25</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 65.

eighteen dollars instead of the twenty dollars written on the paper in his hand. On the table in this print is a representation of Hockney's earlier etching *Myself and My Heroes* of 1961 (Figure 91), considered in the previous chapter, which features a somewhat deprecating self-portrait. This earlier representation of the artist, whilst simplified yet further than the figure in *A Rake's Progress*, bears a marked similarity to the latter series' protagonist; I would argue that this encourages the viewer to identify Hockney's Rake with the artist himself.

Hockney's actual itinerary on this initial trip to the United States is somewhat difficult to clarify, with the 1976 autobiography, Peter Webb's 1988 biography and an interview with the artist in 2009 all offering slightly different accounts. However, it seems that Hockney initially intended to stay at the Long Island family home of Mark Berger, but that Berger was himself hospitalised suffering from hepatitis for some or all of his visit.<sup>26</sup> Instead, Hockney claims to have met 'a boy in a drugstore there and I moved in with him, and that's where I stayed; 'cause he had an air conditioner'.<sup>27</sup> This boy may have been Ferrill Amacker, whom Webb identifies as Hockney's host<sup>28</sup> and with whom the artist remained in contact until at least 1967, as drawings such as *Ferrill in Rome* (1967, Figure 123) attest. Webb credits Amacker with introducing Hockney to the gay clubs and cruising sites of New York.<sup>29</sup> At any rate, Hockney's Rake, as had the artist himself, is shown taking in several of the famous sights and sounds of the United States. New York's Chrysler Building can be discerned in the background of plate 1, *The Arrival*, whilst plate 2, *Meeting the Good People (Washington)* (Figure 94) depicts three of the District's famous monuments and memorials, highlighting in almost comical fashion their decidedly phallic forms. Plate 2a, meanwhile, returns to New York in its presentation of *The Gospel Singing (Good People) (Madison Square Garden)*

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid; Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 55.

<sup>27</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. vii.

<sup>28</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

(Figure 95). In all of these scenes, Hockney's Rake alter-ego is a passive observer – in plate 2a he sits, cross-legged, the smallest figure in the crowd, whilst in *Meeting the Good People (Washington)* he becomes a disembodied head, viewed in profile, gazing blankly forward. The passivity of Hockney's Rake is in marked contrast with the protagonist of Hogarth's series. Tom Rakewell takes a very much active role in the flamboyant lifestyle that leads to his downfall, at the centre of a triumphant ruckus in plate 6, *In a Gaming House* (Figure 117); by contrast, Hockney's Rake is a man often literally on the sidelines. Even in plate 7, *Disintegration* (Figure 104), he merely looks at an image of an exceptionally expensive glass of whiskey – he does not imbibe. Nannette Aldred has remarked that in this series, Hockney becomes 'protagonist in, and viewer of, his own mythologised life'.<sup>30</sup> This seems a persuasive interpretation; indeed, one could go so far as to suggest that Hockney casts his Rake, and by extension himself, in the role of voyeur; the viewer, through the act of looking, becomes an accomplice. Weinberg draws an astute comparison between Hockney as he represents himself in *A Rake's Progress* and Charles Baudelaire's hero of 'The Painter of Modern Life' of 1863. He writes, quoting Baudelaire:

(T)he Hockney figure in the *A Rake's Progress* (sic) is something of a flâneur: 'For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world.' Throughout the series Hockney's stand-in is depicted observing, from the wings, contemporary American culture as if detached from it. His task as an artist is to experience the various pleasures that America seemed to offer – nightclubs, sex and drink. He becomes a rake, but unlike Hogarth's infamous hero, he always remains outside himself. He is, as Baudelaire writes, 'an "I" with an insatiable appetite for the "non-I"'.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Nannette Aldred, 'Figure Paintings and Double Portraits', Paul Melia, (ed.), *David Hockney*, Manchester, 1995, p. 74

<sup>31</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne, London, Phaidon Press, 1964, p. 9; Weinberg, *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art*, p.153.

Weinberg's observation is borne out by a visual analysis of the two cycles. Where Tom Rakewell is shown at the heart of the scene of debauchery in plate three of Hogarth's series (Figure 114), with elegantly-dressed women of doubtful virtue caressing his body, Hockney's Rake indulges in altogether more observational, voyeuristic pleasures. Whilst one should not conflate the voyeur, who seeks to observe for purposes of personal gratification, and the flâneur, who observes but with the intent of being himself observed, I would argue that in *The Rake's Progress*, Hockney's protagonist can be seen to occupy both of these roles. In plate 3a, *The Seven Stone Weakling* (Figure 97), he embodies the role of flâneur at its most literal,<sup>32</sup> strolling the pathways of New York's Central Park whilst gazing at two men in the act of running, his own newly-lightened hair radiating with cartoon brightness.<sup>33</sup> With their athletic figures and prominent buttocks, these men are very much in keeping with the conception of American physicality that Hockney professed to have sought after at this time:

I must admit I'd begun to be interested in America from a sexual point of view. I'd seen American *Physique Pictorial* magazines which I found when I first came to London. And they were full of what I thought were very beautiful bodies, American, and I thought, very nice, that's the real thing.<sup>34</sup>

However, whilst Hockney's Rake and his new American trappings can be seen to occupy the more ostentatious position of the flâneur in images such as *The Seven Stone Weakling* and *Viewing a Prison Scene* (Figure 101), in others he appears to err more on the side of the voyeur. In plate 6 for example, *Death in Harlem* (Figure 102), the Rake appears merely as a red, disembodied head in the corner of a scene of black-printed grief, whilst in plate 5, *The Election Campaign (with Dark Messages)* (Figure 100) he is absent entirely.

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<sup>32</sup> Keith Tester (ed.), *The Flâneur*, London and New York, Routledge, 1994, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Glazebrook, p. 80.

<sup>34</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 65.



Further incongruities can be detected in the title of *The Seven Stone Weakling*. Its wording draws attention to the tension between the artist's feelings of inadequacy as a physically less attractive Englishman and his attraction to the fantasised perfection of American youth. As with Hockney's self-portrait in *Myself and My Heroes*, the figure of the Rake is physically identified primarily through his spectacles; in *A Rake's Progress* Hockney deliberately exploits his glasses, a sign of physical shortcomings, as a contrast with the perceived perfection of American physicality. The title *The Seven Stone Weakling* quotes from the British version of the famous advertising campaign for the 'dynamic tension' exercise system of legendary fitness mogul Charles Atlas, which offered to transform the body of a 'seven stone weakling' into 'big, powerful useful muscles' (sic).<sup>35</sup> In both Britain and the United States, the famous cartoon strip-style advertisement (Figure 124) purported to represent Atlas' own experience as a seventeen-year-old 'scrawny runt', the Italian-born sometime Angelo Siciliano who came to America and transformed both his name and his body. Hockney's quotation of this Horatio Alger-esque myth of self-transformation in America suggests the earnest, if unrealistic, expectations of the emigré, with his Rake left looking on from a distance at the objects of his desire – a satirical remark, perhaps, on the true degree of 'progress' achieved by his Rake.

Hockney's decision to interpret his New York experiences as a revision of Hogarth's cautionary tale might lead one to believe that his journey was an unpleasant and unsatisfactory one, but interviews and the artist's itinerary suggest otherwise. In the 1976 autobiography, Hockney recalled:

The life of the city was very stimulating, the gay bars – there weren't many in those days; it was a marvellously lively society. I was utterly thrilled by it, all the time I

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<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Toon and Janet Golden, "'Live Clean, Think Clean, and Don't Go to Burlesque Shows': Charles Atlas as Health Advisor", *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2002, p. 45.

was excited by it. The fact that you could watch television at three in the morning, and go out and the bars would still be open, I thought it was marvellous.<sup>36</sup>

Interviewed in 2009, he also remarked upon the ‘gayness’ of New York in comparison with London:

I went to New York, for the first time, 1961, and that was a city very different from London, to me. I didn’t have much money but I had money. I mean, I’d gone to New York at the age of, what, 23, I think? So, not many people had been. And I found the city wide open and it was a twenty-four hour city; London closed at eleven. Uh... much more gay – although LA was *the* gay place. But uh... it opened you up. I mean America.<sup>37</sup>

The artist’s youthful enthusiasm at experiencing the stuff of his fantasies is palpable. It was during this initial trip to the States that Hockney adopted what arguably amount to conscious physical and sartorial signifiers of his sexuality, and began to manifest the characteristic flamboyant persona that brought him to the attention of the press and public. With the proceeds of the sale of his etchings to Lieberman, Hockney purchased ‘a suit, an American suit’,<sup>38</sup> and inspired by a television commercial for Clairol hair colourant proclaiming that ‘blondes have more fun; doors open for a blonde’,<sup>39</sup> bleached his naturally dark hair. This is an event commemorated in the etching *The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde* (Figure 96) from *A Rake’s Progress*. One of Hockney’s insertions without direct precedent in Hogarth, the image shows the figure of the would-be rake, occupying the otherwise blank left side of the plate, an impossibly large bottle of ‘Lady Clairol’ hair dye atop his head like a giant hat or women’s salon hairdryer. One can compare this appropriation of easily recognisable branding, with its potential for layered humour, with that found in some

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<sup>36</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. vi.

<sup>38</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 65.

<sup>39</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 56.

of Hockney's other contemporaneous works, for example the Colgate and Vaseline logos of *Teeth Cleaning, W.11* (Figure 31) considered in chapter one.

What looks like an anatomical drawing of a single muscle can be also seen on the upper arm of Hockney's Rake in *The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde*, something that also appears in *Receiving the Inheritance*. The right side of the image dissolves into a stylised vision of Utopia, complete with palm trees, surf and a brilliant red sunset; all accessible, it seems, from a single door, through which one might pass if only one has the right credentials – in this case, the right look. Weinberg suggests that the artist probably associated being blond with being American, suggesting that '(b)ecoming a blond was the first step in the long process of Hockney becoming an expatriate in that very California setting that lies on the other side of the doorway'.<sup>40</sup> However, this assessment does not seem to take into account the fact that in the following frame, *The Seven Stone Weakling*, Hockney's Rake remains on the sidelines, visibly Other; the plate's title alone suggests that its maker recognises that dyeing one's hair does not immediately effect a transformation into a tanned American athlete.

Crucially, neither Weinberg nor any other commentator seems to have recognised the linguistic anomalies inherent in this work. Re-introduced to the English language from modern French in the seventeenth century,<sup>41</sup> the word blonde – or blond – unusually retains gender specificity in its spelling. Hockney retains the feminine form in his title. Although a self-confessed poor speller,<sup>42</sup> as shown in the previous chapter Hockney had a complex understanding of the relationship between the literary and this visual at this time, whilst the

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<sup>40</sup> Weinberg, *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art*, pp.153-155.

<sup>41</sup> 'blonde/blond, a. and n.', *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, 1989; online version November 2010, URL: <http://www.oed.com:80/Entry/20381>; consulted June 2011. Earlier version first published in *New English Dictionary*, 1887.

<sup>42</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 64; David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. x.

artist's recognition of the importance of the title of an artwork is clearly shown in his somewhat mercenary tactic employed during the early years of his career of deliberately assigning lengthy titles to paintings in order to occupy more space in exhibition catalogues.<sup>43</sup> Whilst Hockney has stated that he lifted the spelling from the bottle,<sup>44</sup> nonetheless it marks the artist out as a user of beauty products intended for women. As such, I would argue that this lexical choice can be construed as significant to the interpretation of this work. During the period in which Hockney produced *A Rake's Progress*, much emphasis was placed on the definition and classification of various 'types' of homosexual,<sup>45</sup> both within the community itself and from the outside. Such was the belief in an array of discrete and identifiable homosexual identities that in 1958, when the Home Office Research Unit commissioned the sociologist Richard Hauser to prepare a report on the subject, Hauser managed to list and describe forty-six individual types, from 'The Ship's Queer' and 'The 'Cottage' Type' through to 'The Fully Sublimated Homosexual' and 'The Homosexual Voyeur'<sup>46</sup> – this latter label might indeed have been applied to Hockney's Rake. Within contemporary homosexual communities themselves a desire to define could also be observed. The Polari dialect contained many words for distinct types of homosexual, with several significant uses of the masculine and feminine; where feminine-rooted words such as 'nelly' and 'queen' were designated particularly to those deemed to be effeminate or to take a particular (and often receptive) role within relationships, others such as 'butch' and 'punk' were applied to those perceived to be more 'masculine' in their aspect.<sup>47</sup> As noted in chapter one, the presumption of the presence of a degree of intrinsic femininity in any individual with homosexual leanings was long-standing; indeed, this assumption was reflected even in Polari, with a common word

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<sup>43</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>44</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. x.

<sup>45</sup> Hauser, pp. 26-81.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, pp. 161-195.

for a man of any homosexual ‘type’ being ‘omee-palome’ – literally ‘man-woman’.<sup>48</sup> In the light of such precedent, one could argue that in assigning himself a ‘*blonde*’, Hockney quite literally highlights and identifies with common contemporary signifiers of homosexuality, and indeed signifiers of a particular homosexual persona.

Hockney was to retain his dyed blond(e) hair into the 1990s (Figure 125), and it was a continual focal point of contemporary media attention. An excellent early example of such focus is Robert Wraight’s ‘On Galleries: Hic, Haec, Hockney’ in *The Tatler* of December 1963, the first line of which describes the artist as ‘the (literally) golden-headed boy’ of the Royal College;<sup>49</sup> another article in *The Daily Mail* of 1965 compares the artist to the Beatles, remarking that ‘his platinum hair is as individual as their mop tops’.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, in early press coverage, Hockney’s personal appearance and idiosyncratic sartorial style could dominate over any reference to his artistic practice. Hockney’s rise to fame coincided with the introduction of the first colour supplements distributed with weekend newspapers in Britain, and his literally colourful character was showcased to spectacular effect in an article by David Sylvester from *The Sunday Times* colour supplement of June 1963 (Figure 126). Across a double page spread, the figure of Hockney himself appears no less than three times. In a full-page image, the young artist is shown in front of his large-scale 1963 canvas *The Hypnotist*; his dyed hair worn in a modish, American-inspired ‘crew cut’, he is smoking a cigar, the bright red of his cardigan echoing the robe of the painted figure to his right. On the left-hand side are three smaller photographs; one shows *The Second Marriage* (1963; Figure 127) amidst a background of studio clutter, whilst two more focus once again on Hockney himself. In both, he sports a gold lamé jacket, which he had worn as a visual pun when he collected his

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 184.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Wraight, ‘On Galleries: Hic, Haec, Hockney’, *The Tatler*, 19 December 1963.

<sup>50</sup> Pierre Jeannerat, ‘Art’, *The Daily Mail*, 3 December 1965.

gold medal from the Royal College of Art.<sup>51</sup> In the uppermost image, Hockney is shown strolling down a London street in the jacket, his blond hair bright in the sun, a metallic gold carrier-bag in his hand. Webb notes that ‘both jacket and carrier-bag soon entered into the popular mythology that gathered around Hockney’,<sup>52</sup> whilst Simon Faulkner, in his analysis of the artist’s (re)presentation in the 1960s, points out that in a 1967 interview, Hockney complained: ‘In a way I regret buying that Bloody Coat. For I think people thought I had worn it every day. In actual fact I only wore it twice’.<sup>53</sup> Although in this quotation Hockney appears in retrospect to opine such mythologising, he was clearly complicit in its development. Indeed, it could be argued that his heavy exposure in the British media of the 1960s was crucial in establishing – and maintaining – his presence in the consciousness not only of the general public, but of the art Establishment also. Hockney’s dealer John Kasmin maintained excellent records of press coverage on the artist from the early ’sixties onwards,<sup>54</sup> whether it was in the form of serious critical attention or his inclusion in a celebrity fashion spread in a 1967 issue of *Harper’s Bazaar* (Figure 128).

Simon Faulkner offers an insightful analysis of the artist’s public persona in the 1960s, and argues that the decade that saw the emergence of the so-called ‘permissive society’<sup>55</sup> allowed Hockney to express outwardly his homosexuality in a manner hitherto proscribed. He writes:

The 1962 photograph for ‘Clown with Vision’ showed Hockney with his bleached hair wearing a working man’s vest. This juxtaposition of a sign on the ‘inauthentic’ and feminine world of the consumer and a sign of Hockney’s northern working-class

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<sup>51</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 66.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> ‘The Point is in Actual Fact’, *Ark* 10, 1967; quoted in Simon Faulkner, ‘Dealing with Hockney’, Paul Melia (ed.), *David Hockney*, Manchester, 1995, p.18.

<sup>54</sup> Three large and well-catalogued scrapbooks of press cuttings can be found in the Getty archives; see Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 35. The Kasmin collection of press cuttings has been of particular value in the researching of this thesis.

<sup>55</sup> Christie Davies, ‘Buggery and the Decline of the British Empire’, *Permissive Britain: Social Change in the Sixties and Seventies*, London, Pitman, 1975, p. 93.

origin defined his northernness as a site of contradiction. Hockney's dyed hair was a sign of his homosexuality, although it was not construed as such in the media. Signs of his homosexuality were seen as part of a persona compatible with the heterosexual images which were, by 1965, associated with figures like David Bailey. (...) Hockney's glitzy image – the hair, the coat – found its meaning with reference to the ability of heterosexual males, no longer restricted by traditional masculine identities, to indulge in new forms of display.<sup>56</sup>

Whilst many of Faulkner's observations are astute, I would dispute his contention that aspects of Hockney's physicality, such as his bleached hair, were not construed as indicators of homosexuality by the media. As has been seen with regard to critical comment on the artist's Cavafy etching series, comment on Hockney's open and unapologetic brand of homosexuality often took the form of oblique or implied innuendo. Whilst the *Sunday Times* pictorial states nothing explicitly, its depiction of the lamé-clad Hockney, standing in front of *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* (Figure 11) with its camp representation of gay domesticity, suggests its authors were likely well aware of the artist's orientation; readers familiar with rhetoric such as the *Sunday Mirror*'s pointers on homosexual style<sup>57</sup> would surely have been able to make the connection. In this one can discern yet another instance of double coding – as with the double entendres of Polari, with its intentionally layered significations, Hockney's representation in the 1963 *Sunday Times* spread could equally have been construed as mere eccentricity for those who chose not to look further.

A belief in the existence of specific sartorial styles associated with men sexually attracted to members of the same gender was extant in Britain at least two and a half centuries prior to the 1960s, although as Florence Tamagne suggests, this was an association that formed gradually.<sup>58</sup> The concept of a 'modern homosexual aesthetic', as formulated by Prickett, was mentioned in the introduction to this thesis in relation to unofficial homosexual

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<sup>56</sup> Faulkner, p. 22.

<sup>57</sup> Baker, *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men*, p. 66.

<sup>58</sup> Florence Tamagne, 'The Homosexual Age, 1870-1940', Robert Aldrich (ed.), *Gay Life and Culture: A World History*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2006, p. 172.

creative canons. However, his observations extend beyond the dissemination of material of homosexual interest, enumerating five key aspects of this homosexual aesthetic. He states:

The 'modernist homosexual aesthetic' should be understood as that aesthetic that (1) is developed by the homosexual subject, (2) expresses homosexual self-determination, (3) portrays homosexuality as natural, 'normal', and 'aesthetically pleasing' (thereby 'norming' the homosexual), (4) is a 'product' of modernity that emerges from the 'crisis' of masculinity and (5) as such, is 'disseminated' among homosexuals via homosexual journals, homosexual literature, and homosexual film.<sup>59</sup>

Prickett's observations on the homosexual aesthetic can also be seen to relate to the area of personal dress and presentation. As has been seen, the 'mollies' of sixteenth-century London flouted gender conventions with regards to both behaviour and dress,<sup>60</sup> with the practice of buggery, as it was then popularly known,<sup>61</sup> becoming tied to a 'deviant' gender role.<sup>62</sup> In the late-nineteenth century, the perceived flamboyance of members of the 'aesthetic' movement was widely satirised by figures such as the *Punch* cartoonist George du Maurier, notably through his characters of the painter Maudie (Figure 129), a caricature of Oscar Wilde himself,<sup>63</sup> and poet Jellaby Postlethwaite. Michael Hatt has noted that in this period the aesthete was routinely associated with Narcissus, the mythical figure who died of self-love. Whilst he points out that a good many of these figures were represented as heterosexual, Hatt claims that

there is an unmistakable slippage from heterosexuality, through Aesthetic identity, to homosexuality, as if the Aesthete was the pivot of a moral slide from norm to deviance. At the considerable risk of being utterly anachronistic, one might think of

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<sup>59</sup> Prickett, p. 39.

<sup>60</sup> Randolph Trumbach, 'The Heterosexual Male in Eighteenth-Century London', Katherine O'Donnell and Michael O'Rourke (eds.), *Love, Sex, Intimacy, and Friendship Between Men, 1550-1800*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 105.

<sup>61</sup> Nikki Sullivan draws attention to the fact that prior to the late 1800s, the term 'sodomy' was not solely used to refer to the act of anal penetration, but rather extended to any 'unnatural' (i.e. non-procreative) sexual act. (*A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2003, p.3)

<sup>62</sup> Trumbach, 'The Heterosexual Male in Eighteenth-Century London', p. 105.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Raby (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 202.



Henry James' remark about Maudle, Postlethwaite and du Maurier's other Aesthetes: 'none of his queer people are so queer as these perverted votaries of joy'.<sup>64</sup>

The choice of Narcissus as a cipher for the homosexual is notable for the implication of a symmetry of desire; in love with his own reflection, Narcissus desired 'a boy who is like myself', a statement of longing that can be found written on the surface of Hockney's *The Third Love Painting*.

To return to conceptions of nineteenth-century aestheticism and their relation to questions of homosexuality, Hatt notes that du Maurier's 1881 cartoon *Maudle on the Choice of a Profession* (Figure 129) is remarkably explicit in its framing of aesthetic sensibilities as symptomatic of homosexual ones, with Wilde-as-Maudle 'drool(ing) over a beautiful young man'.<sup>65</sup> Significantly, Hatt goes on to claim that:

The *general* perversity of the Aesthete came to be recognized as a specifically *sexual* perversity. The wish to be able to identify homosexuality, which, by its very nature, can remain hidden, required the consolidation of specific visual signs and types and the Aesthete provided a perfect home for this visualizing urge.<sup>66</sup> (original emphases)

Tamagne has suggested that prior to his trial, Wilde succeeded in escaping censure as the majority of his contemporaries had no idea how a homosexual man should look or act.<sup>67</sup> However, following his 1895 conviction for 'gross indecency' after a sensational trial, many of Wilde's personal attributes became associated in the public consciousness with homosexuality, with Alan Sinfield stating that the trial made 'effeminacy, idleness,

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<sup>64</sup> Michael Hatt, 'Space, Surface, Self: Homosexuality and the Aesthetic Interior', *Visual Culture in Britain*, vol. 8, no. 1, Summer 2007, p. 107.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Tamagne, 'The Homosexual Age, 1870-1940', p. 172.

immorality, luxury, insouciance, decadence and aestheticism' symptomatic of 'sexual inversion'.<sup>68</sup>

As with many minority groups, the extent to which homosexuals have been persecuted has fluctuated, with periods of comparative tolerance being followed by spates of open hostility and victimisation. Following Wilde's conviction the latter came very much into the fore, and homosexual men felt under pressure to appear to be heterosexual, or at the very least not to appear too threatening to heterosexist sensibilities. Houlbrook notes that from the 1930s onwards, even clubs such as the Caravan began to exercise a greater degree of caution, with their clientele exercising restraint in their choice of attire – something, which Houlbrook notes, exasperated 'queens' such as Quentin Crisp with their far more extravagant modes of dress.<sup>69</sup> In *The Naked Civil Servant*, Crisp asserted that his outlandish physical appearance was an act of 'propaganda', a phrase that Hockney was himself later to apply to his early works dealing with homosexual themes.<sup>70</sup> Crisp wrote:

A teacher of languages called Lamb Chop came further out into the open than most others. He said, 'You are dyeing your hair in order to seem younger.' This was untrue. I had started to use henna when I was twenty-four, but as my life was one long journey toward self-assessment, I felt I must always give consideration to the opinions of me held by other people, however malicious I might secretly think them. Since I had adopted my chi-chi appearance partly as propaganda, if the message became confused, I must alter it. I set about forcing red out and forcing blue in. This would continue my original purpose of showing that my hair was dyed but it would allow it to be seen that underneath the tinting, I was gray-haired.<sup>71</sup>

In this very conscious posturing it is clear that Crisp's stance with regards to his personal visibility was a politically charged one, prefiguring the gay liberation movement of the early 1970s. However, in the 1950s and early 1960s, Crisp's deliberate public visibility was rare.

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<sup>68</sup> Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Movement*, New York, 1994, pp. 11-12.

<sup>69</sup> Houlbrook, p. 84.

<sup>70</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68

<sup>71</sup> Crisp, pp. 168-169.

Hockney himself was certainly aware of homosexuals who kept their sexual identities a secret in the early 1960s, recalling in 2009:

I was aware that people led kind of double lives. And I didn't want to do that. Why? I don't want to... no, you want to be yourself, yeah. And as I say that's the one thing that somebody like Quentin Crisp... that's what impressed me. He was himself, he wasn't, he wasn't afraid of, er, things, he was... funny, took a funny view of life, view of life that amused me, and well, I know... and (...) he felt really at ease with himself, you know, just... and he was, as I say, he was quite a rare person in those days. I mean, today of course you meet all kinds of people, but not very many people said they were gay, I mean they would hide it, they would... you know, simply because it was easier.<sup>72</sup>

The influence of Crisp himself was clearly a formative one in terms of the young Hockney's development of his personal and sexual persona, and would appear to conform to Prickett's definition of a 'modernist homosexual aesthetic'. Hockney was in personal contact with Crisp in the early 1960s, when the older man worked as a life model at the Royal College of Art; indeed, Hockney has stated of Crisp that 'he was the first absolutely open homosexual I knew'.<sup>73</sup> Whilst Crisp was almost thirty years Hockney's senior, one can compare his consciously 'chi-chi' appearance (Figure 130) with Hockney's self-presentation in images such as the *Sunday Times* pictorial. To return then to *A Rake's Progress* and *The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde* (Figure 96), the dyeing of the Rake's – and Hockney's – hair can be interpreted as signifying more than simply 'the first step in the long process of Hockney becoming an expatriate in (...) California'.<sup>74</sup> Like Quentin Crisp before him, Hockney consciously blurs binary gender oppositions, appropriating a consumer product aimed at (heterosexual) women and using it to create a physical appearance openly reflecting his sexual identity.

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<sup>72</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xi.

<sup>73</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. v.

<sup>74</sup> Weinberg, *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art*, pp.153-155.

Commentators have asserted that Hockney's *A Rake's Progress* is a cautionary tale warning against not only wanton excess, as do Hogarth's originals, but also the sin of losing one's individuality and allowing oneself to become indistinguishable from the crowd. The 1970 Whitechapel Gallery exhibition catalogue is clear in its interpretation, asserting that 'the rake's crime, sin or solecism of allowing his wallet to empty has forced him to join the mindless mass'.<sup>75</sup> In the series' final plate 8a, *Bedlam* (Figure 107), Hockney's Rake has quite literally been reduced to a mindless automaton. Viewed from behind, the former protagonist is now just one of five identical figures, all wearing t-shirts bearing the radio station advertising slogan 'I swing with W.A.B.C.' and plugged into transistor radios, a space where their brains should be; all that identifies Hockney's Rake from the surrounding figures is a tiny arrow above his head as like those around him he walks, zombie-like, on what could be a treadmill towards a screen bearing the plate's title in stark, red capitals. Livingstone suggests that the series is quite consciously aligned with Hogarth's originals, echoing their particular moral message. He writes:

Like Hogarth's series, it is a cautionary tale, a warning to himself and others of the loss of identity which occurs when one bows to external pressures. The destruction of innocence and individuality, we are reminded, is not simply a matter of personal morality. (...) Elsewhere Hockney hints at the dilution of art in its transformation into the clichés of advertising, as in *The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde*, where the artist admits to his seduction by the promises of eternal sunshine and carefree existence. Hockney is well aware of his own weaknesses: the swaying palm trees presented here as the product of his fantasy were later often to be depicted by him from direct observation.<sup>76</sup>

To a certain extent one can concur with Livingstone's argument. The protagonists of both artists' series clearly end in ruin; whilst Hogarth's Tom Rakewell's luxuriant life of excess and debauchery leads to his incarceration, insane, in the squalor of the asylum (Figure 119),

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<sup>75</sup> Glazebrook, p. 81.

<sup>76</sup> Livingstone, p. 39.

Hockney's Rake's poverty forces him to become simply one of the 'Other People' of the penultimate plate's title (Figure 106). However, one could argue that in a fundamental respect, the moral messages conveyed by the two artists differ significantly. Throughout Hogarth's eight, highly moralising plates, Rakewell is depicted continually at the centre of ribald excess, spending, drinking and whoring his way to a squalid end, his final suffering in Bedlam serving as a diverting spectacle for the upper-class ladies who can be seen looking on to the centre-right of the etching. It is Rakewell's active participation in his expensive and immoral activities that leads to his downfall. By contrast, as noted previously, Hockney's Rake is very much more a passive agent, an observer rather than a participant. Indeed, as has been noted previously, in *The Election Campaign (with Dark Messages)* (Plate 5, Figure 100), he appears to be entirely absent from the image, and any potential for excess is cut short by the 'BAR CLOSED' sign placed to the bottom-right of the frame. Far from the squalid chaos of Hogarth's Bedlam, Hockney's vision of hell is sterile, one in which his protagonist's dreadful fate is not to become an outlandish spectacle, but instead to become exactly like everyone else – a (literally) mindless automaton. As such, one could argue that unlike Hogarth's original, Hockney's version of *A Rake's Progress* is fundamentally a celebration of difference and the extrovert – albeit meted by the necessity of being able to afford one's chosen lifestyle. In Hogarth's day, the Rake constituted a readily identifiable and frequently satirised type,<sup>77</sup> a 'fashionable or stylish man of dissolute or promiscuous habits',<sup>78</sup> and Hogarth's depiction follows this pattern. By contrast, Hockney's version shows its protagonist to be a mere would-be Rake, at best a voyeur on the sidelines. Having spent his money without even experiencing at first hand the physical pleasures he desires, Hockney's

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<sup>77</sup> Laurence Senelick, 'Mollies or Men of Mode? Sodomy and the Eighteenth-Century London Stage', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, no. 1, July 1990, p. 35.

<sup>78</sup> 'rake, n.<sup>7</sup>,' *Oxford English Dictionary*, third edition, December 2009; online version November 2010. URL: <http://www.oed.com:80/Entry/157646>; accessed June 2011. An entry for this word was first included in *New English Dictionary*, 1903.

protagonist's error is not to go far enough in asserting his own identity, and instead to bow, under duress, to the pressures of conformity.

As noted in chapter one, Hockney has stated that his works from this early period were consciously formulated to spread a particular message with regard to homosexuality, constituting 'propaganda of something I felt hadn't been propagandized'.<sup>79</sup> To be a homosexual or to have homosexual feelings is not necessarily to put this identity on public display. Today, the concepts of being 'in the closet' – that is, having homosexual preferences but shielding this knowledge from associates and/or the public – and conversely 'coming out' of the closet<sup>80</sup> are widely discussed in the wake of the gay liberation movement that began in Britain and the United States in the aftermath of the Stonewall Riots of New York City in 1969.<sup>81</sup> However, as has been discussed previously, in the late 1950s and early 1960s the risks of publicly confirming one's sexual preferences remained significant, whilst heightened public conceptions regarding what constituted 'homosexual behaviours' led to an atmosphere in which many homosexual men chose to exercise greater discretion in their self-presentation.<sup>82</sup> Despite this, Hockney himself chose to be open about his own homosexuality with his peers during his first year at the Royal College of Art,<sup>83</sup> taking college events as opportunities to explore concepts and identities such as drag (Figure 19). It could be argued that in the decade in which 'the permissive society' and increased sexual freedoms amongst men and women alike became pressing causes for concern for authorities,<sup>84</sup> the political climate was to become far more favourable to an individual such as Hockney choosing to

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<sup>79</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68.

<sup>80</sup> For an expansive and erudite discussion of these concepts, please see Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990).

<sup>81</sup> David Fernbach, 'David Fernbach on the Rise and Fall of GLF', *Lunch*, London, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, October 1973, pp. 12-14.

<sup>82</sup> Houlbrook, p. 84.

<sup>83</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 35.

<sup>84</sup> Davies, p. 93.

make a stand on such an issue. The artist has admitted that he had ‘become conscious, not of the shock value of homosexuality – you can’t shock students, you couldn’t then and I don’t think you could now (...) but that I was being cheeky and bold, and that’s what one should do, I thought’.<sup>85</sup> Hockney’s identification of students as his intended audience is significant, suggesting that he sought to target a comparatively well-educated, liberal constituency, a very different one from the generally hostile and homophobic readership of publications such as the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Pictorial*, which according to Patrick Higgins ‘passionately and (...) aggressively presented the male heterosexual viewpoint’.<sup>86</sup> As such, I would argue that Hockney’s *A Rake’s Progress* serves not only as a semi-autobiographical account of the artist’s discovery of his own (homo)sexual identity, like works such as *We Two Boys Together Clinging* borrowing legitimacy from its canonical source, but can also be seen to function as a rallying call to others to emerge from the shadow of heterosexist oppression, to have the confidence to express openly sexual identities that they might previously have felt compelled to hide. Nonetheless, Hockney’s *Rake* remains a site of ambiguity. ‘Hover(ing) between the still public figure of the flâneur and the modern condition of voyeur’,<sup>87</sup> the *Rake* is at once Hockney himself and an everyman, one moment confident in his newly-acquired American glamour and the next shrinking (literally) into nothingness. In this respect, *A Rake’s Progress* can be construed as reflecting a changing political climate surrounding homosexuality. The 1957 Wolfenden Report had once more brought the subject to the forefront of public consciousness, but in 1963 its recommendations remained unheeded, the 1967 Sexual Offences Act still four years away. Hockney’s *Rake*, like the artist and his contemporaries, remains trapped in this area of contradiction.

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<sup>85</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 62.

<sup>86</sup> Higgins, p. 287.

<sup>87</sup> Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and Histories of Art* (1988), London and New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 120.

