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Parnassian Cosmopolitanism: Transnationalism and Poetic Form

When, in the 1870s and 1880s, the fashion for medieval French verse forms in English poetry resulted in an influx of villanelles, rondeaux, triolets, and other fixed forms, there was often great suspicion among commentators about these immigrant arrivals. Indeed, the lack of attention in more recent years to this prominent moment in Victorian poetic history suggests a continued sense of it as a strange excrescence. There has been some study of the individual writers who contributed (centrally or peripherally) to the vogue,¹ but in general those constructing broader narratives of nineteenth-century English poetry dismiss it as a prosodic workshop or ignore it altogether. It would be safe to say it has not generally been considered relevant to the story of the modernization of poetry. Yet, if we are interested in literary history is it not the numerous embarrassing poems that most require our attention, and are potentially the more revealing of English culture, than the few canonical works that transcend their own time and place? The Parnassian vogue was a larger and more prominent feature within British poetry than is usually acknowledged, and should be visible within our literary histories.² This essay is particularly interested in the vogue as a case study in cosmopolitan poetics.³ What kind of transnational politics and aesthetics were played out in that fashion for French ‘Parnassian’ poetic forms in English poetry of the 1870s and 80s? ‘The “big” poems of Europe’ in Victorian literature have received welcome scholarly attention in recent years,⁴ but what about the small, minor, and sometimes tiny, poems of Europe? English Parnassianism sits at a juncture between scholarship on Victorian cosmopolitan poetics and the newly burgeoning field of scholarship on fin-de-siècle cosmopolitan poetics.⁵ Lost to some extent between both fields, it is nonetheless a landmark in the history of Victorian poetry’s attempt to reach beyond national boundaries to remake itself. Ultimately, I argue that this cosmopolitan poetics brings a tangible politics into the heart of this ‘art for art’s sake’ experiment with form.

The name of the vogue is a reference to the nineteenth-century French journal, *Le Parnasse contemporain* which, issued in 1860s and 70s, inspired the English revival.

Indeed, many English Parnassian poems were translations of works by the writers published in the journal, which notably included Charles Leconte de Lisle, Théodore de Banville, Sully Prudhomme, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Paul Verlaine. The profile of the English Parnassian movement has been outlined by others, so I won't repeat that narrative here, although I will introduce something of the poetic context.⁶ The 1860s and 1870s saw a battle over form between the traditional and tired, but established, forms of English verse and the need for a new formal energy. The new formal energy came in various guises, but it must be recognized that the revival of Parnassian forms was in this sense a modernizing impulse at this time, as much as was Hopkins's sprung rhythm, and Swinburne's return to Sapphic meters. It is not uncommon to read poems such as John Payne's 'Ballade' (included in William Davenport Adam's 1878 selection of Parnassian verse and Gleeson White's 1887 Parnassian anthology too) which asks precisely why poets are turning to poetic forms of the past and replies that it is because 'our task is yet undone'. Some quotation from this poem will serve to give a flavour of poetry characteristic of the vogue. Stanza one begins:

What do we here who, with reverted eyes,
Turn back our longing from the modern air
To the dim gold of long-evanished skies,
When other songs in other mouths were fair?⁷

Stanza three elaborates:

Songs have we sung, and many melodies
Have from our lips had issue rich and rare;
But never yet the conquering chant did rise,
That should ascend the very heaven's stair,
To rescue life from anguish and despair.
Often and again, drunk with delight of lays,
'Lo!' have we cried, 'this is the golden one
That shall deliver us!' – Alas! Hope's rays
Die in the distance, and Life's sadness stays.
Why, but because our task is yet undone?

