

Over His Shoulder

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by

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A study of the aesthetics of the masculine novel of action and the romance form in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods.

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#### Chapter 1. A Homosocial Aesthetic at the Hearth of British Patriarchy.

##### Introduction

There was, in the eighteen-eighties and nineties, a small group of men who, in reaction to a world they believed Queen Victoria had feminised if not desexualised, and in an age of antimacassars, starched collars and shirt fronts, sexual hypocrisy and concealed emotion, wrote and travelled together, and then set up a clubland at the hearth of British patriarchy, to which to return.

At the end of the nineteenth century some writers feared that sexuality, gender and male roles were not quite what they should be, and consequently set about producing new forms; the masculine novel of action and the romance genre, which, if we do not take their texts at face value, appear to confirm and consolidate their male bondings. At the Savile club in Piccadilly, Haggard and Lang produced a co-authored work, which could be taken to engage in misogyny. They wrote a novel entitled *The World's Desire* in the form of a Hellenic, lyrical fable, which explores the fictive world of masculinity but ends in misogyny and seems to hark back to Carlyle through Scott, Tennyson, Mallory's *Morte d' Arthur*, and *The Odyssey*.

It was when Haggard had completed his Icelandic saga *Eric Brighteyes*, that he received a letter from Lang about a sequel to *The Odyssey* that they had planned to collaborate on. Haggard completed a first draft and sent it to Lang. Lang lost the manuscript for six months and was only able to rediscover it among some paper covers, where it lay, presumably subconsciously repressed, to keep it from seeing the light of day. Green's version is that Haggard was working away on the story and doing a good deal of what is now the central portion. Then he sent it to Lang who promptly lost the manuscript so completely and for so long a time that the idea of writing the book was almost abandoned. After this, the next stage was uncertain but Lang probably sent the manuscript back to Haggard who must have written a good deal more to it, and then returned it to Lang early in 1889. "Lang and I discussed it," wrote Haggard, "Then I wrote a part of it, which part he altered or rewrote." Each writing a part at a time, the novel was completed and sent for publication. After serialisation in the *New Review* (from April to December, 1890), *The World's Desire* was published on the fifth of November, 1890 by Charles Longman. 1.

As Homeric as Homer, as Arthurian as *The Legends*, Haggard and Lang's chivalrous work recounts, in a story reminiscent of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, the second journey of Odysseus, the son of Laertes. Back from his wanderings at his ancestral home, and

finding among the ruins of a destructive attack the remains of his wife, Penelope, the Wanderer (Odysseus) hearing the invocation of the bow of Eurytus resolves:

"Let us forth again  
Let us feed our fill  
On the flesh of men."

Having thus sworn to avenge the deaths in flesh, he clothes himself in armour, selects two spears from a stand of lances, throws a quiver of arrows over his shoulder and takes the great bow in his hand; the bow of Eurytus, which no one else can bend. Then he goes forth into the moonlight to fulfil his mission. (It is just unfortunate that he spends the rest of the novel seeking the love of a woman rather than wreaking revenge for his slain wife.) It is this bow, then, which produces the song of the tale:

"The Song of the Bow"

Lo, the hour is nigh  
And the time to smite  
When the foe shall fly  
From the arrow's flight!

Let the bronze bite deep!  
Let the war bird fly  
Upon them that sleep  
And are ripe to die!  
Shrill and low  
Do the gray shafts sing  
The song of the bow  
The sound of the String! 2.

Hyper - masculinity as an ethos of empire is the resplendent theme of these Greek epics, in a misuse of the genre as a form of disguise: an overt masculine response to an essentially feminine experience.

Odysseus is visited by the goddess Aphrodite who promises him Helen of Troy, the goddess whom all men desire. Soon afterwards, Odysseus is captured by Sidonian merchants who plan to sell him as a slave, but he defeats them and escapes with the treasure by ship to Egypt where he finds both the Pharaoh's sorceress wife, Meriamun, and the beautiful goddess, Helen. Meriamun has already been warned about Odysseus's arrival by the reincarnation of a courtier, whom she has promoted to power. She falls in love with Odysseus, but he is overwhelmed by

the lovely Helen and rejects her in favour of "The World's Desire". But the Wanderer cannot conquer Helen easily for she appears to change shape. But what shape does she take? In his pursuit of Helen his directions are clear:

"By the star of Love shalt thou know her. On the breast of Helen, a jewel shines, a great star - stone. From that stone fall red drops like blood and they drip from her vestment." 3.