## 4.2 Mad About the Boy: Physique Photography, Gender Symmetries and Homosexual Domesticities

Having discussed Hockney's earliest engagements with the United States, I will now to be moving to another significant American source for the artist, the male physique photograph. As has been demonstrated above, the influence of physique photography can be detected in Hockney's works of the early to mid 1960s, not only in the rounded buttocks of the artist's runners in plate 3a of *A Rake's Progress*, *The Seven Stone Weakling*, but also more overtly in works such as *Life Painting for a Diploma* (Figure 9), the origins of which (Figure 10) are writ literally upon its surface. The influence of physique photography on Hockney's works from this period can scarcely be underestimated. The visual vocabularies of such volumes and their concentration on the potential of the male form as homoerotic object were to have a great influence upon Hockney's works of the 1960s, from the domestic scenes through to *The Room*, *Tarzana* (Figure 131) of 1967. Whilst the artist's earliest figurative works taking homosexuality as their subject such as *Adhesiveness* (Figure 3) and *We Two Boys Together Clinging* (Figure 8) use very much stylised, simplified human forms, by 1962 many of Hockney's figures appear to have an altogether more mimetic aspect, clearly observed from or inspired by the life, or at least photography. In that year, threatened with the prospect of not receiving his diploma from the Royal College of Art on the basis that he had not produced the required number of life paintings, Hockney facetiously produced not only his own, home-made version of a diploma, but also *Life Painting for a Diploma* (Figure 9). A large work, almost two metres square, a well-groomed American bodybuilder smiles out from the paint surface, one arm akimbo, the other fading out as if reaching towards some lost object; the painting's title is written in a line that ends at the central figure's crotch. The word 'physique' is painted across the top of the image in large red capitals, while a highly detailed



observational drawing of a skeleton, completed during the artist's first term at the Royal College, is glued to the left-hand side.<sup>88</sup> Unusually amongst Hockney's works, the work is derived not from the Athletic Model Guild's *Physique Pictorial*, but from the cover image of a competing publication, the October 1961 issue of *The Young Physique* (Figure 10),<sup>89</sup> demonstrating that the artist's readership of physique magazines at this time extended more widely than was previously thought.<sup>90</sup> Although Simon Faulkner misidentifies the painting's source in his essay 'Dealing with Hockney', he makes the astute observation that *Life Painting for a Diploma* clearly makes a conscious mockery of the academic discipline of life painting, which is intended to hone observational skills.<sup>91</sup> Hockney has claimed that he came to an impasse with the Royal College authorities over the issue of life models, stating that:

I had a few quarrels with them over it because I said the models weren't attractive enough; and they said it shouldn't make any difference, i.e. it's just a sphere, a cylinder and a cone. Any great painter of the nude has always painted nudes that he liked; Renoir paints rather pretty plump girls, because he obviously thought they were really wonderful. He was sexually attracted to them and thought they were beautiful, so he painted them; (...) Michelangelo paints muscular marvellous young men; he thinks they're wonderful. In short, you get inspired.<sup>92</sup>

In view of this statement, one could argue that Hockney's intended stance in producing *Life Painting for a Diploma* is a public questioning of the politics of desire, as well as what it is that legitimates an image or object's status as 'art'. In juxtaposing the bodybuilder with his carefully-observed skeleton, Hockney clearly demonstrates that he is in possession of the skills being asked of him by the college authorities. However, his near life-sized physique

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<sup>88</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 88.

<sup>89</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xiii.

<sup>90</sup> Hockney states in *David Hockney by David Hockney* that he simply painted the cover of the magazine in question (p.88). The magazine utilised by Hockney has been widely misidentified – Mark Glazebrook in his 1970 Whitechapel retrospective catalogue, Paul Melia and Simon Faulkner all claim that the publication was *Physique Pictorial* (p. 18) whilst Jonathan Weinberg points towards an elusive *Physique Magazine*, but my research demonstrates that it was indeed *The Young Physique* that was used.

<sup>91</sup> Faulkner, p. 18.

<sup>92</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 88.

model appears to be an icon of a personal ideal of physical beauty and sexual attraction. A photograph published alongside an article on the artist in *Town* magazine of September 1962 (Figure 132) shows Hockney dressed in a vest and slim trousers, standing next to the work. His hand touches the painted figure's shoulder in what can be interpreted as an affectionate manner, whilst the position of the figure's unfinished left arm is such that it appears as though he is touching the artist's buttocks. The black-and-white reproduction of the photograph merely serves to intensify the illusion of this blending of realities; here, it could be argued, is a 'doll boy' of the artist's own creation.

Whilst Hockney first came into contact with physique photography on his move to London, the publications that he favoured were ones imported from the United States. The phenomenon of the genre has been the subject of study by a number of researchers in recent years, with Thomas Waugh claiming in his book *Hard to Imagine* that the movement constituted '(t)he high point of gay erotic culture before Stonewall'.<sup>93</sup> However, this label is one that could only be applied explicitly with hindsight in the aftermath of the gay liberation movement; as Waugh himself states repeatedly, the physique industry was one that depended on the construction of 'alibis' that could be used to explain away any apparent homoeroticism in its content.<sup>94</sup> In this respect, one can draw parallels with the inherent polysemous nature of Polari as considered in chapter one, as well as the playful plurality of meaning discernable in the creative works of both Hockney and Warhol already considered. The principal alibi employed by the physique photography industry was a concern with genuine bodybuilding or exercise-related activities, resulting in spreads such as this (Figure 133) from the August 1959 issue of *Trim* magazine. Purporting to offer details of model Willy Rios's workout, the images linger on his muscular, oiled body, clad only in a pair of white underpants, while a final shot

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<sup>93</sup> Waugh, p. 176.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, pp. 219-227.

gratuitously shows him in a shower. The relatively restrained nature of this example can be contrasted with an exercise-related feature from the April 1960 issue of *Physique Pictorial* itself (Figure 134). Here, actual instructional text and imagery is relegated to a thin strip occupying less than a fifth of the available space, with the seven small frames showing a model demonstrating an exercise routine. The clear focus is instead aimed at the two young studs above, the accompanying copy listing the models' names and vital statistics. Camp sensibilities are clearly evident in these images: a sailor hat perched on the head of the model at left and the 'slave' costume of the model on the right are indicative of homosexual erotic archetypes, such as the sailor and the leather-clad motorcyclist, that recur throughout this and other homoerotically-focused publications and cultural products.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, exercise was often harnessed as a reason to pose two near-naked young men in a passionate clinch, under the guise of wrestling, as this photograph from the May 1962 issue demonstrates (Figure 155).

Waugh writes:

What may seem surprising in retrospect is the degree to which the sports establishment was complicit in relaxed poses and this alibi (...) the willingness of various presumably nongay (sic) champions, despite the currents of paranoia and homophobia that must have existed in the circuit, to pose for the photographers and collectors whose gayness must have been evident, even to the extent of frankly erotic or nude performances in both still photography and film as the sixties progressed. From the 'straight' models who didn't ask and the newsagents who didn't look, to the mothers, wives and roommates who didn't dare wonder, everyone *must* have known.<sup>96</sup> (original emphases)

Certainly the homoerotic nature of the content of these publications was not lost on the homosexual market, as the letters pages of *Physique Pictorial* demonstrate. Indeed, Hockney himself has remarked upon the rather disingenuous nature of these alibis, stating 'the first ones, I might have bought even at W.H. Smith's. When they looked more innocent and they

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<sup>95</sup> Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman, *Becoming Visible: An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth-Century America*, New York, Penguin Studio, 1998, p. 92, p. 122.

<sup>96</sup> Waugh, p. 222.

looked like, um, bodybuilding magazines. But I could see ‘this isn’t just bodybuilding’, this is, you could see that’.<sup>97</sup>

From the 1940s through to the late 1960s, the physique photography industry blossomed, with a plethora of publications such as *Vim*, *Tomorrow’s Man*, and *Male Pix* catering to a variety of tastes and preferences, from a heterosexual (and potentially homophobic) readership professing genuine interest in the practice of bodybuilding, to a homosexual market for whom the magazines constituted a source of erotic material. Vince Aletti has argued that a core element of these publications were produced ‘for an audience that their publishers never named and rarely acknowledged; in a sense, they were as closeted as many of their gay readers and even more vulnerable to discrimination and attack’.<sup>98</sup> A handful of publications were produced on Continental Europe, such as *Apollon-Vénus* of France and *Muscles Magazine* of Belgium, whilst the one-man cottage industry of John S. Barrington, who published in a plethora of formats from the 1950s until his death in 1991,<sup>99</sup> afforded a British perspective on the genre; however it was in the United States, and in particular in southern California, that the physique magazine industry was especially strong.<sup>100</sup>

Although as Waugh points out the homoerotic content of these publications could verge on the overt, throughout this period physique photographers, their models and the consumers of their products all operated under the constant threat of legal censure. In the United States, the so-called ‘Comstock Act’ of 1873 had been passed with the intention of suppressing ‘trade in,

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<sup>97</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix pp. x-xi.

<sup>98</sup> Vince Aletti, ‘The Masculine Mystique: Physique Magazine Photography’, *Aperture* magazine, Summer 2007, p. 55.

<sup>99</sup> Rupert Smith, *Physique: The Life of John S. Barrington*, London, Serpent’s Tail, 1997, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> Aletti, pp. 55-57.

and circulation of, obscene literature and articles of immoral use'.<sup>101</sup> The carriage of such goods by the US Postal Service was also prohibited, with Section 48 of the act declaring that

no obscene, lewd or lascivious book, pamphlet, picture, paper, print or other publication of an indecent character (...) shall be carried in the mail, and any person who shall knowingly deposit, or cause to be deposited, for mailing or delivery, any of the hereinbefore-mentioned articles, shall take, or cause to be taken, from the mail any such letter or package, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof, shall, for every offense, be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five thousand dollars, or imprisoned at hard labor not less than one year nor more than ten years, or both, in the discretion of the judge.<sup>102</sup>

This law, and similar ones on the opposite side of the Atlantic, meant that prior to 1969 and the United States Supreme Court judgement that declared that obscenity statutes that punished mere private possession of obscene matter were unconstitutional,<sup>103</sup> it was essential that the producers and viewers of physique imagery were able to provide the aforementioned 'alibis' that could provide alternative, if sometimes dubious, reasons for their existence and consumption, in order to avoid prosecution. The images themselves meanwhile had to straddle a fine line between being sufficiently titillating to satisfy their homosexual readership, and being innocuous enough to avoid the wrath of the law. Hockney himself fell afoul of the police in 1968 when having purchased a number of male nudist magazines in America, they were seized by Customs at Heathrow Airport for allegedly containing pornographic material.<sup>104</sup> Refusing to accept the seizure, he contested the case, calling upon the aid of the-then National Council for Civil Liberties and the press; however, in the light of the Supreme Court judgement, the Home Office settled out of court.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *United States Statutes at Large*, forty-second congress, session III, ch. 256-258, 1873, p. 598.

<sup>102</sup> *United States Statutes at Large*, forty-second congress, session III, ch. 256-258, 1873, p. 599.

<sup>103</sup> *Stanley v. Georgia*, 394 U.S. 557, 1969.

<sup>104</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p.193.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 193-194.

Of the numerous publications then on the market, it was *Physique Pictorial* with which Hockney appears to have been most familiar. Published under the self-aggrandising moniker of the Athletic Model Guild, *Physique Pictorial* was in reality largely the work of one man, Bob Mizer, who published the magazine – at times sporadically – from 1951 until his death in 1992.<sup>106</sup> Produced from his base in Los Angeles, Mizer's photographs, like those of many of his competitors, celebrate the hairless, suntanned bodies of Californian youth; however, his magazine was remarkable in particular for its construction of visual homosexual narratives, something that was to become central to Hockney's works of the 1960s. The pages of issues of *Physique Pictorial* from the late 1950s and early 1960s demonstrate clearly an appreciation of the legal dangers faced, and a creative attitude towards attempts to avoid them. A recurring editorial claim was that the publication was 'planned primarily as an art reference book'<sup>107</sup> for use by educational institutions, along with the obligatory nod towards the coverage of genuine exercise stories – a tactic referred to by Waugh as the 'artistic alibi'.<sup>108</sup> As has been shown, magazines such as *Physique Pictorial* were clearly recognised by a homosexual readership as being on a certain level homoerotic in nature, with visual and textual codes utilised by photographers and publishers across the genre. These visual conventions were appropriated by Hockney in a number of figurative works. Amongst the earliest of these appropriations can be seen in plate 3a, *The Seven Stone Weakling* (Figure 97) from *A Rake's Progress*. The sporting figures of the two men whom Hockney's Rake admires from a distance feature the rounded, prominent buttocks typical of *Physique Pictorial* models, the rear view of their tight athletic shorts echoing the charged anal eroticism of the photographs.

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<sup>106</sup> Aletti, p. 57.

<sup>107</sup> Bob Mizer, *Physique Pictorial*, vol. 4, no. 3, Los Angeles, Athletic Model Guild, Fall 1954, p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> Waugh, p. 224.

Whilst *The Seven Stone Weakling* transports these bodies to New York, the original photographs were of course created in Los Angeles. The address of Mizer's studio was published in every issue of *Physique Pictorial*, whilst the somewhat amateurish layouts of the magazine showcased the locale. Hockney confirmed that his (pre)conceptions of Los Angeles were in large part influenced by *Physique Pictorial* in the 1976 autobiography, when he recalled:

Although by then I had made two visits to the United States, I hadn't yet gone further west than Washington, D.C. California in my mind was a sunny land of movie studios and beautiful semi-naked people. My picture of it was admittedly strongly coloured by physique magazines published there; *Physique Pictorial* often had street scenes of wooden houses and palm trees with motorcyclists acting out fantasies for 8mm movies. The interior scenes in the magazine were obviously (like old movies) shot in made-up sets out of doors.<sup>109</sup>

For Hockney, it could be argued, the environment of Los Angeles itself became closely linked with the erotic fantasies promoted by magazines such as *Physique Pictorial*, aided by his reading of Rechy's *City of Night*. Certainly Mizer's studio was a site of particular significance to the artist. As has been shown in the previous chapter, Hockney had sought to visit the Berlin of which he had read in Christopher Isherwood's novels, and the Alexandria of Cavafy's poetry; so too did Hockney view Los Angeles as a necessary 'pilgrimage site' as the source of what was for him an equally important formative influence. His eagerness and excitement at the prospect of visiting Mizer's enterprise, and the world from which it arose, is palpable in the following statement:

I went to visit the place where *Physique Pictorial* was published in a very seedy area of downtown Los Angeles. It's run by a wonderful complete madman and he has this tacky swimming pool surrounded by Hollywood Greek plaster statues. It was marvellous! To me it had the air of Cavafy in the tackiness of things.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 93.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p. 98.

From this account, as well as from the information afforded by Mizer's own photographs, the sense of 'tackiness' and artifice of *Physique Pictorial*, its rival publications and its birthplace are evident. Mizer repeatedly used stock set-ups, such as distinctively tiled shower and bathroom sets (Figures 135-136), photographs of which were often somewhat careless: 'bathrooms had palm-tree shadows across the carpets, or the walls suddenly ended and a swimming pool was visible'.<sup>111</sup> Although operating under strict censorship laws, whereby a photographer could be arrested should the bulge in a man's posing pouch be deemed too well-defined,<sup>112</sup> Mizer can be seen to flirt with voyeurism in the early 1960s, shooting his subjects at play in his pool or whilst taking a shower. This is clear in such spreads as this from the July 1962 issue (Figure 135) which Hockney himself possessed.<sup>113</sup> Whilst serving as an advertisement for the Athletic Model Guild's range of silent 8mm films and glossy 8 x 10 prints (of which Hockney owned several),<sup>114</sup> Mizer's pictures take the exercise theme central to the conceit of physique photography to its logical conclusion, the shower. In so doing, he creates a novel excuse for showing the nude male figure, devoid even of the twentieth-century answer to the fig leaf, the jockstrap. Melia argues that the exaggerated contrast between suntanned flesh and pallid buttocks in these images serves not only to draw the viewer's gaze towards this area and its promised delights, but that it also lends the body a 'spurious mystique', presenting them as 'forbidden territory' in spite of the subject's nakedness.<sup>115</sup> Whether or not one accepts Melia's thesis, the allure of such images for their intended market is clear. That Hockney found inspiration in them is unquestionable; not only is the motif of

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<sup>111</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 93.

<sup>112</sup> Aletti, p.55.

<sup>113</sup> The figure in the screenprint *Cleanliness is Next to Godliness* is drawn from a photograph of 'Fred Wiggins' on page 11 of this issue.

<sup>114</sup> Hockney, p. 99.

<sup>115</sup> Melia, 'Showers, Pools and Power', p. 56.



the showering youth a recurring theme in the artist's works of the early 1960s, but Mizer's studio's distinctive tiled shower set-up can also be discerned in a number of Hockney's drawings, paintings and etchings of this period. Examples can be seen in *Boy About to Take a Shower* of 1964 (Figure 109), directly inspired by a photograph printed in a 1961 issue of *Physique Pictorial* (Figure 110), and *American Boys Showering* of 1963 (Figure 137). In the screenprint *Cleanliness is Next to Godliness* (Figure 138), the artist even goes so far as to reproduce photographically one of Mizer's images (Figure 139), veiling the youth in question in a fantasised shower curtain.

In the 1976 autobiography, Hockney claimed that 'it's difficult to paint from photographs. If you haven't taken the photograph yourself, you can only do something imaginative with it'.<sup>116</sup> In these images, the artist appropriates a visual lexicon of sexuality from an external source and makes that sexuality his own, subtly adjusting the figures provided to create new sexual objects, as he had earlier done in *Life Painting for a Diploma*. It is no oversight that Earl Deane, the teenage model whose photograph in *Physique Pictorial* inspired the image, was reworked into the nameless and faceless *Boy About to Take a Shower*. His body, with its buttocks the central focus of the canvas, becomes a sexual object abstracted from its original owner. In his analysis of this painting and other shower scenes, Melia interprets these images as having a clearly Freudian significance, in which the 'hard, metallic, shower nozzle' gripped in the figure's hand and the 'imminent release of a jet of liquid' are obvious metaphors for sexual arousal and orgasm.<sup>117</sup> His subsequent assessment of the shower paintings meted through the theoretical concept of the gaze is a compelling one. Drawing upon Laura Mulvey's theories, Melia argues that these images 'represent attempts to organize visual pleasure around the spectacle of the male for the *male* spectator' (original

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<sup>116</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 99.

<sup>117</sup> Melia, 'Showers, Pools and Power', p. 56.

emphases).<sup>118</sup> Like Mizer's photographs, Hockney's shower scenes certainly exploit the inherent voyeuristic gaze of the viewer in this scenario; the act of bathing is generally a private one, yet in these images the viewer is invited to become a party to this act. In *Two Men in a Shower* (Figure 111), the semi-transparent shower curtain, suspended out of nowhere in the centre of the canvas, disrupts the viewer's unimpeded gaze, arousing interest in the activities taking place behind it.

However, I would argue that in addition to considering these images in terms of phallic significance and privileging of vision, the shower (and its occupants) in Hockney's works of this period also represents a symbol of the exotic. Writing in 1976, the artist himself stated: 'Americans take showers all the time – I knew that from experience and physique magazines'.<sup>119</sup> As a boy from 1950s Bradford, the shower – and a perceived American fixation on bodily hygiene – were alien quantities to Hockney; indeed, when he visited the Long Island home of Mark Berger on his first visit to New York in 1961, Berger's mother was shocked to discover that their young visitor did not change his clothes or bathe every day.<sup>120</sup> It is significant that Hockney made the then-unusual decision to have a shower installed in his flat in Powis Terrace, London in 1962.<sup>121</sup> Showers feature in two works produced prior to Hockney's first visit to California – *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* (Figure 11) and *Two Men in a Shower* (Figure 111), both of 1963. In the former, a man stands beneath a shower, his back washed by his (male) companion, incongruously juxtaposed with a telephone, chintz armchair and voluminous vase of flowers; in the latter, one man stands fully behind a shower curtain, his body abstracted by its folds, whilst to the left of the image another man appears to be stepping in to join him. These images are notable for their merging of

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<sup>118</sup> Melia, *Images of men in the early work of David Hockney* (unpublished MPhil dissertation), University of Manchester, 1991, p. 100.

<sup>119</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 99.

<sup>120</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 55.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

fantasy and reality, of photographic reference and first-hand observation; in the case of *Two Men in a Shower*, the left-hand figure is culled from a physique magazine, whilst the other was painted from life, with Hockney's friend Mo McDermott posing in the artist's own shower.<sup>122</sup>

On Hockney's arrival in Los Angeles in 1964, this fascination with showers can be seen to continue, with such imagery for a time dominating his paintings and drawings. The pencil drawing *Clean Boy* of 1964 (Figure 140) shows the closely-observed torso, buttocks and upper legs of a boy standing beneath a shower jet, the lower portion of his legs concealed in a tub familiar from *Physique Pictorial* photographs (Figure 141). Like the figure in *Boy About to Take a Shower*, this is an incomplete, anonymous body, a nameless, headless boy. In drawings such as these, more so even than in Hockney's completed paintings, one can clearly identify the physical areas that piqued the artist's sexual interest. The swell of the buttocks and smooth skin of the thighs is carefully observed and shaded, the body bent forward, its rear proffered to the viewer; the head, meanwhile, dissolves into white paper. In the title and execution of this drawing, Hockney's association between the clean, wet, American body and sexual excitement is clear. The 'Americanness' of these embodiments of homoerotic desire is made most explicit in the title of the painting based on this study, *Man Taking a Shower in Beverly Hills* (1964, Figure 142). Despite the tiled background identifying the work as being based at least in part upon a *Physique Pictorial* photograph, the title transplants its subject westwards from Mizer's downtown LA studio to the altogether more salubrious – and glamorous – surroundings of Beverly Hills. Even the medium of the work, acrylic paint, can be construed as a celebration of a perceived superiority of America over Britain on the part of the artist. Speaking of his first experiences in California, Hockney stated:

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<sup>122</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 93.

I went into an art store and it was full of American equipment. I'd tried acrylic paint in England before and I hadn't liked it at all; texture, colours weren't so very good. But the American ones I liked. It was superior paint.<sup>123</sup>

It was this 'superior' American paint, with its vibrant colours, rapid drying time and fashionable flatness that Hockney chose to depict the 'beautiful bodies'<sup>124</sup> of American youth.

In her essay 'The Erotics of the Built Environment', Cécile Whiting situates these works in the context of the real estate revolution in Southern California at this time, one in which, she argues, 'the single family home with backyard pool itself constituted one of the most public and visible icons of Los Angeles in the 1960s'.<sup>125</sup> She draws the reader's attention to contemporary advertisements that extolled the virtues and comforts of life in 'sunny Southern California' (Figure 143), which bear a remarkable similarity to Hockney's representations of suburban Los Angeles, as seen in *A Lawn Sprinkler* (Figure 144) and *A Bigger Splash* (Figure 145), both of 1967. These large-scale, vividly coloured paeans to the Californian lifestyle are unpopulated – anyone, it seems, could live in these houses. To return to Hockney's claim that one can only 'do something imaginative' when working from photographs,<sup>126</sup> it is significant that whilst the artist lifts some of the visual tropes of *Physique Pictorial* images, his appropriated figures inhabit a very different locale from the 'tackiness'<sup>127</sup> of Mizer's own studio environment. This is most evident in works such as *Man Taking a Shower in Beverly Hills* (Figure 142) and *Man Taking Shower* (Figure 146) of 1965. In both, the variegated grey tiles of Mizer's shower can be perceived, a nod to the source of the artist's inspiration; however, rather than the amateurish, make-shift set-ups of *Physique Pictorial*, Hockney's figures occupy the imagined luxury of Whiting's real estate brochures.

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<sup>123</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 98.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>125</sup> Whiting, p. 123.

<sup>126</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 99.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p. 98.

In both of these paintings, Hockney has added a domestic context, a luxurious pink carpet edging the bathroom of *Man Taking a Shower in Beverly Hills*, and modish furniture visible in the next room in both works. In *Man Taking Shower*, what appears to be a double bed occupies the fashionable, minimalist interior. This contrast is noted by Whiting, when she writes:

The *Physique Pictorial* photographs on which Hockney based his Los Angeles paintings envisioned a homoerotic alternative to the single-family home: muscle-bound youths living together in simply furnished interiors, performing such everyday tasks as cooking and taking showers, more or less in the nude. Photographed close-up and from slightly below, the male bodies fill the small, cramped bathrooms and kitchens like giants in a Lilliputian home. Even as the nudes remain the focus of the photographs, the fixtures – narrow showers, tiny bathtubs, modest sinks, small aluminum mirrors – locate the men in lower-middle-class interiors.<sup>128</sup>

Whiting also quotes Richard Meyer's assertion that Hockney's images, in transporting their occupants to 'more up-scale dwellings... shifted type and neighbourhood, from the "rough trade" around Pico Union to the well-heeled men of Beverly Hills... from lower middle-class to upper middle-class'.<sup>129</sup> One could argue that in transposing these figures from one class and physical setting to another, we see another attempt on the part of the artist to normalise homosexual lifestyles for a heterosexual/heterosexist audience. Indeed, Whiting claims that 'Hockney's representation of gay domesticity and eroticism attained public visibility precisely because the male nude migrated from the small black-and-white photographs published in *Physique Pictorial* to the high-art practice of painting on canvas'.<sup>130</sup> Just as Hockney's use of lavatory graffiti in works such as *The Third Love Painting* can be interpreted as transforming the art gallery into a 'gay space', so too do these images of homosexual domesticities.

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<sup>128</sup> Whiting, p. 120.

<sup>129</sup> Richard Meyer, 'Warhol, Hockney and the Secret of Physique Photography', paper delivered at 'Media Pop', Getty Research Institute, 6-7 April 2001, quoted in Whiting, pp.120-121.

<sup>130</sup> Whiting, p. 124.

Hockney himself was aware that Mizer's models were often drawn from less than savoury backgrounds, observing that 'the *Physique Pictorial* men get men, boys, when they've just come out of the city gaol: Do you want to earn ten dollars? Take your clothes off, jump in the pool, that sort of thing'.<sup>131</sup> This method of recruitment would suggest that not all of Mizer's models would themselves have been homosexual. As such, Melia has contended that one must make the 'obvious yet important distinction' between those works of Hockney – based on source material such as Mizer's photographs – which explicitly represent homosexuals, and those which merely represent men or boys.<sup>132</sup> However, I would contest this. Although Mizer's models may have been heterosexual in their personal lives, in the context of the *Physique Pictorial* images their likenesses are drawn upon by the photographer in order to depict fantasies of homosocial/sexual camaraderie and domesticity, albeit mediated through the alibis of which Waugh has written. I would argue that the same can be said of Hockney's works that draw upon these images.

In keeping with the tendencies towards hermeticism, codification and subterfuge in relation to historical homosexual cultures already considered, it is significant to note that Mizer codified his images not only through Waugh's alibis, but still more explicitly through his use of an actual symbolic code to denote personality traits of his models. An official code sheet, headed 'Subjective Character Analysis' (Figure 147), was distributed to purchasers of Mizer's mail order photographs,<sup>133</sup> and offered a key to symbols that could be observed in some of the photographs that appeared in *Physique Pictorial* itself, such as this from 1963 (Figure 148). Amongst the traits apparently signified included 'likes to dominate', 'closed mind' and, in the tradition of du Maurier, 'aesthetic', with the advice 'may tend to be mother-

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<sup>131</sup> Hockney *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 99.

<sup>132</sup> Melia, *Images of men in the early work of David Hockney* (unpublished MPhil dissertation), University of Manchester, 1991, p.

<sup>133</sup> Dian Hanson, *Bob's World: The Life and Boys of AMG's Bob Mizer*, Cologne, Taschen, 2009, p. 10.

oriented'. However, in a further layer of meaning, Mizer had a personal, very different sheet of interpretations for the same symbols (Figure 149). Whereas the official code sheet featured the euphemistic 'closed mind' for the symbol 'Θ', Mizer's personal key interprets this as 'can not (sic) be fucked'. An official interpretation of the symbolic code appended to the figures in the 1963 *Physique Pictorial* photograph (Figure 148) for example would suggest that the men in question were variously agreeable, dominant and ambitious; however, unofficially, Mizer's code signified that each of them was in fact 'gay and proud'.

It was a photograph from the July 1962 issue of *Physique Pictorial* of 'a boy with a little apron tied round his waist scrubbing the back of another boy in a rather dingy American room'<sup>134</sup> (Figure 141) that was the inspiration for *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* (Figure 11), the last of the three domestic scenes that Hockney painted in 1963. Both *Domestic Scene, Notting Hill* (Figure 37) and *Domestic Scene, Broadchalke, Wilts* (Figure 38) deal with similar visual themes of all-male domesticity, with each painting in the series featuring two figures in often incongruous interior set-ups; in the first two paintings, the pairs of figures were modelled by friends of the artist. In his assessment of the domestic scenes, Melia compares these double-figure paintings, produced after the artist's graduation from the Royal College, with Hockney's earlier attempts, such as *We Two Boys Together Clinging*. He draws attention to the fact that the artist's domestic scenes are situated within private, domestic spaces, whereas the earlier works are sited within implied public space.<sup>135</sup> Where works such as *Adhesiveness* and *Teeth Cleaning, W. 11* celebrate the physically, furtively sexual, these subsequent, more naturalistically observed images focus on the seemingly mundane – two male figures allowed to share a domestic environment. As such, Melia appears to interpret the domestic scenes as amounting to a performative 'aping' of a contemporary version of

<sup>134</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 55.

<sup>135</sup> Melia, *Images of men in the early work of David Hockney* (unpublished MPhil dissertation), University of Manchester, 1991, p. 84.

heterosexual monogamy. In his interpretation of *Domestic Scene, Broadchalke, Wilts*, Melia makes a somewhat troubling attempt to map ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ behaviours onto the figures depicted. He writes:

As in *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles*, we seem to have meanings being produced by the painting around role-behaviour. Hockney has had to improvise these oppositions to differentiate the role-behaviour of the partners from one another since he cannot rely on the dichotomy of sexual difference which traditional images of married life rely on. (...) The opposition clothed/naked is most often found in those representations of a male artist with his model in the artist’s studio – the artist usually shown clothed and *seated*, the model nude and *standing*. From this perspective, the polarities can be seen to produce meanings which conflict with the earlier reading: ‘masculine’, in this context, can be mapped onto the seated figure.

In this image, the artist has paired the profile and frontal image to create a meaning which is reinforced by the difference in posture. Yet, the polarity in dress when paired with the difference of posture seems to create an opposite meaning to this. It would seem that the signifiers of the polarity masculine/feminine are confused.<sup>136</sup> (original emphases)

Given the heavily psychoanalytic positioning of Melia’s subsequent analysis, this attempt to ascribe masculine and feminine behaviours to the figures depicted is perhaps not too surprising. In *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles*, for example, Melia designates the left-hand figure to be the ‘feminine’ one, on account of his small, frilly apron. He washes the back of his nude companion who stands beneath a potentially phallic shower head. Whilst there is certainly an opposition of the nude versus the clothed figure in *Domestic Scene, Broadchalke, Wilts*, I would argue that these images can perhaps be interpreted less as homosexual performative refigurations of unequal heterosexual partnerships, and more as reflections of the gender symmetry of homosexual relationships, with both members being of the same sex. Both *Broadchalke, Wilts* and its Los Angeles counterpart are notable for their symmetries of gender and design. Glazebrook’s commentary on the former painting in the 1970 Whitechapel retrospective catalogue remarks particularly upon this, describing:

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid, pp. 82-83.



Two young men, similarly clad in dark trousers and white T-shirts, are seated on a small sofa. The limbs of both are arranged to form a coherent pattern, simple but ingenious. The symmetrical balance is echoed to right and left by the two curtains, the two sofa arms and the two schematised vases of flowers.<sup>137</sup>

*Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* is similarly symmetrical in the central placement of the two figures. Indeed, in each of the three paintings there is a visual similarity between the figures, for which Hockney has stated there was ‘no attempt at likeness’ from the sitters used.<sup>138</sup> The similarities afforded by same-gender relationships are emphasised in several of the artist’s works of the early 1960s. In the bottom right-hand corner of *The Third Love Painting* of 1961, a small, stylised human figure appears from whom emanates, speech bubble-like, the sentence ‘I want to meet a boy who is like myself’. The implications of this statement are made clear in the drawing *Self Portrait with Mirror and Cigarettes* (Figure 150) of the same year. Whilst the representation of the human body remains highly stylised in this work, Hockney’s use of Whitman’s numerical code once again identifies the left-hand figure as ‘4.8’ or David Hockney himself. This figure is shown kissing a mirror, his reflection labelled with a direct reversal of the numerical characters. This, I would argue, represents clearly Hockney’s desire for a most fundamental form of gender symmetry in his conception of the ideal intimate relationship at this time. In addition to the visual similarities of the male figures seen in the domestic scenes, *Seated Woman Drinking Tea, Being Served by Standing Companion* (Figure 151), also painted in 1963, can be construed as representing Hockney’s sole attempt at depicting a lesbian relationship in his oeuvre – that is, a relationship between women who sexually or romantically desire one another. However, commentators such as Glazebrook have previously neglected to consider this possibility, grouping the work instead with the

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<sup>137</sup> Glazebrook, p. 34.

<sup>138</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 93.

artist's 'curtain paintings'.<sup>139</sup> One could go so far as to argue that in so doing, Glazebrook enacts Luce Irigaray's criticism of Freudian conceptions of female sexuality. She argues that as a result of the phallocentrism of his theories, '(t)hat a woman might desire a woman "like" herself, someone of the "same" sex (...) is simply incomprehensible to Freud'<sup>140</sup> – and by extension, to those that base their own conceptions of sexuality on his. The female figures of Hockney's painting, along with the title, are taken from the photographer Eadweard Muybridge's influential book *The Human Figure in Motion*, first published in 1887 (Figure 152). Although he claims to have been drawn to the subject on account of the absurdity of the title, which fails to draw any attention to the incongruous nudity of its figures,<sup>141</sup> like the domestic scenes, the work presents a harmonious vision of same-gender domesticity. One can compare this symmetry of gender with the choice of Narcissus as cipher for homosexuality in late-nineteenth century Britain, as noted above.

Such harmonious symmetry is in stark contrast with two of the artist's earliest representations of heterosexual relationships, *The First Marriage (A Marriage of Styles I)* (Figure 81) of 1962 and *The Second Marriage* (Figure 127) of 1963. Both of these images present stark visual oppositions, in addition to the fundamental binary opposition of gender. Whereas the figures of the domestic scenes are stylistically as well as anatomically similar, those in *The First Marriage* are opposites in every respect. Whilst the groom is depicted relatively naturalistically, suited and booted and with a receding hairline, his bride is an entirely different quantity, inspired by an ancient Egyptian sculpture glimpsed in Berlin's Pergamon Museum.<sup>142</sup> Her naked breasts, painted like targets, project weapon-like from her chest, very much like those of the woman whom Hockney's alter-ego marries in *A Rake's*

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<sup>139</sup> Glazebrook, p. 32.

<sup>140</sup> Luce Irigaray, 'Female Hom(m)osexuality', Donald Morton (ed.), *The Material Queer: A LesBiGay Cultural Studies Reader*, Boulder, Colorado and Oxford, Westview Press, 1996, p. 176.

<sup>141</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, p. 89.

*Progress* (Figure 99). Where the man, stands, his wife sits; neither appears to interact with the other. The grey shape at the bottom-left of the canvas has been explained by the artist as representing a Gothic window, added for its ecclesiastical connections with marriage,<sup>143</sup> but one could also interpret this as a headstone – a most literal and pessimistic reminder of the phrase ‘till death do us part’. These oppositional themes are continued in *The Second Marriage*. The husband of this painting appears considerably older, but once again accompanied by a wife depicted radically differently in terms of style. She too sports the target-like, stuck-on breasts, but her face, again inspired by Egyptian statuary,<sup>144</sup> is now grey and curiously empty. Nestled in a bourgeois setting of chintz wallpaper and soft furnishings, the painting is cramped and dark, a world away from the light, spacious vistas of the domestic scenes. The title of the work alone suggests a failed first marriage, a hint that the Establishment ideal of heterosexual monogamy is less stable than one is led to believe. Hockney’s homosexual partnerships are quite literally unions of equals, two like quantities making a harmonious whole, allowing the ‘happy ending’<sup>145</sup> of E. M. Forster’s hopes to be realised through this visual fiction. By contrast, it could be argued that the implication of such images as *The First Marriage* is that male and female are opposite and irreconcilable, conjoined merely by the weight of tradition and the institution of marriage, on an insipid road to the grave.

In relation to a different aspect of Hockney’s engagement with visual quotation in his works of this period, it was the influence of another homosexual figurative artist, Francis Bacon, that drove Hockney to acquire his own copy of Muybridge’s *The Human Figure in Motion*.<sup>146</sup> Hockney was certainly aware of the older artist’s work during his formative years

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Glazebrook, p. 31.

<sup>145</sup> Forster, *Maurice*, p. 236.