There is a strong sense that lyric poetry is failing ('never yet the conquering chant did rise') and needs fresh inspiration – and this is found here through the backward glance.⁸

While A. C. Swinburne, Christina Rossetti, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote occasionally and memorably in Parnassian forms, the above poem by Payne is more typical of the plethora of poems published during the Parnassian revival: a vogue which had at its heart short forms written by 'minor' poets. Included in the anthologies that represented the movement there is some extremely compelling writing by, for example, May Probyn (see her Villanelle; White, p. 263), Emily Pfeiffer (e.g. 'A Ballade of the Thunder-See'; White, p. 48), and A. Mary F. Robinson (whose *Italian Garden* contained more than a few French flowers).⁹ However, the poets most invested in shaping the movement as a movement were a small group containing at its heart Austin Dobson, John Payne, Edmund Gosse, and Andrew Lang. By contrast, A. Mary F. Robinson, for example, was somewhat aloof from their earnest cataloguing in her preference for mixing influences into a pan-European identity.¹⁰ Robinson's tongue-in-cheek chiding of Vernon Lee – in French ballade form – for her obsession with 'forgotten tunes' might also serve as a comment on the Parnassian collectors (White, p. 52). The impetus for the vogue might be best understood through Edmund Gosse's 'A Plea for Certain Exotic Forms of Verse' (1877): the most influential defence of Parnassian forms in the period in its call for strict, fixed forms to rectify the excesses of formless, improvised blank verse that dominated the mid-century. His condemnation of 'purely spontaneous and untutored expression' is roused particularly by the Spasmodics and 'The invertebrate rhapsodies of Sydney Dobell'.¹¹ Austin Dobson also notes that the Parnassian forms 'add a new charm of buoyancy, -- a lyric freshness, -- to amatory and familiar verse, already too much condemned to faded measures and out-worn cadences'.¹² Yet this route toward poetic modernization brought with it a politics of nationhood, which was an important factor in the reception of its innovations. Certainly, a suspicion of things 'foreign' was a factor in the dismissal of the Parnassian revival, and it is this play of issues of nationhood and transnational identity that I want to explore.

France

The transnationalism of the vogue worked in opposition to a strong nationalist politics of form in English poetry which believed in the more ‘natural’ rhythms of native forms and saw the French forms as intricate and ‘artificial’. A substantial anonymous article in *The Athenaeum* of 1888, titled ‘Artificial Forms of Verse’, encapsulates something of this opposition in its combined review of E. Clarence Stedman’s recently revised edition of *Victorian Poets*, and Gleeson White’s 1887 collection of Parnassian poems, *Ballades and Rondeaux, Chants Royal, Sestinas, Villanelles, &c.* The reviewer notes that Stedman’s revised, and updated, edition contains a supplementary chapter on England’s contemporary poetry, railing against what Stedman calls ‘debonaire verse’: the Parnassian verse represented in Gleeson White’s collection. The recent vogue for Parnassian poetry, according to Stedman, represents a degradation of ‘the noblest imaginative literature of any race or tongue’.¹³ Such fury at the poetic miscegenation represented by the Parnassian poets is certainly couched in terms of nationalist politics. Stedman’s ideal of English poetry, accepted by this reviewer, seems to be one that aims at sincerity, and to such an end there is ‘danger in using any meters save those of the simplest kind’ (p. 13). The reviewer ends by noting that England has turned to an American, in the figure of Stedman, to chronicle its verse – and this is pleasing evidence ‘that the bonds of sympathy between the two countries are tightening every day’ (p. 15).

Where, then, does this leave English poetry’s relationship with France? This reviewer makes some attempt to counter Stedman’s criticism of contemporary poetry for its emasculation of English poetic heroism and imagination by French forms. She or he argues that one would hardly expect heroism and imagination to be the major concerns of Parnassian poetry, in which it is appropriate for the self-conscious artifice of the work to be foregrounded. Yet, the reviewer’s defence of White’s volume is weak, and his or her implicit position is with Stedman on the virtues of ‘English’ poetry. How might English Parnassianism be reconsidered through the lens of cosmopolitanism rather than through this dominant narrative of cultural miscegenation? Before starting to answer that question, it is important to note how Stedman’s conception of English poetry remains