Now, it is from this moment, Wayne Kostenbaum argues in "Double Talk" (see footnote 12.) that the drops of blood falling suggest themselves to be symbolic of the menstruating female figure. Again, in the poem which prefaces the work, the authors, in obscure reference to a star and a snake, appear to be using imagery of a star to represent female love and the long, snaky member possibly to represent male love:

"Not one but he hath chanced to wake  
Dreame of the star and found the snake  
Yet, through his dreams, a wandering fire  
Still, still she flits, the World's Desire." 4.

The star and the snake appear to function here as symbols which are originally derived from Herodotus. As Morton Cohen ("RiderHaggard" p. 102) has reminded us: "the psychological symbols present a challenging puzzle to the specialist as well as the casual reader". Their symbolism is nowhere explained in the story itself, but whatever significance Haggard and Lang intended them to hold, it is difficult to avoid the suggestion of masturbation.

In Western literature beginning with monasticism, masturbation seems to be associated primarily with the realm of the imagination and with its dangers, as Foucault suggests in Volume 3 of *The History of Sexuality*, "The Care of the Self". It is not easy to dismiss here an erotic, nocturnal onanistic symbolism. (dream, wake up, ...find the snake?) Perhaps associating the snake with a penis Haggard is making a visual reference to the erotic fantasies created by masturbation. Of course we are not eliminating the invidious connection between the snake and Eve, which has been in currency since Chaucer which has obvious connections with the role of women at that time - their then essentially subservient place in society. This leads us to the nub of the theme for the confusion over the emblems of the star and the snake could be taken to suggest a more intriguing, fundamental, human choice between love and evil, between pure love and the profane, lust and purity.

William Henley used a similar kind of imagery - that of a sword, to demonstrate power and strength, in his poem *Pro Rege Nostro*, a public paean to service in action, where he equates an England married to the mighty sword with a chosen people.

"England, my own  
Chosen daughter of the Lord,  
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword," 5.

His work is often seen as the poet's own idiosyncratic response to his personal suffering, which dominated the literary annals of imperialism, but it is replete with a shared symbolism. Then, later, promising him that he is immortal, Helen decrees that, although he is clearly mortal: "Thou shalt live again, Odysseus, as thou hast lived before, and life by life we shall meet and love till the end is come." 6. So the wages of live is life after death; resurrection for heterosexual love. In this passionate, heterosexual scene, Helen promises Odysseus immortality, but it is difficult not to read into it the desire of the author, Haggard, for immortality through reincarnation, for it is well documented that he was a firm believer in the rebirth of the self. Stevenson, pointed out *The World's Desire's* misogyny and wrote a parodic poem which disparaged its heterosexual plot. According to Stevenson, Lang and Haggard were foolish to make their aged Odysseus seek a wife. He called the novel both audacious and wrong and derided it in broad Scots:

"Awdacious Odyshe  
Your conduc' is vicious,  
Your tale is suspicious  
An' queer  
Ye ancient sea-roamer  
Ye dour old beach-comber  
Frae Haggard to Homer  
Ye Veer.

Sic veerin and steerin'!  
What port are ye nearin'  
As frae Egypt to Erin  
Ye gang.  
Ye ancient old blackguard  
Just see whaur ye're staggered  
From Homer to Haggard  
And Lang'

In stunt and in strife  
To gang seeking a wife  
At your time o' life  
It was wrang.  
An' see! Fresh afflictions

Into Haggard's descriptions  
An' the plagues o' the Egyptians  
Ye sprang!

The Folk ye're now in wi'  
Are ill to begin wi  
Or to risk a hale skin wi'  
In breeks  
They're blacker and hetter  
(Just ask your begetter)  
And far frae bein' better  
Than Greeks.

There's your Meriamun  
She'll mebbe can gammon  
That auld-furrand salmon Yoursel'  
And Moses and Aaron  
Will gie ye your fairin  
Wi fire an' het airn  
In Hell." 7.

The allegory in the romance *The World's Desire* swings from star to snake and back again as it would appear that the authors change from male to female imagery.

"'What did I tell thee,' says Aphrodite. 'Was it not thou shouldst know the Golden Helen by the Red Star on her breast, the jewel whence fall the red drops fast, and by the Star alone? And did she not tell thee, also, that thou shouldst know her by the Star? Yet when one came to thee wearing no star but girdled with a snake, my words were all forgotten, thy desires led thee wither thou wouldst not go. Thou wast blinded by desire and couldst not discern the False from the True. Beauty has many shapes, now it is that of Helen, now that of Meriamun, each sees it as he desires it. But the Star is not yet the Star and the Snake is not yet the Snake and he who, bewildered by his lusts, swears by the Snake when he should have sworn by the Star, shall have the Snake for guerdon. 8.