<sup>146</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, pp. 90-91.

at the Royal College, attending Bacon's exhibition at the Marlborough Gallery in the Spring of 1960.<sup>147</sup> It should be emphasised that Muybridge was not himself homosexual,<sup>148</sup> and produced his images ostensibly in pursuit of a 'scientific' understanding of motion.<sup>149</sup> Nonetheless, Bacon frequently turned to Muybridge's photographs as source material for his own, at times erotically charged, explorations of the male nude, as typified by the 1953 painting *Two Figures* (Figure 153). The work depicts two bodies, apparently male, wrestling on a bed. The outstretched legs of the lower figure are pinioned down by his companion (or opponent), who straddles and envelops him. The artist's characteristic loose brushwork creates the illusion of movement, whilst the teeth of the lower figure are bared in a grimace or scream; whether of pain or pleasure, the viewer is left unsure. The source image for the painting is derived from a photograph by Muybridge of two naked men wrestling (Figure 154), reproduced in *The Human Figure in Motion*, but Bacon's reinterpretation, like the work's title, imbues the figures with a sense of ambiguity. One could interpret this painting as a genuine depiction of a bout of wrestling, or alternatively as a codified representation of a (homo)sexual act; indeed, friends of Bacon apparently jokingly referred to *Two Figures* as *The Buggers*.<sup>150</sup> Muybridge's photographs were a welcome resource to mid-century homosexuals, as a reader's letter published in the Spring 1959 issue of *Physique Pictorial* demonstrates. The writer states:

I recently sent \$10 to Dover Publications in New York City and received a 400 page volume entitled 'The Human Figure in Motion' with 4,789 photographs by Eadweard Muybridge, and almost all of these are complete nudes, many including the genitalia.

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<sup>147</sup> Watson, unpaginated.

<sup>148</sup> Marta Braun, Anne McCormack, Stephen Herbert and Paul Hill, *Eadweard Muybridge: the Kingston Museum Bequest*, Hastings, The Projection Box in association with Kingston Museum and Heritage Service, 2004, p. 141.

<sup>149</sup> James Gifford, *Dayneford's Library: American Homosexual Writing, 1900-1913*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1995, p. 100.

<sup>150</sup> David L Phillips, 'Francis Bacon', in Robert Aldrich, Garry Wotherspoon (eds.), *Who's Who in Contemporary Gay and Lesbian Culture*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 26.

I understand this book can be sold openly in book stores and meets no resistance from postal inspectors in passing thru the U.S. mails (sic). Many of the wrestling duals in this book are even more subject to misinterpretation than (sic) the most extreme work of most of the current physique photographer's (sic) offerings which I have seen.<sup>151</sup>

In reply, Mizer wrote:

The Muybridge book has achieved a classic status (it is used in art schools thruout (sic) the world, by the Disney Studios etc.) and even the most bigoted officials dare not expose themselves as aesthetic barbarians by attempting to interfere with its distribution. (...) the Muybridge book is so blurred as to make this volume of somewhat limited advantage to artists, and possibly this too saves its legal neck. A modern-day photographer who would show the same illustrations in fine detail would probably end up with 20 years in prison.<sup>152</sup>

Mizer's somewhat bitter response demonstrates the frustration felt by the photographer and his contemporaries at the double standards that were prevalent at the time of his writing – albeit double standards that he frequently exploited himself, as witnessed by his frequent recourse to illustration and in the appearance of a Michelangelo nude on the cover of the Winter 1954-1955 issue of his magazine (Figure 60). This exchange also highlights the popularity of wrestling scenes in physique photography (Figure 155), for the express reason that they were often very much open to (mis)interpretation, as with Bacon's treatment of the subject matter. The sinuous form of the figure in Bacon's *Study from the Human Body* of 1949 (Figure 156), meanwhile, bears a remarkable similarity to the back shots of young men seen in the pages of *Physique Pictorial*<sup>153</sup>. In his essay 'Comparative Strangers', Simon Ofield draws the reader's attention to a photograph of Bacon's chaotic studio at 7 Reece Mews, in which a well-thumbed copy of the March 1962 issue of *Physique Pictorial* can be clearly seen atop a pile of assorted books and magazines (Figure 157). Whilst, as Ofield

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<sup>151</sup> *Physique Pictorial*, vol. 9, no. 9, Los Angeles, Athletic Model Guild, July 1959, p. 7.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Although *Physique Pictorial* itself did not appear until 1951, other publications and photographs were available at this time.

points out, one has no way of knowing whether Bacon purchased it the time of publication or acquired it much later,<sup>154</sup> that the artist had the magazine in his possession, along with his confirmed appropriation from other photographic sources, suggests that he too may well have been inspired by its visual lexicon.

The usage of photographic reference materials by both Bacon and Hockney in the production of their homoerotic works had historical precedent. As seen in the previous chapter, the American painter Thomas Eakins produced works such as *The Swimming Hole* partly through references to photographs he had himself taken of his young male students. Indeed, Thomas Waugh has argued that, in the wake of gay liberation, critics and scholars have been able to establish a canon of homoerotic photography;<sup>155</sup> this can be compared to the proliferation in recent years of compilations of homosexually-themed writings, examples of which have been noted previously. From the mid-nineteenth through to the early-twentieth centuries, such images evolved from photographs of the Academic nude or *académie*, genuinely marketed towards practicing artists;<sup>156</sup> however, as Waugh describes somewhat colourfully in his assessment of the phenomenon, ‘the painters were left behind as the purest, most functional of anatomical studies became fodder for leering wankers as well... Academic male nudes inevitably reached an emerging gay constituency as part of their undifferentiated secondary audience’.<sup>157</sup> With this alternative usage increasingly recognised by producers, consciously erotic, and indeed homoerotic, photographs came to be made and marketed. Amongst the most famous of these was Wilhelm Von Gloeden, a Prussian photographer who,

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<sup>154</sup> Simon Ofield, ‘Comparative Strangers’, Matthew Gale and Chris Stephens (eds.), *Francis Bacon*, exhibition catalogue, London, Tate Britain, 2008, p. 64.

<sup>155</sup> Waugh, p. 59.

<sup>156</sup> Waugh, p.61.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

suffering from ill health, settled in the town of Taormina, Sicily in 1876.<sup>158</sup> Himself a homosexual<sup>159</sup> and acquainted with Oscar Wilde,<sup>160</sup> Von Gloeden captured local youths draped and posed in the manner of classical antiquity (Figures 158 and 160). Allen Ellenzweig, in his consideration of Von Gloeden's work, suggests that the photographer's treatment of the landscape and his models are symptomatic of a northern European enthrallment with the classical south, with the warmth of its climate believed to be correlative with the sensuality of its citizens.<sup>161</sup> Aldrich notes that another Italian island, Capri, had also become a fashionable resort for rich, northern European homosexuals by the late-nineteenth century.<sup>162</sup>

Von Gloeden's images can certainly be interpreted as homoerotic; like Mizer's pictures of Muscle Beach's teenage bodybuilders, his photographs fetishise the rugged good looks of his sun-scorched sitters, transforming working-class Sicilian youths into neo-classical idols. One can compare the photograph known as *Sicilian Youth with Veil* (c. 1885-1905, Figure 158) with one reproduced in the January 1961 issue of *Physique Pictorial* (Figure 159). In Von Gloeden's image, a rustic-looking youth, photographed slightly from above, meets the viewer's gaze; he smiles slightly, his head cocked to one side, an elaborately embroidered, sheer shawl lending an air of exoticism – and the effeminate – in its veiling of his smooth, naked body. The *Physique Pictorial* photograph is altogether more camp in its presentation of the young 'Robin Hood',<sup>163</sup> whose nudity is shielded by a remarkably elaborate, gilded jockstrap, his arms pinioned between two posts; however, both images re-

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<sup>158</sup> Robert Aldrich, *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy*, London, Routledge, 1993, pp. 143-152.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, p. 143.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 91.

<sup>161</sup> Allen Ellenzweig, 'Von Gloeden in Europe, Holland Day in America', *The Homoerotic Photograph: Male Images from Durieu/Delacroix to Mapplethorpe*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 35.

<sup>162</sup> Aldrich, p. 91.

<sup>163</sup> Bob Mizer, *Physique Pictorial*, vol. 10, no. 3, Los Angeles, Athletic Model Guild, January 1961, p. 25.

inscribe their working-class sitters as repositories of homoerotic fantasy. One could argue that an even greater similarity of intent can be inferred between Mizer's myriad shots of young men's backs in his shower and an untitled Von Gloeden photograph of c. 1900 (Figure 160). Here the gaze is averted, the young man's naked, hairless body shown from behind, one hip enticingly pushed out in a contrapposto pose reminiscent of Renaissance statuary. The implied male viewer is in a position of dominance; the youth's body is seemingly offered to a penetrating 'other'. Significantly, the wreath of leaves around his head also recalls a Classical visual paradigm, an allusion to the concept of 'Greek love' as construed by contemporary homosexual readers of Classical texts such as Plato's *Phaedrus*.<sup>164</sup> Indeed, Classical precedent makes itself felt even within the pages of *Physique Pictorial*, with a number of models posed in faux-Classical attire (Figure 161), whilst one of the magazine's regular illustrators, who produced drawings of homoerotic fantasy such as *Santa Jr* and *The Cut Up Present* (Figures 162-163), used the pseudonym of 'Spartacus'.

The use of photographic material in the creation of works with a homoerotic bent can also be discerned amongst Hockney's contemporaries. As has been shown, Francis Bacon made frequent recourse to Muybridge's *The Human Figure in Motion* as well as physique magazines, whilst Andy Warhol was a most prolific producer of such work, based upon both commercial images and his own photographs. *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* (Figure 164), considered briefly in the first chapter, draws upon FBI mugshots to glamorise a gay erotic archetype – the hoodlum<sup>165</sup> – with punning humour, whilst his *Sex Parts* series of the late 1970s and early 1980s utilised photographs of the artist's own making. Meanwhile Warhol's early *Golden Nude* of 1957 (Figure 165) can be compared with the anal erotics of Mizer's shower scenes and Von Gloeden's enticing youths; one could argue that the physique

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<sup>164</sup> Aldrich, pp. 98-99.

<sup>165</sup> 'Are Hoodlums Glamorous?', *Physique Pictorial*, vol. 11, no. 3, March 1962, p. 12.



magazine practice of showcasing the buttocks, rather than the penis, in order to avoid the wrath of the censor actually serves to elevate their erotic potential. This is emphasised most clearly by Warhol in this work, which crops and gilds the body to emphasise the site of the artist's greatest interest.

As has been shown, Hockney's own works of the early to mid 1960s representing homosexual persons and relationships demonstrate an affinity with the physical and sexual tropes forwarded by physique publications such as *Physique Pictorial* to a significant degree. Indeed, the artist's own personal homoerotic photographs of the 1970s (Figures 201-202, 208-209), discussed in detail in chapter four, can be seen to follow aesthetic precedents established by Mizer. In an image such as *Cleanliness is Next to Godliness* (Figure 138), Hockney re-works physique photographs printed on cheap paper and sold for thirty-five cents an issue, creating a lasting art object using an appropriated visual vocabulary of the body. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Melia has asserted that had Hockney been born some fifty years earlier, he would simply have gone to Capri rather than Los Angeles, and used Von Gloeden's photographs rather than Mizer's.<sup>166</sup> However, I would argue that this is not the case, and that in viewing Los Angeles merely as an exotic clime interchangeable with any other, Melia misses what I believe to be a fundamental issue in the artist's move to America. In the 1976 autobiography, Hockney describes an exchange with his friend and fellow expatriate Christopher Isherwood:

I don't know how it was that we hit it off, but we did. It wasn't only that we were both English, but we were both from northern England. I remember Christopher later said Oh David, we've so much in common; we love California, we love American boys, and we're from the north of England. Of course Christopher's from the opposite side of the north of England: his family was quite rich, mine is working-class.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Melia, 'Showers, Pools and Power', p. 52.

<sup>167</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 98.

If Hockney had indeed been born in the final decades of the nineteenth century, as a man from a working-class, Northern background, he would most likely never have left England, or even Yorkshire. Matt Cook has demonstrated how class divisions were inherent to British homosexual hierarchies from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, and the source of much scandal,<sup>168</sup> emphasised by Hugh David in his accounts of the Oscar Wilde trials of 1895 and the later Montagu case of 1954.<sup>169</sup> Whilst in 1893 John Addington Symonds, in a letter to Edward Carpenter, praised homosexuality as a leveller of social classes,<sup>170</sup> it is significant to note that even in the relationship between middle-class Carpenter and his younger, working-class lover George Merrill – the couple who served as the exemplars for the characters of Maurice Hall and Alec Scudder in Forster's *Maurice* – inequalities remained. Twenty years' Merrill's senior, Carpenter described his lover as having been 'bred in the slums quite below civilisation',<sup>171</sup> and claimed that 'I knew of course that George had an instinctive genius for housework, and that in all probability he would keep house better than most women would'.<sup>172</sup> In so doing, it could be argued that Carpenter essentialises Merrill's working-class background, with this seemingly imbuing him with his 'instinctive genius' for domestic drudgery.

With regard to same-gender relationships in antiquity, Aldrich highlights the historical precedent for distinct roles for partners in homosexual encounters, beginning with the older *erastes* of Classical Greek civilization, who was expected by society to select, and penetrate, a much younger *eromenos*.<sup>173</sup> As has been demonstrated, beginning in the early 1960s, Hockney began to fashion his own social and sexual identity, using his own body to reflect

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<sup>168</sup> Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 38.

<sup>169</sup> David, pp. 3-27, 151-176.

<sup>170</sup> Stuart Kellogg (ed.), *Literary Visions of Homosexuality*, New York, Haworth Press, 1983, p. 45.

<sup>171</sup> Edward Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams* (1916), Whitefish, MT, Kessinger Publishing, 2003, p. 159.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, p. 161.

<sup>173</sup> Aldrich, pp. 15-17.

his changing outlook. However, it is significant to note that the roles within which he situates himself in works such as *A Rake's Progress*, and in his personal homoerotic photographs discussed in the next chapter, are those hitherto occupied by upper-class English homosexuals. Indeed, Hockney's own subsequent domestic arrangements can be compared with those of Carpenter and Merrill. The biographical statement regarding the artist's partner John Fitzherbert in the catalogue accompanying Hockney's National Portrait Gallery exhibition stresses how his sketches of Fitzherbert 'reflect the quiet domesticity of their lives together – John sleeping, reading and cooking'.<sup>174</sup>

In view of the inherent class inequalities evident in British homosexual hierarchies of the 1950s and 1960s, I would argue that Hockney's decision to leave Britain for California was not merely to exchange a chilly climate for a perennially warm one, but also to escape his role in the British class system, a consideration that is overlooked by Melia in his thesis. That this was the case was confirmed by Hockney in 2009, when he stated:

LA was *the* gay place. But uh... it opened you up. I mean America, in a... especially if you were, you know, kind of... I did point out, if you were English, working-class, which I am; I mean, I divide the English working-class up a little bit. There was always a very conservative side of it, you know, 'we can't do this, we just don't do that', and then there was a radical side, 'you're as good as anybody else'; well, that's what I'm from, that's my parents. But you know, I come from a... they had a very... restricted view of the world, really. Essentially. They never travelled, had never been out of Bradford that much, in those days. And so to go to New York was like... oh, it was... very... you felt very very free; I did. Very very free. Nobody cared where you were from; whereas in London they'd be mocking my accent... I'd have had a heavier accent at that time.<sup>175</sup>

From this it is clear that escape from traditional British class structures – or at least, the avoidance of what would have been his traditional role within them – were significant in Hockney's decision to leave Britain for the United States. Born in 1937, Hockney was over

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<sup>174</sup> Howgate and Shapiro, p. 225.

<sup>175</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. vi.

three decades' Isherwood's junior, and significantly younger than either Francis Bacon or Keith Vaughan. As such, he was one of the first generation of working-class children to benefit from the implementation of the 1944 Education Act, which put in place provision for grammar school education for the most able regardless of social background.<sup>176</sup> Hockney was the recipient of a scholarship to Bradford Grammar School in 1948;<sup>177</sup> by the early 1960s it was acknowledged that these changes to education policy had contributed to an unprecedented degree of social mobility.<sup>178</sup> Interviewed in 2009, Hockney differentiated himself from both Bacon and Vaughan as members of a different generation, one more accepting of the necessity to live 'a double life',<sup>179</sup> and also as having come from more elevated social backgrounds.<sup>180</sup> As seen in chapter one with Peter Wildeblood's assessment of conviction rates for homosexual offences, working-class individuals were far more likely to be arrested and sentenced than those from more privileged backgrounds;<sup>181</sup> indeed, as late as 1960, E.M. Forster wrote, in his endnote to *Maurice*, that 'Clive on the bench will continue to sentence Alec in the dock'.<sup>182</sup> In London, Hockney's accent marked him out as provincial and working-class; in America, it made him an exotic quantity in and of himself.

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<sup>176</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity*, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 96.

<sup>177</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 27.

<sup>178</sup> Ken Jones, 'The Golden Age?', *Education in Britain: 1944 to Present*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2003, p. 43.

<sup>179</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xviii.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> Wildeblood, pp. 29-30.

<sup>182</sup> Forster, p. 224. Here Forster is referring to hypocrisy and class discrimination; Clive is the young – and privileged – man with whom Maurice shares his first homosexual experiences at Cambridge; Alec is Maurice's subsequent, working-class lover.

### 4.3 Life Imitates Art Imitates Life: Hockney, Relationships and the Gay Community in Los Angeles in the 1960s

In *The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde*, Jonathan Weinberg sees the young Hockney fantasising about a life in California,<sup>183</sup> symbolised by stylised swaying palm trees and a vivid red sunset. This was to become a reality for the young artist within a few years. In 1963, Hockney's successful exhibition at the Kasmin Gallery, 'Pictures with People in', earned the artist sufficient funds to support him in his ambitions to live abroad for an extended period of time. After a brief initial stay in New York, by January 1964 he had settled in Los Angeles, where he was to remain for the most part until 1967. As has been demonstrated in this and the previous chapter, Hockney initially sought to visit the city in search of the environments and casual relationships presented by both John Rechy in *City of Night* and Bob Mizer in *Physique Pictorial*; indeed, Hockney has stated that the only period in his life in which he would consider himself to have been promiscuous was during his early months in Los Angeles.<sup>184</sup> Whilst the artist's earliest works produced in the United States can be interpreted partly as a paean to these conceptions of the city, by the latter years of the 1960s Hockney's works appear to shift in emphasis. Where images such as the shower scenes and pool paintings, for example *California* (1965; Figure 166), show a fantasised vision of gay life in Los Angeles meted through appropriated visual sources, works such as *Portrait of Nick Wilder* of 1966 (Figure 167) and *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* (Figure 83) utilise more individualised representational modes; sitters are named and identifiable in their own right. Whilst one must be wary when it comes to the inference of intentionality on the part of an artist, it will be argued that events experienced by Hockney,

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<sup>183</sup> Weinberg, *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art*, pp.153-155.

<sup>184</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68.

alongside professional and social connections forged at this time, must be considered as significant to the creation of these works.

Completed in 1967, *The Room, Tarzana* (Figure 131) can be considered to represent a turning point in Hockney's engagements with appropriated visual tropes and imagined sexual scenarios. A large work, almost two-and-a-half metres square, the painting depicts a rather sparsely furnished but well-lit room, purportedly in the Tarzana area of Los Angeles. Lying prone atop the bright green bedspread is a young man clad only in a white, short-sleeved shirt and striped sport socks – references to dominant visual tropes of physique publications, described most accurately by Peter Webb as 'the uniform of the desirable all-American boy'.<sup>185</sup> However, in spite of its title, like *Man Taking a Shower in Beverly Hills*, this work is a visual fiction, spun together from a variety of sources. Rather than being a genuine space in Tarzana itself, the room was painted directly from a colour advertisement for Macy's department store in the *San Francisco Sunday Chronicle*, and indeed was completed in Berkeley, not Los Angeles.<sup>186</sup> The model for the figure was Peter Schlesinger,<sup>187</sup> a young student whom Hockney had met in a class he taught at UCLA in 1966, and with whom he subsequently embarked upon a relationship.<sup>188</sup> Melia has written of the painting:

The spectator is installed in a position of control *and* superiority, and the representative of Los Angeles youth – Peter Schlesinger (...) – is reduced to a sexual stereotype, as the white tee-shirt and sport socks suggest. Schlesinger's presence is, once again, erased as his painted body becomes a sign not of a particular Californian but of a European's desire.<sup>189</sup> (original emphases)

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<sup>185</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 117.

<sup>186</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 124.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Peter Schlesinger, *A Chequered Past: My Visual Diary of the 60s and 70s*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2004, p. 11.

<sup>189</sup> Melia, 'Showers, Pools and Power', p. 63.

One can concur with certain elements of Melia's analysis. Certainly the male figure in the painting is objectified; pallid buttocks are exposed, with Schlesinger, in Melia's words, 'served up to be sodomised'.<sup>190</sup> The composition of the work does indeed place the viewer in a position of implied dominance, a penetrative *erastes* to the figure's *eromenos*. However, Melia does not comment on how this work represents a departure from Hockney's previous sexualised scenes. Whilst the artist presents the viewer once again with an erotic fantasy of gay Californian life that borrows from the visual tropes of physique photography, *The Room*, *Tarzana* contains a significant element of original material. Whilst the individuality of Schlesinger himself is eroded, it is nonetheless clear that this visual fantasy has some basis in the artist's lived reality.

Whilst Hockney began to construct his own scenes of homoerotic fantasy to the pattern of physique photography as early as 1963 with the domestic scenes, the figures within these works remain largely appropriated from identifiable commercial physique photographs, with some notable exceptions posed by friends. However, by 1965 the artist had begun to create figurative works mimicking the visual tropes of these images, but observed from the life – or at least his own photographs of the life. Amongst the earliest examples of such works are the drawings *Bob, London* (1965?, Figure 168)<sup>191</sup> and *Bob, France* (1965, Figure 169). Both images depict a 'ravishingly beautiful... California boy',<sup>192</sup> Bobby Earles, whom the artist had picked up in a Hollywood gay bar a week prior to his return to London for a show at the Kasmin Gallery.<sup>193</sup> Whilst Hockney's account of the affair in the 1976 autobiography makes it clear that the two had little in common beyond a purely sexual attraction, his

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

<sup>191</sup> The drawing is signed and dated by Hockney as 1964, and described as such in the 1995 Royal Academy drawing retrospective catalogue; however, Hockney's own account of events in the 1976 autobiography contradicts this – I would argue than an attribution of 1965 is more likely.

<sup>192</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 101.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

drawings showcase clearly Bob's physical charms. In *Bob, London* Hockney's sitter stands in bright white underpants beside a faintly sketched bed, arms akimbo; whilst the delicate pink of his skin is hatched with relative care, this is concentrated on the figure's thighs, petering out into the torso with the head and face composed with swift, sparse graphite marks. In *Bob, France*, meanwhile, the sitter's identity is once again eroded through the total concealment of the face; couched in the sheets of an ocean liner berth, Bob's body is objectified in near-identical fashion to the young wrestlers of *Physique Pictorial*. As has been seen with the drawing *Clean Boy*, produced the previous year and directly inspired by physique photography, the focus in *Bob, France* is clearly on the buttocks, which occupy the centre of the paper and are once again carefully observed with smooth graduations of tone. Where Hockney's Rake in *The Seven Stone Weakling* merely observes from afar the eroticised creations of another, in these images, and those that the artist produced of Schlesinger in the late 1960s, Hockney becomes an active agent through his recording of scenes of real-life sexuality.

The 1966 drawing *Dale and Mo* (Figure 77) was considered in the previous chapter in relation to its use as a preparatory study for the Cavafy etching series, which has been noted for its total lack of female figures. Like the *Bob* drawings and *The Room, Tarzana, Dale and Mo* is a scene of Hockney's own construction, with friends of the artist used to create an image of intimacy, both social and sexual. A case can be made that in so doing, Hockney was not only forwarding an agenda of same-sex domesticity and intimacy on the level of a visual fiction, but also reflecting a social reality that he had created for himself in Los Angeles. In addition to being an avid collector of commercial physique photographs, Hockney was himself a prolific photographer in his own right, whether for the production of artworks such as the joiner pictures of the 1980s or for more personal reasons. In the course of my research I



was fortunate enough to be granted access to some of the artist's personal photograph albums from the 1960s, and their contents are of great significance when considering Hockney's images of homosocial/homosexual relationships in this period. An album in the artist's personal collection entitled 'Photos: 1960 – August 1967' contains a selective visual record of Hockney's experiences throughout this period, ranging from photographs of areas of homosexual interest on Long Beach in New York circa 1961 and a snapshot of a young Hockney outside Liberace's shop on Los Angeles' La Cienega Boulevard, through to posed images of Peter Schlesinger dressed as another gay erotic archetype, the topless sailor.<sup>194</sup> Particularly remarkable amongst the images contained within the album are Hockney's photographs of his male friends in states of abandon and camaraderie. One image, inscribed 'Dick and Bob, Hollywood, 1965' shows two young men kissing, whilst another from 1966 shows Hockney himself lying in bed with Ferrill Amacker and another man identified as 'Russ'. Still others show the artist and his friends engaged in carefree and ribald sexual humour. A large pair of comedy spectacles spelling out the word 'ZOOM' features in a number of the photographs; a group labelled as 'Dale Ossie Trevor Jimmy Powis Terrace June 1966' features three-way embraces between several of the figures, as well as the performance of simulated fellatio with the over-sized spectacles. Another, later photograph shows Schlesinger, seen nude from behind, performing the same actions upon a carrot. As such, the humorous stance that Hockney was seen to take towards homosexuality in the previous chapter in his engagements with textual sources can be seen to extend into the everyday lives of the artist himself and his social circle throughout this period. The photographs in the album are in colour, then a relatively novel medium which would certainly have required commercial processing at a time in which prosecution for possession – and

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<sup>194</sup> Collection of David Hockney, Los Angeles.

indeed creation – of images deemed to be obscene would have been an ever-present risk; their existence is surely evidence that Hockney made good on his claim that he sought to live, in his personal time at least, an openly gay life following the example of Quentin Crisp.<sup>195</sup>

Hockney's photographs of Schlesinger were the basis of a number of works by the artist, notably *Peter Getting out of Nick's Pool* of 1966 (Figure 170). Awarded first prize when shown in the Liverpool John Moores exhibition of 1967,<sup>196</sup> the large-scale acrylic painting purportedly represents the artist's young lover emerging from the personal swimming pool of Nick Wilder, a Los Angeles contemporary art dealer whom Hockney had met in 1964, and who would later represent him in California.<sup>197</sup> However, the composition of the image, and its (homo)social implications, are more complex than may be immediately apparent. Both Melia and Andrew Causey assess this work in some detail. Causey emphasises Hockney's transformation of Schlesinger literally into an object; he argues that the artist's deliberate practice of dislocation – Hockney's nude reference photograph of Peter for the work was taken against a car radiator, not within the pool itself (Figure 171) – further objectifies the figure through a process of estrangement from its natural environment.<sup>198</sup> Melia meanwhile compares the painting with a seemingly similar one of the same year, *Portrait of Nick Wilder* (Figure 167), which appears to show the eponymous sitter posed in the same pool; like *Peter Getting out of Nick's Pool*, however, what is being presented is a composite image. As Melia points out, *Portrait of Nick Wilder* aggrandises its sitter, whereas the painting of Peter diminishes his status. He writes:

We may note that Wilder's full name is given in one title – he is an identifiable individual – whereas in the second only the young man's Christian name is supplied.

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<sup>195</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xi.

<sup>196</sup> Glazebrook, p. 59.

<sup>197</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 89.

<sup>198</sup> Andrew Causey, 'Mapping and Representing', Paul Melia (ed.), *David Hockney*, Manchester 1995, pp. 102-103.

In the portrait of Wilder, much more of the pool and building is shown, presumably to serve as a sign of his wealth. One of the principal pleasures he will have derived from this portrait is that of seeing himself depicted as wealthy – a man of property. However, an absence is significant here: a public sign bearing the notice ‘No lifeguard on premises’ is present in a study. While there may be a number of reasons why this sign was not included in the finished portrait, the effect of the omission is to establish Wilder as the owner of the building and pool. Neither the entire building nor the whole pool was, in fact, owned by Wilder (it belonged to a condominium) despite the claim to the contrary contained in the title of the other painting.<sup>199</sup>

One could go so far as to argue that the presentation of Peter Schlesinger by Hockney in works such as *Peter Getting out of Nick's Pool* serves to objectify him at the most basic level – Schlesinger, whom the artist admitted in an interview with Marco Livingstone served as an embodiment of his Californian fantasies,<sup>200</sup> becomes the homosexual equivalent of the trophy wife. Hockney took countless photographs of Schlesinger<sup>201</sup> along with a great many studies and drawings, including *Peter, Albergo la Flora I* (Figure 172) and *Peter on a Bed, Rome* (Figure 173), both of 1967. Each epitomises one of Hockney's favoured drawing styles of the time; the former is a visually spartan pen and ink drawing, whilst the latter is a richly shaded, coloured crayon work. The line drawing showcases Schlesinger's slim, almost hairless body, leaning slightly and framed by rustic wooden shutters, his circumcised penis drawn with great care. Whilst he faces the viewer directly, youthful and full-lipped, the sitter's gaze is slightly averted, eliminating the possibility of a confrontational returned gaze. *Peter on a Bed, Rome* meanwhile resembles nothing so much as *Bob, France* (Figure 169) of two years' previously. Excepting the forename-only identification, identity is once again obliterated, with Schlesinger's face turned away from the viewer. Like *The Room, Tarzana*, the drawing is unusual amongst Hockney's works of the period in its use of marked diagonals in the construction of its perspective. The relatively steep angle of the bedspread stretches

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<sup>199</sup> Melia, 'Showers, Pools and Power', p. 60.

<sup>200</sup> Livingstone, p. 103.

<sup>201</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 121.

Schlesinger's body enticingly across its length, the viewer once again positioned behind and slightly above; this means of inviting the viewer to partake in voyeuristic pleasures recalls the visual conceits of Edgar Degas in his presentations of female bathers, for example *The Tub* of 1886 (Figure 174). In *Peter on a Bed, Rome*, the buttocks are of course emphasised and literally highlighted; in his biography of the artist, Webb notes that both Schlesinger and Mo McDermott recalled 'how often Hockney would ask them to pose "bottom uppermost"'.<sup>202</sup> Certainly these art objects of the sexualised, objectified male form were lucrative for the artist; Kasmin's records demonstrate that a comfortable trade in these works was established with private collectors, some of whom wished – understandably – to remain anonymous. In 1966, Kasmin was retailing drawings at approximately fifty pounds each, a significant sum for the time; it was at this price that the critic Edward Lucie-Smith, as seen in the previous chapter a notable defender of Hockney's works dealing with homosexual themes, initially purchased *Bob, London*.<sup>203</sup> Drawings of Schlesinger himself were also popular with collectors, as seen in the first chapter with the anonymous purchase of *Peter in Bed* by Prince Aamyn Aga Khan.<sup>204</sup>

Whilst lucrative for the artist, it must be acknowledged that these images that objectify the young, sexualised, male body can be construed as exploitative to a considerable degree. As has been shown, the industry of physique photography that produced the images that (directly or indirectly) inspired many of Hockney's works of this period was itself exploitative at the most basic financial level, with often vulnerable, young, working-class men paid a pittance to pose for photographs in which they were transformed into sexual objects, available to the consumer for only thirty-five cents.<sup>205</sup> Thus objectified, the agency of the

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<sup>202</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 117.

<sup>203</sup> Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 25.

<sup>204</sup> Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 123.

<sup>205</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by Hockney*, p. 99.

original sitters is eroded, arguably even negated entirely, with them exploited not only financially but also on a further level of sexual objectification. Hockney's images that draw upon these photographs share in this exploitation. However, it is also clear that even in works that are not directly drawn from recognisable commercial physique photographs, Hockney can be seen to objectify the subjects he represents in an exploitative fashion. This can be seen as early as 1965 in the two drawings of Bobby Earles, *Bob, London* and *Bob, France* (Figures 168 and 169). As noted previously, these images are drawn from the life, but borrow from the visual lexicon of physique photography. Hockney's account of their creation in the 1976 autobiography makes clear the power dynamics at play between artist and sitter:

At the end of 1965 I had to go back to London for a show at Kasmin's. About a week before I left Hollywood I met in a gay a ravishingly beautiful boy. It was lust on my part, sheer lust, and I thought, fantastic! And I took him home that night. It seemed unfair that I should meet him just as I had to leave because of the exhibition (...) So I said Why don't you come to England? He'd never left California before. (...) We came over on the *France*, and Kasmin and a few friends came to meet us at Waterloo Station and we had this big welcome. (...) He was very dumb; really very dumb. He'd no interest in anything at all; have some sex and that's it; absolutely no interest; all he was interested in, really, was Hollywood bars. After a week I said I think you should go back; I'll give you your ticket to go back. And I put him on a plane and sent him back. There is a drawing, called *Bob, 'France'*, of a marvellous beautiful pink bottom, and that's really all he had in his favour, I suppose. But he's dead now; he died later on. Sad thing. I saw him for a year or two when I went back to California. He was a go-go boy dancing at a bar on Laguna Beach – and a few years later he took an overdose of drugs; tragic. He was a sweet boy and I felt very sad.<sup>206</sup>

This single paragraph account demonstrates clearly that Hockney had little interest in Earles beyond his 'marvellous beautiful pink bottom', and although it appears under the subheading 'a sad story', Earles' premature death appears almost as an afterthought at the end of the passage. In the previous section of this chapter, it was suggested that Hockney had viewed his move to California as an opportunity to escape traditional British class structures; however, I

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid, pp. 101-102.

would argue that rather than abandoning class divisions altogether for an egalitarian homosexual utopia, Hockney instead exchanged his working-class status in Britain for a middle-class one in Los Angeles. In a real-life re-enactment of the scenario from Rechy's *City of Night* that forms the epigraph to this chapter, Earles becomes Skipper, the beautiful kept boy, Hockney the 'director', whose new-found money and power enable him to attract the erotic flavour of the month – only to discard it just as easily when the novelty fades; so too could Mizer himself be fickle with his models. Although by all accounts the subsequent relationship between Hockney and Schlesinger was on far more equal terms than that between the artist and Earles, the images that Hockney produced of Schlesinger in the late 1960s do, as has been demonstrated, objectify the younger man in a remarkably similar, and exploitative, fashion to that seen in *Bob, France*. In both *The Room*, *Tarzana* and *Peter on a Bed, Rome*, Schlesinger becomes an essentially anonymous body, an attractive array of parts presented for the viewer's titillation.

That Schlesinger himself felt that he was objectified by Hockney was made clear in a 1986 interview with Peter Webb, in which he claimed that

David had built up a fantasy through his physique magazines of blond Californian athletes. I was not blond and not particularly athletic. I was an aspiring artist and I had a mind of my own. I was *not* the embodiment of his fantasy at all. I found it difficult to develop as an artist and as a person while living with him. We had wonderful times and I don't regret any of it, but the relationship could not have lasted for ever.<sup>207</sup> (original emphasis)

Whilst the relationship between Hockney and Schlesinger ended in 1972,<sup>208</sup> during the latter years of the 1960s Hockney produced artworks exploring the homosexual partnerships of several of those within his social circle. One of the earliest of these was the large double

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<sup>207</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p.162.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, p.161.

portrait *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* (Figure 83), completed by Hockney in 1968. The painting presents Isherwood and his younger lover Bachardy in their well-appointed Santa Monica home. Barring the window seat on the right-hand side of the canvas, the composition is harmoniously symmetrical; the equal spacing of the figures, sitting in identical armchairs, is echoed in the placing of the shutters behind them and the still life composition in the foreground. Nannette Aldred has argued that Hockney carefully exploits the nature of the gaze as propounded by Laura Mulvey. In the painting, Isherwood on the right of the image directs his gaze towards Bachardy, who in turn gazes forwards; Aldred argues that even Isherwood's crossed leg and raised elbow serve to direct the viewer's attention towards Bachardy, and that thus a relationship between the two is represented.<sup>209</sup> Although Bachardy was three decades younger than his lover, this difference is not made entirely clear in Hockney's painting. The younger man's hair appears even greyer than Isherwood's, and the age difference is neither emphasised nor problematised. Like the domestic scenes of five years previously, I would argue that this work is a celebration and promotion of homosexual relationships between two equals. Contemporary critical reviews of Hockney's works dealing with homosexual themes frequently attempted to infer an awkwardness and shamefulness within them, tendencies that, I would argue, were not in fact there. Speaking of the Cavafy etchings, Richard Findlater claimed, in loaded language, that 'the bodies in the beds are very conscious of the fact that they are not in an innocent relationship in normal moral terms'.<sup>210</sup> Whilst I would contest this pronouncement in relation to the Cavafy series, it is certainly fair to say that the same sentence would be an inaccurate assessment of *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy*. The sitters' relationship is

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<sup>209</sup> Nannette Aldred, 'Figure Paintings and Double Portraits', Paul Melia (ed.), *David Hockney*, Manchester, 1995, p. 77.