dominant in setting the remit for recent explorations of English national identity in poetic form of the nineteenth century. While, scholars have explored the association of poetic meters with health, order and English national identity,¹⁴ the geographical politics of the turn to France by the English Parnassians needs to be recognized as a challenge to that narrative of English culture, as well as an important moment in the narrative of prosody and English national identity. Parnassianism represents an alternative to the healthy, wholesome and uplifting Englishness that appears in much of the writing on prosody of the period: a deliberate turn away from jingoistic nationalism to find a voice that was, in spite of its often anodyne content, baroque, subversive and cosmopolitan. Decadent poets, after all, loved Parnassian forms for this reason.¹⁵ The forms were associated with the ‘other’: complex rather than simple, crafted rather than spontaneous, sculptural rather than songlike – a formal embodiment (however unlikely it seems to our modern eyes) of the perversion of French culture.

It is this alternative narrative I want to pursue, and it is the tension between the meters of English nationalism and the forms of French subversion – between English *ballad* and the French *ballade*, as one might put it in shorthand -- that interests me. Edmund Gosse wrote in his essay introducing the English Parnassian forms that: ‘the ballade made classic by Deschamps and Villon has nothing whatever in common with the romances sung by wandering minstrels [...] and known to us from time immemorial as *ballads*’ (p. 66). While the latter represent a ‘vital and stirring form of poetry’, ‘wholly artless and spontaneous’, the French form is intensely artful: ‘a precious and delicate work of art’ (p. 66). The difference is crucially one of structure. The English ballad form is a simple and flexible container for what is often narrative-led poetry, frequently in quatrains with a rhyme at the end of lines two and four. The French *ballade*, on the other hand, is a fixed structure of three stanzas followed by a shorter, concluding, envoy. The tighter rhyme scheme demands ababbcbc in each octave and bcbc in the envoy. The same refrain forms the final line of every stanza. The form makes strict demands within this scheme as no word used as a rhyming word can be used again for that purpose within the poem. Also, the octaves must not break down into smaller conceptual units, or end up as two quatrains conjoined, but must carry the sense over the whole arc of the stanza. Moreover, strictly

speaking, the envoy addresses the patron of the poet ('Prince!', 'Princess!', or 'Sire!').¹⁶ While the English ballad is flexible, 'natural' and accommodating of the voice, the French ballade is a highly stylized construction. They were different forms with substantially different politics.¹⁷

Indeed, the publication of Gleeson White's 1887 collection was itself designed to take part in and capitalize on a growing controversy around the national identity of English poetry. Encouraged and published by William Sharp as part of his 'The Canterbury Poets' series, it was juxtaposed with a volume of English ballads that Sharp added to the series the following year. Indeed, in the 'Dedicatory Introduction' to *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy* of 1888 Sharp states, 'we are all tired of pseudo-classicism, pseudo-medievalism, pseudo-aestheticism'.¹⁸ The charge of 'pseudo' here echoes the charge most commonly levelled against Parnassian poetry at the time of its composition: that of being 'artificial'.¹⁹ Of course, the high frequency of repetition required by the fixed forms was more laboured in English than in French because English does not have, for example, the gendered endings that create natural opportunities for rhyme.²⁰ Within reviews of the period – particularly those of Gleeson White's retrospective summary volume - the vogue was often seen to have failed because the forms failed to 'naturalize'. In his long review, Cosmo Monkhouse writes that 'there is not much promise in the future for the expansion of this French colony of forms'. The vogue:

will leave its mark on English literature for some time to come. [...] It has done something to raise the technical standard of verse, and it has enriched our literature with many beautiful things; but the thorough naturalisation of these forms, certainly of most of them, in their exact French shape is not to be expected. (p. 246)

Christina Rossetti and Swinburne's development of an English version of the rondeau (the 'roundel') might be the exception that proves the rule, and while Monkhouse is keen to recognise Swinburne's importance, his pessimism about the assimilation of immigrant forms is striking. Monkhouse claims that even Shakespeare's 'English' sonnet failed to truly naturalize the Italian or Petrarchan version:

Perhaps this movement will end in the invention and adoption of some modification of the ballade and the rondeau better suited to English thoughts and English words than the French forms. Perhaps Mr. Swinburne's 'roundel' [...] will strike root. [...] But if he fails in this, it need be no reason for wonder, when we remember that even Shakspeare [sic] failed to make his sonnet grow. (p. 247)

Monkhouse's language of colonialization and naturalization indicates something of the charged vocabulary of nationhood that is common in the discussion of the Parnassian vogue in the 1880s.