Confirming their collaborative efforts, Stevenson wrote to Lang in continuance of their masculine bonds and Lang reported to Haggard, "Stevenson says he is 'thrilled and chilled' by Meriamun." Lang himself did not hold his own efforts in high esteem and parodied the contribution he made in a few lines of doggerel:

"It did not set the Thames on fire  
It is not quite "The World's Desire!"

Much rather do the public scoff,  
And yell to Nature, 'Take them off!'  
While critics constantly conspire  
To slate the hapless "World's Desire." 9.

To which I have penned the parody in reply;

"It did not set the world ablaze,  
As on its pages they did gaze.  
Much rather did the critics scoff,  
And tell of Rider Haggard's toff.  
While public papers they all say  
The fiction set down here is gay."

Providing further proof of their collaboration, Lang wrote to Haggard pointing out that:

"You gave Loi a white beard! I shaved it! I have not been idle. I've worked on the advent of the jews, knocked out a lot of Wardour Street; added a heap and re-written the first chapter plainer and shorter." 10.

The beard, a common homosocial motif in many cultures, often indicates the mature, middle aged man, and distances him from the character of the Valentino-like lover, with the exception of those wearers of designer stubble. The scene is a failure of both Haggard and Lang in their attempts at characterisation. They try, in a collaborative act, to portray masculinity but compose a misogynistic text to drown their overt feelings of woman hating. At a later date, Lang, admitting its misogyny, wrote:

"No date.

I hope you will like the new turn to the death of Pharaoh, where I give Meriamun a song, and tell the death differently. Chess again, and Pharaoh is dead! I like Helen's song in the flames; she lets the women have it. It's rather a misogynistic book on the whole." 11.

Wayne Kostenbaum has argued 12. that, in an intensely febrile scene in which she reaches into a box, the goddess Meriamun takes part in an act of female onanism, but my own feeling is that Haggard is recreating a sense of the duality of human nature, that Green has referred to as the "Platonic Dual Unity of Complementary Souls". It seems to be unrelated to the idea of good and evil as such but infers, rather, a concept of human nature being part of a divided whole, a 'doppelganger', a double identity, suggested by the shape shifting of Helen.

Both Haggard and Lang in their writing are taking part in an act of misogyny. They, dislike, it appears, the female sex and admire, preferably, males. The image of the curling snake arguably represents here the male sex which they prefer. When the long curling snake is revealed to possess the head of a human, albeit a female one - that of Meriamun - there is a loss of reality in the sense of what the serpent represents: sin or beauty, beauty or sin. When she is questioned by the snake about what s/he represented, the answer that Meriamun gives the snake confirms the idea of a duplicity of the female psyche which Haggard so despised - the psychological allegory of the images appears to be that the snake represents sin, and not purity and chastity, yet the snake proceeds forth from the evil side of the queen's nature and not the beautiful side.

Haggard and Lang seem to assert that beneath the beauty of the female lies duplicity and evil - beneath the disguised sex of the serpent there is a fundamental criticism of not only female nature but human nature. Haggard and Lang have been cheated in love and they disguise their feelings in a story filled with evil, sin, malice, duplicity and lust to represent beauty; and beauty, attraction, desire, loveliness and faith in humanity to represent evil:

"And the first time that she breathed the Thing stirred and sparkled. The second time that she breathed it undid its shining folds and reared its head to hers. The third time that she breathed it slid from her bosom to the floor, then coiled itself about her feet and slowly grew as grows the magician's magic tree."

"Greater and greater it grew yet, and as it grew it shone like a torch in a tomb, and wound itself about the body of Meriamun, wrapping her in its fiery folds till it reached her middle. Then it reared its head on high, and from its eyes there flowed a light like the light of a flame, and lo! its face was the face of a fair woman - it was the face of Meriamun!" 13.

The snake and the woman take part in a lengthy conversation a deux and then intimate a serpent devouring its own self: the standard emblem of eternal life, represented by the unending circle of the snake's body and with, importantly, the serpent shedding its own shining skin. The snake was part of the emblems of the Hippocratic Society and of the Theosophical Society. If I can throw my hat into the ring, and deconstruct the sexual imagery a little further, we have here the idea of a ring, a common fetish of Haggard's, possibly conveying marriage, or we could gloss it as the anus. Haggard and Lang seem to suggest to each other, "I could eat you" - a conventional image for sexual desire. The imagery of sexual arousal, the snake, arguably representing the erect phallus prior to penetration of its 'alter ego'.