<sup>210</sup> BBC Transcript of *The Critics*, 3/1, 1966, unpaginated, Kasmin Limited Records 2001.M.1, Getty Research Institute, box 34.

presented as entirely normative and comfortably domestic, their relaxed poses in identical modish armchairs serving to emphasise this. In contrast with the makeshift set-ups and working-class models of Bob Mizer's scenes of gay domesticity, Isherwood and Bachardy are presented as middle-class intellectuals; this is made clear through the fashionable yet comfortable surroundings and the stacked, weighty books that stand on the coffee table in front of the pair. However, a nod at homoerotic archetypes can be perceived in Isherwood's revealing a striped white sports sock, identical to those sported by the figure modelled by Schlesinger in *The Room, Tarzana*. One could argue that by including this Hockney seeks to create a link between contemporary homosexual subcultures typified by physique imagery and novels such as *City of Night*, and an older model embodied by Isherwood himself. Indeed, in his novel *A Single Man*, set in the early 1960s, Isherwood touches upon desirable contemporary sartorial archetypes as articulated in physique photography and writing, emphasising his sixty-something semi-autobiographical protagonist's dedication to his exercise routine at a local gym, noting George's attire of 'sweatsocks, jockstrap and shorts'.<sup>211</sup>

Unlike the Cavafy etching series of 1966 or even the domestic scenes, *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* contains no sexual references. Its title is merely a statement of the sitters' names, and a viewer with no prior knowledge of either Hockney or Isherwood could potentially interpret the image as simply a comparatively conventional portrait of two middle-aged men. Whilst Hockney began the painting in California with sittings with Isherwood from the life, it was completed in London in 1968, the artist having returned to Britain at the request of Schlesinger. It was only one year previously that parliament had passed legislation supporting the findings of the 1957 Wolfenden report, which had recommended the partial decriminalisation of homosexual acts between consenting males

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<sup>211</sup> Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 105.



over the age of 21; however, Hockney's relationship with his younger lover would still have fallen foul of the law, as Schlesinger turned twenty on 2 April 1968. A photograph by Cecil Beaton published in the December 1968 edition of British *Vogue* (Figure 175) depicts the pair in an unusual *ménage à trois* with a glamorously-dressed female model, the painting *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* serving as a backdrop. Hockney, striking with his bleached hair and owlish glasses, is presented as the dominant creator-artist, standing over a trolley bearing the tools of his trade; Schlesinger meanwhile sits on the floor, hunched over and cross-legged.

Although Beaton's original photograph was taken in colour, the image as it appears printed in *Vogue* is split, over two pages, between colour and black and white. Whilst the painted Isherwood and Bachardy both remain coloured together, Hockney and Schlesinger are placed across this colour divide, with Hockney alone in black and white, whilst Schlesinger's tanned skin and red trousers are preserved. The apparently dominant Hockney and submissive Schlesinger are clearly contrasted with the equitable symmetry of Isherwood and Bachardy on the wall behind them; however, the sequinned elephant in the room is the female model, comically over-dressed in the informal surroundings of Hockney's studio. Visually and conceptually, she is the odd-one-out; it is tempting to suggest that this is entirely deliberate on the part of Beaton, himself a homosexual man also.<sup>212</sup> However, whilst the painting of Isherwood and Bachardy appears to present a non-threatening conception of homosexual domesticity and monogamy, it seems to have been deemed too controversial a choice for the Tate Gallery, which was offered the opportunity to buy the painting in 1968. The Tate received *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* on approval on 14 November 1968, but a letter to Hockney's dealer dated 22 November reads:

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<sup>212</sup> Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris, 1919-1939, Volumes I and II*, New York, Algora Publishing, 2006, p. 166.

Dear Kasmin,

This is to confirm our telephone conversation and to let you know officially that, although they admired Hockney's double portrait, the Trustees decided not to buy it but to wait and see what he produces in the next six to twelve months. Perhaps the best course would be to let us see the works painted for the Emmerich exhibition before they are dispatched to New York.

Yours ever, Keeper of the Modern Collection<sup>213</sup>

The painting that the Tate ultimately chose to purchase was *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy* (1970-71, Figure 176), depicting Hockney's married friends Ossie Clark and Celia Birtwell, and one of the Tate's most famous possessions. As Hockney's private photographs of the designer suggest, Clark engaged in homosexual relationships as well as his heterosexual marriage;<sup>214</sup> it seems ironic that this contributed to Clark and Birtwell's divorce, shortly after the painting's completion, in 1974, whilst Isherwood and Bachardy's homosexual partnership lasted until Isherwood's death, nearly two decades after the completion of their portrait.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has considered a number of key areas of significance in Hockney's representations of homosexual individuals, relationships and 'lifestyles' in his works from the early to mid-1960s, in particular those images that engage with Hockney's experiences of the United States. As has been shown, visual sources – both historical and contemporary – played a significant role in the artist's output of this period. However, whilst this thesis has considered the artist's engagements with textual, literary and visual sources under separate

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<sup>213</sup> Letter from the Keeper of the Modern Collection, Tate Gallery, 22 November 1968, Hyman Kreitman Research Centre.

<sup>214</sup> Martin Myrone, *Representing Britain, 1500-2000: 100 Works from Tate Collections*, London, Tate Publishing, 2000, p. 126.

chapters, it is important to remember that Hockney did in fact at times draw upon such sources concurrently, particularly in the early 1960s; this is evidenced by works such as *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* of 1961 (Figure 46), in which textual insertions from various sources can be observed alongside a painted figure reminiscent of *Physique Pictorial* models, and indeed the 1966 Cavafy etching series (Figures 62-74, 76), which draws upon the conventions and imagery of physique photography in its illustration of the poetic works of an historical author.

The genre of physique photography was clearly of particular significance to Hockney throughout the 1960s, with its influence discernable in works as far apart as *Life Painting for a Diploma* (Figure 9) at the start of the decade, and *The Room, Tarzana* (Figure 131) and *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* (Figure 83) towards its end. Indeed, Hockney's engagement with the visual tropes of the genre can be seen later still, in his own personal erotic photographs of the 1970s (Figures 208-209). However, whilst physique-inspired imagery is employed by the artist in many of his artworks of the 1960s, the appearance of these works is by no means uniform, and neither, I would argue, is the intended significance of the use of such sources. In works such as *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles* and *A Rake's Progress*, for example, physique imagery is employed to a number of ends. In the former, Hockney clearly draws upon the tropes of homosexual domesticity epitomised by Mizer's *Physique Pictorial* spreads, as well as the implied exoticism of southern California, accessible to the artist in photographic form before his having actually visited the locale for himself. In both of these works, the casual, accessible eroticism of the young male body is exploited by the artist, translated (and enlarged) from the disposable, crudely designed pages of the physique magazine to occupy the status of art (and sexual) object. In so doing, Hockney once again brings homosexual subject matter to the attention of a wider audience, with physique

imagery, like the lavatory wall graffiti considered in chapter one, transforming art object and art gallery into 'gay spaces'.

As this chapter has shown, representations of harmonious homosexual domesticities emerge as a particular concern within Hockney's oeuvre from 1963 through to the end of the decade, in contrast with the emphasis on physical intimacies displayed in earlier works such as *Adhesiveness* (Figure 3) and *Teeth Cleaning, W. 11* (Figure 31). I would argue that this shows the artist pursuing a normalising agenda in relation to the representation of homosexuality to a mainstream, predominantly heterosexual, audience and media environment. In early works such as the Domestic Scenes and *Man Taking a Shower in Beverly Hills* (Figure 139), Hockney presents homosexual men as living comfortable, ordinary, bourgeois lives, albeit with occasional incongruous nudity as seen in *Domestic Scene, Notting Hill* (Figure 37). In so doing, Hockney goes some way to producing a visual version of the 'healthy' homosexual fiction called for by David L. Freeman in 1955. Certainly Hockney's homosexual couples are presented as themselves being better matched than are his heterosexual ones. Where the heterosexual figures in *The First Marriage (A Marriage of Styles)* (Figure 81) and *The Second Marriage* (Figure 127) are depicted as grossly different from one another, with the wife in the latter image modelled on a stone statue, Hockney's Domestic Scenes, and indeed *Seated Woman Drinking Tea, Being Served by Standing Companion* (Figure 151), depict unions of equals. This narcissus-like ideal of the mirror image is expressed most clearly in *Self Portrait with Mirror and Cigarettes* (Figure 151), with its mirrored numerical codes, and the exhortation in *The Third Love Painting* of wanting 'a boy who is like myself'.

Hockney's images of homosexual intimacy and domesticity such as the Cavafy etchings, and the physique magazines that inspired them, were comparatively shocking in the

late 1960s, as evidenced by the 1968 seizure of the artist's magazines at Heathrow customs. However, with the advent of the gay liberation movement in Britain and the United States following the passage of the 1967 Sexual Offences act, and the New York Stonewall riots of 1969, the visibility of homosexual men increased greatly in the 1970s. Long-standing cultures of obfuscation, such as the Polari dialect, and alibis such as the exercise story, became increasingly unnecessary, as evidenced by the appearance in January 1969 of the first issue of *Physique Pictorial* to feature full frontal nudity. Conventions around the self-presentation of gay men also evolved through the following decade, with the rather campy, eccentric sartorial style of figures such as Crisp and Hockney increasingly dominated by more radical forms of appearance, for example the leather cultures captured by gay photographer Robert Mapplethorpe in the late 1970s. As such, previous scholarship concerned with Hockney and his representations of homosexualities has largely confined itself to considerations of the artist's works of the 1960s. However, Hockney's involvement with such homosexual themes and subjects can be seen to extend well beyond this decade, sometimes in forms very different from the paintings, drawings and prints of the 1960s. It is Hockney's status as a homosexual public figure, and the changing relevance of the artist and his works within both homosexual and heterosexual forums, that will be considered in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 5. THE LONG VIEW: PUBLIC (RE)CONCEPTIONS OF HOCKNEY FROM THE 1970S TO THE PRESENT

*Watching love stories on TV,  
watching a movie,  
I wonder where we are.  
I've wondered for a long time.*

*Ralph Pomeroy, 'Gay Love and the Movies'*<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the David Hockney of the 1960s was widely perceived as a maverick by the court of public opinion, over the course of the ensuing four decades conceptions of the artist and his work have evolved. Having already enjoyed a retrospective of sorts with the 1970 exhibition at London's Whitechapel Gallery, in 1988 a major retrospective of the artist's work was launched at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, touring to New York's Metropolitan Museum before closing at the Tate in London in 1989.<sup>2</sup> Paul Melia has addressed this exhibition and its reception, arguing that whilst it represented a zenith in terms of establishment recognition for the artist, many of Hockney's important homoerotic works were excluded from the selection.<sup>3</sup> Only a small number of comparatively hermetic pieces appeared in the show, with the domestic scenes conspicuous by their absence.<sup>4</sup> In his review of the Tate exhibition in *The Burlington Magazine*, Julian Spalding went so far as to state that:

His student paintings are (...) not only significant in his oeuvre for their formal sophistication, but also for their place within the development of his subject matter, specifically his declared homosexuality. Sadly, these works are given a poor showing here; many fine ones are missing, such as *Adhesiveness* (1960), *Going to be a Queen for Tonight* (1960), as well as the magnificent *A Grand Procession of Dignitaries in*

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Pomeroy, 'Gay Love and the Movies' (1969), in Byrne R.S. Fone (ed.), *The Columbia Anthology of Gay Literature: Readings from Western Antiquity to the Present Day*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 732.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Tuchman and Stephanie Barron (eds.), *David Hockney: A Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art and London, Tate Gallery, 1988-89, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Melia, *Images of men in the early work of David Hockney* (unpublished MPhil thesis), University of Manchester, 1991, pp. 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Tuchman and Barron (eds.), *David Hockney: A Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, pp. 251-257.

*the Semi-Egyptian Style* (1961). Their absence seriously devalues the seriousness of this 'retrospective'.<sup>5</sup>

However, if the homoerotic content of Hockney's oeuvre can be deemed to have been understated in the institutional context of the 1988 retrospective,<sup>6</sup> the same cannot be said unilaterally across the cultural market. Of particular significance is the noticeable trend of picture editors selecting images produced by the artist for the covers of volumes dealing with issues of gay interest. In addition to the examples mentioned in the introduction to this thesis (Figures 1 and 2), *Gay Men's Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Figure 177), published in 1993, features an image from the Cavafy etching series, whilst *Who's Who in Contemporary Gay and Lesbian History* (Figure 178), published in 2001, is emblazoned with the 1965 painting by Hockney *Two Boys in a Pool, Hollywood*. As such, it could be argued that in recent decades, Hockney's works themselves have become a form of 'visual shorthand' for homosexual desires. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Simon Ofield has recalled a 1980s' adolescence spent trawling London's second-hand bookshops in which for him personally, 'homosexuality came to look like a David Hockney painting',<sup>7</sup> whilst in discussing the 1980 film *American Gigolo* in an essay of 1995, Paul Burston has claimed that 'Schrader's protagonist exists in what was in 1980 an identifiably gay world. It is a world of sun-kissed bodies and swimming pools, of pastel interiors and micro-blinds. It is the world

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<sup>5</sup> Julian Spalding, 'Review: David Hockney. London, Tate Gallery', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 131, No. 1030 (January 1989), p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> In his MPhil thesis, Melia refers to private correspondence with Hockney biographer Peter Webb suggesting that this understatement of the homoerotic focus of the artist's early work was brought about as a result of the introduction of the so-called 'Clause 28' legislation by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, which stated that local authorities 'shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality' or 'promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'; Webb is quoted as saying 'as regards the lack of clearly gay work in the Tate show, I understood that both David and the Tate were in agreement that this should be so. David wanted it to be more about modernism, painterly devices etc than autobiography, and the Tate were worried about Clause 28 when school parties would be going' (Melia, 1991, p. 138).

<sup>7</sup> Simon Ofield, 'Cruising the Archive', *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 351-352.

revealed in the paintings of gay artist David Hockney'.<sup>8</sup> However, Burston's conception of 'an identifiably gay world' is very much at odds with the gay scenes (re)presented by Hockney's contemporary, and fellow gay man, Robert Mapplethorpe in his works of the late 1970s, such as *Brian Ridley and Lyle Heeter* (Figure 179). This is an image which entirely subverts notions of comfortable and camp domesticity that Burston draws upon, and, as shall be seen, was one more in line with conceptions of progressive gay political, cultural and sexual values at this time than Hockney's works dealing with gay themes. That both Ofield and Burston, writing in the years after the emergence of AIDS, identify Hockney as a visual archetype of 'gay worlds' raises questions with regard to how, and indeed why, Hockney's representations of gay themes came to be construed as the more conventional, and arguably acceptable, face of homosexuality for the general public.

Where the previous chapters have been largely concerned with the artist's practice, and influences upon it, concentrating particularly on the 1960s, this chapter seeks to look beyond that decade. It will focus particularly on receptions of, and responses to, Hockney and his works in the years since this period. As has been discussed previously, the artist was the subject of sustained press attention in Britain from 1963 onwards, some of which obliquely criticised Hockney for his homosexuality; however, the release of Jack Hazan's 'quasi-documentary'<sup>9</sup> film *A Bigger Splash* in 1974 placed Hockney under yet closer scrutiny, centring as it does on the breakdown of the artist's relationship with Peter Schlesinger, and its apparent personal and professional repercussions. Although decriminalisation had taken place in 1967, as shall be seen, discrimination against gay men was far from eradicated by the mid-1970s. The first portion of this chapter will consider the impact of this film on public

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Burston, 'Just a Gigolo? Narcissism, Nellyism and the 'New Man' Theme', Paul Burston and Colin Richardson (eds.), *A Queer Romance: Lesbians, Gay Men, and Popular Culture*, London, Routledge, 1995, p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> Jack Babuscio, 'Camp and the Gay Sensibility', Richard Dyer (ed.), *Gays and Film*, London, British Film Institute, 1977, p. 42.



perceptions of Hockney and his works. Later sections will examine the artist's continuing relationship with the media, including the gay press, as well as wider gay political and cultural interests, in particular the spectre of AIDS in the 1980s. Hockney has been criticised for his apparent failure to confront the darkness and devastation of this crisis in his works;<sup>10</sup> however, I will argue that such criticism demonstrates a failure to appreciate the significance of the hermetic in Hockney's oeuvre, as well as in the history of homosexual cultures and artistic production as a whole.

In approaching these concepts, this final chapter seeks to address a series of key questions. How have Hockney's works dealing with homosexual themes been received by gay and heterosexual audiences, both past and present? What has been the effect of the AIDS crisis that developed in the 1980s, and which continues to have an impact on gay men, socially and culturally, into the twenty-first century? To what extent, if any, can Hockney's body of work produced since the 1960s be considered to be concerned with homosexuality? How have public perceptions of Hockney himself affected constructions and interpretations of his art and of his legacy? I will argue that Hockney has ultimately succeeded in joining the gay creative canon, with his art performing the same intended functions as the poetry of Whitman and Cavafy, or the prose of individuals such as Edward Carpenter. I will also contend that the artist's apparent forwarding of committed gay monogamy and domestic bliss becomes politically expedient during the AIDS crisis, amid a widespread desire to re-educate gay men with regard to potentially hazardous sexual practices. However, the question remains as to whether or not the eventual widespread acceptance of his work as a visual cipher for homosexuality has damaged his potential legacy as a 'serious' artist, along with his

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<sup>10</sup> Bronski, p. 190.

emergence as an early example of an artistic ‘celebrity’ whose fame developed along trajectories other than from his art practice alone.

### **5.1 *A Bigger Splash* on Film: Fantasy, Reality and Public Perceptions**

Although the relationship between Hockney and Peter Schlesinger was over by 1972,<sup>11</sup> its breakdown was played out on the big screen in 1974, with the completion and limited release of film director Jack Hazan’s *A Bigger Splash*. Promoted as a documentary piece concerned with Hockney’s work, the film was pieced together from footage shot by Hazan beginning in the spring of 1971. From the start the notions of an (apparently) objective, documentary recording of ‘reality’ and subjective interpretation are blurred. Whilst the first minute and a half of footage is composed of close-ups of press articles and photographs of the artist, including some of those considered elsewhere in this thesis, the main titles that follow declare that this is a film ‘starring David Hockney’ (Figure 180). The many friends and acquaintances of the artist that feature on screen are likewise introduced as if they were actors – their names, like that of the artist himself, accompanied by portrait drawings by Hockney. Where no individual portraits are available, Hazan has utilised details from prints in the Cavafy etching series, the forename-only identifications of young men superimposed (Figure 181).

Whilst the film itself is named for what is now one of the artist’s most recognisable paintings of the 1960s, Hockney’s works – and working process – often appear sidelined throughout the course of *A Bigger Splash*. Interviewed in 2006, Hazan claimed that initially he had no idea what form the piece would take, this not becoming clear until his second visit

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<sup>11</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p.161. In his book *A Chequered Past*, Schlesinger claims that he left Hockney in 1971 (p. 72); however, the two remained in contact throughout the 1970s.

with the artist after securing his permission to record. However, later remarks make clear the director's subsequent intent, with Hazan stating:

He [Hockney] said he wanted to call Peter over, he wanted to finish, um, 'a little detail' he was painting of Peter on another canvas (...) and he said he'd call him. And I realised... first of all, I didn't know who Peter was, and there was a bit of tension in Hockney's, in his phone call to Peter, and irritation on the other side, coming out of the phone. So I thought, 'hello, what's this?'. Then Peter came round, the most gorgeous looking boy! I soon realised that (...) Peter was obviously, had been, David's boyfriend! And things had obviously gone wrong. And he was only there... he was just tolerating David by coming there. It almost seemed like it was a ploy on David's part just to see him, that he wanted to actually paint him again, just to have him there. Anyway, I went back (I shot this stuff, it looked amazing)... I went back to the cutting room with my partner. We discussed this, and he said 'well, there's the story, there's the conflict: David Hockney, and his lover has left him, and he's deeply saddened by this'. And that's the start of... that's the plot.<sup>12</sup>

Hazan's use of the word 'plot' in his statement is of particular significance, as it underlines the film's then-novel intermediary state between truth and fiction, part of a 'fact/fiction continuum'<sup>13</sup> since popularised through the medium of 'scripted reality' television programmes such as MTV's *The Hills*, which feature real participants in situations engineered by programme-makers.<sup>14</sup>

*A Bigger Splash* makes significant use of analepsis in its representation of events. The first live action scene, preceded by the emotive string soundtrack of the opening titles, purports to show a decidedly camp Hockney in Geneva in 1973, waxing lyrical on the virtues of another young American companion, Joe Macdonald. Hazan then shifts the action to London, with a dapper Hockney reclining between Celia Birtwell and a sailor-suited Schlesinger at the fashion show of Birtwell and Clark's 'Quorum' label, female models

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<sup>12</sup> Jack Hazan, interview with Adam Roberts, *A Bigger Splash*, DVD, London, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Annette Hill, *Reality TV: Audiences and Popular Factual Television*, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2005, p. 173.

<sup>14</sup> Loren A. Seeger, *The Rest Is Still Unwritten: Female Adolescents' Cultivation of Gender from MTV's Reality Television Series 'The Hills' Through Celebrity Gossip Blog Commentary*, unpublished MSc thesis, Manhattan, KS, Kansas State University, 2009, p. 34.

strutting provocatively down the runway. A 'reserved' sign hangs from Schlesinger's chair. With this scene, Hazan begins the construction of Hockney's glamorous, decadent yet apparently, at times, superficial social circle. The following sequence, however, constructs the film's central conceit. Hockney's assistant Mo McDermott is shown going through his morning ablutions, his sullen voiceover declaring:

It's over. He phoned me last night and told me Peter's leaving him. It must be fucking heavy over there. I always hoped it would last forever. When love goes wrong, there's more than two people suffer.<sup>15</sup>

This latter phrase, referred to as a 'dirge' by Webb,<sup>16</sup> is repeated several times throughout the course of the film, and it becomes clear that it is this tale of love gone wrong, rather than Hockney's oeuvre *per se*, that is the central crux of the piece. Where Hockney is depicted at work, the director forwards a context of emotional turmoil. The scene Hazan describes above, in which Hockney uses Schlesinger as a model in a study for 1971's *Sur la Terrasse* (Figure 182), is again overlaid with Patrick Gowers' minor key strings alongside the distracting sounds of builders performing the extensive improvements on Hockney's Powis Terrace property that Schlesinger himself had inspired.<sup>17</sup> Throughout, Schlesinger gazes at a wall, impassive, whilst Hockney is shown absorbed in his work.

However, the most spectacular scene of apparent emotional discord occurs half an hour into *A Bigger Splash*. Lingering, but unpopulated, shots depict the artist's modishly renovated flat, now complete; finally his double bed is shown empty, the wall behind covered with framed drawings and photographs of Schlesinger. Hockney is shown at work on a large canvas bearing a formative version of *Portrait of an Artist* (Figure 183), which features Schlesinger to the right hand side. Throughout, the aria 'Nessun Dorma' from Puccini's

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<sup>15</sup> Jack Hazan, *A Bigger Splash*, 1974.

<sup>16</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 194.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 154.

*Turandot* is played. After some contemplation, Hockney is shown rising and takes a large kitchen knife to canvas, hacking out sections as the music comes to a climax. This scene is pivotal in the plot of the film, and was deemed worthy of mention in the official press release, which is unequivocal in its representation of events, claiming that ‘(a)t a new low, he destroys the “Peter canvas” and his six months’ work’.<sup>18</sup> Webb notes that this interpretation has been taken at face value by a number of commentators, referring to the judgment of *The Observer*’s film critic:

In a finely directed scene which eventually justifies an ambitious operatic backing (‘Nessun Dorma’), Hockney advances on his problematical canvas and knifes it. Hazan’s camera, unable to watch, stares at the windows, a table, the flashing lights of the artist’s telephone. But the tension thus released enables Hockney to make a fresh technical approach to *Peter by the Pool*.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond mere critical opinion, this scene of destruction has arguably itself become mythologised, being central to the poem ‘A Letter’ by Jim Powell. It is referred to explicitly in the second stanza, when Powell writes:

I put on ‘Nessun dorma’  
to remind me: while Puccini’s last  
tenor aria overwhelms the soundtrack  
of Jack Hazan’s film, the artist runs a long  
stainless steel kitchen knife into his painting  
– atonal soprano rasps from its parting weave  
score the crescendo as his shaking white  
knuckles lock on the canvas to tear through  
the figure of his lover’s painted face  
because it wasn’t true.<sup>20</sup>

Powell’s re-dramatisation of Hazan’s presentation is clearly emotive, and takes the same line of interpretation as the previous two sources. However, even a relatively cursory viewing of

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<sup>18</sup> Press release for *A Bigger Splash*, cited in Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 193.

<sup>19</sup> Russell Davies, *The Observer*, London, 16 March 1975, cited in Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 193.

<sup>20</sup> Jim Powell, ‘A Letter’, *It Was Fever That Made the World*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 10.

the film itself demonstrates that it is erroneous. Whilst editor David Mingay's cuts are dramatic and potentially disconcerting, it is clear that the canvas that Hockney seeks to destroy is not that which he is previously shown to be painting (Figure 184). Indeed, this deception is a source of disquiet for Hockney in his first volume of autobiography, although he acknowledges that he did ultimately destroy the first version of *Portrait of an Artist*. He states:

I cut up and destroyed the first version of the picture. I didn't slash it, as Jack Hazan says in his film. It was actually cut up quite carefully because I made a bit of it into another painting and gave it to Ossie and Celia. Some parts were painted quite nicely (...) I thought, I can't throw that away. I could just cut it out and give it to a friend – which is what I did.<sup>21</sup>

Regardless of the 'reality' of the situation, Hazan's representation of events presents Hockney – and by extension his relationship with Schlesinger – as being firmly within the arena of the melodramatic.

Although *A Bigger Splash* might be criticised as misleading in this respect by viewers expecting a more traditional 'art documentary', the film is certainly significant in its representation of homosexuality. Where previous media encounters with Hockney had made allusions to his sexual orientation, often – as in the case of *The Observer's* review of the 1966 'Drawings and Etchings' exhibition – making snide yet oblique comments on the issue,<sup>22</sup> *A Bigger Splash* appears to make no critical or moral judgment on the sexuality of the artist or any members of his circle. However, Hockney's status as a gay man is obviously at the very heart of the film, and no pretence is made at disguising it. Indeed, Hazan has claimed that he felt it necessary to emphasise the homosexuality of the film's subjects to audiences, to the

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<sup>21</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 247.

<sup>22</sup> Thompson, 'Natural Wonders', *The Observer*, 24 July 1966.

extent that he inserted a now-infamous scene of simulated sexual contact between Schlesinger and another man. He stated:

People have asked me why we've got this possibly explicit scene of sex between two boys on the bed, which is Peter and his supposed new lover, and... that was inserted at a late date. Again, a lot of agonising went on in this movie... we showed this movie around, and people were very comfortable with it (*laughs*). And we got the feeling they didn't really know these people were gay! They just thought these people had sort of... they were slightly, um... had effeminate characteristics and they were kind of sweet to each other and they would kiss each other a little bit, but we got the feeling that they [the audience] were content and happy, and we thought 'hang on a minute, this isn't really what we intended! (*laughs*) We're selling the gay scene – we're expressing the gay scene, the homosexual scene', and so, it's too easy to view this. So we wanted to introduce a bit of... conflict, if you wish, between the film and the viewer, the film and the audience.<sup>23</sup>

In perhaps an ironic twist, this scene is arguably the most constructed in the entire film; whilst Schlesinger had indeed left Hockney for another lover by this point in proceedings, the man in question, photographer Eric Boman, was not the other participant in Hazan's simulated love scene. One could go so far as to argue that Schlesinger and this second character should be considered to be the film's only professional actors, since both demanded payment for their performance.<sup>24</sup> It is not known from what background members of the film's test audiences were drawn, and therefore one can only conjecture as to whether or not its members were familiar with either art house cinema or homosexuality as a concept. Nonetheless, what Hazan says of his test audiences would appear to give credence to the views expressed by E.M. Forster in his terminal note to *Maurice*. Composed in 1960, half a century after the novel itself, but less than fifteen years before the completion of *A Bigger Splash*, in it Forster opines:

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<sup>23</sup> Jack Hazan, interview with Adam Roberts, *A Bigger Splash*, DVD, London, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 195.

Since *Maurice* was written there has been a change in the public attitude here [towards homosexuality]: the change from ignorance and terror to familiarity and contempt. (...) I, though less optimistic, had supposed that knowledge would bring understanding. We had not realised that what the public really loathes in homosexuality is not the thing itself but having to think about it.<sup>25</sup>

Hazan's test audiences had seemingly been content with the everyday camp behaviour of Hockney and his circle, rather like that of Noël Coward, or Oscar Wilde before his conviction; indeed, a review of the film in *The Burlington Magazine* explicitly compares Hockney and his created self-image with that of Coward.<sup>26</sup> However, the acknowledgement that homosexuality might involve physical sexual acts certainly resulted in hostile reactions to the work from some quarters. A 1975 review in *The Richmond and Twickenham Times* recalls earlier critical coverage in its use, once again, of the pointed adjective 'limpid'. Author Robert Harris goes on to write:

There are beautiful scenes and interesting sounds in this film and if the result is an appalling sterility that is appropriate to its subject, the homosexuality of the artist. The one intensely embarrassing and degrading scene, presumably included to pull in the 'gay' boys, doesn't last long and could have been cut out without harming the film, if anyone concerned had the least sense of decency.<sup>27</sup>

The reviewer's feelings of moral indignation are palpable in this piece. Again the author attempts to ascribe conventional notions of 'correct' responses to the subject of homosexuality, such as shame and dissatisfaction. This tendency echoes the response of the *Evening Standard's* reviewer of the film in 1974, in an article disparagingly entitled 'A small ripple in Hockneyland'. The pull quote of the piece is drawn from a section headed 'emotional', and reads 'We see Hockney's friends. We look into a world that's small and sad.

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<sup>25</sup> Forster, *Maurice*, p. 224.

<sup>26</sup> Keith Roberts, 'The Artist Speaks?', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 117, no. 866, May 1975, p. 301.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Harris, 'Fooling and Pooling', *The Richmond and Twickenham Times*, 4 July 1975.



The least emotional upset and all the wheels stick'.<sup>28</sup> However, I would argue that both of these commentators have not only succumbed to conventional dialogues of homosexuality as tragic and unfulfilling, but have also failed to interpret Hazan's representational methods at anything more than face value. What I believe to be a far more insightful analysis of *A Bigger Splash* can be found in Jack Babuscio's essay 'Camp and the Gay Sensibility' from 1977. Crucially Babuscio recognises the work's intermediary state between documentary fact and artistic fiction, as well as acknowledging, almost uniquely amongst his critical peers, the significance of 'visual humour' to Hockney's creative practice.<sup>29</sup> According to Babuscio, whilst *A Bigger Splash* must be recognised as a subjective account of the life of a particular gay man, the film forwards one means by which such individuals can defy convention and express themselves creatively. He writes:

the director manages to convey the wry, distancing nature of his subject's visual humour as an integral part of a gay sensibility that is defiantly different from the mainstream. Because Hockney responds to his gay 'stigma' by challenging social and aesthetic conventions in life and art, Hazan's concern is to show the various ways in which his subject's private life affects his art – or how art records personal experience and determines our future. Thus, the film relates to the artist's work in much the same way as the paintings do to life. The presence of the unseen beneath the surface is no less important than what one actually sees. (...) By wit, a well-organised evasiveness, and a preference for the artificial, Hockney manages a breakthrough into creativity.<sup>30</sup>

Babuscio's interpretation is incisive and persuasive, and whilst this perspective on the film appears to have been shared by some contemporary reviewers,<sup>31</sup> the presence of hostile commentary such as the articles of Harris and Walker considered above demonstrates that a significant section of the film's audience interpreted the work in a less than sympathetic fashion.

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<sup>28</sup> Alexander Walker, 'A small ripple in Hockneyland', *The Evening Standard*, 12 December 1974.

<sup>29</sup> Babuscio, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43.

<sup>31</sup> *The Guardian*, 13 March 1975; *The Islington Gazette*, 13 February 1976.

Critical comment, both favourable and hostile, was all the more significant in 1975, as whilst *A Bigger Splash* became somewhat notorious, in reality very few people actually saw the film at the time. Although it was selected for showing at Critics Week at the 1974 Cannes Film Festival, the film was for several months banned in Paris, and in the United States authorities initially allowed only a single screening at the New York Festival, on the grounds that the film was deemed to be ‘disgusting and immoral’.<sup>32</sup> On presentation to the British Board of Film Censors, certification was again initially denied, with Hazan claiming that it was only the influence of critics that furnished the film with its ‘X’ certificate.<sup>33</sup> Whilst the Times Baker Street cinema showed the film continuously for eighteen months,<sup>34</sup> it was one of only three in Britain to show the film at all at on its initial release, with none located outside London.<sup>35</sup> As such, I would argue that far more people would have read second-hand reviews or commentary on *A Bigger Splash* than would have actually seen the film itself. Hazan has spoken of the work as ‘hell by its notoriety’<sup>36</sup> on account of its open and frank handling of homosexual subject matter. As such, the film seems to have become a source of gossip and innuendo in the contemporary press. Even *The Sunday Times* engaged in such sensationalism, with a piece from March 1975 containing an interview with Peter Schlesinger on the nature of his relationship with Hockney. The article accompanied by a large photograph of an attractive Schlesinger subtitled ‘I was never a kept boy’, interviewer Michael Roberts probes his subject on the nature of financial arrangements between the former lovers during their relationship.<sup>37</sup> In this, one can discern a fascination with the traditionally perceived inequalities in homosexual relationships, as discussed in the previous chapter. A subsequent article by gossip

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<sup>32</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 196.

<sup>33</sup> Jack Hazan, interview with Adam Roberts, *A Bigger Splash*, DVD, London, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Anon., *The Guardian*, 13 March 1975.

<sup>36</sup> Jack Hazan, interview with Adam Roberts, *A Bigger Splash*, DVD, London, 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Roberts, ‘Men’, *The Sunday Times*, 16 March 1975.

columnist Nigel Dempster in *The Daily Mail*, although not concerned with any of the film's subjects, is still more pointed in its innuendo:

PS I am glad to note that the shadow Education Minister, confirmed bachelor Norman St John Stevas [sic], 45, is maintaining his interests in the arts. He was observed the other evening queuing in Baker Street to see *A Bigger Splash*, which documents artist David Hockney's five-year romance with boyfriend Peter Schlesinger.<sup>38</sup>

Whilst this piece makes no direct criticism of Hockney himself, its subtext is clear; the author's implication is that 'confirmed bachelor' St John-Stevas,<sup>39</sup> a Conservative politician and legal scholar, must be a closeted homosexual. Dempster is evidently suggesting that the sole attraction of the film is homoerotic titillation, in so doing dismissing the notion that it might offer any insight into Hockney's art itself. Although it served as a 'profoundly respectable and unsensational' publication at the time of its founding in 1896,<sup>40</sup> *The Daily Mail* by the 1970s was very much a tabloid paper with a high circulation. As such, whilst its readers would have been unlikely to have seen *A Bigger Splash* for themselves, I would argue that their attitudes towards Hockney, and media treatments of the artist and his oeuvre elsewhere, would almost certainly have been coloured by such innuendo-laden statements.