There is no doubt that in the 1870s English attitudes towards France had started to soften after France's defeat by Prussia, yet the long association of French culture with decadence, degeneration and the salacious continued to resonate strongly across the rest of the century. This accounts for some of the vitriol against the English Parnassian movement in the popular press, where suspicion and resentment of all things French persisted. Reviews of the period often approach the 'foreign' Parnassian forms through a vocabulary that we would now think of as orientalisising in its designation of them, whether for praise or blame, as 'exotic'; and indeed, the specificity of the origins of these forms is largely glossed over by reviewers with the assumption that they all come from 'old France'. In fact, as Gleeson White recognized in his introduction to the volume, a form such as the pantoum is Malaysian, albeit that it came into English poetry through the influence of French poetry in the nineteenth century. For all the popular suspicion about this influx of foreign forms, those who wrote the poems often had strong personal affiliations with France, whether through family heritage, research, or bilingualism.²¹ This is true for Swinburne (whose parents had French heritage), for A. Mary F. Robinson (who didn't move to France until 1888, but was earlier educated in Brussels), as well as Dobson (whose father was of French descent, and who was educated for a while in Strasbourg) and Gosse (whose strong critical interest in France resulted in several book-length studies).²² All of the above created the perfect conditions for a turn to France to represent a cosmopolitanism that was connected to a rebellion against what were seen

towards the end of the century as not just tired, but also restrictive and morally staid, themes and forms of English culture.

To explore what it might mean for Parnassianism to offer a cosmopolitan poetics, it will help to go back to the comparison between the English ballad and the French ballade introduced above. If the ballad is expressive of national politics and national communities, then the ballade and the other Parnassian forms in English literature are, I will argue, a counter-expression not just of Francophilia but of international community. The ballad was obsessively collected, reiterated and idealized within nineteenth century literary culture as a repository of a national culture: ‘a legitimating point of origin for all consequent national literature’; and ‘a direct reflection of an imagined and idealized British community’.²³ Of course, the ballad was pre-eminently also a place to explore the fault lines within that national culture -- with the Scottish and English ballad competing over ideas of national identity; Swinburne’s border ballads enacting this tussle from the perspective of a self-proclaimed Northumberland border dweller;²⁴ and W. B. Yeats making the ballad a focus of the community that constitutes his particular brand of Celticism – but this only confirmed its role in relation to concerns around national identity.²⁵

It is in this context that the cosmopolitan potential of the French ballade in English literature can be recognized – offering a vehicle for the formation of transnational identity and an alternative to sacred nationalisms. While the ballad draws community around the idea of nationhood, the ballade finds similarity among difference in a transnational community. Or to put it another way: the ballad draws a community of like things while the ballade, and the Parnassian revival more generally, unite unlike things. One of the most obvious places to see this at work is in the plethora of English Parnassian poems that are translations of French sources. François Villon’s ‘Le Testament’ (lines 978-989), for example, was translated by D. G. Rossetti, Swinburne, and John Payne, creating a multiple echo of medieval France within nineteenth-century English. These translations enact a kind of cultural cosmopolitanism without drawing attention to their status as translations.²⁶ Yet, there is also a type of cosmopolitan identity articulated

simply at the level of the borrowing of form. After all, it is significant that Parnassian forms can travel between different languages more easily than content. The forms are intricate enough that they are easily recognizable across languages (even with little foreign language proficiency), and so can create a shared bond whatever the specificity of content.