W B Yeats explains in his Autobiography that "the meaning of the serpent was plain enough... the serpent is the Kabalistic serpent - winding nature". In *Mythologies* Yeats elucidates on "the meaning of winding nature and the straight line which is called in Balzac's *Seraphita* "the Mark

of Man" but is better described as saint or sage'

Interestingly, Freud, referring to snakes in his interpretation of the Medusa's head-dream, viewed the decapitated head with its snaky looks as a "genitalized head", an upward displacement of the genital organs so that the mouth stands for the vagina dentata and the snakes for pubic hair. Freud thereby seems to confirm long held suspicions of the snake's identification with sexuality and, in particular, with the pubic and erogenous areas of the human body.

The star could be taken to represent the dreaming side, the female, receptive emblem of the Morning Star which has connotations of Lucifer, and, most paradoxically, in view of my remarks about the serpent, of Eve.

Evidently Haggard felt a great deal of grief for the loss of his first love which is repeated in his fiction. In a deeply revealing scene, the Queen, Meriamun, poisons Hatsaka for daring to toy with her Pharaoh, Khani. This can perhaps be taken to mean that Haggard's woman love is paramount and will brook no rivals in her affections, for Meriamun disposes of them in the same way as Haggard's father forced him to dispose of his first love by demanding that he remain in South East Africa. It could appear that, fictively, Haggard makes Leo strive to retain the Queen as first in his affections which is a construct for Haggard to be able to continue, in his novel, the obsession with his first real love affair.

An inferential thought; the star does not necessarily represent love but rather, its brightness could be taken to represent South Africa, where Haggard saw his ambitions and love for life blossom, his lode star so to speak; and the snake, paradoxically, does not represent evil but stands for Norfolk where Haggard failed in his first amatory and amorous ventures. Haggard, a great imperialist, which I mean in a negative sense, especially in his activities in the Commonwealth, saw his future as only represented by the star of hope, which we take to mean Zululand, and he possibly felt an undying sense of injustice at his failure in love as the misogyny of the tale becomes a second order of reality represented by the snake and the star.

The snake imagery appears again in the story which appeared as a sequel to "She" entitled "Ayesha". A story which is primarily a quest for an idealised woman, it describes an utopian vision of a beautiful heroine who again wears the snake charm:

"Oh! and there - a Glory covered with a single garment - stood a shape celestial. It seemed to be asleep, since the eyes were shut. Or was it dead, for at first that face was a face of death? Look, the sunlight played upon her, shining through the thin veil, the dark eyes opened like the eyes of a wandering child; the blood of life flowed up the ivory bosom into the pallid cheeks; the raiment of black and curling tresses wavered in the wind; the head of the jewelled snake that held them sparkled beneath her breast." 14.

And in a heterosexual passage from the novel *She*, the snake rears its heads again, where her gown is fastened by a snake brooch:

"About the waist her white kirtle was fastened by a double-headed snake of solid gold above which her gracious form swelled up as pure as they were lovely, till the kirtle ended at the snowy argent of her breast." 15.

Again the snake has two heads to confirm and endorse its double nature - the double nature of being, a major component of the novel.

It is well documented that Lang helped Haggard plan and revise *She*. It is a misogynistic story depending for its success largely on a masculine public repressed by Victorian standards of sexuality. The heroine, Ayesha, possesses the traditional qualities of womanhood: permanent youth, perennial prettiness, supernatural strength; and she is white! Ayesha, whose name is the same as the wife of the prophet of Islam, is of the Arab nation for which Haggard felt a strong affinity, regarding it as pure, and culturally in accord with his values, its people being strong, virile and attractive to westerners, a model for Haggard's heroes and protagonists. She appears in historical costume and is very wise. Morton Cohen 16. sees her as Sagacity itself: Wisdom's Daughter he calls her, referring to another Haggard title. She is in one (Jungian) theory, the projection of Haggard's unconscious deal of the perfect love, an image varying only in small details that man has inherited in part as a legacy of his race's past history - what Jung terms "the race memory". 17.

Haggard's thinly veiled women figures are usually seen high above on a plinth or on another unreachable 'pylon's brow' adorned with hieroglyphics and, especially, the imagery of the Star of love. In the sequel to *She*, entitled *Ayesha* the story is also arguably a quest for the perfect woman. But the reader cannot easily follow the geographical role that his/her search unfolds nor can s/he distinguish the various priestesses, shamans, goddesses such as Meriamun and Ayesha or the immortal women such as the Hathor, Khania or Atene with which Haggard peoples his novels. The work is, I would argue, a reflection of Haggard's search for a lost love, and there is the acceptance of a compromise in the later part of the novel, where, not finding his idealised woman, Leo settles for a less beautiful, but perfectly adaptable female life partner.