Dempster's article carries the direct implication that *A Bigger Splash* is a 'gay' film, of primary – if not exclusive – interest to gay audiences. However, the extent to which this can be deemed to be the case is a matter of contention. As has been noted, the film was remarkable in its day for its then unprecedented openness in the handling of gay themes and

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<sup>38</sup> Nigel Dempster, *The Daily Mail*, April 1975.

<sup>39</sup> St John-Stevas was, in fact, a dedicated follower of the arts, serving as Minister of State for the Arts under Margaret Thatcher from 1979 to 1981, and subsequently as Chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission from 1985 to 1999. In his former life a barrister, he was famously called as a witness at the Chatterley trial, largely on account of his having published the book *Obscenity and the Law* in 1956. Perhaps significantly, St John-Stevas also penned a detailed account of legal stances towards homosexuality in his 1961 volume *Life, Death and the Law: Law and Christian Morals in England and the United States*.

<sup>40</sup> Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language*, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 4.

individuals in a mainstream theatrical release; as such, it is unsurprising that *A Bigger Splash* is now routinely acknowledged by commentators attempting to construct histories of 'queer cinema'. Allied with the concerns of queer theory, it is a cinema identified with avant-garde and underground movements, and, according to Susan Hayward, 'one that takes pride in difference'.<sup>41</sup> The authors of the *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality* describe *A Bigger Splash* as 'perhaps the first' queer documentary film,<sup>42</sup> whilst Thomas Waugh draws on it as an example in his essay 'The Third Body: Patterns in the Construction of the Subject in Gay Male Narrative Film'.<sup>43</sup> The work has also been included in the programmes of a number of seasons of gay and lesbian film, a tendency that began in the late 1970s and continues into the present day, with the work featured at the Paris Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in 2007.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, it is possible to argue that the film's homosexual content has been the focus of such public and critical attention that other aspects of the piece have been overshadowed, thus influencing perceptions of Hockney and his work. *A Bigger Splash* certainly highlights the campness of the artist and other members of his circle at this time. Whilst the concept of camp has been mentioned previously in this thesis, until this point it has not been examined in any detail. Camp as a phenomenon came under particular scrutiny from the mid-1960s onwards, with one of the earliest and most widely-known examples of an analysis of the concept to be found in Susan Sontag's essay 'Notes on Camp', first published in 1964 in the *Partisan Review*. Describing it as an 'unmistakably modern' concept, 'a variant of sophistication but hardly identical with it',<sup>45</sup> Sontag's article, organised around fifty-eight

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<sup>41</sup> Susan Hayward, *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts* (third edition), Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 289.

<sup>42</sup> Wayne Dynes et. al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, New York, Garland Publishing, 1990, p. 405.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Waugh, 'The Third Body: Patterns in the Construction of the Subject in Gay Male Narrative Film', in Martha Gever, Pratibha Parmar, and John Greyson (eds.), *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*, New York and London, Routledge, 1993, p. 146.

<sup>44</sup> [http://www.ffglp.net/archives/festival\\_2007/f07-pdf/Programme%20FFGLP%202007.pdf](http://www.ffglp.net/archives/festival_2007/f07-pdf/Programme%20FFGLP%202007.pdf); accessed August 2010.

<sup>45</sup> Susan Sontag, 'Notes on Camp', *Against Interpretation* (1966), London, Vintage, 2001, p. 275.

statements, delineates the major theoretical and aesthetic characteristics of camp, drawing a line between the camp and the merely kitsch – for Sontag, the distinction lies in a genuine love for particular objects or styles,<sup>46</sup> with camp taste being ‘generous’,<sup>47</sup> not a mere avant-garde posturing, but a sincere celebration of the frivolous, the non-serious. She offers a ‘pocket history’ of the concept, finding its roots in the extravagance of mannerist art of seventeenth-century Italy, but arguing that camp emerges ‘full-blown’ in the self-created personalities of fin-de-siècle figures such as Oscar Wilde and English novelist Ronald Firbank.<sup>48</sup> However, Sontag also makes explicit the perceived connections between camp and homosexuals. This is the subject of her fifty-first to fifty-third points, with Sontag stating:

The peculiar relation between Camp taste and homosexuality has to be explained. While it’s not true that Camp taste *is* homosexual taste, there is no doubt a particular affinity and overlap (...) not all homosexuals have Camp taste. But homosexuals, by and large, constitute the vanguard – and the most articulate audience – of Camp. (...) The reason for the flourishing of the aristocratic posture among homosexuals also seems to parallel the Jewish case. For every sensibility is self-serving to the group that promotes it. Jewish liberalism is a gesture of self-legitimization. So is Camp taste, which definitely has something propagandistic about it (...) Homosexuals have pinned their integration into society on promoting the aesthetic sense. Camp is a solvent of morality. It neutralizes moral indignation, sponsors playfulness.<sup>49</sup>

Sontag’s assertions on the power of camp to ‘neutralize’ moral indignation are significant so far as Hockney, and his representation in *A Bigger Splash*, are concerned. Hockney’s distinctive and idiosyncratic approach to aesthetics and personal dress, addressed in the previous chapter, is showcased by Hazan’s film. The press clippings that dominate the opening segment are focused heavily on newspaper and magazine photographs of the artist, his quirkiness emphasised and optimised. The use of press images to establish the film immediately removes Hockney from his original Northern, working-class, dark-haired roots

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 292.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 291.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 281.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 290.

and places him squarely within a cosmopolitan, international and artificial context. The posed press shots contribute to this sense of the artificial, showcasing a boyish, almost cartoonish character, all bright clothes, bleached hair and enormous glasses. This campness of personal appearance is compounded by Hazan in Hockney's opening conversation with Joe Macdonald, with the artist speaking in a stereotypically effeminate, slightly lisping voice, albeit in his distinctive Bradford accent. As noted by contemporary commentators, the members of Hockney's circle are presented as similarly camp, both the *Evening Standard* and the *Sunday Times* seizing upon a particular tendency: 'they all bring one another small bunches of flowers'.<sup>50</sup>

Significantly, Sontag also expounds upon camp's rejection of the serious, noting that:

The whole point of Camp is to dethrone the serious. Camp is playful, anti-serious. More precisely, Camp involves a new, more complex relation to 'the serious'. One can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious. (...) One is drawn to Camp when one realises that 'sincerity' is not enough. Sincerity can be simple philistinism, intellectual narrowness. (...) The traditional means for going beyond straight seriousness – irony, satire – seem feeble today, inadequate to the culturally oversaturated medium in which contemporary sensibility is schooled. Camp introduces a new standard: artifice as an ideal, theatricality. (...) Camp proposes a comic vision of the world. But not a bitter or polemical comedy.<sup>51</sup>

Such an emphasis upon the 'playful' and 'anti-serious' is clearly evident in Hockney's engagements with homosexual themes in his works, as well as in his approach to his personal appearance. Sontag's observation that 'one can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious' is also significant, as is her later remark that camp taste 'definitely has something propagandistic about it'. As noted in chapter one, Hockney himself has acknowledged that his early images dealing with homosexual themes and subjects were construed as a form of propaganda. So too, I would argue, did the artist adopt his distinctive personal appearance,

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<sup>50</sup> Anon, *The Sunday Times*, 16 March 1975.

<sup>51</sup> Sontag, p. 288.

using it, like Quentin Crisp before him, as a means of making a form of political statement regarding his personal and sexual identity. However, as has been shown in chapter two in relation to the Cavafy etching series, commentators such as David Thompson and Harry Craig demonstrate a tendency to attempt to impose conventional dialogues of homosexuality as tragic and unfulfilling upon Hockney's works, as well as viewing his appearance as a mere caricature of his homosexuality; this can be seen most clearly in the illustration of a 'polka-dotted David Hockney' accompanying Thompson's *Observer* article (Figure 78). As such it is clear that the 'serious' capabilities of camp – its potential as a signifier of political as well as sexual difference – were often misunderstood by contemporary critics.

Hazan is at pains in his film to suggest that real-life influences on, and experiences of, the artist are directly reflected in his works. This is expressed most clearly in the slavish reconstruction of a number of Hockney's paintings using *tableaux vivants* composed of the artist's original sitters. Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott are posed in the manner of their 1969 double portrait (Figures 185 and 186), and Schlesinger is literally transformed into a naked Californian pool boy in a fantasy sequence; meanwhile Betty Freeman performs a re-enactment of *Beverly Hills Housewife* (Figures 187 and 188), a vision of sterile, indulgent Los Angeles life. Whilst these spectacular visual conceits create an eerie stylistic symmetry between Hazan's film and Hockney's works, it is possible to argue, as Keith Roberts does in his contemporary review of *A Bigger Splash* in the *Burlington Magazine*, that this undermines the seriousness of Hockney's original images. He writes:

As an insight into Hockney's art, the film offers both more than one expected and less than one would have liked. At a basic level, it shows the artist working from postcards and photographs, using an enlarger (with assistance) and painting very meticulously, area by area. It makes clear that he prefers to work from particular models or sitters. (...) Hockney's vision would have come across even more strongly had the makers not fallen into the classic art film trap of trying to make the appearance of *A Bigger Splash* itself rather like a Hockney painting. This reduces the

artist to the level of a commonplace naturalist who merely copies what the film suggests is the reality that surrounds him.<sup>52</sup>

Roberts' interpretation raises a significant question with regard to the impact of *A Bigger Splash* on subsequent conceptions of Hockney and his output. In a 1975 interview with *Quorum* magazine, Hazan claims not to have been conscious of this visual similarity of style, condemning the idea as 'awfully pretentious and silly'.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, a profound symmetry is apparent, accentuated by the artist's focus in the late 1960s and early 1970s on figurative subjects executed in a mimetically naturalistic style. Hockney's works of this period, and indeed beyond, bear out the suggestion that his surroundings and social circle are a source of particular inspiration. However, as the *Evening Standard* and *Sunday Times* reviews suggest, Hazan's presentation of both can be construed as somewhat shallow and superficial. Webb has written astutely on this situation, arguing that 'Hockney comes out of the film well because he is the hub and everyone else mere spokes in his wheel. No one has identity except insofar as they relate to him'.<sup>54</sup> Like the painting that is the film's namesake, Hazan can be seen to take three-dimensional personalities and crowded situations and simplify them down, in the process flattening them, at times, almost to the point of caricature. Whilst this directorial approach can be seen to emphasise the significance and centrality of the artist, I would argue that it undermines to an extent the significance and achievement of the works themselves. Not only is it possible from the film to construe Hockney, as Roberts suggests, as a mere 'commonplace naturalist',<sup>55</sup> but I would argue that Hazan's representation of Hockney's world and social circle as somewhat shallow, unstable and superficial also allows for these accusations to be levelled at the works that reflect them.

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<sup>52</sup> Roberts, 'The Artist Speaks?', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 117, no. 866, May 1975, p. 301.

<sup>53</sup> Geoffrey Ryman, 'When Love Goes Wrong', *Quorum*, May 1975, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 195.

<sup>55</sup> Roberts, 'The Artist Speaks?', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 117, no. 866, May 1975, p. 301.



Such criticisms can admittedly be discerned in commentary prior to the release of *A Bigger Splash*, with Hockney's final exhibition at the Kasmin Gallery in 1972 garnering particularly unfavourable reviews. One of the most critical, entitled 'From Hockney, a disaster', appears in the opening montage of *A Bigger Splash* itself. Written by Richard Cork for the *Evening Standard*, it opines that:

Hockney's heart now seems to lie with simple-minded studies of Vichy, fish underwater and an endless parade of friends lying about in hotel beds and deckchairs. They all look as listless and devoid of inspiration as the idiom in which their portraits have been executed; and I really think one of them ought to wake up and tell Hockney just how near he has come to debasing his entire reputation as an artist.<sup>56</sup>

The film *A Bigger Splash* itself covers this apparently listless and inspirationally bereft period in Hockney's practice, but it does not demonstrate to the viewer that the artist had in fact emerged from it by the time of the film's release. I would argue that it is significant that the artist had moved away from both this London social circle and naturalistic style by the mid-1970s, moving to Paris in 1973<sup>57</sup> and producing *Invented Man Revealing Still Life* (Figure 189) in 1975; this oil on canvas work demonstrates a jointure of stylistic concerns. Whilst the centrally placed vase of tulips is observed with the relative mimetic realism of the paintings that Cork criticises, the 'invented man' of the title and the revelatory curtain both recall the visual conceits and artistic playfulness of Hockney's works of the early 1960s. However, although the artist's practice was undergoing such a transformation by the time of the film's release, *A Bigger Splash* begins and ends with Hockney in 1973. As such, I would argue that it preserves, as if in aspic, a period in which the artist was seen by some to amount to 'an established superstar who no longer sees why he should be bothered to paint carefully',<sup>58</sup> a

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<sup>56</sup> Richard Cork, 'From Hockney, a disaster', *The Evening Standard*, 14 December 1972.

<sup>57</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 285.

<sup>58</sup> Cork, 'From Hockney, a disaster', *The Evening Standard*, 14 December 1972.

self-consciously constructed man at the heart of a superficial world which, if Hazan is to be believed, is reflected almost unfiltered in his expensive artworks.

## **5.2 Mainstream Media Encounters, Boyishness and Hockney as (Artistic) Celebrity**

Like Hockney's artworks themselves, *A Bigger Splash* was the focus of a great deal of press attention; however, the artist was – and indeed has remained – a figure of fascination for the media for a variety of reasons. The 1960s saw a sea change not only in legal and societal attitudes towards homosexuality, but also in media technologies. As noted in chapter two, Hockney benefitted from the establishment in 1963 of the *Sunday Times* colour supplements, persuading its editors to send him on a trip to Egypt;<sup>59</sup> however, with his colourful personal appearance and idiosyncratic persona, Hockney was to grace the pages of such magazines for reasons ultimately beyond his artworks themselves. The profile of the artist in the *Sunday Times* of July 1963 (Figure 126), considered in the previous chapter, focuses as much on the figure of Hockney himself, resplendent in its pages sporting his gimmick of a gold jacket, as it does on his paintings. Later press coverage, up to the present day, was often to take this tendency still further, with Hockney's practice as an artist often treated as incidental, a secondary concern to his status as celebrity.

The trope of the golden-headed, golden-jacketed Hockney presented in the July 1963 *Sunday Times* feature is one that recurs in press coverage of the artist throughout the rest of the decade, and indeed into the 1970s. In reviewing Hockney's second solo show at the Kasmin Gallery in 1965, *Evening Standard* journalist Ian Dunlop focuses more closely on the appearance and perceived temperament of the artist than he does on the content of the exhibition itself. He writes:

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<sup>59</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 94.

Los Angeles obviously suits him better than his home town, Bradford. In that limbo of lost souls his dyed-blond hair, gold lamé jacket, and owl-like spectacles pass unnoticed. He is free to play his favourite role of innocent poking gentle fun at a complex and often silly grown-up world.<sup>60</sup>

Dunlop's choice of language in this piece is remarkable. Although twenty-eight years old at the time of composition, Hockney is presented as a boy-man, an innocent, and an eccentric, content to 'play' on the fringes of the 'grown-up world'. Hockney's distinctive take on a homosexual sartorial aesthetic is recast here by Dunlop as a childish game of dressing-up, his approach prefiguring David Thompson's critique of the artist's designs for *Ubu Roi* (Figure 190) as corresponding to a 'neat toytown convention'.<sup>61</sup>

Such casting of Hockney as a 'boyish' homosexual figure draws an obvious parallel with the subjects of Carol Mavor's *Reading Boyishly* of 2007. Constructed in a 'novelesque' fashion, along similar lines to the writings of one of its central figures, Roland Barthes, this text places at its heart five intellectual and creative figures – Barthes, J. M. Barrie, Marcel Proust, D. W. Winnicott and Jacques Henri Lartigue – and examines the ways in which the 'boyish' tendencies of each, and attachments to the maternal, can be discerned in their output. Central to its analysis is the concept of 'punctum' as forwarded by Barthes in *Camera Lucida*, and which Mavor describes as 'that tiny bit of light carried to us by the photograph that triggers memory (that wounds us with our past)'.<sup>62</sup> Rather than being something limited to the photographic medium, Mavor links the notion of punctum to other stimuli, most notably the famous madeleine cakes that feature in Proust's epic seven volume novel *A la recherche du temps perdu* – the madeleine, with its powers to stimulate memory, is a notable *leitmotif* of Mavor's text.

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<sup>60</sup> Ian Dunlop, 'A Second Look at a Golden Boy of the Art World', *The Evening Standard*, 14 December 1965.

<sup>61</sup> David Thompson, 'Natural Wonders', *The Observer*, 24 July 1966.

<sup>62</sup> Carol Mavor, *Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J. M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Marcel Proust, and D. W. Winnicott*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2007, p. 19.

Other boyish men beyond the central five play a supporting role in *Reading Boyishly*, including Hockney himself, with Mavor drawing upon the artist's childlike designs for the Metropolitan Opera House's 1980 production of Maurice Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (Figure 191). However, it is not only the artist's works but also the figure of Hockney himself, and aspects of his personal self-fashioning and presentation, that appear to attract attention with regards to their boyishness from contemporary commentators and reviewers such as Dunlop; indeed, for many the two appear to be seen in tandem, or as two sides of the same coin. Such a conception can be discerned in another review of the same 1965 exhibition:

LONDON, Dec. 20 – David Hockney at the Kasmin Gallery and Elisabeth Frink at Waddington's are two talented young artists, who earned precocious reputations, now revealed at important stages in their careers.

Mr. Hockney comes out of this test rather better, not because he is basically more talented but because he has largely got rid of a youthful exhibitionist facetiousness, or at least toned it down, so that his serious concern for the paradox of depiction can be seen and studied.

Born 28 years ago, this blond Yorkshireman is perhaps better known for his gold lamé jacket and the prizes he won for gimmicky pop painting than as a potentially important painter. He has always been a fine draftsman and a serious illustrator. But much of his earlier work was little higher than the best cartoons one finds in *Punch* or the *New Yorker*, and usually far less funny.<sup>63</sup>

As ever, author Charles S. Spencer's lexical choices are significant here, with the lamé jacket once again making a cameo appearance. Hockney's youth is emphasised, but his *youthfulness* criticised. Spencer appears to damn the artist with faint praise through his implication that Hockney's immediate success is not through a preponderance of talent, but through his having suppressed his 'youthful exhibitionist facetiousness' in favour of the grown-up, serious, modernist endeavour of 'the paradox of depiction'. Hockney's earliest works, including those

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<sup>63</sup> Charles S. Spencer, '2 Painters Exhibit In London', *The New York Times* (international edition), 21 December 1965.

concerned most consistently with issues surrounding homosexual identities and relationships, are dismissed by Spencer, and further disparaged by the comparisons he draws between these images and the flippant, disposable visual culture of the newspaper cartoon. The implications of this review are clear – whilst Hockney's boyish, 'gimmicky' personal tendencies might draw press and public interest, these should be dispensed with if he is to continue along the path of a 'serious' artist.

Mavor's subjects are linked in their boyishness not only through a superannuated youthfulness, such as that for which Spencer criticises Hockney, but also through their filial devotion. From the photograph albums lovingly constructed by the *Maman* of Lartigue to Barthes' well-documented closeness to his own mother,<sup>64</sup> Mavor's boyish subjects are linked by their intimacy with, and fond nostalgia for, beloved parental figures. Beyond the many portraits Hockney produced of his mother, up until her death in 1999,<sup>65</sup> a remarkable photograph accompanying Hockney's 1976 interview with *Gay News* (Figure 192) draws the artist firmly into this group. Sporting battered, unlaced Converse sneakers, braces and a rugby shirt, his distinctive round glasses and bleached hair in place, Hockney is shown sitting cross-legged on the floor in front of his unfinished painting *My Parents and Myself*. Showcasing a childlike pose, with a low viewing position of both the artist and his painted parents, this photograph – as well as the painting within it – echoes the 'sense of a nostalgic dialogue' which Francesca Berry has discerned in the similarly maternal-centred works of Édouard Vuillard.<sup>66</sup> As well as his real, bodily presence, Hockney's painted face and garishly striped tie can be seen in the work itself, reflected in a small mirror positioned between his soberly and smartly dressed parents, Laura and Kenneth Hockney. Smiling for the camera from his

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<sup>64</sup> Mavor, p. 80, p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> Howgate and Shapiro (eds.), *David Hockney Portraits*, exhibition catalogue, p. 227.

<sup>66</sup> Francesca Berry, "'Maman is my Muse': The Maternal as Motif and Metaphor in Édouard Vuillard's Intimisme", *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2011, p. 63.

squatting position at his painted parents' feet, the artist – almost forty years old at the time the photograph was captured – appears still more boyish for their proximity. Although the 1975 painting itself (Figure 193) ultimately went unfinished,<sup>67</sup> superceded by *My Parents* (Figure 194) of 1977, Hockney not only chose to reproduce it in his 1976 autobiography *David Hockney by David Hockney*, but another photograph of the artist positioned in front of the 1975 painting appears on its dust jacket (Figure 195). In an interesting symmetry with Mavor's repeated references to the 'magic madeleine'<sup>68</sup> of Proust's nostalgia-laden text, it is Proust that Hockney uses to replace himself in the second of his two parental portraits. That Hockney read *A la recherche du temps perdu* is confirmed in his first volume of autobiography,<sup>69</sup> with the artist emphasising the educative value of the text on his first reading as a young man. As noted in chapter two, literary texts by homosexual authors played a significant role in the shaping of Hockney's personal, sexual and artistic identities in the early years of his career; it is surely therefore significant that in constructing a cipher for himself in *My Parents*, Hockney includes not only his painting trolley and the flowers seized upon by reviewers of *A Bigger Splash*,<sup>70</sup> but also six volumes from his own copy of Proust's epic novel of boyish nostalgia.<sup>71</sup>

Relationships between parent and child, and the consequences for artistic output, are the subject of Sigmund Freud's psychobiographical text *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* of 1910, to which Mavor refers in *Reading Boyishly*. Freud's text is an applied case study (albeit posthumous on the part of its subject) of his theories about the development of homosexuality, or what he initially termed sexual inversion. Freud deemed a preference for sexual partners of 'the normally inappropriate sex' a sign of 'immature' sexuality, trapped in

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<sup>67</sup> Melia and Luckhardt, *David Hockney: Paintings*, p. 95.

<sup>68</sup> Mavor, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 40.

<sup>70</sup> Anon., *The Sunday Times*, 16 March 1975.

<sup>71</sup> Melia and Luckhardt, *David Hockney: Paintings*, p. 95.

what he termed the anal phase;<sup>72</sup> individuals with such preferences possess an ‘inverted’ sexuality, according to Freud, since it focuses on non-reproductive sexual goals.<sup>73</sup> In his assessment of the life and work of Leonardo, Freud places a direct correlation between the artist’s parental relationships and his developing sexual identity. An illegitimate child, with an absent father, Leonardo’s close identification with his mother, and with strong female figures more generally, is attributed with having ‘arrested’ his sexual development; Mavor quotes Freud’s statement on this when he writes ‘(i)ndeed, the great Leonardo remained like a child for the whole of his life in more than one way’.<sup>74</sup> Freud’s thinking with regard to this close maternal affiliation, this innate boyishness as a root for homosexuality, was clearly still given credence in the early 1970s. As noted previously in chapter one, in a 1972 interview Hockney appeared to offer this as a potential cause of his own sexual orientation. Asked if he could attribute his homosexuality to anything in his background, Hockney replied ‘I don’t know. I’ve never been analysed. My mother is certainly much stronger than my father’.<sup>75</sup>

To return to Dunlop’s review of the 1965 Kasmin exhibition, this piece clearly follows the pattern set out by David Sylvester’s 1963 *Sunday Times* feature, and compounds the presentation of Hockney as boyish eccentric. It repeats perceptions of the artist’s personal appearance gleaned at second-hand, with Hockney claiming in 1967 that the gold jacket in particular had been overplayed by journalists, when in reality he ‘only wore it twice’.<sup>76</sup> Nonetheless, Hockney embraced press attention of almost all kinds from the early 1960s onwards, with both the artist and his dealer Kasmin clearly conscious of the power of the media to establish and sustain a prominent public profile. Both Hockney and Kasmin feature

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<sup>72</sup> Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), trans. James Strachey, New York, 2000, p. 14.

<sup>73</sup> John Fletcher, ‘Freud and His Uses: Psychoanalysis and Gay Theory’, in Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallace (eds.), *Coming on Strong: Gay Politics and Culture*, London, 1989, p. 92.

<sup>74</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci* (1910), trans. James Strachey, Abingdon, 2001, p. 84.

<sup>75</sup> Anon., ‘Profile: David Hockney’, *Lunch*, no.12, September 1972, pp. 4-8.

<sup>76</sup> ‘The Point is in Actual Fact’, *Ark* 10, 1967; quoted in Faulkner, ‘Dealing with Hockney’, Paul Melia (ed.), *David Hockney*, Manchester, 1995, p.18.

as cover stars of a 1971 edition of the *Telegraph Magazine* (Figure 196), trailing an article on the artist by V.S. Naipaul, the winner of that year's Booker Prize. Once again Hockney's attire can be construed as indicative of a boyish persona. Whilst Kasmin sports a sober, sensible coat and wide brimmed hat, Hockney resembles nothing so much as a naughty schoolboy, made to stand in a corner of the room. His severely parted, bleached hair, his knitted sweater, blazer and over-sized multicoloured scarf all conspire to present the artist as a boyish artistic ingénue, even at the age of thirty-four. Contained in the colour supplement of a newspaper typified by upmarket advertising and an elite readership,<sup>77</sup> the first two paragraphs of the *Telegraph* feature focus particularly on Hockney's financial success and the substantial monetary values of his artworks; coverage such as this exposed the artist to potential buyers.<sup>78</sup> It is also, I believe, significant that although reference is made to Hockney eating 'with friends' at a particular restaurant, and that amongst his visitors are 'young men... in pairs',<sup>79</sup> Naipaul's profile makes no explicit mention of Hockney's homosexuality, negating the risk of alienating a traditionally conservative readership.<sup>80</sup>

Whilst the *Telegraph Magazine* article can be construed at least in part as a prudent business opportunity, other media engagements are less immediately relevant to Hockney's artistic practice. Despite his frequent jaunts to the United States, Hockney was seen to be emblematic of the 'Swinging London' of the 1960s, frequently photographed for magazines such as *Town* and *Queen* which had previously aimed themselves at upper- and upper-middle-class readers, a bias reflected in their content.<sup>81</sup> David Mellor has identified the case of

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<sup>77</sup> James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility: the Press and Broadcasting in Britain*, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 91.

<sup>78</sup> V.S. Naipaul, 'V.S. Naipaul on David Hockney', *The Telegraph Magazine*, 10 December 1971, p. 41.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>80</sup> Curran and Seaton, p. 73.

<sup>81</sup> Faulkner, p. 16.



Hockney as a particularly remarkable instance of ‘promotional fashioning’<sup>82</sup> of the period. He argues that such traditionally exclusive and conservative glossy publications served as ‘mechanisms of celebrity’,<sup>83</sup> chronicling – both textually and visually – a period of hitherto unprecedented social change and mobility. Faulkner points to Hockney’s inclusion in fashion photographer David Bailey’s 1965 portraiture project *Box of Pin-ups* as the beginnings of Hockney’s status as a celebrity personality, rather than simply a celebrated artist. No outward signs of Hockney’s profession are included in Bailey’s image, Faulkner arguing that by this point Hockney was sufficiently well known for an image independent of his identity as an artist to be constructed.<sup>84</sup> Faulkner goes on to argue that whilst Hockney’s ‘northernness’ marked him out as an outsider in the London social monde of the 1960s, it may also have made him more attractive to media commentators eager to observe the happenings of Swinging London.<sup>85</sup> He refers to a comment made by another northern transplant to the south of this period, author Margaret Forster, who in 1967 stated:

I’m terribly pleased to be working-class because it’s the most swinging thing to be now (...) a tremendous status symbol really (...) I’m very conscious of it, because I know it’s a good thing and it makes me seem all the brighter and cleverer and more super to have come from the muck of the North.<sup>86</sup>

However, it is also possible to construe media interest in Hockney’s northern origins as condescending, and indeed othering. In his *Tatler* profile ‘Hic, Haec, Hockney’ of 1963, Robert Wraight focuses not only on the artist’s artificial blondness but is at pains to emphasise Hockney’s diction to readers, writing that ‘he has an accent that even an amateur

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<sup>82</sup> David Mellor, *The Sixties Art Scene in London*, London, Phaidon, 1993, p. 143.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Faulkner, p. 18.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>86</sup> J. Aitken, *The Young Meteors*, London, 1967, p. 264, in Faulkner, p. 21.

Professor Higgins can immediately pin-point as “Bradford””.<sup>87</sup> Even as late as 1972, Gordon Burns was to go so far as to attempt to transcribe Hockney’s speech phonetically in an article for *Flair*:

Round here somehow it’s – I don’t know how to put it – it’s a lot *nicer*. Somehow the people are a bit different. What I mean is, I *like* it. An’ I’d hate the idea, as I earned more money and things like that, of actually moving out to Belgrave Square. I mean it just wouldn’t suit me at all.<sup>88</sup> (original emphases)

Like other interviews with, and profiles of, the artist, Burns’ creates a context of mild chaos in Hockney’s professional existence. When Burns arrives at Hockney’s home, we are told, the artist himself is not there, only his friend Henry Geldzahler, who is unaware of the engagement; when Hockney returns, he initially beckons his interviewer to ‘come with me while I arrange me (sic) flowers’.<sup>89</sup> Burns’ attempts at direct transcription emphasise Hockney’s working-class identity and, I would argue, make it a point of mild ridicule. Despite Hockney’s rejection of Belgrave Square, an affluent area traditionally associated with the aristocracy, his ownership outright of his London house is seemingly – for the author – at odds with this working-class identity; Burns emphasises the accidental nature of Hockney’s property purchase when he writes ‘it was more or less a case of buy or get kicked out, so naturally he bought’.<sup>90</sup> So far as Hockney’s status as an integral part of a progressive, Swinging London in the 1960s is concerned, it is I believe significant that in a 1976 interview for *Gay News*, Hockney questioned the true extent of social change in this period. Of London in the mid 1960s, he claimed:

It wasn’t as swinging as they said it was, I tell you. Ten years ago I designed the sets and costumes for *Ubu Roi* at the Royal Court. They still had the Lord Chamberlain

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<sup>87</sup> Robert Wraight, ‘On Galleries: Hic, Haec, Hockney’, *The Tatler*, 19 December 1963.

<sup>88</sup> Gordon Burns, ‘Artists and Their Environment Part 3: David Hockney’, *Flair*, July 1972.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

censoring plays then and he cut from the script the phrase: 'screw-top bottles'. Everybody would laugh about it now but that was 1966 in Swinging London.<sup>91</sup>

Whilst, as has been seen throughout this thesis, a wry humour has been central to many of Hockney's engagements with issues of homosexuality, articles such as Burns' *Flair* profile construct Hockney himself as a figure of fun, seemingly laughing at, rather than with, the artist. Once again any discussion of Hockney's artworks themselves is minimal and incidental, the emphasis instead on the artist's busy and disorganised social life. His famously self-fashioned appearance of the period lent itself to caricature; Schlesinger has described Hockney at the time of their first meeting, stating 'he was a bleached blond; wearing a tomato-red suit, a green-and-white polka-dot tie with matching hat, and round black cartoon glasses'.<sup>92</sup> It is unsurprising therefore that Hockney's 'cartoonish' appearance resulted in numerous actual cartoon representations of the artist, such as these from *Nova* (April 1970, Figure 197) and the *Sunday Times* (July 1973, Figure 198). Although both line-drawn images depict the famous spectacles mentioned by Schlesinger, in other respects they are fundamentally very different. The earlier of the two is far looser in its execution, the subject's personal identity suggested by a sparse arrangement of lines; only the glasses and tennis shoes are clearly delineated. However, in the caricatured Hockney's hands is a cartoon canvas, filled with a representation of the curvaceous buttocks that are the focus of works such as *Boy About to Take a Shower* and *The Room, Tarzana* (Figures 109 and 131). Significantly, these buttocks are placed over Hockney's chest in such a fashion that they can be read as female breasts, an obviously emasculating gesture. By contrast, the *Sunday Times* cartoon is comparatively naturalistic in its representation of the artist, his over-sized head observed with careful hatchings and placed upon a modishly dressed if shrunken body. This Hockney carries

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<sup>91</sup> Keith Howes, 'Interview: David Hockney', *Gay News*, no. 100, 29 July – 25 August 1976, p. 17.

<sup>92</sup> Schlesinger, p. 11.

a brush and palette, but is shown painting an exact replica of a steaming bowl of food. This characterisation reflects the nature of the article that it illustrates, a short column entitled ‘Top Nosh’, in which interviewer Russell Miller claims to talk ‘to the stars (...) about their favourite restaurants’.<sup>93</sup> Whilst at the dawn of the twenty-first century the notion of a celebrated artist engaging in a discussion of their eating habits is not unexpected,<sup>94</sup> I would argue that in Britain in 1973 such behaviour was atypical in relation to traditional conceptions of a ‘serious’ artist, the levity of the article reinforced by the cartoon representation. As John Ellis has noted, the notion of celebrity culture in relation to lifestyle journalism was in its infancy in this period, albeit pioneered by newspaper supplements such as that at the *Sunday Times*.<sup>95</sup> Hockney’s participation in such ventures recalls the stance of his American contemporary Warhol, whose enthusiasm for the format of the celebrity interview was such that he founded his own magazine, *Interview*, in 1969.<sup>96</sup> In addition to his showcasing of other public figures in this publication, from the 1970s until his death in 1987 Warhol himself became a media staple, not only a regular feature of the *New York Post*’s ‘Page Six’ gossip columns but also prepared to lend both his work and himself – or at least his persona – to commercial advertising, for example in a 1982 television advertisement for TDK video tape on the Japanese market (Figure 199). In the years immediately before his premature death, Jack Bankowsky argues that as a result of such eclectic and often indiscriminating media appearances, Warhol was almost universally perceived to have become superficial and irrelevant, this position only reconsidered posthumously.<sup>97</sup> To return to Sontag’s analysis of

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<sup>93</sup> Russell Miller, ‘Top Nosh’, *The Sunday Times*, 8 July 1973.

<sup>94</sup> Such short interview features with celebrities have become commonplace across print media; a strikingly similar example can be found in the *Observer Food Magazine* of 18 April 2010, in which artist Tracey Emin discusses her proclivity for oysters and inability to eat ‘cute things’.

<sup>95</sup> John Ellis, ‘TV Pages’, Bob Franklin (ed.), *Pulling Newspapers Apart: Analysing Print Journalism*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 234.

<sup>96</sup> Daniel Morris, *Remarkable Modernisms: Contemporary American Authors on Modern Art*, Boston, University of Massachusetts Press, 2002, p. 29.

<sup>97</sup> Jack Bankowsky, ‘Pop Life’, *Pop Life* (exhibition catalogue), Tate Modern, 2009, p. 20.

camp, one could argue that these tendencies towards engaging with seemingly frivolous media subjects illustrate once again Sontag's forty-first note, which states that '(t)he whole point of Camp is to dethrone the serious'.<sup>98</sup> Whilst Hockney's forays into the celebrity features arena were not nearly so frequent or comprehensive as Warhol's, I would argue that they may have undermined Hockney in terms of his representation as a 'serious' artist, certainly into the mid 1970s.