More than this, though, in what follows I want to consider the multiple forms of insistent repetition that are characteristic of the Parnassian forms as themselves enabling, when expressed through the English language, something we might think of as a cosmopolitan aesthetic. One of the difficulties in translating these forms into English is, as noted earlier, the greater difficulty in finding rhyme words in English than in French; this tension makes the tight rhyme schemes of Parnassian forms a very prominent characteristic within English poetry. Yet one of the characteristics of these insistent rhyme schemes is to repeatedly draw attention to the similarity found between different lexical elements: they assert community through difference. Take, for example, the first two poems of Andrew Lang's *Ballades in Blue China* (1877) – a central volume of the English Parnassian vogue. The first poem of the volume -- 'Ballade to Theocritus, In Winter' -- acts as a segue from modern-day London back to an idealized lyric past. Not, it should be noted, the troubadour past of medieval France, but that of ancient Greece (which was another key point of reference for French Parnassian poets too). A past invoked as a separate world of 'blue Sicilian sea' to which the poet can retreat when the wild 'northern winds' are blowing:

Ah! Leave the smoke, the wealth, the roar
Of London, and the bustling street,
For still, by the Sicilian shore,
The murmur of the Muse is sweet.
Still, still, the suns of summer greet
The mountain-grave of Helikê,
And shepherds still their songs repeat
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea.²⁷

These opening lines reconcile through rhyme the opposition between the ‘roar’ of modern Victorian London with its ‘bustling street’, and the still ‘Sicilian shore’ where the murmur of the muse is sweet’. The gap between the two worlds (different in place and time) is bridged through form. Later on, ‘Helikê’ is rhymed with ‘sea’, giving a steer to the English pronunciation of this Greek name (‘Helikey’). If we are to see the formal properties of densely patterned rhyme schemes being used to enable a cosmopolitan poetics it might be in this bridging of different geographical and linguistic worlds which finds similarity within difference.

The second poem in the volume continues this bridging of different times and places in taking as its subject London’s ‘Cleopatra’s needle’ monument. This ancient Egyptian obelisk was transported to the Victoria Embankment in London in 1877: the same year Lang’s book was published, and the same year Gosse’s defence of Parnassian poetry anchored the Parnassian revival in English culture. As a transnational transplant and a resurrection of a form from a distant past the monument represents something analogous to the revival of medieval French forms in London in Lang’s own book. To quote just the second stanza:

Behold, the hieroglyphs are dumb
That once were read of him that ran
When seistron, cymbal, trump, and drum
Wild music of the Bull began;
When through the chanting priestly clan
Walk’d Ramses and the high sun kiss’d
This stone, with blessing scored and ban –
This monument in London mist. (p. 17)

The rhymes conjoin ‘dumb’ and ‘drum’ to emphasize that the hieroglyphs not understood by passing Londoners used to speak with the fanfare of the ‘drum’ that hailed their ritual meaning long ago. ‘Now’ and ‘then’ – and London and Egypt – are simultaneously opposed but also united by rhyme, which draws them together through this sonic echo. Indeed, one might say that this poem also bridges the climactic differences that symbolize these two temporally and geographically distinct worlds drawing together through rhyme

the stone that was once ‘sun kiss’d’, but now in ‘London mist’. The envoy likens the monument to the needle of a sundial, noting that its long shadow tells of the long temporal history it brings to London. Both poems, then, set up the reader for the temporal and geographical conjunctions English Parnassian practice represents, and implicitly for the dual locus of the volume in contemporary England and ancient France.

It bolsters and complicates this argument to attend to the discussion on differences between French and English rhyming conventions that accompanied the vogue. Dobson notes that in French rhyme it is acceptable to rhyme words of exactly the same sound and spelling if the meaning is different. Dobson notes that this is not admissible in English. Dobson does however suggest a compromise for English Parnassianism that would allow a rhyme between, say, ‘hail’ and ‘hale’: words that sound the same but have different spellings as well as meanings (Dobson, ‘A Note on Some Foreign Forms of Verse’, pp. 348-9). What is interesting about this rather dry debate on poetic technique is that it creates a formal politics to English rhyme that insists on the necessity of difference. Rhyme in English must form a connection between two *unlike* things – a rhetorical assertion of similarity within difference. It is difficult not to acknowledge the potential of this within a transnational poetic practice. This poetics presents the possibility – exactly as it does in the poems by Lang above -- of a commonality that neither denies difference nor asserts identity. This formal structure, then, offers the potential for a model of cosmopolitanism that neither fetishizes otherness nor fails to recognize it.