Besides the romantic heroine there is also another woman in the Haggard novel. She is kept in the background during the early part of the work and comes to the fore as a force to be reckoned with only towards the end when the hero has lost the heroine and realizes, on the rebound, that he may have to accept a less than perfect match for his romantic ideals, who is a young lady who truly loves him, is a good manager and companion and might not be so unsuitable after all. The hero marries her and the couple live in perpetual contentment if not in blissful happiness thereafter.

To what extent, then, did the collaborators work together to produce a heated yet viable form of writing? While Haggard was writing *She* he asked Lang to assist him in the day to day writing, sometimes at the Savile Club in Piccadilly. Lang's letters to Haggard document the translation of *She* from a figment of Haggard's imagination to a printed novel. Unfortunately, none of Haggard's letters to Lang survives. Morton Cohen's research shows that he probably asked for Lang's help in what Cohen pedantically calls "charting the history of Leo Vincey's ancestry". Lang wrote to Haggard to teach him how the ancient Greeks named their children. "My Greek prose has 20 years of rust on it," he complained, but as a compromise he said he would get him "a piece by an Ireland scholar". In a letter of February 1st. 1886, Lang suggested that "'Vindex, Vindici, Vincey' would knit" and this became the genealogy of Leo Vincey. On 12th. July, 1886, Haggard sent the proofs of *She* to Lang and although he tampered with them little, he sent them back with the comment:

"I have pretty nearly finished *She*. I really must congratulate you; I think it is one of the most astonishing romances I ever read. The more impossible it is, the better you do it, till it seems like a story from the literature of another planet."

but he also criticises the hasty style:

"You really must look after the style, more when it comes out as a book. I would also, if it is not impertinent, reduce the comic element a good deal- it is sometimes so sudden a drop as to be quite painful. For my own part (and I am pretty sure many readers will agree) there is too much raw heart... and other tortures. I'm saying pretty much what I would say in a review, only beforehand I'd like to see it polished up a bit and made more worthy of the imagination in it."

Later, "I want it to be A1 in its genre - a dreadfully difficult genre it is," Lang cajoles in his usual scholarly tone, and again: "I want you to be very careful with the proofs." Coming from someone who had lost them for six months that is likely to have fallen on deaf ears.

In his review of the novel Lang found it hard not to give 'any but a personal and subjective estimate' about it and went on to say that for him the book was a rare experience that took him 'beyond the bounds of explored Romanticism. The more impossible it gets, the better (to my taste) Mr Haggard does it.' The *Athenaeum* judged *She* to be "an original, attractive, bewildering, impressive, and withal disappointing work", and Henley confessed that "For my part I couldn't put it down until I had finished it". 18.

*She* is another tale, like *King Solomon's Mines* told by a returned traveller. In this heated, homosocial work, there is an emphasis on male ties which is reflected in the devotion of Leo and Holly for each other and the dogged affection given by Job to his employer. The hypercharged reaction between master and servant in the Victorian novel is thematically dominated by homosocial bonding, it crosses class/master/servant divides and gender differences and frequently does so. In turn, it wreaks vengeance on women. In the scene where

Leo and Holly are escaping danger (the homoeroticism/homosociality is always fraught with danger) each must help the other to jump across a yawning chasm. Leo reconfirms their mutual ties of togetherness:

"I heard his sinews cracking above me, and I felt myself lifted up as though I were a child, till I got my left arm around the rock, and my chest was resting on it. The rest was easy; in two or three more seconds I was up, and we lay panting side by side, trembling like leaves, and with the cold perspiration of terror pouring from our skins."

We can almost taste the salt of sweat in such perilous escapades! At another point, running away from the allegedly cannibalistic warriors we learn that:

"There was a curious gleam in Leo's eyes, and his handsome face was set like a stone. In his right hand was his heavy hunting knife. He shifted its thong a little up his wrist, then he put his arm round me and embraced me." 20.

Violence is juxtaposed with the vocabulary of male bonding, for during the fight with the allegedly cannibalistic warriors "they did not know but that we could continue shooting forever". 21.

At the end of the romance the homosocial relationship between Holly, the narrator, who doubles conceivably as a literary personification of Haggard, and Leo Vincey, the most beautiful man of all the academic alumni of his maternal university assemblage, transcends the African location of the piece and continues on after Ludwig's return to his old college - (something) College, Cambridge:

"Now I write these last words with Leo leaning over my shoulder in the old room in my College, the same into which some two-and-twenty years ago my poor friend Vincey stumbled on the memorable night of his death..." 22.