Thus far in this thesis, discussions of Hockney, his works and reception have been rooted largely in the first two decades of his career; however, it must be noted that Hockney remains a prominent figure in the public consciousness into the second decade of the twenty-first century. Elected a Royal Academician in 1991, Hockney appears to have achieved the status of an elder statesman of the international art scene, but one still openly prepared to discuss not only his work but his life and political opinions with the world's media. His deeply held libertarian views could be detected in interviews as early as the 1960s, with an initial protest against British licensing laws. In a 1966 *Sunday Times* article, Hockney presented his views with characteristic petulant humour, complaining:

I want to know why the Government is trying to get everybody into bed by eleven o'clock. Why else do all the pubs close at eleven and the telly shut off at twelve? It makes me fed up, so I'm going to America. Life should be more exciting, but all they have is regulations stopping you from doing anything. I used to think London was exciting. It is, compared with Bradford. But compared with New York or San Francisco, it's nothing.<sup>99</sup>

Hockney was to repeat these sentiments ten years later in a *Gay News* feature, going so far as to suggest that like-minded individuals should hold sit-ins in pubs.<sup>100</sup> Three decades after this advocacy, Hockney has been widely noted for turning his attention to other perceived attacks

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<sup>98</sup> Sontag, p. 288.

<sup>99</sup> Hunter Davies, 'Atticus: Pop Artist Pops Off', *The Sunday Times*, 9 January 1966.

<sup>100</sup> Keith Howes, 'Interview: David Hockney', *Gay News*, no. 100, 29 July – 25 August 1976, p. 17.

on civil liberties, most notably smoking bans in California and the United Kingdom. Indeed, since the mid 2000s it has become rare to find a media engagement with Hockney that does not mention his thoughts on this matter. In 2005 Hockney was engaged by smokers' lobby group Forest to appear at that year's Labour Party conference, addressing delegates on the issue. This event was reported by virtually all mainstream British media outlets, including the BBC, with Hockney invited to speak on Radio 4's *Today* programme on 28 September opposite MP Julie Morgan.<sup>101</sup> The exchange between Hockney and Morgan itself became a subject of media interest, with the contrast between the two emphasised by commentators. *The Times* saw fit to publish a transcript of the discussion:

Julie Morgan. Thirty three thousand people die of lung cancer every year, we know that it has a very bad effect on asthmatics and with all this knowledge there is a duty on the government to take steps to protect people.

David Hockney. Well, yes, I mean, death awaits you whether you smoke or not. Pubs are not health clubs. People go to drown their sorrows. You could save a lot more lives if they didn't serve alcohol, you could argue. This is ridiculous. It's bossy.

JM. If I spend an evening in a smoky pub it affects my health.

DH. Why has every place to be suitable for you? What about me? Can't there be some places suitable for me? You'll destroy Bohemia.

JM. You can carry on smoking wherever you like, but not in the pubs, not in public places or work places. We're not attacking you smoking, you can smoke.

DH. I think you're too bossy, chum.<sup>102</sup>

The decision of the BBC to invite Hockney to speak on this subject, rather than a member of the lobby group itself, suggests that *Today* programme producers were intending to capitalise on Hockney's reputation as an eccentric and 'Britain's "moaner in chief"'.<sup>103</sup> Where Morgan

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<sup>101</sup> Roland Lloyd Parry, 'Hockney says Labour smoking ban will 'destroy Bohemia'', *The Times*, 28 September 2005.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Anon, 'David Hockney: Line of Beauty', *The Independent*, 16 May 2009.

provides the more conventional and politically-correct dialogue, Hockney's contributions are once again marked by humour and a degree of flippancy. In contrast with more conventional *Today* programme exchanges, he does not counter Morgan's data with figures of his own, but with dogged belligerence; his somewhat anachronistic references to 'Bohemia' and the phrase 'I think you're too bossy, chum' add to a conception of Hockney as embodying, rather like Isherwood's protagonist of *A Single Man*, the archetypal 'grumpy old man'.<sup>104</sup> A 2008 article in *The Independent*, provocatively entitled 'Painter sees Red: Is David Hockney the Grumpiest Man in Britain?', devotes over one thousand words to the subject of the artist's perceived indiscriminate 'grumpiness' alone, appended by a list of 'Six Sulky Rivals' drawn from the celebrity sphere; the online edition of the newspaper featured a poll inviting readers to select which of the seven was 'the grumpiest of them all'. The only mention of Hockney's art in the article is in relation to his smoking practices, when author Andy McSmith writes 'Hockney does not smoke while he is painting because he needs his hands free, but when he steps back to take stock of his work, he lights up'.<sup>105</sup>

It is difficult to dispute that advocacy for such causes as the rights of smokers has become one of Hockney's major concerns in his later years – the interview with the artist that comprises the appendix to this thesis is testament to the extent to which Hockney is passionate about the subject. However, I would argue that the plethora of media agencies and commentators that have engaged with the artist's apparent 'grumpiness' have failed to draw a connection between Hockney's forwarding of rights for homosexuals in the 1960s and his continuing advocacy for individual liberties. Interviewed for this thesis in 2009, the artist drew this parallel himself, stating:

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<sup>104</sup> Adrian Searle, 'The Pleasure Principle: David Hockney at Nottingham Contemporary', *The Guardian*, 11 November 2009.

<sup>105</sup> Andy McSmith, 'Painter sees Red: Is David Hockney the Grumpiest Man in Britain?', *The Independent*, 5 June 2008, URL (consulted April 2011): <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/painter-sees-red-is-david-hockney-the-grumpiest-man-in-britain-840532.html>

I now point out to people – I was pointing out to friends in LA, I said, ‘you shouldn’t be so anti-smoking if you’re gay, because you’ve got to really support tolerance’. Uh... because otherwise – I will point out you can have anti-gayness very quickly.<sup>106</sup>

From this statement one can discern Hockney’s rationale for his personal libertarian agenda. According to his reasoning, ‘tolerance’ is a universal quality, in so far as its withdrawal can lead to a spectrum of negative effects on civil liberties, from the seemingly trivial in the case of smoking to the gravity of a potential return to the criminalisation of homosexual behaviours. However, in the decades since partial decriminalisation in 1967, aspects of Hockney’s identity as a gay man have, I would argue, been elided to a degree by mainstream media sources. As discussed in the previous chapter, in the 1960s the artist’s dandified appearance, following the example of Quentin Crisp, served not only as a physical indicator of his perceived eccentricity and ‘artistic’ nature, but also as an implicit signifier of his sexual identity. However, by the first decade of the twenty-first century, Hockney’s personal style appears to have become estranged in the eyes of commentators from previous interpretations; indeed, his highly coordinated and distinctive appearance has on a number of occasions been co-opted as a model of mainstream – that is, heterosexual – sartorial appeal.

There are a number of factors to consider when addressing this issue. As noted in chapter one, cultural and subcultural behaviours are in a constant state of flux; as a result, since the establishment of gay liberation movements in the West since the early 1970s, stereotypes of the appearance and behaviour of gay men have continued to evolve. In the late 1970s, the disco movement in music came to be strongly associated with a gay, male audience,<sup>107</sup> this connection made most explicit with the formation of the group the Village People in 1977. The band’s name referencing the predominantly gay area of Greenwich

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<sup>106</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xvi.

<sup>107</sup> Tim Lawrence, “‘I Want to See All My Friends At Once’: Arthur Russell and the Queering of Gay Disco”, *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, vol. 18, issue 2, 2006, p. 148.



Village in New York, it was the brainchild of French music producer Jacques Morali, with the aim of creating a face for disco music that was clearly and recognisably gay.<sup>108</sup> The band's all-male line-up reflected a gamut of macho gay stereotypes, featuring a police officer, leather clad biker, Native American, a cowboy, a soldier and a construction worker. According to Gary Soldow, the choice of such macho figures reflects negative stereotyping on the part of both heterosexuals and gay men. He argues that despite an objection on the part of the gay men towards the reliance of heterosexuals on gay stereotypes, many gay men themselves hold, or have internalised, stereotypes of gays as effeminate, unmasculine or androgynous, professing an erotic preference for stereotypically 'masculine' traits.<sup>109</sup>

The feminised stereotype of the gay man as particularly stylish has to an extent been sustained into the twenty-first century; however, changes in male behaviours from the late 1990s onwards have led to the emergence of the so-called 'metrosexual'. A pun and portmanteau of 'metropolitan' and heterosexual', the word is used to refer to men who identify as heterosexual, but who have adopted certain behaviours, notably a close attention to personal style and grooming, that have been previously associated with a particular constituency of gay men. The phenomenon of the metrosexual has been capitalised upon by the American television programme *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, which premiered in 2003. The basic premise of the programme is that a team of gay male stylists and advisors, the so-called 'Fab Five', take on the case of a typically ill-groomed and poorly-dressed heterosexual man, usually in order to increase the subject's attractiveness to women.<sup>110</sup> However, whilst metrosexuality involves the appropriation of particular behaviours, media

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<sup>108</sup> Judith A. Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens: Musical Technologies of Queer Identity from Homer to Hedwig*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 2006, p.180.

<sup>109</sup> Gary Soldow, 'Homoeroticism in Advertising: Something for Everyone with Androgyny', Tom Reichert and Jacqueline Lambiasi (eds.), *Sex in Consumer Culture: the Erotic Content of Media and Marketing*, New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 326.

<sup>110</sup> Ron Becker, *Gay TV and Straight America*, Piscataway, Rutgers University Press, 2006, p. 221.

presentations such as *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* reinforce a fundamental difference between the metrosexual and the homosexual. Ron Becker has addressed this subject in detail, stating:

As a glorified infomercial, *Queer Eye* channelled both the celebration of male consumerism and the evocation of gay male stereotypes so central to the discourse of metrosexuality. (...) While the concept of metrosexuality revealed how categories of sexual identity and gender were being redrawn in a culture where being gay wasn't necessarily bad, *Queer Eye* made it clear that being a metrosexual was different than being homosexual. (...) Although thoroughly heterosexual, these newly crafted metrosexuals are also thoroughly homo-friendly. (...) *Queer Eye*, then, provides a guide for escaping male homosexual panic and a solution for those straight panic anxieties about what it means to be straight in a culture where being gay was no longer unequivocally stigmatised.<sup>111</sup>

Becker makes a significant observation as regards cultural change in the decades since the beginnings of gay liberation. As public attitudes towards gay men become more progressive, heterosexual men may open themselves towards the possibility of adopting behaviours previously deemed stereotypically homosexual, as semiotic links between behaviour and sexual orientation become attenuated. Hockney's own distinctive and self-consciously constructed personal style has, I would argue, become a part of this phenomenon, as exemplified by the decision of *Vogue Hommes International* magazine to name Hockney as its style inspiration for the Spring-Summer 2008 fashion season.<sup>112</sup> Hockney's sartorial example is also the chief subject of a 2010 interview in *The Chap*, a magazine aimed at enthusiasts of a somewhat comical model of traditional gentlemanly behaviours. In it Hockney waxes lyrical on the importance of dressing well and having one's suits tailor-made, exclaiming:

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, pp. 220-221.

<sup>112</sup> Alexis Petridis, 'A Gentleman Abroad', *The Guardian*, 16 August 2008.

we are living in dark times, and people have never been so badly dressed. I thought it was appalling, for example, that Tony Blair wore an ordinary suit at the Queen Mother's funeral. He was pretending to be an ordinary man, but the ordinary man would have gone to Moss Bros and hired a morning suit.<sup>113</sup>

The intermingling of stylistic comment and political railing in the above quotation exemplifies the jointure of two aspects of Hockney's celebrity persona – that of the Wildean aesthete of his youth and the 'grumpy old man' of his later years. One could compare this article with the 'Posh Nosh' feature of 1973 in its preoccupation with factors other than Hockney's artistic practice. Hockney's homosexuality is alluded to by the author, with mention of the artist's 'long-term partner' and a description of his household as 'a well-run menagerie of men'.<sup>114</sup> However, in keeping with the context of the publication in which it appears, the *Chap* article celebrates Hockney precisely because of his somewhat dated and curmudgeonly stance, his tastes and behaviour presented as those of a traditional gentleman. This is an intriguing reversal of a concept that Chris Straayer posits in relation to Patricia Highsmith's 1955 novel *The Talented Mr Ripley*, the eponymous protagonist of which, it is implied, is a homosexual man originally from a working-class background like Hockney himself. Having become close to the wealthy Dickie Greenleaf, Tom Ripley murders him and assumes his identity. Straayer writes:

*The Talented Mr Ripley* never states whether Tom is homosexual. Highsmith's reliance on gay stereotypes and codes produces a text that, in its opacity, resembles Tom's personality. Such a gay stereotype links Tom's performative ability to his proclivity for artifice. The affectation and affection for style that are often described as effeminacy in the gay male subject are simply attributed to class in the wealthy heterosexual male. Thus one can argue that Tom's homosexuality actually assists his class passing. His fondness for jewelry and exquisite clothing suits the upper-class masculinity of Greenleaf. Ironically, once achieved, this upper-class masculinity then smoothes Tom's passing as straight.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Tom Hodgkinson, 'The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow', *The Chap*, no. 51, June-July 2010, p. 15.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, pp. 14-15.

<sup>115</sup> Chris Straayer, 'The Talented Poststructuralist: Heteromascularity, Gay Artifice and Class Passing', Peter Lehman (ed.), *Masculinity: Bodies, Movies, Culture*, New York and London, Routledge, 2001, p. 126.

The changing attitudes toward perceived homosexual behaviours in the decades following gay liberation can be seen to have had a dual effect on media perceptions and presentations of Hockney himself. The sartorial self-presentation that once differentiated him from the norm and signified his performative enactment of stereotypical homosexual behaviours has now entered the heterosexual mainstream of metrosexuality, as the phenomenon of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* suggests. His attention to personal presentation is now construed by the public and the media as a positive attribute, and indeed is no longer exclusively perceived as an indicator of homosexual tendencies; like Highsmith's Tom Ripley, Hockney's passing into the mainstream is smoothed, his identity as a gay man subtly elided. With the assimilation of stereotypically homosexual behaviours, such as attention to personal style, into the heteronormative mainstream, I would argue that recent stereotypes of gay men in the mass media have become still more bluntly caricatured. Whilst the criticisms of Hockney's homosexual identity considered in the previous chapter are barbed, the aspects of Hockney's self-presentation – such as his perceived 'limpidity' – that they target are remarkably subtle when compared to contemporary stereotypes of gay behaviours. Whilst the 'Fab Five' of *Queer Eye* can be seen to correspond with such exaggeratedly feminised stereotypes, the character of Jack McFarland from the American situation comedy *Will and Grace* typifies them most clearly. First broadcast in 1998, the programme was deemed ground-breaking by some commentators on account of its presentation of another gay character, Will Truman, as fulfilling certain conventions of masculinity and sober behaviour;<sup>116</sup> however, this is countered by the character of Will's best friend, Jack, fulfilling all conventional, malevolent stereotypes of gay men as camp, lisping, limp-wristed, histrionic queens. Widely distributed

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<sup>116</sup> James R. Keller, *Queer (Un)Friendly Film and Television*, Jefferson, McFarland and Company, 2002, p. 125.

domestically and abroad, *Will and Grace* has been described as '[providing] the American viewing public with the most constant current stream of media images of gay men (at least upper-middle-class, white, urban gay men)'.<sup>117</sup> However, Thomas Linneman's study of the programme's representation of these individuals argues that it consistently depicts gay men as feminised, noting the frequency with which they are subjected to insults couched in feminine terms – a tendency which, as Linneman observes, can be construed as offensive to both women and gay men.<sup>118</sup> He also notes that test audiences expressed concern at the at-times disingenuous presentation of such slurs, one participant remarking that 'it's very much disguised, but that in itself is kind of dangerous'.<sup>119</sup> Linneman concludes that such presentations of gay men in widely consumed cultural products carry the potential for the reinforcement of these exaggerated and negative stereotypes, in particular when one considers that many heterosexual audiences may not watch the show equipped with a camp sensibility through which to filter its humour. As such, one could go so far as to argue that Hockney has been marginalised so far as twenty-first century (pre)conceptions of gay men are concerned, because his publicly-performed behaviour corresponds less to the ubiquitous stereotype of 'faggy hairdressers'<sup>120</sup> and more with an aesthetic that has become increasingly absorbed into the heterosexual mainstream. I would also argue that as an older man, Hockney has also been excluded from contemporary media conceptions of homosexuality on account of his age, with representations of gay men and lesbians focusing almost entirely on the young.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Thomas J. Linneman, 'How Do You Solve a Problem Like Will Truman? : The Feminization of Gay Masculinities on *Will & Grace*', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 10, no. 5, August 2008, p. 586.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, pp. 597-601.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 597.

<sup>120</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xli.

<sup>121</sup> Jon F. Nussbaum, *Communication and Aging*, New York, Taylor and Francis, 2000, p. 226.

### 5.3 'There's All Types of Gay':<sup>122</sup> 'Lifestyle', Gay Movements and Gay Communities

As this chapter thus far has demonstrated, Hockney has a long history of encounters with a mainstream, heteronormative media. In addition to this, on account of the relative openness with which he addressed his own sexual identity as a young man, he has also played a central role in discussions and commentary emanating from gay media outlets since their inception in the wake of gay liberation movements of the early 1970s. However, Hockney's individual stance with regards to personal conduct, political actions and the existence, or otherwise, of a cohesive 'gay community'<sup>123</sup> has at times placed him at odds with dominant agendas within gay movements. As Lampela's study has shown, Hockney's identity as a gay artist is, certainly in the present, widely recognised by art educators;<sup>124</sup> however, as Spaulding has noted, the selection of the 1988 major retrospective could be interpreted as underplaying the significance of the artist's engagements with his sexual identity in the early years of his career.<sup>125</sup>

In 1968 Hockney had performed a personal act of public rebellion when he contested the confiscation by British Customs of a number of American nudist magazines that he had brought back from New York.<sup>126</sup> Eight years later, he intervened when police attempted to raid a gay book shop in London's Earls Court, bringing considerable publicity to the case.<sup>127</sup> Interviewed in *Gay News* at the time, Hockney expressed his dissatisfaction with the state of censorship conventions in Britain, drawing attention to the practice of certain double standards. He stated:

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<sup>122</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xli.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Lampela, p. 155.

<sup>125</sup> Julian Spaulding, 'Review: David Hockney. London, Tate Gallery', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 131, no. 1030 (Jan., 1989), p. 51.

<sup>126</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney on David Hockney*, p. 193.

<sup>127</sup> Keith Howes, 'Interview: David Hockney', *Gay News*, no. 100, 29 July – 25 August 1976, p. 17.

there's a loophole in the law that you can publish obscene or pornographic material if it has aesthetic merit or historical interest which is the way they got round publishing those letters of James Joyce. Normally the police would have busted Faber and Faber but they have a defence in that they were written by James Joyce which seems to me a bit unfair that little Johnny Someone in Hammersmith can't do it and James Joyce can. So I'm going to do some pornographic drawings for a gay magazine and see whether the police prosecute. It's just an artist's way of taking it down a bit.<sup>128</sup>

Significantly, this article is accompanied by a 1966 photograph from Hockney's personal collection (Figure 200), captioned 'David with an American lover', showing a young Hockney naked except for a bed sheet and curled up beside Ferrill Amacker. In 1973, Hockney had contributed *An Erotic Etching* (Figure 75) to a book, produced by his subsequent biographer Peter Webb, entitled *The Erotic Arts*; the work, a conscious continuation of the themes of the Cavafy print series,<sup>129</sup> shows two naturalistically rendered young men engaged in the act of fellatio. A few months prior to the publication of the *Gay News* interview, Hockney had given another to *Playguy* magazine, a titillating periodical featuring male nudity and aimed at a readership of gay men; whilst the text is relatively brief, the article is illustrated by a plethora of the artist's personal erotic Polaroid photographs, two of which feature the artist himself (Figures 201 and 202). I will argue that Hockney's decision to allow the publication of such images amounted to a conscious and concerted effort to challenge existing conventions surrounding the display of homoerotic images. In this aim these images bear similarities to the photographic works of both Andy Warhol and Robert Mapplethorpe of the late 1970s, Hockney's contemporaries and fellow gay men.

Whilst the 1970s saw an unprecedented expansion in the rights, freedoms and visibility of gay men, the emergence of the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s dealt a catastrophic blow to gay communities. Initially labelled Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID) due to

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 184.

the high numbers of homosexual men affected, or even the ‘gay cancer’ on account of the previously rare Kaposi’s sarcoma lesions that presented with many early cases,<sup>130</sup> AIDS amounted not only to a humanitarian crisis but a political one, with Ronald Reagan’s Republican administration widely admonished for being slow to respond to the problem in the United States.<sup>131</sup> Successful management of HIV infection as a chronic condition with combination anti-retroviral therapies did not become available until 1996,<sup>132</sup> with the result that many gay men, particularly in the United States, were caught in a constant cycle of fear and loss. Writing in 1988, Dean, Hall and Martin observed that the particular vulnerability of gay men to contracting AIDS led to powerful reactions towards both the illness itself and the bereavements to which it led, noting that ‘when friends and associates die, not only in large numbers but in year after succeeding year, without a sufficient interval of time to resolve the grief from one death or set of deaths before the next occurs, the grief reaction may be compounded and contribute to a sense of impending doom and chronic mourning’.<sup>133</sup> Robert Mapplethorpe was himself to become a victim of the AIDS epidemic, dying in 1989, and he was not the only acquaintance of Hockney to succumb to the disease, with the artist referring to the many deaths of friends in his second volume of autobiography, *That’s the Way I See It*.<sup>134</sup>

Given the enormity of the impact of AIDS upon affected constituencies, it was inevitable that artistic responses to the crisis would emerge. Arguably the most well-known of these is the ongoing NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, commenced by activist Cleve

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<sup>130</sup> Michelle Cochrane, *When AIDS Began: San Francisco and the Making of an Epidemic*, New York and London, Routledge, 2004, p. 232.

<sup>131</sup> Kenneth MacKinnon, *The Politics of Popular Representation: Reagan, Thatcher, AIDS, and the Movies*, Madison, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992, p. 158.

<sup>132</sup> Eric Rofes, *Dry Bones Breathe: Gay Men Creating Post-AIDS Identities and Cultures*, Binghamton, Haworth Press, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> Laura Dean, William E. Hall and John L. Martin, ‘Chronic and Intermittent AIDS-Related Bereavement in a Panel of Homosexual Men in New York City’, *Journal of Palliative Care*, vol. 4, no. 4, December 1988 p. 54.

<sup>134</sup> David Hockney, *That’s the Way I See It*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1993, pp. 135-6.



Jones in 1987, which invites friends and relatives of AIDS victims to contribute a quilt panel in their memory.<sup>135</sup> Mapplethorpe's later self-portrait images, in particular his 1988 *Self-Portrait* (Figure 203) which shows an obviously ailing artist clutching a cane topped with a miniature skull, have been explicitly connected with AIDS by commentators;<sup>136</sup> indeed, Richard Meyer has argued that such was the escalation of rhetoric attached to the disease, Mapplethorpe's visibility as a celebrity AIDS sufferer led to the entirety of his oeuvre being interpreted through this lens.<sup>137</sup> By contrast, Hockney has been criticised for the apparent lack of focus on AIDS in his work, to the extent that Michael Bronski has claimed that '(t)he chief criticism of his work has been that it fails to grapple with the darker side of life, and it is true that suffering – the anguish of AIDS, for example – finds no echo in his art'.<sup>138</sup> This is a claim that I seek to contest. I would argue that Hockney's engagements with AIDS in his artworks rely, like much of his work dealing with homosexual themes, on the hermetic, and as such the symbolism inherent in many of his floral works contemporary with the AIDS crisis may be overlooked by critics such as Bronski. Whilst Hockney has intermittently produced images of flowers from the mid-1960s onwards, a particular profusion can be seen to emerge in the mid-1980s, for example *Three Black Flowers, May 1986* (Figure 204) and *Two Pink Flowers* (1989, Figure 205). A parallel can be found in the later work of Mapplethorpe himself, who likewise produced a considerable number of works focusing on floral subjects in the years subsequent to the development of the AIDS crisis and in particular following his own diagnosis in 1986. I will argue that these works can be interpreted as memorial images, dealing with the AIDS crisis obliquely rather than directly. Bronski argues that it is a failure

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<sup>135</sup> Peter S. Hawkins, 'Naming Names: The Art of Memory and the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19, no. 4, Summer 1993, p. 757.

<sup>136</sup> Roger Myrick, *AIDS, Communication, and Empowerment: Gay Male Identity and the Politics of Public Health Messages*, Binghamton, Haworth Press, 1996, p. 50.

<sup>137</sup> Richard Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 220.

<sup>138</sup> Bronski, p. 190.

of Hockney's practice that he has not approached the suffering and anguish of AIDS directly; however, I believe that in order fully to comprehend the artist's motives so far as his images of flowers are concerned, one must bear in mind his 1993 statement, at the height of the AIDS crisis, on his personal understanding of the tragic. He writes:

I think I tend to have a somewhat Oriental attitude to tragedy, not a Western attitude. The Oriental view of life is different; it doesn't see life as tragic in a European sense, and in a way I find myself quite drawn to that. It seems to me one of the great sadnesses is that all of us understand tragedy to a certain extent, or sense it in our lives: loved things disappear, people you love die. But it's the comic side that some people can't see.<sup>139</sup>

Hockney's emphasis on 'the comic side' begs comparison once again with Sontag's statements on camp, as well as offering further affirmation of the place of humour within both the artist's work and personal outlook. In the context of Hockney's floral works of the 1980s and 1990s however, this statement, I believe, underpins the significance of these images.

Whilst panic surrounding the developing AIDS crisis was to lead to attempts from various sources to curtail the rights and liberties of gay men in the 1980s, the previous decade bore witness to remarkable advances in the social and political visibility of gay communities. Organised gay liberation movements in both Britain and the United States began to arise at the close of the 1960s, in the latter case famously catalysed by the 'historic rupture'<sup>140</sup> of the Stonewall Riots of June 1969. Whilst raids of New York gay bars were a common occurrence of the time, when police stormed the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village in the early hours of 28 June 1969, patrons of the bar resisted. Apparently occurring on the same day as the funeral of gay icon Judy Garland,<sup>141</sup> the New York *Daily News* tellingly stated that with the riots,

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<sup>139</sup> Hockney, *That's the Way I See It*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>140</sup> John D'Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics and the University*, New York and London, Routledge, 1992, p. 107.

<sup>141</sup> Nicholas C. Edsall, *Toward Stonewall: Homosexuality and Society in the Modern Western World*, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2003, p. 333.

‘queen power reared its bleached-blond head in revolution’.<sup>142</sup> This act of defiance, and the media coverage that surrounded it, created the ideal conditions for sustained resistance and organisation, with the result that a proliferation of groups allied to the cause of gay liberation occurred in its wake. However, as Smith and Haider-Markel have argued, the emergence of these new cultural and political gay movements marked the beginning of the end of more traditional homophile groups such as the Mattachine Society,<sup>143</sup> and I would argue of preceding constructions of ‘ideal’ homosexual relationships. In Britain, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality was formed in 1971, a group that developed from the pre-decriminalisation era Homosexual Law Reform Society, with Hockney himself serving as one of the new organisation’s vice-presidents. However, by his own admission his participation in organised resistance of this kind was in name only. When informed by a *Gay News* journalist in 1976 that his name appeared on the organisation’s note paper, Hockney admitted to having never actually attended any of its meetings, professing his belief that ‘things [there] are a bit dull’.<sup>144</sup> Although in a 1972 interview with the Campaign’s magazine *Lunch* Hockney claimed to have ‘been to a couple’ of Gay Liberation Front (GLF) meetings,<sup>145</sup> it is clear that his engagement with organised protest and advocacy for gay liberation in the 1970s was cursory at best. Indeed, despite claiming that ‘I feel one should stand up and be counted and do one’s bit occasionally’,<sup>146</sup> in his engagements with gay media platforms during the decade, Hockney can be seen to distance himself somewhat from prevailing attitudes towards gay political activism and desirable social behaviour of the time. In a prefigurement of the

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<sup>142</sup> *Daily News*, 6 July 1969.

<sup>143</sup> Raymond A. Smith and Donald P. Haider-Markel, *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation: a Reference Handbook*, Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2003, p.75.

<sup>144</sup> Keith Howes, ‘Interview: David Hockney’, *Gay News*, no. 100, 29 July – 25 August 1976, p. 17.

<sup>145</sup> Anon., ‘Profile: David Hockney’, *Lunch*, no.12, September 1972, pp. 4-8.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

curmudgeonly persona to be seized upon by the media in the artist's later years, a 1976 interview saw Hockney claim that

I tend to think that people who are in the gay movement are just too grey and could do things with a lot more wit. I don't think the English are dull really but there are a lot of people who don't live *intensely*. There's no reason that the place should be so boring.<sup>147</sup>(original emphases)

Although the connection between the two might on the surface appear tenuous, one could compare Hockney's situation as a gay man, public figure and artist in the 1970s with the fate of early pressure groups such as the HLRS. As Meyer has noted, a sea change occurred at the end of the 1960s in terms of the aims and approaches of homosexual rights groups. In the 1950s and early 1960s organisations such as the Mattachine Society in the United States and the Homosexual Law Reform Society in Britain deliberately sought to present themselves as assimilable and non-threatening to a heterosexist majority in order to ensure that their fundamental message was heard; however, by the 1970s successor groups such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Campaign for Homosexual Equality chose to take a more radical and confrontational approach, with social and sexual revolution being the goal rather than earlier aims of tolerance and decriminalisation.<sup>148</sup> Ken Plummer has also noted the emergence in the 1970s of a new aesthetic amongst gay men, the 'masculinist look' of leather cultures<sup>149</sup> explored in the later years of the decade in the photography of Robert Mapplethorpe.

One could contrast the representations of monogamous, homosexual domestic bliss forwarded by Hockney in the late 1960s in his painted double portraits such as *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* with Mapplethorpe's photographic double portrait *Brian Ridley*

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<sup>147</sup> Keith Howes, 'Interview: David Hockney', *Gay News*, no. 100, 29 July – 25 August 1976, p. 17.

<sup>148</sup> Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, p. 165.

<sup>149</sup> Ken Plummer, 'The Lesbian and Gay Movement in Britain: Schisms, Solidarities and Social Worlds', Barry D. Adam, Jan Willem Duyvendak and André Krouwel (eds.), *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics: National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1999, p. 133.

and *Lyle Heeter* (Figure 179), produced over a decade later in 1979. Like Hockney's painting, Mapplethorpe's photograph depicts its subjects in the context of their own domestic environment, in the latter case an apparently comfortably appointed apartment decorated in a somewhat kitsch style, with a patterned rug on the floor and an assortment of trinkets arranged on a table supported by legs constructed from deer antlers. However, against this background of bourgeois comfort are placed the eponymous subjects themselves. Both sporting the tight, black leather outfits associated with sado-masochistic sex play, one sits in an armchair, his neck, wrists and ankles bound with chains that are held by his standing partner who wears a military-style peaked leather cap and grips a riding crop. Despite the evident power dynamics of dominance and submission suggested by their pose, both Ridley and Heeter are shown looking directly at the camera; as Meyer has argued convincingly, this confrontational gaze prevents Mapplethorpe's sitters from appearing merely 'deluded or pathetic',<sup>150</sup> instead emphasising their agency. Although Ridley and Heeter are shown in the conventional trappings of their preferred sexual activity, it is significant that they are not depicted in the act of performing sado-masochistic practices themselves, instead couched in the incongruous territories of domesticity. This decision can be interpreted in a number of ways. As with *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* before it, Mapplethorpe's image presents its sitters as part of a domestic partnership; by placing them within this context, the artist normalises Ridley and Heeter, showing them to have a social dimension beyond their sexual preference. It could be argued that in so doing, Mapplethorpe attempts to subvert a tendency identified by Sedgwick in *Epistemology of the Closet*, when she writes:

It is a rather amazing fact that, of the very many dimensions along which the genital activity of one person can be differentiated from that of another (...) precisely one, the gender of object choice, emerged from the turn of the century, and has remained,

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<sup>150</sup> Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, p. 194.

as *the* dimension denoted by the now ubiquitous category of ‘sexual orientation’.<sup>151</sup>  
(original emphases)

From Mapplethorpe’s photograph, we can infer that Ridley and Heeter are not only men who sexually desire other men (and each other), but that they also enjoy games of erotic dominance and submission in addition to being in a committed relationship, sharing an otherwise conventional home. In this respect, *Brian Ridley and Lyle Heeter* could be seen on a certain level to perform a similar function to Hockney’s images of the 1960s that sought to present homosexuality in a normative fashion. The domestic setting may also be construed as giving lie to contemporary stereotypes of gay men as mere ‘promiscuous, bar-hopping bathhouse dwellers’.<sup>152</sup>

However, the distinctive leather garb of Mapplethorpe’s sitters and their sado-masochistic accoutrements are undoubtedly the central focus of this photographic portrait, and arguably the central reason for their selection as subjects. Whilst both men can be viewed as assimilable into mainstream, heteronormative society with respect to their domestic arrangements, their leather fetishwear identifies them as corresponding to the then-emergent faction of gay men that identified themselves as queer, with its accompanying implications of progressive and unapologetic political activism. Deliberately confrontational in their self-presentation, Ridley and Heeter appear potentially threatening to heterosexist sensibilities. Whilst hostile stereotypes of gay men as promiscuous did exist, the practice of promiscuity was not in itself condemned unilaterally by gay men themselves, being at this time construed by some liberationist movements as a positive action indicative of true sexual and political liberation, to the extent that in 1983, activists Richard Berkowitz and Michael Callen argued

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<sup>151</sup> Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 8.

<sup>152</sup> Robert Jensen, ‘The Relevance of Radical Feminism for Gay Men’, Christopher Kendall, Wayne Martino (eds.), *Gendered Outcasts and Sexual Outlaws: Sexual Oppression and Gender Hierarchies in Queer Men's Lives*, Binghamton, Harrington Park Press, 2006, p. 23.

that ‘sex and “promiscuity” have become the dogma of gay liberation’.<sup>153</sup> Whilst the ‘sex-positive’ attitudes of such factions can be seen to be forwarded in *Brian Ridley and Lyle Heeter*, these elements are constrained in the work by the simultaneous presence of the domestic. However, this is not the case in many of Mapplethorpe’s other contemporary visual explorations of sexual subcultures, as seen in works such as the controversial ‘X’ portfolio of images concerned with sado-masochism. Amongst the most confrontational of these images is one of Mapplethorpe himself, the *Self-Portrait* (Figure 206) of 1978. Like the later *Brian Ridley and Lyle Heeter*, it is squarely cropped and places its focus of the trappings of sado-masochistic practices, the artist placing himself at the centre of the composition dressed in black leather fetish wear. However, where the double portrait presents its subjects merely in costume, as it were, *Self-Portrait* shows Mapplethorpe in the act of anally penetrating himself with a long leather bullwhip that snakes, tail-like, out of frame. Once again appearing to confront the viewer’s gaze directly, Mapplethorpe’s self-image has layered significations. By showing himself in such an auto-erotic act, the artist can be seen to attempt to validate for the viewer his visual explorations of such cultures and practices; the image makes it explicit that Mapplethorpe is not merely a passive observer, but an active participant on the radical fringes of (homo)sexual politics. The nature of the artist’s chosen act, and his method of self-presentation, can be construed as a wry comment on the dynamics of sado-masochism, and homosexual acts more widely. The receptive, or ‘passive’ partner in anally penetrative acts is commonly referred to as a ‘bottom’, often with implications of submission, whilst the penetrator or ‘active’ participant is referred to as a ‘top’.<sup>154</sup> However, in terms of Mapplethorpe’s auto-erotic act, he is simultaneously penetrator and penetrated, creator of both

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<sup>153</sup> Richard Berkowitz, Michael Callen, *How to Have Sex in an Epidemic: One Approach* (pamphlet), New York, News from the Front Publications, 1983

<sup>154</sup> Domonick J. Wegesin, Heino F. L. Meyer-Bahlburg, ‘Top/Bottom Self-Label, Anal Sex Practices, HIV Risk and Gender Role Identity in Gay Men in New York City’, *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, vol. 12, no. 3, December 2000, pp. 43-62.

photograph and the situation being photographed. Meyer points to Sedgwick's conception of the anus in *Tendencies* as 'the place that is singularly not under one's own ocular control', a place that recalls shame and restraint through its connection to childhood imperatives to control its function,<sup>155</sup> through the act of photographing his own self-penetration, Mapplethorpe makes the private public, the unseen visible, the shameful defiant – aims endorsed by contemporary agents of progressive gay liberation.