Of course, rhyme is hardly an original contribution to English poetics in the 1870s, and lyric as a genre offered many affordances (to invoke Caroline Levine’s way of thinking about form)²⁸ for figuring the collective independent of, and prior to, this particular lyric vogue. Yet the Parnassian forms do bring an insistent rhymic patterning to the fore in a way that is part of the distinctive presence of the vogue – and which is, ultimately, a result of their French genealogy. This is not only a characteristic feature of the forms, but one on which much attention was focussed, whether for praise or blame of the movement (Gosse praised the ‘dignity and service of rhyme’ [p. 55], while others, cited earlier, complained that such forms were mechanical and artificial). The refrain of the English

ballad asserts a community of likeness insofar as it invokes a unified chorus of voices, singing as one. Yet the French forms tend to offer a more contrapuntal movement, such as voices singing in a round. Is it possible, then, that there might be structures offered at the level of form in the ballad that speak to modes of unitary identity, while the Parnassian forms offer rhetorical strategies more suitable, in their complexity and intricacy, for drawing attention more to commonality within difference? It adds weight to such an idea to note that while the ballad was being discussed in relation to issues of national boundaries and seemed to have a particular potential for representing the unity of a community, Parnassian forms were being seen at the time to offer a formal vehicle for the exploration of sameness and difference. As Edmund Gosse notes: in the refrain of the rondel, ‘the charm and force of the whole mainly depended on the skilful introduction of these thrice-repeated words, with a delicate nuance and change of meaning in each case’ (p. 57). Andrew Lang also notes that ‘In the rondel, as in the rondeau and the ballade, all the art is to bring in the refrain [...] each time with novel effect and with fresh light cast on the central idea’.²⁹ Frequent exact lexical repetition within these condensed and intense Parnassian forms highlights and exaggerates the capacity for the same word to signify differently on each repetition. For example the repetition of the word ‘death’ as a refrain in D. G Rossetti’s translation of Villon in French rondeau form is given a different colour each time by the tonal implications of the punctuation used to inflect it: ‘Death’; ‘Death?’, and ‘Death!’.³⁰ The effect of French Parnassian forms in English, then, is not only to draw attention to sameness within difference, but also to highlight difference in sameness -- both affordances that provide useful foundations for a cosmopolitan poetics.

South-East Asia

While it is essential to think about the English Parnassian vogue in relation to a transnational connection between Britain and France, any consideration of its cosmopolitan poetic practice must push beyond this geographically close literary alliance. It will importantly extend our sense of the movement if we recognize that it reflected not just a European influence but also the broader colonial and global economic context in

which the two countries were enmeshed. I noted earlier that the Pantoum is considered a Parnassian form by the English but was sourced from what is now Malaysia. The form is generally considered to have been brought into English verse via France in the nineteenth century. Victor Hugo included a French version of the form in *Les Orientales* of 1829, and it became a form popular with some later Parnassian poets -- perhaps most notably Leconte de Lisle (Gleeson White, p. lvii.). However, the British were the Western presence in Malaya for most of the nineteenth century and the form was earlier brought into the west by a British writer, William Marsden, in 1812 through his *A Grammar of the Malayan Language*.³¹ Both Britain and France had strong interests in south-east Asia, particularly as colonial presences in Indochina and economically in China, and this joint global interest is registered in the Parnassian vogue. What follows will argue for the importance of the engagement with much more distant cultures through, or in combination with, French culture in the English Parnassian vogue -- and for Imperial connections with south-East Asia, particularly, being an inextricable and important part of the transnational poetics of English Parnassianism.