Again, the erstwhile friend leaning (innocently?) over the shoulder as these books were meant to be read by a boy with a man looking **over his shoulder**. This male attraction allows of the possibility of further cooperative ventures in private while a continuing, more intimate relationship is eagerly mooted and ardently endorsed:

"Here ends this history as far as it concerns science and the outside world. What its end will be

as regards Leo and myself is more than I can guess. But we feel that it is not reached yet."23.

If we could hazard an opinion at what is meant, I would contend that their homosocial ventures were sure to continue on into Ayesha, Allan Quatermain and other binding projects.

In this Haggard romance Holly, a typical Haggard hero, is sitting alone in his room at night when a friend, Leo Vincey, arrives with a box. Informing him that he is dying, he invites his friend to foster his son, Leo, after his death. Much later, his son opens the box and discovers the writings which tell of an obscure and weird genealogy. Leo is related to Kallikrates, a priest of the Royal House of the Pharaohs of Egypt, who has escaped from his country with his love, Amenartas. The Queen has murdered Kallikrates, but Amenartas has fled with her son, from whom Leo is descended. Arriving in Africa to investigate the genealogy and to follow their destiny, Vincey and the others are captured by Billali and taken directly to the queen. Reaching the queen's apartments after many difficulties overcome, as is standard in the genre, the veiled beauty explains that she is waiting for the love of her life to return after an interval of two thousand years.

When, the next day, she enters Leo Vincey's sickroom, where he is recovering from a spear wound inflicted by the Armahaggar warriors, she finds that he is the man she has been dreaming of for aeons. Ayesha demands that he be taken to her chamber, where she watches over him until his recovery. Leo soon comes under her spell and falls irrevocably in love with her, despite the fact that Ayesha has killed Ustane, his Armahaggar bride. Ayesha shows Leo the solidified empty shell of Kallikrates who died two thousand years before and claims that he, Leo, is the living embodiment of Kallikrates and that he is, in fact, Kallikrates. Leo, Holly and the Queen set out for the Pillar of Life, which is depicted as a magical flame. Ayesha enters into the crematory fire, and beckons Leo to follow but does not survive the experience, and is turned into a hideous burnt out old hag with the face of a wizened monkey, while Leo does not enter. With no option but to return home, Leo Vincey and Ludwig Holly go back to England where they can contemplate further adventures to complete the unfinished story.

Unanswered questions remain: what is the meaning of the fire which gives everlasting life, and why is Leo but not Ayesha allowed to survive by refusing to enter it? Leo does not risk the crematory flames because he cannot be sure of death. The possibility of immortality without his woman is too great a fictional burden for Haggard to contemplate in his grief at the loss of his love, so he chooses not to allow his character to enter fictively into the golden flame of eternity. Why does Haggard create originally a mocking, cold beauty without relation to the humanity of women? Moreover, why does Haggard turn a beautiful woman into a hateable, monkey-like creature, and why is his misogyny such a potent force in the novel? We would suggest that his misogyny represents his desire to rid himself of his woman figure and thereby allow the men to continue their homosocial activities in further adventures.

The idea of the immortality of a beautiful goddess comes, arguably, from the opera *Aida* by Verdi and the idea of a burning immortal woman reputedly from Zulu myth. We have to look no

further than Boadicea and the 'iron lady' for women with superior feminine powers. We may give a reference here to Simon Shepherd's "Amazons and Warrior women". 24. Shepherd is a gay male critic who has worked in male/female stereotyping. He identified warrior women in the literature of the seventeenth century - the marshall Britomart, and her lookalike Bradamante; Radigund, of the 'faire visage' whose fighting overturned the laws of chivalry because 'like a greedy Beare' she refused to remain obeisant to men; the sword wielding Artegall and, of course, Boadicea (Bunduca). There were also fighting women named Gwendolen, Martia, Emmilen and most famous of all, the dreadful Angela. Amazons were supposedly hyperactive sexually; the reason, Simon Shepherd explains in this most intriguing study, these one-breasted seventeenth century WRACs set up single gender constructs was because they could not attract men.