Whilst as has been shown Mapplethorpe's works of the late 1970s corresponded more closely with contemporary conceptions of gay radicalism than did Hockney's, a parallel can be found between the early works of both artists in their use of physique photography, as well as overt pornography in the case of Mapplethorpe. Examples of such appropriation by the younger artist can be found in his collage works of the early 1970s, for example *Untitled (Grecian Guild)* of 1970 (Figure 207). The piece consists of a manipulated photo transfer of the cover of a 1964 issue of *Grecian Guild Pictorial*, a physique magazine operating along similar lines to Hockney's preferred *Physique Pictorial*. Interviewed by curator Janet Kardon on the occasion of his controversial retrospective 'The Perfect Moment' in 1988, Mapplethorpe explained his motivation for utilising such images, and the impetus to create his own, stating:

I went to Pratt [art school] where I did collages. I was also making photographic objects with material from pornographic magazines. At some point, I picked up a camera and started taking erotic pictures – so that I would have the right raw material and it would be more mine, instead of using other people's pictures. That was why I went into photography. It wasn't to take a pure photographic image, it was just to be able to work with more images.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Sedgwick, 'A Poem is Being Written', *Tendencies*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1993, p. 199; quoted in Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, p. 196.

<sup>156</sup> Janet Kardon, 'Robert Mapplethorpe: Interview', Janet Kardon (ed.), *The Perfect Moment* (exhibition catalogue), Institute of Contemporary Art, 1991, p. 23.



As such, a clear symmetry can be perceived between works such as *Untitled (Grecian Guild)* and Hockney's images of the early to mid-1960s utilising similar physique photographs, such as *Life Painting for a Diploma* of 1962 (Figure 9), as well as the desire to create more personal images inspired by the sensibilities of such material. An example of this can be seen in the mapping of Mizer's *Physique Pictorial* aesthetics onto the body of Peter Schlesinger in *The Room, Tarzana* (Figure 131). However, whilst Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photographs have been widely acknowledged and considered, Hockney's have not. This disparity may in part be due to the limited availability of Hockney's photographs to the viewing public. However, one could go so far as to argue that Mapplethorpe's death, by a disease often associated in public perceptions with homosexual intercourse,<sup>157</sup> has contributed to a tendency to focus on his works that deal with homoeroticism. By contrast, as has been shown above, Hockney's image in the twenty-first century has evolved in a way that has become increasingly absorbed into the heterosexual mainstream, whilst as an older man, his agency as a sexual being has been diminished.<sup>158</sup>

As has been noted previously, Hockney was a prodigious photographer of family and friends from the 1960s onwards, although he did not begin to exhibit his photographic images as artworks in their own right until the early 1980s, with his composite 'photo-joiner' pieces. Nonetheless, like Mapplethorpe, Hockney evidently produced a range of personal homoerotic photographic images in the 1970s, with nine of these being published in the January 1976 issue of *Playguy*. Like *The Room, Tarzana*, these images are clearly heavily influenced by the erotic aesthetics of physique photography, Mizer's *Physique Pictorial* in particular. The pictures feature the young American men Mark Lippescombe and Gregory Evans, both of

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<sup>157</sup> Douglas A. Feldman, Julia Wang Miller, *The AIDS Crisis: A Documentary History*, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1998, p. 22.

<sup>158</sup> Nussbaum, p. 226.

whom appear briefly in *A Bigger Splash*;<sup>159</sup> Evans was the former lover of Hockney's Los Angeles dealer Nick Wilder, before subsequently becoming Hockney's lover and, later, assistant.<sup>160</sup> The artist's original Polaroid images are greatly enlarged in the *Playguy* feature, with four of the nine reproduced in colour and occupying a full page each. They demonstrate a strong affinity for the homoerotic visual tropes of *Physique Pictorial*, with Evans and Lippescombe shown sporting jockstraps and sportswear in several of the pictures, echoing Isherwood's account of his protagonist's gym attire of 'sweat-socks, jockstrap and shorts' in *A Single Man*.<sup>161</sup> The *Playguy* feature closes with a full-page colour photograph of the two men in these garments (Figure 208). Arranged alongside one another, both wear sport socks, shiny shorts, and brightly coloured running vests. On the right hand side, Evans lies prone, his body strongly foreshortened by the camera. To his left, Lippescombe is in a semi-reclining position, his right leg raised, affording a glimpse inside his silvery shorts. However, unlike Ridley, Heeter or Mapplethorpe himself in the images already considered, neither sitter appears to meet the viewer's gaze in this photograph; Lippescombe's head is shown in profile, glancing to his left, while Evans' face is concealed entirely. Once again, Mulvey's theories around the gaze might be applied to this image; reorganised around a homoerotic axis, the (young) man becomes image, with an older man as bearer of the look – and constructor of the scene.<sup>162</sup> In only one photograph out of the nine does one of the subjects meet the viewer's gaze directly (Figure 209); however, even in this image, the viewer is placed in a (literally) superior position above Lippescombe and Evans. It could be argued that as such, Hockney elides the agency of his sitters in a way that Mapplethorpe does not. In two of the *Playguy* photographs Hockney himself appears (Figures 201-202). In both, he appears naked alongside

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<sup>159</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 211.

<sup>160</sup> Evans remains the manager of Hockney's Los Angeles office and studio.

<sup>161</sup> Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 88.

<sup>162</sup> Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975), Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 837.

Lippescombe, sitting on the edge of a bathtub. In the first, both men's bodies face the camera, although their eyes are once again averted; fully naked, Hockney's penis is clearly visible, whilst his companion's is perfunctorily shielded with a hand. Hockney drapes his right arm over Lippescombe's shoulder, whilst the younger man's left arm appears to snake around Hockney's back. Both men's bodies glisten as if oiled, an effect reminiscent of physique photography achieved through frequent dippings in Hockney's bathtub.<sup>163</sup> This focus on the bathroom, on nudity, on apparent comradeship, is clearly prefigured in the photographs of Mizer, such as this from 1963 (Figure 148).

At the time of the publication of Hockney's photographs in *Playguy* in January 1976, Hockney was almost thirty-nine years old, but this is belied by his self-presentation in the images. Like Mavor's subjects, he appears 'neither man nor boy, neither little nor big',<sup>164</sup> instead, he is boyish. His hair, still bleached blond, remains unthinned, whilst the pale outline of untanned skin is visible on both men's bodies. However, despite the apparent camaraderie of the pose, in both the photograph and the *Playguy* article that frames them, Hockney's dominant position can be inferred. The over-arm posture of his embrace of Lippescombe adds to Hockney's physical presence in the composition, whilst diminishing the younger man's. Whilst the artist appears personally in only two of the photographs, the text that accompanies them focuses almost exclusively on Hockney, his success and his erotic ideals. The young men that perform these ideals are mentioned only in passing in the article's final line, with first name identification only.<sup>165</sup> Meanwhile, like Mapplethorpe's sado-masochistic couple Ridley and Heeter, Hockney too can be seen to perform a sexual role, of the older, indulgent but socially dominant lover. It has been noted in the previous chapter that although having migrated from his northern, working-class origins Hockney is in a self-made position of

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<sup>163</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 212.

<sup>164</sup> Mavor, p. 5.

<sup>165</sup> Mike Arlen, 'Sundown: Hockney in Camera', *Playguy*, no. 10, 1976, p. 39.

privilege, his chosen position could nonetheless be compared to the traditional roles of middle- or upper-class homosexual men of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. William Pannapacker has noted that although theoretically classless, life at Millthorpe, Edward Carpenter's estate in Derbyshire that he shared with George Merrill, remained highly stratified.<sup>166</sup> The domestic inequalities between the two men themselves were touched upon in the previous chapter, whilst Sheila Rowbotham's account of contemporary conceptions of Millthorpe<sup>167</sup> chimes with Sedgwick's notion of 'the English homosexual system whereby bourgeois men had sexual contacts only with virile working-class youths'.<sup>168</sup> Hockney's photographs celebrate an aesthetic centred around the spectacle of just such a 'virile working-class youth' – with Hockney himself describing Mizer's recruitment technique for *Physique Pictorial* as a case of getting 'men, boys, when they've just come out of the city gaol'.<sup>169</sup> As such, one could go so far as to argue that these images demonstrate a performance of sexual identities on a comparable scale to that seen in Mapplethorpe's photographs, a performance enabled by Hockney's own self-fashioning; photographed in Paris, Lippescombe and Evans, middle-class, Californian young men, become the 'rough trade' of the artist's imaginings, whilst Hockney himself becomes like Mizer, even Carpenter, the middle-class facilitator of these fantasies.

Despite the relatively tame appearance of Hockney's photographs in comparison with Mapplethorpe's images of sado-masochistic practices, I would suggest that beyond their homoerotic potential, both artists shared a common goal in so far as they recognised, challenged and indeed exploited contemporary controversies surrounding the exhibition and distribution of homoerotic images. Whilst Hockney's involvement with organised gay

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<sup>166</sup> William Pannapacker, *Revised Lives: Walt Whitman and Nineteenth-Century Authorship*, New York and London, Routledge, 2004, p. 123.

<sup>167</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love*, London, Verso, 2008, p. 261.

<sup>168</sup> Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, p. 204.

<sup>169</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 99.

liberation groups in the 1970s was marginal, he did concern himself on a number of occasions with the defence of gay men's rights to access homoerotic materials. Hockney's successful protest in the late 1960s at the seizure by British Customs of eighteen magazines featuring male nudity is highlighted by Mike Arlen in the *Playguy* feature,<sup>170</sup> whilst his agency on behalf of the 'Incognito' gay bookshop in Earls Court, which was raided by police in 1976, is praised by Howes in his *Gay News* article.<sup>171</sup> I would argue that Hockney's own attempts to challenge conventional heterosexist norms surrounding the representation of the homoerotic can be seen to begin with the Cavafy etching series of 1966, with its (for the time) uncompromising, naturalistic depictions of gay male eroticism and domesticity. The series inspired not only glib, heterosexist criticism by media commentators on its first exhibition, but also apparent outrage from members of the public. In August 1968 eight etchings from the series were included in an Arts Council exhibition at Hornsey Central Library in north London; although the images provoked only two official complaints, these were deemed serious enough for local newspaper the *Hornsey Journal* to devote a half page feature to the subject, with the inflammatory headline "'Likely to cause breach of the peace': Protest over Central Library pictures – Mr Ende talks of prosecution".<sup>172</sup> Complainant Ende, a member of the executive committee of the Haringey Ratepayers Association, professes to find the images 'disgusting' on account of their 'suggestions of unnatural love', exclaiming that 'exposure [was] not justified in a public place, and no woman or girl is warned of it'.<sup>173</sup> Hockney's revisiting of these themes with *An Erotic Etching* (Figure 75) of 1973 attracted similarly delayed hostile reactions, when the work was included, by default, in an exhibition of the artist's complete prints, which toured Britain from 1979-1980. Webb notes that in a number

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<sup>170</sup> Mike Arlen, 'Sundown: Hockney in Camera', *Playguy*, no. 10, 1976, pp. 38-39.

<sup>171</sup> Keith Howes, 'Interview: David Hockney', *Gay News*, no. 100, 29 July – 25 August 1976, p. 17.

<sup>172</sup> Anon., 'Protest Over Central Library Pictures', *The Hornsey Journal*, 16 August 1968.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

of museums, the etching was removed from display by order of local authorities on grounds of obscenity, whilst at others such as Glasgow Art Gallery 'it was placed so discreetly that many people never saw it at all'.<sup>174</sup> Nonetheless Hockney's creation, exhibition and distribution, in the case of the *Playguy* photographs, of such explicit homoerotic images should, I believe, be interpreted in the light of his 1976 complaint, quoted above, regarding a double standard towards the pornographic, and who might legitimately produce such works. Hockney was clearly aware of the power of celebrity to attract attention to a cause, and expressed his intentions to take advantage of the 'loophole' offered to him as an artistic figure within the public consciousness. Although very different from Mapplethorpe's explicit images of extreme sexual practices, I would argue that Hockney's publicly distributed erotic works of the 1970s amount to a challenge and protest against this perceived unfairness – 'an artist's way of taking it down a bit'. Hockney exploits his position as a media figure and established art world presence in order to challenge these stances. However, it should be borne in mind that in contrast with Mapplethorpe's photographs, which were presented by the artist in a gallery context to be considered (if not necessarily accepted) as fine art,<sup>175</sup> Hockney's erotic photographs appeared only within a single issue of a British publication with a limited print run and aimed solely at a constituency of gay men. The presentation of these images as the 'amateur' dabblings of a 'snapshot fanatic',<sup>176</sup> along with their limited availability, creates a conceptual divide between Hockney's images as fine artworks, and the private – and implicitly inconsequential – 'snapshot'. I would argue that this may account for the lack of attention that has been directed towards these photographs.

Whilst the homoerotic works of Hockney such as *An Erotic Etching* received some degree of hostile critical attention, Mapplethorpe's came under still greater scrutiny. One of

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<sup>174</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 184.

<sup>175</sup> Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, p. 205.

<sup>176</sup> Mike Arlen, 'Sundown: Hockney in Camera', *Playguy*, no. 10, 1976, p. 39.

the most notorious instances of this occurred when his retrospective ‘The Perfect Moment’ was cancelled by the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington DC only three weeks before it had been scheduled to open in June 1989,<sup>177</sup> just three months after the artist’s death. When the exhibition subsequently toured to the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, it was raided by police, and the gallery’s director Dennis Barrie charged with obscenity and misuse of a minor in a photograph<sup>178</sup> – the latter charge arising from the inclusion of two portraits of unclothed children.<sup>179</sup> Although a jury eventually rejected the obscenity charges, reactions to Mapplethorpe’s images were to have far-reaching consequences. Republican Senator Jesse Helms was to draw upon them in the course of his campaign to restrict Federal arts funding in the late 1980s; like an amplified version of Hockney’s adversary Mr Ende, Helms declared to Congress:

It is a matter of soaking the taxpayer to fund the homosexual pornography of Robert Mapplethorpe, who died of AIDS while spending the last years of his life promoting homosexuality (...) Many Senators have seen [the photographs], and without exception every one has been sickened by what he saw.<sup>180</sup>

Meyer has noted that at the time of their creation and first exhibition in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Mapplethorpe’s images of sado-masochistic tropes were rarely accepted as fine art photography.<sup>181</sup> In 1978 he had been due to exhibit some of his most sexually explicit works at the San Francisco gallery of Simon Lowinsky, but the dealer subsequently rejected many of these photographs in favour of Mapplethorpe’s more conventional images, with the result that the final Lowinsky exhibition was instead an admixture of a third portraits, a third

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<sup>177</sup> Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, p. 206.

<sup>178</sup> E. Louis Lankford, ‘Artistic Freedom: An Art World Paradox’, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Autumn, 1990), p. 15.

<sup>179</sup> Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, p. 213.

<sup>180</sup> Senator Jesse Helms, *Congressional Record*, 28 September 1989, S12111.

<sup>181</sup> Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, p. 205.

flowers and a third sexual pictures;<sup>182</sup> this ‘rule of thirds’ is echoed in Mapplethorpe’s X,Y and Z portfolios, consisting of thirteen photographs each and focusing on representations of sado-masochism, flowers and the black male nude respectively. However, Mapplethorpe chose to exhibit the rejected photographs in a parallel exhibition in San Francisco at the Langton Street Gallery, provocatively entitled *Censored* at the artist’s behest and advertised with the 1978 *Self-Portrait* (Figure 210). As Meyer notes, this splitting of Mapplethorpe’s output into two separate exhibits on opposite sides of the same city – Lowinsky’s gallery located in the city’s boutique district, and the Langton Street venue in the heart of the San Francisco gay leather scene – meant that the artist benefitted not only from a presence in a major commercial gallery, but that the commercial sale of his more mainstream images were themselves boosted by the notoriety of the *Censored* exhibition.<sup>183</sup>

Akin to Hockney’s self-fashioning in the 1960s, in the 1970s Mapplethorpe consciously constructed himself as an ‘authentic’ figure, participating in the gay leather scene as well as documenting it, but also presented himself as a man comfortable with moving between two worlds. This can be seen most clearly in the design he produced to advertise an earlier pair of concurrent exhibitions split along similar lines, the *Pictures* show of 1977 that was divided between two New York venues, the commercial Holly Solomon Gallery and the Kitchen, a not-for-profit space. In her biography of the artist, Patricia Morrisroe writes that the invitation to *Pictures* (Figure 211) ‘revealed his uncanny awareness of how to market himself’.<sup>184</sup> The invitation shows Mapplethorpe’s own hand in the act of writing the word ‘pictures’ twice, side by side; in the right hand image, he wears the striped shirt and Cartier watch of uptown prosperity, whilst at the left, the same hand performs the same action, only this time clad in a fingerless black leather glove, a studded metal cuff around the wrist. As

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid, p. 200.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, p. 201.

<sup>184</sup> Patricia Morrisroe, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, New York, Random House, 1995, p. 177.



both Meyer and Morrisroe suggest, Mapplethorpe's self-orchestrated division of his life between two separate worlds allowed him to move comfortably within, and between, both. Meyer quotes from a feature on the artist in leather porn magazine supplement *Son of Drummer*:

He lunches afternoons at One Fifth Avenue. He maneuvers after midnight at the Mineshaft. He photographs princesses like Margaret, bodybuilders like Arnold, rockstars like his best friend Patti Smith, and nighttrippers nameless in leather, rubber and ropes. He's famous for his photographs of faces, flowers and fetishes'.<sup>185</sup>

An organ of Mapplethorpe's chosen sector of the gay community, embracing sexual practices then deemed politically radical by organised gay liberationist groups, the *Son of Drummer* article appears to praise Mapplethorpe for his chameleonic social abilities. Unlike Hockney's created persona of the dandy, Mapplethorpe's self-construction is of two binary oppositions – active leatherman and assimilable bourgeois. As such, I would argue that in terms of the aims of organised gay activism in the late 1970s, Mapplethorpe's work represented a far more sexually and politically progressive vision of gay life – and 'lifestyle' (then, as now, a politically charged and controversial term)<sup>186</sup> – than did Hockney's comparatively tame images of physique photography-themed eroticism and monogamous, potentially heteronormative, homosexual domesticity.

However, whilst Hockney's representations of homosexuality produced in the 1960s may have been sidelined to a certain extent in the 1970s, in the 1980s they resurfaced to such a degree that Simon Ofield has written that for him, as a young teenager trawling the gay bookshops of London, 'homosexuality came to look like a David Hockney painting'.<sup>187</sup> His

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<sup>185</sup> Jack Fritscher, 'The Robert Mapplethorpe Gallery', *Son of Drummer*, 1978, quoted in Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, p. 203.

<sup>186</sup> Evan Gerstmann, *The Constitutional Underclass: Gays, Lesbians, and the Failure of Class-Based Equal Protection*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999, p. 111.

<sup>187</sup> Simon Ofield, 'Cruising the Archive', *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 351-352.

early career images certainly became popular with picture editors in the 1980s and 1990s as embodiments of a generalised vision of homosexuality, featuring on the covers of books such as *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse* in 1983 (Figure 2) and *Gay Men's Literature in the Twentieth Century* in 1993 (Figure 177), a book sold in aid of London Lighthouse, a charity focused on helping people affected by AIDS. I would argue that the AIDS crisis itself, which began to develop in the early 1980s and which affected the lives of an overwhelming number of gay men, must be considered as a factor in this forwarding of Hockney's – by this time somewhat old-fashioned – visions of monogamous homosexual domestic bliss produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As AIDS was initially seen most frequently in sexually-active gay men, perceived promiscuity became a significant target in 'the demonology of AIDS',<sup>188</sup> with Davies quoting an early epidemiological study by the Centers for Disease Control in the United States as claiming to have

identified a subset of homosexual men who were more likely to have many anonymous sexual partners, to have a history of a variety of sexually transmitted diseases and to engage in sexual practices that increased the exposure to small amounts of blood and faeces. The most important variable was that the AIDS patients had more male sexual partners than the controls.<sup>189</sup>

By the early 1980s, gay bathhouses – places where men could meet and have sex – had become an integral part of sexual cultures for homosexual men in major American metropolitan centres, with twenty in operation in San Francisco until 1983.<sup>190</sup> A 1979 study concluded that in Los Angeles, the mean number of sexual contacts for bathhouse patrons, per visit, was 3.2, with subjects visiting on average 4.2 times a month.<sup>191</sup> As it became clear that

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<sup>188</sup> Peter M. Davies, *Sex, Gay Men, and AIDS*, London, The Falmer Press, 1993, p. 151.

<sup>189</sup> W. Foege, 'The National Pattern of AIDS', *The AIDS Epidemic*, New York, 1983, quoted in Davies, p. 151.

<sup>190</sup> Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 160.

<sup>191</sup> Hernando I. Merino et al, 'Screening for Gonorrhea and Syphilis in Gay Bathhouses in Denver and Los Angeles', *Public Health Reports*, vol. 94, no.4, July-August 1979, p. 378.

HIV was being transmitted through sexual means, public health agencies and local authorities placed a great deal of pressure on bathhouses to shut down.<sup>192</sup> Efforts were also made to encourage gay men to take up safer sex practices such as using condoms and limiting numbers of sexual contacts, even to the extent of practicing monogamy (sex with a single partner only), celibacy or abstinence from ‘fucking’ (engaging in anal intercourse).<sup>193</sup> Rosser notes that after the initiation of gay liberation, but prior to the AIDS epidemic, ‘monogamy was presented politically as “mimicking heterosexual lifestyles” and so was seen by some at least as anti-liberation and thus “politically incorrect”’.<sup>194</sup> However, a 1989 report by the National Research Council Committee on AIDS research in the United States found that average numbers of reported sexual partners for gay men declined rapidly in the wake of the emergence of AIDS, although rates of monogamy and celibacy increased slowly.<sup>195</sup>

The conceptual oppositions of ‘monogamy’ versus ‘promiscuity’ are clearly emotive ones, and it is important to qualify them in any discussion in which they are included, but particularly so in relation to their application to matters concerned with the AIDS crisis.<sup>196</sup> In her essay ‘Domesticating Partnerships’, Eva Pendleton draws attention to divisions of opinion that existed amongst gay men over these issues from the early 1980s into the 1990s. She describes how the rise of AIDS led some individuals previously identified with gay radicalism – so-called ‘gay reactivists’ – to join forces with a faction that Pendleton labels ‘gay male conservatives’, whom she alleges ‘struggle for inclusion within the white, middle-class

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<sup>192</sup> Judith A. Rabin, ‘The AIDS Epidemic and Gay Bathhouses: A Constitutional Analysis’, *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, vol. 10, no. 4, Winter 1986, p. 439.

<sup>193</sup> Rosser, *Male Homosexual Behavior and the Effects of AIDS education: A Study of Behavior and Safer Sex in New Zealand and South Australia*, p. 100.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>195</sup> Charles F. Turner et al, (eds.) *AIDS: Sexual Behavior and Intravenous Drug Use*, Washington DC, National Academy Press, 1989, p. 135.

<sup>196</sup> It is also important to note that I do not seek personally in this discussion to present either monogamy or promiscuity as more or less desirable as a mode of sexual self-expression; instead, I seek to examine discussions that surrounded these concepts following the emergence of AIDS as a public health concern in the early 1980s.

mainstream above all else'.<sup>197</sup> This desire, she argues, leads such conservatives to reject all tendencies towards radicalism, particularly with regard to the kinds of radical sexual cultures represented by Mapplethorpe, and instead to attempt to assimilate themselves into a heteronormative mainstream.

Although in many respects differing from such conservatives in the majority of their political opinions, Pendleton suggests that the AIDS crisis led gay reactivists to form an unlikely alliance with them over the issue of gay male sexual practices. She writes:

In the writings of gay reactivists, the blame for the spread of AIDS lies almost solely with gay promiscuity. The only hope for ending the AIDS crisis lies in closing sex clubs and winning sanctions for gay marriage. For all of these writers, the only mature expression of sexuality is monogamy. This leaves the demonized practices of promiscuity and public sex wholly undeserving of protection. The anti-sex ideology of these otherwise self-identified 'radicals' aligns them with the most conservative of gay writers, many of whom abhor the confrontational tactics of groups like ACT UP and Queer Nation.<sup>198</sup>

Although Pendleton's essay as a whole is very heavily biased against the idea of limiting (by official means or otherwise) radical gay sexual practices, this statement encapsulates well the conceptual opposition of 'monogamy' with 'promiscuity' during the 1980s and 1990s. In it we see a reversal once again of the values asserted by Rosser, with the 'mimicking of heterosexual lifestyles' through monogamy being construed by reactivists and conservatives alike as once again desirable, whilst the formerly more 'politically correct' practice of promiscuity became castigated through its perceived association with the spread of HIV.

With regard to the issues of monogamy and promiscuity, Hockney is a man who has openly stated that the only period in his life in which he would consider himself to have been promiscuous was during his early months in Los Angeles, claiming in 1976 that 'it doesn't

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<sup>197</sup> Pendleton, 'Domesticating Partnerships', Colter (ed.), *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*, p. 375.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, p. 383.

dominate my life, sex, at all'.<sup>199</sup> As has been discussed throughout this thesis, many of the artist's works of the 1960s dealing with issues of homosexuality appear to place an emphasis on love, the domestic and committed, monogamous relationships, as seen most clearly in the double portraits and etchings from the Cavafy series such as *Two Boys Aged 23 or 24*, the image that graces the cover of *Gay Men's Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Figure 177). Whereas Mapplethorpe's pictures of unbridled sexual freedom and expression were the more politically expedient at the close of the 1970s, I would argue that by the end of the following decade, Hockney's more conventionally domestic, and certainly more 'heteronormative', depictions of homosexual relationships of the 1960s came into their own once more with regard to serving the purpose of promoting a reshaping of conceptions of 'politically correct' sexual behaviours for gay men by certain conservative/reactivist factions during an epidemic which rendered promiscuity potentially problematic from a health point of view. This might appear at odds with Hockney's 1970s forays into gay pornography with images such as the *Playguy* photographs. However, once again, it is important to remember that neither these photographs nor works such as *An Erotic Etching* achieved significant public exposure, and that although the artist's works appear on such volumes as *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, the choice of their selection ultimately lies in the hands of external picture editors. Finally, it is important to emphasise that I am not suggesting that Hockney himself was aligned with either radical or conservative factions within gay politics – indeed, as has been shown in his dealings with groups such as the Campaign for Homosexual Equality in the 1970s, Hockney's engagements with organised political activism have been comparatively disinterested at best. However, I would argue that it was possible for those with conservative/reactivist sympathies to view certain of the artist's earlier and better known

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<sup>199</sup> Hockney, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, p. 68.

images as presenting visually concerns – for example, domestic, monogamous homosexual relationships – that echoed their own political ideals.

Whilst Hockney's early works dealing with same sex domestic bliss may have been co-opted as a visual shorthand for homosexuality in the wake of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, his works of the period itself have been criticised by commentators within the gay media for their apparent failure to address the crisis itself. In a 1997 volume profiling significant lesbians and gay men, Michael Bronski made his assertion that Hockney's work does not confront 'the darker side of life', in particular claiming that 'the anguish of AIDS' is something that is notably absent.<sup>200</sup> It is certainly true that none of Hockney's works approach the macabre directness of Frank Moore's *Arena* of 1992 (Figure 212), the product of an artist who consistently confronted the subject of AIDS until his own death from the disease in 2002.<sup>201</sup> The large painting depicts an auditorium at the centre of which masked doctors operate on a naked man, television cameras recording the proceedings. A white cloud escapes from the top of the man's head; that this is his soul or spirit is suggested by a placard-wielding skeleton mounted on a skeletal horse, its sign reading 'pulvis et umbra sumus', or 'we are dust and ghosts'. A band of protestors is held at bay by uniformed officers to the far right of the painting, whilst a small group to the left is occupied in prayer as another body is wheeled past. On a wall to the rear of the painting's population of skeletons and terrified live individuals are shown numerous scientific diagrams demonstrating the process through which HIV attacks human cells. This painting clearly fulfils Bronski's expectations of a work dealing with 'the anguish of AIDS', the significance of its symbolism made obvious to the viewer. However, other images by Moore dealing with the subject of AIDS are more ambiguous, for example *Farewell* of 1989 (Figure 213). An unusual mixed media work incorporating glass eyes, the

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<sup>200</sup> Bronski, p. 190.

<sup>201</sup> Andrew Robinson, 'A Farewell Rendered Hopefully', *Gay City News*, 9-15 October 2003, p. 22.

painting depicts two intertwined, anthropomorphised roses, one yellow and one pink. The flowers seemingly occupy a domestic space, placed in front of a window through which the viewer is shown a wasteland filled with the stumps of trees. Whilst the branches of the roses are – quite literally – attached to their domestic space, entwined around the window frame, a pair of human hands holding gardening shears reaches up from the right of the picture plane, threatening to cut the pink flower. Whilst its symbolism is less overt than that of *Arena*, one can interpret *Farewell* as representing not only the anguish of those afflicted by AIDS themselves, but those whom they leave behind; Eric Rofes has described the period from 1989 to 1995, when AIDS deaths reached a peak, as ‘a time in which vast numbers of our friends [were] dying’.<sup>202</sup> Rofes’ book *Dry Bones Breathe* is notable for its consideration of the perspective of HIV-negative gay men during the AIDS crisis, its author himself having been the long-time HIV-negative partner of an HIV-positive man in the years before the introduction of combination drug therapies.<sup>203</sup>

Hockney was one such HIV-negative gay man, and the deaths of many friends are touched upon in his second volume of autobiography, *That’s the Way I See It*, published in 1993. In a section entitled ‘Death’s Adventure’, Hockney contrasts his father’s death as an old man with the subsequent deaths of many younger friends. He writes:

Since then I’ve had quite a lot of friends die who were much, much younger. An old person dying seems perfectly natural, whereas somebody aged thirty-two is not. The first friend of mine to die was Joe Macdonald (...) He’d had every sexual disease there was; and he was the first person I knew to become ill with AIDS, just after 1981(...) his mother called me and said that he was in hospital with pneumonia. I thought, pneumonia’s not that serious, it’s a curable thing. Now if somebody mentions pneumonia I dread it. (...) That was five years after my father died. Then there were more deaths, each person dying a different way. Joe, when he died, looked like a ninety-year-old man. He’d lost most of his hair and his face was very sunken in, almost like a skull. (...) All this makes you think about death itself, but

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<sup>202</sup> Rofes, p. 12.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, p. 59.

I'm not sure I see it as totally tragic. Sometimes I think maybe it's just another adventure.<sup>204</sup>

From this it is clear that AIDS, and 'waves of dying friends',<sup>205</sup> had a considerable impact on Hockney throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. It was in the 1980s that Hockney began to experiment with modern technologies such as fax machines and laser copiers in the manufacture of his 'Home Made Prints', often depicting flowers or cubistic abstractions. Whilst floral still lifes have been a subject that Hockney has concerned himself with since the 1960s, for example in *Pretty Tulips* of 1969 (Figure 214), I would argue that many of the artist's pictures of flowers of the 1980s have an implicit connection to AIDS, both as tokens of affection to afflicted friends and memorials to those lost. Flowers are a traditional gift to the sick,<sup>206</sup> and memorial to the deceased;<sup>207</sup> that Hockney used images of flowers in this capacity is made clear by a 1995 work *Photography is Dead: Long Live Painting*, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1995 (Figure 215). A technically innovative work, it consists of a digital inkjet print of a photograph of a painting placed alongside the vase of sunflowers that inspired it. Painted over three separate sheets of paper, the image is constructed so as to create an optical illusion of depth. Around the painted flowers appear the words 'sunflowers for Jonathan get well soon love DAVID H.'. The Jonathan in question was Jonathan Silver, a long-standing friend of Hockney who was to die of pancreatic cancer in 1997.<sup>208</sup> Brightly coloured, the painted flowers are accentuated by radiating yellow lines, comparable to those used by gay artist and AIDS activist Keith Haring on his distinctive 'radiant' figures seen in works such as *Ignorance = Fear, Silence = Death* of 1989 (Figure 216). Hockney's painted flowers can be

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<sup>204</sup> Hockney, *That's the Way I See It*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>205</sup> Michael Lynch, 'Cry', *These Waves of Dying Friends: Poems*, New York, Contact II Publications, 1989, p. 106.

<sup>206</sup> Jack Goody, *The Culture of Flowers*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 314.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, p. 303.

<sup>208</sup> Paul Joyce, *Hockney on 'Art': Conversations with Paul Joyce*, London, Little, Brown and Company, 1999, p. 213.



seen to represent hope and comfort in the face of a troubling prognosis. Hockney was still based in California at this time, whilst Silver was living in England, so portable, transmittable images such as these served as a means to remain in contact with a dying friend. Whilst Silver was affected by cancer rather than AIDS, I would argue that this image can be seen as representative of Hockney's stance towards illness and death, and his attempts to approach them through visual means. Hockney made a similar work for Joe Macdonald, an act memorialised in his final, photo-collage portrait of his friend, *Joe Macdonald in his Apartment, New York, Dec 1982* (Figure 217), produced a few weeks before Macdonald's death.<sup>209</sup> The collage shows yet another domestic scene, with the subject standing in his New York apartment, surrounded by Hockney works, including a drawing inscribed 'Dearest Joe, get well soon'. Whilst visibly aged in comparison with his appearance in *A Bigger Splash*, Macdonald is shown by Hockney in the context of his life rather than his death, at home rather than in hospital. Of Macdonald's death, Hockney wrote:

He knew then, the last time I saw him that he was very close to death and yet he said he'd had a good time, which I thought was typical of Joe. He liked to have a good time. At one point earlier, about six months before, he'd said he felt guilty about things, his life. I said, I wouldn't do that Joe, you shouldn't think like that, make the best of it while you can.<sup>210</sup>

This statement demonstrates Hockney's own stance towards the lives and deaths of his friends suffering from AIDS, and its substance, I would argue, underpins the artist's approach to dealing with the subject in his work. Rather than confronting the obvious tragedy of Macdonald's disease leaving him dying resembling a 'ninety-year-old man' with his 'face (...) sunken in', Hockney's representation of his friend affords him dignity, memorialising the Macdonald he remembered in life, rather than the abjection of his death.

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<sup>209</sup> Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney*, p. 284.

<sup>210</sup> Hockney, *That's the Way I See It*, p. 136.

A close examination of works created by Hockney and other artists at the peak of the AIDS crisis shows a consistent recourse to floral and related organic motifs. Roy Lichtenstein provided the cover image for the programme of a 1990 benefit by AIDS Project Los Angeles, incidentally honouring the contribution of Hockney, amongst others, to the cause of AIDS research. Lichtenstein's picture comprises three large, white gerberas standing in a glass (Figure 218). In the years following his own diagnosis with the condition, Mapplethorpe produced many photographic studies of floral subjects, for example *Calla Lily* of 1988 (Figure 219). In the same year, Hockney himself produced a work for reproduction on a poster sold in support of the 'Art Against AIDS' group in Los Angeles (Figure 220). Rather than flowers, the image features a large, brightly coloured bowl of stylised fruit, another traditional gift to the sick. However, in contrast with the bright primary colours of many of his works of the 1980s and 1990s, Hockney also produced a number of monochrome floral images during this period, including *Growing, June 1986* (Figure 221) and *Three Black Flowers, May 1986*, (Figure 204). Produced as part of the artist's 'Home Made Prints' series, the images were created using a laser copy machine capable of colour reproduction.<sup>211</sup> Given that Hockney was experimenting with sending images via fax machine at this time, it is possible that these works are executed in black and white in order to facilitate their distribution in this manner, possibly to sick friends; however, with these works being produced at a time in which deaths from AIDS were escalating, my contention that they also function as memorial images is surely pertinent.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the proclivity of Hockney and his circle for flowers was seized upon by contemporary reviewers of *A Bigger Splash* as symptomatic of their

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<sup>211</sup> David Hockney, *Hockney's Pictures*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2004, p. 361.

homosexuality.<sup>212</sup> An association of flowers with homosexual men extended at least as far as the nineteenth century. Oscar Wilde and his followers, for example, were connected in the public imagination with the wearing of a green carnation. Although Wilde claimed that this was merely an act of empty symbolism, intended to annoy and intrigue,<sup>213</sup> the 1895 publication of R.S. Hitchens' *roman à clef* entitled *The Green Carnation*, on the eve of Wilde's trial, was widely interpreted as documentary fact rather than fiction by the reading public and contributed to this cognitive link.<sup>214</sup> Above and beyond their association with homosexuality and the feminine/effeminate, Haggarty has pointed to the potential for hermetic symbolism in flowers through floral codes, in which certain flowers were ascribed particular meanings, stating:

Because of its connotations of secrecy, it was easily appropriated by gay writers searching for language through which to figure their own desires. In most floral dictionaries, tuberose represented 'dangerous pleasures'. Raffalovich called it a flower 'whose name I may not tell', prefiguring by almost a decade Lord Alfred Douglas's 'love that dare not speak its name'.<sup>215</sup>

In a parallel with the comparative hermeticism with which Hockney articulated his homosexual desires in works such as *The Third Love Painting*, so too does he employ codification in the representation of loss. In the mid-1980s, under Reagan's socially conservative administration, AIDS sufferers were stigmatised, and might have been literally so had right-wing columnist William F. Buckley's exhortations to tattoo all people identified as HIV-positive come into effect.<sup>216</sup> In his 1990 study of AIDS obituaries, Peter Nardi notes

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<sup>212</sup> Anon, *The Sunday Times*, 16 March 1975.

<sup>213</sup> Rhonda K. Garelick, *Rising Star: Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siècle*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 145.

<sup>214</sup> Marvin J. Taylor and Carolyn Dever (eds.), *Reading Wilde: Querying Spaces*, New York, New York University Press, 1995, p. 10.

<sup>215</sup> George E. Haggarty (ed.), 'Flowers and Birds', *Encyclopedia of Lesbian and Gay Histories and Cultures*, London, Taylor and Francis, 1999, pp. 513-514.

<sup>216</sup> William F. Buckley, 'Identify All the Carriers', *New York Times*, 18 March 1986.

that press memorials of prominent gay men who had died from AIDS in the 1980s featured a hermetic system of coding 'to conceal the actual stigmatizing cause of death and stigmatizing lifestyle'.<sup>217</sup> He also points to a tendency to deny the agency of the gay men who mourned them, claiming

it is customary for many newspapers (and a policy of *Variety*), not to mention any male lovers as survivors. When they are mentioned, they are typically referred to in the concealing language of 'long-term companion'. *Variety* does not even use this language; not a single case was found of any hint of a surviving male lover. Not only, then, is the stigma removed from the cause of death, but so is the stigma of an alternative gay life-style.<sup>218</sup>

Even the issue of burying people with AIDS became a subject of stigma, with some funeral homes refusing to handle their bodies, this situation not being fully resolved until the 1990s.<sup>219</sup> As a result, the process of mourning friends, lovers and relatives who died as a result of AIDS became complicated, with the true cause of death often publicly denied and a dignified burial not automatically accorded. The death from AIDS of Mapplethorpe's former lover and mentor Sam Wagstaff in 1987 was reported in the *New York Times* as having been the result of pneumonia, but the significance of such codification led to rumours around the artist's own health that ultimately forced him to disclose publicly his own diagnosis.<sup>220</sup> Whilst Mapplethorpe produced a confrontational conception of his own mortality in his 1988 *Self-Portrait* (Figure 203), in which the gaunt-looking artist clutches a cane featuring a miniature skull, I believe that his many flower studies of the late 1980s may be considered to function as memorial pictures along similar lines to those of Hockney. Although dismissed by Camille

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<sup>217</sup> Peter Nardi, 'AIDS and Obituaries: The Perpetuation of Stigma in the Press', Douglas A. Feldman (ed.), *Culture and AIDS*, Santa Barbara, Praeger, 1990, p. 167.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Stanisław Frankowski, *Legal Responses to AIDS in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge MA, Kluwer Law International, 1998, p. 27.

<sup>220</sup> Morrisroe, p. 317.

Paglia as ‘insipid, formulaic and uninspired’,<sup>221</sup> I would contend that Paglia sees images such as *Anthurium* (1988, Figure 222) merely as phallic forms enacting less successful rehearsals of sexual themes, rather than acknowledging the possibility of a more nuanced, layered signification. Indeed, the memorial potential of Mapplethorpe’s floral photographs was realised when they were displayed on the walls at his own memorial service at the Whitney Museum in 1989.<sup>222</sup> Like a visual form of Polari for the end of the twentieth century, I would contend that such floral images provided a means by which gay artists could hide well wishes and mourning alike in plain sight, avoiding the stigma of open discussion of AIDS.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Although an artist such as Hockney may control on a certain level the nature and production of his artworks, personal appearance and persona, he of course cannot necessarily guarantee that they will be interpreted by critics or publics in the manner that he originally intended. As I have iterated throughout this thesis, legal, societal and cultural standards and conventions are in a continual state of evolution, and as such, the apparent significance of a particular artistic figuration, or aspect of personal presentation, may change with the passing of time. These perceptual differences are central to the assessment of the manner in which Hockney and his works have been interpreted by successive audiences from the earliest years of his career to the present.

Whilst Hockney’s artworks themselves have been considered in this chapter, it is the nature of his public image, and its continuing development, that has been its chief focus. Although in the 1960s Hockney was hailed by the press as ‘the nearest thing in the painting

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<sup>221</sup> Camille Paglia, ‘The Beautiful Decadence of Robert Mapplethorpe: A Response to Rochelle Gurstein’, *Sex, Art and American Culture*, New York, Vintage, 1992, p. 42.

<sup>222</sup> Morrisroe, p. 368.

world to the Beatles',<sup>223</sup> as has been shown, by the first decade of the twenty-first century he had been recast as 'the grumpiest man in Britain'.<sup>224</sup> The (re)presentation and reception of Hockney as a homosexual man in the public eye has likewise evolved over the course of the artist's career, from the relative understatement of the pre-decriminalisation era 1963 *Sunday Times Magazine* feature (Figure 126), to his visibility as an openly gay man in the emergent gay press of the early 1970s, and his subsequent co-opting by publishers as creator of the 'identifiably gay world' of which Burston has written,<sup>225</sup> his images becoming an instantly recognisable symbol of homosexuality. If 1960s media commentators such as David Thompson in the *Observer* and Harry Craig on the BBC's *The Critics* had not made Hockney's homosexuality entirely clear to their audience, filtering their criticism through loaded yet still euphemistic language, then Hazan's film *A Bigger Splash* – and the notoriety that surrounded it – certainly made Hockney's orientation clear to many. Although today the film is routinely held up as an early example of 'queer cinema', it is clear from articles such as Nigel Dempster's *Daily Mail* commentary that at the time of its first release, *A Bigger Splash* was seen by many as mere provocative titillation, with Hockney's artistic practice sidelined in relation to the central story of the breakdown of the relationship with Schlesinger. Indeed, one could go so far as to argue that the film actually undermines Hockney's role in the 1960s as a producer of artworks, such as *We Two Boys Together Clinging* and the Cavafy etching series, that challenged legal and societal restrictions against homosexuals. Whilst some of the Cavafy prints appear, they are relegated to mere decoration in the opening titles (Figure 181), and the film instead focuses on a period in the early 1970s in which Hockney's

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<sup>223</sup> Pierre Jeannerat, 'Art', *The Daily Mail*, 3 December 1965.

<sup>224</sup> Andy McSmith, 'Painter sees Red: Is David Hockney the Grumpiest Man in Britain?', *The Independent*, 5 June 2008, URL (consulted April 2011): <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/painter-sees-red-is-david-hockney-the-grumpiest-man-in-britain-840532.html>

<sup>225</sup> Burston, 'Just a Gigolo? Narcissism, Nellyism and the 'New Man' Theme', *A Queer Romance: Lesbians, Gay Men, and Popular Culture*, p. 124.

work was criticised in the art press as ‘listless and devoid of inspiration’.<sup>226</sup> Hazan’s presentation of Hockney as being at the centre of a fashionable, camp, and somewhat superficial, social circle can also be seen to undermine his status as a ‘serious’ artist.

Hockney’s willingness to embrace press attention throughout his career, from special interest publications such as *Gay News* to the mainstream media, has provided a plethora of sources through which to assess his evolving public profile. As I have demonstrated in both this and the previous chapter, media representations of Hockney in the 1960s placed considerable emphasis on the artist’s idiosyncratic appearance, in particular the famous gold jacket. In so doing, journalists, I would argue, can be seen to exploit contemporary conventions surrounding the codification of homosexuality that can be traced back at least as far as Du Maurier’s ‘Maudie’ cartoons of the nineteenth century, with Hockney’s ‘aestheticism’ once again a cipher for his sexuality for those who chose to look. However with the advent of gay liberation in the 1970s, Hockney’s dapper, co-ordinated and boyish self-presentation lost currency as a statement of (homo)sexual identity. A reference to an historical model of homosexual behaviours, in an era in which the more confrontational presence of the individuals portrayed in the photography of Mapplethorpe became more ‘politically correct’,<sup>227</sup> Hockney’s self-presentation and public persona came to lose their significance as a conscious symbol of sexual difference – indeed, as I have shown, many of the sartorial codes that were previously associated with homosexual individuals and stereotypes have since been adopted by a heterosexual mainstream as semiotic associations between behaviour and sexual orientation alter.

The changing relevance of Hockney and his works into the twenty-first century in relation to homosexual communities has seldom been addressed by scholars to date. Where

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<sup>226</sup> Richard Cork, ‘From Hockney, a disaster’, *The Evening Standard*, 14 December 1972.

<sup>227</sup> Rosser, *Male Homosexual Behavior and the Effects of AIDS education: A Study of Behavior and Safer Sex in New Zealand and South Australia*, p. 100.

Hockney's homosexuality has been considered in relation to his oeuvre, associations have been restricted to those works of the 1960s that most clearly address this subject.<sup>228</sup> It is certainly the case that since the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, Hockney has not produced a body of work that has engaged so consistently, or so explicitly, with homosexual themes or subjects as did his images from his Royal College years to the Cavafy series of 1966. As such, Bronski's criticism of Hockney's work for failing to address the 'anguish of AIDS',<sup>229</sup> which has been iterated throughout this chapter, is perhaps understandable. Hockney's works produced since the decriminalisation of homosexuality continue to display the tropes of hermeticism that characterised his earliest images concerned with homosexual themes, tropes which, as I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, have a history stemming from Classical antiquity<sup>230</sup> with regards to homosexual creative endeavour. Hockney's own statement regarding his attitude to tragedy,<sup>231</sup> I believe, offers a key to comprehending some of the artist's later works in relation to the AIDS crisis. Nowhere is this more clear than in the case of *Joe Macdonald in his Apartment, New York, Dec 1982* (Figure 217), a portrait of the friend whose early death from AIDS is described by Hockney in *That's The Way I See It*. Rather than portraying the abjection of his death in a hospital bed, the work shows Macdonald standing in his own domestic environment, surrounded by trappings that represent his identity as an individual beyond his disease. Although, like the later floral works, this image does not make an explicit connection to the AIDS crisis, I would argue that to suggest that Hockney has not addressed this issue is to overlook the artist's career-long tendency towards the hermetic, and to fail to comprehend his personal understanding of the tragic.

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<sup>228</sup> Livingstone, *David Hockney*, pp. 20-26; Melia, *Images of men in the early work of David Hockney*, (unpublished MPhil thesis), University of Manchester, 1991.

<sup>229</sup> Bronski, p. 190.

<sup>230</sup> Martin, *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry*, p. 219.

<sup>231</sup> Hockney, *That's the Way I See It*, pp. 133-134.



## 6. CONCLUSION

Hockney is now in the sixth decade of his career, with a major solo exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London scheduled for 2012, whilst much media fanfare surrounded his 2008 donation to Tate Britain of the large scale composite painting *Bigger Trees Near Warter* (Figure 223). Hockney's largest work to date, an aggregate of fifty individual canvases, it is a landscape painting representing the artist's native county of Yorkshire, and typical of much of Hockney's oeuvre produced since his return to Britain in 2005.<sup>1</sup> At the time of his donation, Hockney stated:

The Tate asked me two years ago about giving things. I thought 'If I'm going to give something to the Tate I want to give them something really good. It's going to be here for a while. I don't want to give things I'm not too proud of'. (...) I thought this was a good painting because it's of England...It seems like a good thing to do.<sup>2</sup>

The Tate's apparent pursuit of Hockney, and solicitation of donated works in this manner, can be compared with the very different acquisition process pursued in the late 1960s, as noted in chapter three. The *Times* article covering the donation of *Bigger Trees Near Warter* is notable for its emphasis on the high monetary value of the work, stating that it would 'sell for millions on the open market'.<sup>3</sup> This is reinforced in the same article with a statement by Tate director Nicholas Serota, in which he remarks 'David Hockney has been astonishingly generous (...) Notwithstanding its size, this painting could have been sold to many buyers around the world'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Barker et al., *David Hockney: Nur Natur/Just Nature*, exhibition catalogue, Kunsthalle Würth, Schwäbisch Hall, 2009, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Crerar, 'David Hockney donates Bigger Trees Near Warter to Tate', *The Times*, 7 April 2008, URL (consulted May 2011):

[http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts\\_and\\_entertainment/visual\\_arts/article3700618.ece](http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/visual_arts/article3700618.ece)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

The donation of an artwork of such scale and monetary value by an artist at this stage in his career to a major public institution raises questions of legacy-making, an activity that is in some respects allied with Hockney's demonstrated propensity for self-fashioning and self-presentation. A 2007 interview with Hockney's near-contemporary at the Royal College of Art, Richard Hamilton, showed Hamilton making some astute observations on the later career path of an artist:

‘A title I had early on [for an exhibition] was *The Late Works*,’ says Hamilton. ‘In a funny way it’s a competitive thing. I dislike the late works of de Kooning, and I dislike the late works of Picasso – many of them. So I thought *I’ll* make some late works! Let ’em laugh!’<sup>5</sup> (original emphases)

Hamilton's reference here to the traditional art historical designation of 'late works' is significant, itself carrying implications of artistic legacy and consideration by the academic community. The construction of Hockney's own 'late work', *Bigger Trees Near Warter*, was chronicled by director Bruno Wollheim for the BBC's *Imagine* television series, first broadcast in 2009. The programme itself draws explicit connections between Hockney's creation and exhibition of the work and notions of artistic legacy, with Wollheim describing his subject as being 'at the end of a glittering career as he searches for a grand finale'.<sup>6</sup> However, in both the programme itself, and the interview that I conducted with the artist for this thesis in July 2009, Hockney himself claimed to be unconcerned by matters of legacy, stating '(i)t's irrelevant to me. First of all, it's not up to me; it's up to somebody else. (...) it's actually up to people like you [art historians], in a way'.<sup>7</sup> Whether or not one takes Hockney's nonchalance at face value, it would certainly appear that his decision to donate a work of such scale, with an emphasis on English landscape subject matter, can be viewed as potentially

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Bracewell, 'Richard Hamilton: I Don't Have to Care What People Think!', *Art Review*, issue 13, July and August 2007, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> Bruno Wollheim (dir.), *Imagine – David Hockney: A Bigger Picture*, BBC One, first broadcast 30 June 2009.

<sup>7</sup> David Hockney, interview with the author; see appendix p. xl.

facilitating the construction of an artistic legacy. Indeed, his donation of such a work to the Tate begs comparison with the Turner bequest, the terms of which, it could be argued, have successfully forwarded Turner's own agenda with regard to his continuing art historical relevance.

Hockney's donation of such a recent work, as well as his decision to allow its production process to be filmed and broadcast, can also be seen as an attempt to create public and art historical awareness of his practice beyond the most iconic images of his early career – for example, his 1967 archetypal painting of Californian idyll, *A Bigger Splash*, has been one of the five most popular postcards sold in the Tate Modern gift shop,<sup>8</sup> whilst it has been reproduced on a number of volumes surveying Hockney and his career, from the cover of the 1970 Whitechapel retrospective catalogue to Peter Clothier's 1995 *Modern Masters* series book on the artist. However, attempts at reinterpretation and even a 're-marketing' of Hockney and his oeuvre can be seen to have occurred almost throughout his career, stemming from a variety of quarters. As noted in chapter four, the 1989 Tate retrospective was criticised by Julian Spalding for its failure to address the artist's substantial body of early works dealing with homosexual themes and subjects,<sup>9</sup> forwarding instead an agenda of Hockney as experimental modernist.<sup>10</sup> Whilst this particular instance of the diminishing of the significance of these works, and Hockney's own sexuality, was in part the result of the Tate's fears surrounding the Thatcher government's Clause 28 legislation, which placed strictures on the 'promotion' of homosexuality, I would go so far as to argue that a tendency by commentators and institutions to 'heterosexualise' Hockney and his works persists, even into

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<sup>8</sup> Deyan Sudjic, 'Power Point', *The Observer*, 1 May 2005, URL (consulted May 2011): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2005/may/01/art1>

<sup>9</sup> Spalding, 'Review: David Hockney. London, Tate Gallery', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 131, No. 1030 (January 1989), p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Melia, *Images of men in the early work of David Hockney*, unpublished MPhil dissertation, University of Manchester, 1991, p. 138.

the twenty-first century. The 2006 exhibition *David Hockney Portraits* at the National Portrait Gallery was accompanied by a great deal of media attention. However, this coverage is notable for its forwarding of Hockney's female sitters and acquaintances, with the artist's long-time friend – and admittedly frequent subject – Celia Birtwell cast in the role of 'muse'. Articles printed by both *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* on the exhibition's opening forwarded this relationship to the extent of placing it within the headline.<sup>11</sup> However, neither article mentions the many male sitters depicted by Hockney, nor indeed acknowledges the exhibition catalogue's alternate designation of the artist's former lover, Peter Schlesinger, as 'muse'.<sup>12</sup>

A contemporaneous article by Martin Bailey in *The Art Newspaper* goes still further along this heterosexualising path, focusing on the rediscovery and exhibition of an early self-portrait by the artist, given to a fellow (female) student at the Bradford College of Art. Entitled 'Found: the self-portrait David Hockney gave his first girlfriend almost 50 years ago', the piece is very clear in its exegesis of the painting's significance. Having been characterised by the author as 'the artist's first girlfriend',<sup>13</sup> the owner of the painting, Terry Kirkbride, is pressed for details of her relationship with Hockney. Under the subheading 'Romance', Bailey writes:

There is another twist to the story. Although she has never before spoken out about it, Terry was Hockney's first girlfriend. They went out with each other for just over a year, in 1956-7, often going to the cinema, with David walking her home. This was before Hockney became open about being gay, in the early 1960s. (...) 'David had been such a good friend and an important part of my early life', she told us. And why

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<sup>11</sup> Mark Brown, 'Hockney's Muse at Retrospective Opening', *The Guardian*, 12 October 2006, URL (consulted May 2011): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/oct/12/arts.artsnews>; Caroline Davies, 'Hockney Muse Steps into the Picture for his Biggest Show Yet', *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 October 2006, URL (consulted May 2011): <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1531224/Hockney-muse-steps-into-the-picture-for-his-biggest-show-yet.html>

<sup>12</sup> Edmund White, 'The Lineaments of Desire', Howgate and Shapiro (eds.), *David Hockney Portraits*, exhibition catalogue, London, National Portrait Gallery, 2006, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Bailey, 'Found: the self-portrait David Hockney gave his first girlfriend almost 50 years ago', *The Art Newspaper*, 30 May 2006.

did she never paint over the self-portrait, when she was short of board? ‘Sentimental reasons’, she says.<sup>14</sup>

It is surely significant that author Bailey places such emphasis on the apparent romantic relationship that took place between the young Kirkbride and Hockney. Whilst the story of the painting’s rediscovery in the attic of a former landlady makes for interesting copy in and of itself, Bailey instead chooses to direct the reader towards a rather sanitised tale of young love in the 1950s. Relegating Hockney’s longstanding public identity as an openly homosexual man to a single sentence, the author makes repeated reference to Kirkbride as Hockney’s ‘first’ girlfriend, whilst neglecting to mention that she was, in all probability, his only girlfriend. One can compare this situation with that previously noted in relation to Warhol in chapter two, with the claims of Doyle et al. that in order for Warhol’s works to be accepted as ‘high art’ by the establishment, issues surrounding his homosexuality had to be ‘aggressively elided’.<sup>15</sup>

Even in the light of these examples of the apparently continuing ‘heterosexualisation’ of Hockney and his works, I would not go so far as to suggest that one should interpret the entirety of the artist’s oeuvre and public persona through the intellectual prism of his homosexuality; indeed, I believe that such a pigeonholing of Hockney simply as a ‘gay artist’ would be to do him a disservice. However, throughout the course of this thesis I have sought to demonstrate that this aspect of his life and artistic practice should be considered a significant factor not only in the development of his early career, but also in professional and personal decisions taken by Hockney many decades subsequently. In the first two chapters, I demonstrated how the artist’s earliest works dealing with homosexual themes and subject matter, from *Queer* (Figure 7) through to *We Two Boys Together Clinging* (Figure 8) and

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Doyle et al., *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, pp. 2-3.

indeed the later series of Cavafy etchings (Figures 62-74), draw heavily upon textual and literary sources associated with homosexuality. Whilst previous scholars in this field, including Schumacher<sup>16</sup> and Melia,<sup>17</sup> have noted Hockney's tendency to utilise literary quotations within his works, such as the poetry of Whitman inscribed upon the surfaces of both *The Third Love Painting* (Figure 5) and *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, none to date has drawn explicit connections between Hockney's use of basic textual components that formed part of the Polari dialect lexicon. With its inherent reliance upon layered significations and obfuscatory misdirection, this subcultural homosexual language system, discovered by a young Hockney daubed upon the public lavatories of Earl's Court tube station, fits within a continuum of homosexual cultural and creative endeavour. Melia notes that the abstract expressionist stylings of works such as *Adhesiveness* (Figure 3) provided an intellectual opacity that allowed Hockney to represent 'contentious themes and illegal acts'.<sup>18</sup> I would certainly support this argument, although I am less confident of Melia's conviction that this particular image, with its highly stylised yet still recognisably sexualised figures, would have been entirely incomprehensible to the viewing public. As I have iterated throughout this thesis, I believe that it is important to situate an assessment of Hockney's works concerning homosexual themes and subjects within an aforementioned continuum of homosexual cultural and creative endeavour. Far from representing a lone, modernist maverick, I believe that Hockney's images addressing homosexuality, as well as his own personal self-fashioning, can be seen to position him within an historical tradition of homosexual creative and cultural figures. Whilst one cannot infallibly attribute an individual's intent in any given action, I would argue that a case can be made that Hockney may have sought to situate himself, and his

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<sup>16</sup> Schumacher, *David Hockney: Zitate als Bildstrategie*, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> Melia, *Images of Men in the Early Work of David Hockney* (unpublished MPhil thesis), University of Manchester, 1991, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

works, within a version of a homosexual creative canon. As I have shown, Hockney's documented engagements with the languages and writings of homosexual men, as well as with the visual works of figures such as Bacon and Vaughan, demonstrate that he was familiar with a history of homosexual creative and cultural production. That Hockney held a conception of such a canon of homosexual creative luminaries – and his own potential for inclusion within it – is, I believe, evidenced in a number of his works. His 1961 etching *Myself and my Heroes* (Figure 91), with its procession of intellectual dignitaries from a haloed Whitman through the figurehead of civil disobedience, Ghandi, ending with a young Hockney himself, suggests that from an early stage in his career, the artist conceived of such a canonical approach, not only in relation to art and literature but also with regards to the opposition of perceived political oppression. His 'souvenir' collections considered in chapter two, featuring images of sites and persons of homosexual significance, also support the contention that Hockney conceived of such a homosexual canon.

The manner of Hockney's approach to the representation of homosexual themes and subjects in his work, as well as those of contemporaries such as Warhol and Mapplethorpe, has been a recurrent concern in this thesis. The significance of the domestic space and partnership in Hockney's works, as epitomised in the series of three domestic scenes produced in 1963, has been evident across the four chapters. However, as I have shown, whilst domesticity is a concern across the span of the artist's oeuvre dealing with homosexuality, its resonance can be seen to differ with changing societal and political climes. Whilst the rather camp, comfortable environments of the domestic scenes and the Cavafy etchings would appear remarkably tame to the twenty-first century viewer, one must remember that these images were produced prior to the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967, and as such, represented actions and relationships that were, at the

time, legally prohibited. Indeed, I would contend that in their forwarding of a comparatively unremarkable, lower-middle-class ideal of contented domestic partnership, these images fulfil the call made by David L. Freeman in a 1955 issue of *ONE* magazine, noted previously in chapter two, in which he urged homosexual creative producers to ‘show homosexuals as human beings, as very like their neighbours – working at dull jobs with inadequate wages, struggling to meet the payments on furniture from Sears for the sixty- or seventy-a-month apartment on unromantically-named streets like Sixth or Central or Main’.<sup>19</sup> As such, in these images, I would argue that Hockney presents homosexual domestic partnership as normative, along similar lines to Isherwood’s literary endeavours in texts such as *A Single Man*. Whilst I have contended that Hockney’s sustained focus on domesticity in relation to homosexual relationships rendered his works less immediately relevant within gay communities in the 1970s, a period that saw an unprecedented development in gay liberation groups and activities, I have also argued that with the advent of the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s, and a perceived public health need to encourage gay men to pursue safer sex practices, Hockney’s images of homosexual (monogamous) domestic bliss, stemming from a time before the spectre of HIV, came to be viewed once again as politically expedient in representing what was being forwarded as a once again desirable lifestyle choice. I have also demonstrated how Hockney has utilised the domestic space in a later image such as *Joe Macdonald in his Apartment, New York, Dec 1982* (Figure 217), to confront the tragedy of AIDS whilst still affording dignity to a dying friend.

Hockney’s repeated recourse to the hermetic in his engagements with homosexual themes, even after the passage of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, has been noted throughout this thesis. I believe that in considering why he may have chosen to do so, one must recall the

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<sup>19</sup> David L. Freeman, ‘Literature and Homosexuality’, *ONE* magazine, January 1955, p. 15.



artist's earliest engagements with the notion of a canon of homosexual creative and cultural endeavour, as well as the historical attributes and tendencies with which Hockney has demonstrated familiarity in the construction of his public persona. Robert K. Martin's observation, first mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, that '(g)ay literature has always, since the Greeks, been a literature of indirection'<sup>20</sup> is surely pertinent also in relation to the study of homosexual visual art, as well as homosexual cultures more widely.

The need for discretion in the articulation of homosexual desires during times of legal and societal censure is obvious, and arguably even more so in the visual representation of such than with the textual. Obfuscation, in an attempt to elude censure, has been demonstrably inherent to many areas of homosexual creative and cultural production, from the 'alibis' of the physique photography industry that influenced Hockney as a young man, to the deliberately multiple, layered meanings of the Polari lexicon and Pry's veiled cruising guide *For Your Convenience* (Figure 6). Looking back beyond the twentieth century, one finds still further examples of a deliberate layering of significations. The figure of Saint Sebastian, penetrated by phallic arrows, was widely understood by interested parties of the nineteenth century to represent concerns surrounding same-gender desires,<sup>21</sup> whilst sartorial symbols of homosexuality, from the green carnations of Wildean aesthetes to the feminised costumes of the eighteenth-century mollies, have to varying degrees simultaneously conveyed and codified meanings surrounding a wearer's desires. It is clear that although Hockney was held up as an icon of modern, 'swinging' London in the mid-1960s, many of the sources he draws upon and concerns that he renders demonstrate a clear debt to historical tendencies in the representation of homosexual themes and desires. As a self-appointed heir to Whitman in *Myself and my*

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<sup>20</sup> Martin, *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1998, p. 219.

<sup>21</sup> Richard A. Kaye, 'Losing His Religion: Saint Sebastian as Contemporary Gay Martyr', Peter Horne and Reina Lewis (eds.), *Outlooks: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities and Visual Cultures*, London, New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. 86-105.

*Heroes*, I would argue that Hockney's position within a putative canon of homosexual creative endeavour is as a descendant within a tradition of conveying same-gender desires that is inherently layered and complex, at once revealing and concealing.

So far as the artist himself is concerned, as the preceding chapter has demonstrated, public and media perceptions of Hockney as a gay man in the public eye have evolved over the course of his career. So too have legal, societal and cultural standards. Hockney's 1960s paintings, drawings and prints of normalised, monogamous, homosexual domesticity, often informed by historical cultural traditions surrounding the representation of same-gender desires, were arguably outpaced by the strident confrontation of images such as Mapplethorpe's photographs of participants on the gay leather scene in the late 1970s. However, as the statements of Ofield and Burston suggest, by the mid-1980s Hockney and his works were once again deemed relevant enough to become archetypal of 'an identifiably gay world'<sup>22</sup> to Hollywood and the publishing industry.

I began this conclusion with remarks that might be interpreted as somewhat pessimistic regarding the continuing evolution of the reception of Hockney's oeuvre, as well as his identity as a gay man. Many of those involved in artistic legacy-making, including the Tate directors, film-maker Wollheim and indeed Hockney himself, can be seen to have attempted to downplay the significance of the artist's works dealing with homosexual themes and subjects, instead forwarding the 'late works' of an 'Old Master of the Modern World',<sup>23</sup> more in keeping with the career trajectory of Turner than that of Warhol. The 'heterosexualising' bent of journalists such as Brown, Davies and Bailey might also be seen

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<sup>22</sup> Burston, 'Just a Gigolo? Narcissism, Nellyism and the 'New Man' Theme', Burston and Richardson (eds.), *A Queer Romance: Lesbians, Gay Men, and Popular Culture*, p. 124.

<sup>23</sup> Douglas Skeggs, 'David Hockney - The Old Master of the Modern World', lecture delivered at St. James, Guernsey, 1 March 2010.

as an effort to make Hockney fit more easily into the role of ‘Old Master’, with their traditional designations of male artist and female muse.

One could argue that Hockney’s longevity in comparison with contemporaries such as Warhol and Mapplethorpe has resulted in such questions surrounding the shaping of his legacy. Having been thirty years old when the partial decriminalisation of homosexual activities was enacted in 1967, Hockney is arguably amongst the last generation of homosexual men in Britain for whom the cultures of concealment surrounding the representation and articulation of same-gender desires were part of their everyday lives, rather than simply a historical curiosity. As such, it is possible that the significance of Hockney’s works of the 1960s – and indeed beyond – that address homosexual themes and subjects might appear diminished in the eyes of the twenty-first-century viewer, freighted as they are so often with a polysemy of significations, and in the case of images such as the domestic scenes, a wryly camp humour.

However, there are signs that the position of Hockney’s works within a historical canon of homosexual creative endeavour, as well as the artist’s own role as an activist, is once again being re-evaluated. In 2010, BBC Radio Four produced a series in collaboration with British Museum director Neil MacGregor, entitled *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. Over 100 fifteen-minute installments, MacGregor endeavoured, through the analysis of items held in the museum’s collections, ‘to address as many aspects of human experience as proved practicable, and to tell us about whole societies, not just the rich and powerful within them’.<sup>24</sup> Number ninety-seven was Hockney’s *In the Dull Village* from the Cavafy etching series (Figure 69). MacGregor’s radio presentation, as does his essay in the book that accompanies the series, makes clear not only the work’s significance from a formal point of view, but also

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<sup>24</sup> Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, London, Allen Lane, 2010, p. xiii.

its importance as an artifact of a period in which romantic and sexual relationships between consenting male adults remained criminalised. MacGregor states:

There is no earlier decade in which David Hockney's etching *In the Dull Village* could have been published. Hockney began his art studies in the 1950s, but it was the 1960s that formed him, and he in turn helped shape the decade. He was gay and prepared to be open about it, both in his life and his work, at a time when in the UK homosexual activity between men was criminal, and prosecutions frequent.<sup>25</sup>

With Hockney himself interviewed within the radio version of the project, MacGregor's account of the etching emphasises not only the legal and societal strictures surrounding its creation, but also stresses the continuing relevance of an image presenting a normalising view of homosexual relationships in a world in which gay rights continue to be denied in many countries. He writes:

Gay rights were of course only one of the many freedoms asserted and fought for during the sixties, but they were a particularly challenging issue in the context of universal human rights. Most of these concerned groups of people discriminated against on the grounds of gender, religion or race, and there was a wide consensus that such discrimination was wrong. Sexual orientation and behaviour, on the other hand, were seen as something quite different – indeed they were not even mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948. Hockney and campaigners like him eventually changed the terms of the debate, taking questions of sexuality firmly into the arena of human rights in Europe and America. In some countries, their campaigning changed the law, but in many parts of the world private sexual acts that deviate from an accepted norm are still considered religiously unacceptable or a threat to society, deemed criminal and punished – in some cases by death.<sup>26</sup>

Although centred around a single work, and necessarily limited in its scope, I believe that MacGregor's analysis of *In the Dull Village* encapsulates the same concerns as this thesis. Through a consideration of circumstances surrounding the treatment of homosexual men by the legal system and wider society, as well as the historical tendencies within the development

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 636.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pp. 638-639.

of homosexual creative and cultural production, I believe it is clear that Hockney's works dealing with homosexual themes and subjects, from the early textual explorations of *Queer* through to the symbolic floral subjects of images such as *Three Black Flowers, May 1986* (Figure 204), belong to a tradition of homosexual creative endeavour. Drawing upon historical tendencies towards multiple meanings, obfuscation and, often, humorous approaches to the representation of homosexual concerns, Hockney's images reflect the artist's engagement with a wide corpus of textual, literary, visual and cultural source material in the production of artworks that serve simultaneously as art object and 'propaganda'. Like the homosexual 'great literature' called for by Arthur B. Krell in 1954,<sup>27</sup> the artist's images dealing with same-gender relationships and desires can be construed as seeking not only to normalise homosexuality for a heterosexual majority, but also to educate other young homosexual men. With Hockney himself familiar with a canonical array of creative sources dealing with same-gender desires, as well as the individuals that produced them, I believe that the artist sought through these works not only to advocate for gay rights, but also to position himself within an unofficial form of homosexual creative canon.

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<sup>27</sup> Krell, 'We Need a Great Literature', *ONE* magazine, May 1954, p. 19.

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ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California. One of the largest repositories of material on subjects of LGBT interest in the world, the facility contains rare complete collections of periodicals including the *Mattachine Review* and *ONE* magazine itself. It also contains a wealth of materials pertaining to Hockney's involvement in AIDS fundraising in the Los Angeles area from the 1980s onwards.

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