The derivation of the stone pillars of the city is, arguably, from the fabled city of Zimbabwe. The lost ruins of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) were reputed to have been evidence of a traditional people, who in an ancient past had reared a civilisation in that country and the most important among the ruins were the Zimbabwe remains in Mashonaland where an irregular enclosure measuring approximately three hundred and fifty metres in circumference with massive dry stone walls some ten metres high and four metres thick, known as the "Elliptical Temple" but in fact a large stone kraal, was built. On a nearby hill an Acropolis stood a hundred metres above the surrounding country, and it was reputed to have been fortified as a citadel with a maze of huge walls and crenellations following the contours of the mountainside. There were also, according to the legend, other remains, below, named the "Valley Ruins" which were thought to date back to the times of the Sabeans and the Phoenicians. Who had built these lost ruins and massive temples and fortresses? Haggard's answer to this intriguing question was that they were the evidence of a lost civilisation which worshipped the Nature gods, and the legends and myths about these venerated sites were the ones which Haggard took for the setting of 'King Solomon's Mines'.

Following their collaboration on 'The World's Desire', Haggard and Lang's friendship continued. They often met at the Savile Club and went away on bonhomous trips together and entertained each other at their respective homes. When the two writers travelled abroad they were separated but this, arguably, gave added piquancy to their reunions.

The dedications which romance writers make to their homosocial friends are further evidence of homocentric trends. Others besides, in literature, have dedicated their publications to someone else, of course. The act of dedication of a work to another has an ill documented background in the annals of English Literature. It was, however, a practice for writers in the Renaissance to dedicate work to an influential or aristocratic person in the hope of material reward or financial benefit.

Sir Philip Sidney was the dedicatee of his school friend Sir Fulke Greville's "Treatise on Monarchy" published in 1670, which work he claims had been "Written in his Youth, and familiar exercise with Sir Philip Sidney," to cite one Elizabethan example. 25. Spenser dedicated

his 'Shepherd's Calendar' to Sidney also.

The precursors of these dedications are numerous. Tennyson, bewailing the loss of Arthur Hallam as the heroic leader blazoned in glory, dedicated *In Memoriam* to his memory. The poem envisages a spiritually gifted man who, "moving up from high to higher, / Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope / The Pillar of a world's desire". 26. The title of Haggard and Lang's novel is derived from this literary source dedicated to a male bonding. Their reference to such a preeminently passionate homosocial work clearly sets the tone for the kind of novel they wish to write together.

Together Haggard and Lang dedicated "The World's Desire" to Sir W B Richmond A R A who was a fellow artist at the Royal Academy. Buchan dedicates his adventure romance to Lionel Phillips with the line: 'But in you I think the boy is not over'. While Buchan's dedication is only evocative of the boy in a man and the continuation of that perennial idea of games men play; boyishness in one's desire to play heroes and read adventures, so Lang's dedication to a friend, is an attempt to gain his love and admiration. The coolness of Sir W B Richmond's response to the original request to be a dedicatee suggests a fear of coming out into the open about his sexual proclivities, the danger of which Lang and Haggard are constantly trying to circumvent. All grist to the mill for chaps engaged in double writing on the very edge of respectability and providing for a voyeuristic public.

Haggard dedicated his novel, "King Solomon's Mines", to all the big and little boys who read it, drawing attention, thereby, to its readership; boys with men looking over their shoulder; the boyhood of many a repressed Victorian schoolboy sexually heightened by delighting in prurience.

Henley's preface to "Lyra Heroica" 27. includes the explanation that: "This book of verse for boys is, I believe, the first of its kind in English. " Henley, who salutes Oscar Wilde, the best known of all literary pederasts, as a "scholar and a gentleman", 28. defines its intended readers; boys rather than men. This may appear spurious, but Henley is the most determined of the homosexual writers. His earnest friendships are made, and passionate arguments unfold, with people as diverse as Wilde, Stevenson, Haggard, Lang and Kipling. He employs, suggestively, the notorious homophile, Ross on his journal, 'The Scots Observer' to help him escape from his family.

Andrew Lang dedicated to Haggard a collection of essays, "In the Wrong Paradise", which recalls the pleasure of boy-hood and suggests the desire to return to that state of innocence where sexual escapades are more common and, perhaps more charming: "Dear Rider Haggard, I have asked you to let me put your name here, that I might have the opportunity of saying how much pleasure I owe to your romances. They make one a boy again while one is reading them." In a characteristic remark, Lang in his dedication to Haggard attempts to explain: "We are all savages under our white skins, but you alone recall to us the delights and terrors of the world's nonage."

In the sequel to "King Solomon's Mines", "Allan Quatermain", published in 1887, Haggard dedicated the book to:

"...my son Arthur John Haggard in the hope that in days to come he, and many other boys whom I shall never know, may in the acts and thoughts of Allan Quatermain and his companions, as herein recorded, find something to help him and them to reach to what, with Sir Henry Curtis, I hold to be the highest rank whereto we can attain - the state and dignity of an English gentleman."

The name which he gave his son, "Jock", was his pseudonym for Arthur, the renowned king of fable; and by his dedication to those boys, arguably including Lang, (who contributed an overtly martial, hyper-masculine poem to the novel) who became his sons by reading it, he anticipated they might discover something socially uplifting enough to help them in their journey to become little gentlemen. 29.

Questions remain: why did the authors in question dedicate; to whom were the books dedicated, and who so lovingly? In an effusive tribute written to please a 'homosocialist' Rudyard Kipling dedicated "Barrack Room Ballads" to Wolcott Balestier 30. in embarrassing verses which previously appeared in Henley's paper on 27th. December, 1890, and, on the same day in "St. James's Gazette". The title in Balestier's lifetime was "The Blind Bug" and in the "Barrack Room Ballads" version the last three stanzas have been changed as a tribute to Balestier; a tribute to the man he loved.

Stevenson hotly dedicated "Treasure Island" to "S L O, an American gentleman, in accordance with whose classic taste the following narrative has been designed, it is now, in return for numerous delightful hours, and with the kindest wishes, dedicated by his affectionate friend the author." One wonders what the numerous delightful hours entailed. The dedications were surely an attempt to capture the attention, respect, and admiration of the other and were part of that doubleness of life which collaborators knew and felt for each other in the deepest moments of their cherished collaboration.

It was a sense of privilege, patronage, clubland friendships and homoeroticism which permeated their writing. Patronage has always been a dominant social force in British life. In the nineteenth century it could extend from a means of obtaining employment in the government and the armed forces - jobs for the boys - through to the bestowal of honours and the provision of relief to the middle and upper classes.

The word 'patronage' is used in the OED sense of "the action of a patron in bestowing influential support, favour, encouragement or countenance to a person". It is in this sense that we use it in the context of male literary culture, where it is used as a means of obtaining favour - dedicating works to a superior or more influential patron, which relationship can lead to the promotion of one's literary cause or advance one's chances of publication, and the resultant

sales of books. The word is used in the sense of the protection given by a Lord High Admiral or as in the extremely aristocratic case of the Lord Chamberlain's patronage of Shakespeare.

Ben'Johnson, too, who, in his relation with his patrons, was watching for a partly aristocratic milieu in which to operate. He used the aristocratic, and academic worlds, the field of medicine, as a consultant with younger people to further his ambi-tions.

The full scenario of patronage does not cease with the triumph of print, yet the notion of patronage continues as a minor script culture into the age of print. Yet it did bring about new kinds of patronage, especially State patronage, for example, licences, stipends, and suppliers to royalty etc.

John Donne, too, who in his middle years, after overcoming the shock and scandal occasioned by his ravishing of his employer's sixteen-year-old niece, and looking for employment, enters the church, emerges as a star preacher, becomes a journeyman, takes an oath of allegiance and subservience to the Virginia Company where he thrives. His attempts to look for patrons for his work result in two dedications to Sir Robert Jury, one element of which was the looking to him, through personal wants and needs, as a patron.

"It's a good British feeling to try and raise your family a little," was how Mr Vincey in George Eliot's "Middlemarch" described the emotion aroused by the use of patronage which united some families in its service. Yet, not all sections of society were involved, and frequent charges of nepotism were hard to refute. Some, like Dickens, were well aware of the social reforms necessary to obviate a system based on friendships, alliances and patronage rather like a vast outdoor relief system run by the Cheeryble brothers.

There was an elaborate Edwardian convention of flowery and extravagant dedications. Yet, there is a contrast to be seen in Joseph Conrad who, in a complicated dedication, which has to do with Conrad's social background as an erotic writer whose bewildering courtesies can break out enormously from his Polish ethnic cultural heritage, is deeply penetrated by French culture. 31.

F R Leavis was an eminent critic who perceived Conrad as a 'cosmopolitan of French culture', and an even more eminent critic, Hugh Walpole, came to the conclusion that he was unmistakably 'under the influence of the style of the author of Madame Bovary' (Flaubert) particularly in *Almayer's Folly*. However, since the 1960s Conrad has been increasingly seen as having a 'double image' and a 'dual identity', both Polish and English. This concept has been repeatedly underscored by, amongst others, R D Cunninghame Graham in a book on Stephen Crane and his relations with Conrad and by A Cedric Watts in "A Preface to Conrad" where the idea of a double identity is again raised.

Although Conrad claimed to be 'un ecrivain idiomatique en anglais', despite the full-scale attempts which Conrad made to acquire an idiomatic English prose this contention, as Yves

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