Take, for example, Austin Dobson's *Proverbs in Porcelain* (1877) -- another of the central volumes of the movement, often cited as one of its originators. The 'Prologue' sets a frame for the titular group of six poems in the book in which the conversation of two friends talking by the fireside turns to "“crocks” and plates”:

*Then I produce my Prize, in truth –
Six groups in SÈVRES, fresh as youth,
And rare as Love. You pause, you wonder,
(Pretend to doubt the marks, forsooth!)*

*And so we fall to why and how
The fragile figures smile and bow;
Divine, at length, the fable under
Thus grew the “Scenes” that follow now.*³²

Each poem emerges as an ekphrastic response to one of the porcelain groupings of figures so prized by the host. It is important that the china statues are 'in SÈVRES' – a

reference to the manufacture nationale de Sèvres: one of the most renowned European porcelain manufacturies (located in France) that had been making figurines, vases, crockery and other objects since the eighteenth century. The fame of France in this field of the plastic arts is clearly important to the volume and its aesthetic and cultural conception, but is it too fantastical to imagine that there is implicitly also a reference to south-east Asia carried along in the centrality of fine china to this ekphrastic Parnassian poetics?

This seems plausible if we return to Andrew Lang's 1880 *Ballades in Blue China*, which also equates Parnassian poetry with moulded porcelain and whose titular poem is a meditation on ancient blue china passed down (as the refrain has it) from 'the reign of Emperor Hwang'. However much Dobson associated fine porcelain with France, its long origins are in East Asia (porcelain often still being referred to as china), and this volume makes explicit something implicit in English Parnassianism: a transnationalism in which France and 'the orient' are layered -- something already apparent in that orientalisng reception of the French forms. Lang's translations of Villon in this volume sit explicitly within a frame of ancient China creating a triple-layer cosmopolitan poetics. Indeed, in this sense, Lang's volume (and I think, Dobson's, implicitly) echoes a layering of England, its European neighbours, and China that was a familiar part of domestic life for many at the time through the fashion for the 'crock' manufactured in England by Spode. Chinamania in this period is more usually read with reference to Spode's Chinese willow pattern, but what I want to draw attention to here is something with a rather different cosmopolitan potential. Introduced in 1816, their 'Italian' pattern domestic tableware, for example, was a best-seller across the rest of the nineteenth century. It featured scenes from old Italy in a blue and white design that evoked Chinese porcelain both implicitly through its colour but also explicitly through its use of a border around the Italian scenes that was a direct copy of a pattern featured on Chinese export crockery in the eighteenth century.³³ Lang and Dobson's Parnassian poetry does something similar in layering the 'oriental' and the European, and when they explicitly align Parnassian poetry with 'crock', Spode's Italian seems a particularly relevant comparison. At the heart of the Parnassian vogue, then, is not only a multilayered cosmopolitan poetics but also an

assertion of a continuum between the literary art and the ceramic one.

What did this bring to English Parnassianism in terms of a consideration of poetic form? Well, in the above references it brings an equation of lyric poetry not with ethereal song, but with material forms. Like the French Parnassian comparison of poems with gemstones, Dobson's ekphrastic trope of poems as "'crocks" and plates' and figurines, likens poetry to a material rather than aural form (for all that song is evoked in some poems such as 'The Song out of Season') – a materiality echoed by Andrew Lang's 1880 meditation in porcelain. Unlike the gemstone, though, porcelain, is a sculpted and moulded form: a beauty that is man-made rather than natural. This is perhaps fitting for a style that in the English language was considered more 'artificial' in its effect.³⁴ What does it mean to link English lyric with crockery rather than (or at least, in addition to) birdsong at this time? It is worth noting first of all that Parnassian poems are considered 'lyric' in genre by key commentators: whether by Adams in his 1878 *Latter-Day Lyrics*, or by Lang in his essay on the vogue in which he terms the Parnassians 'lyric poet[s]' (p. 66). Indeed, one might argue for Parnassian poems as inherently preserving the quality of orality embedded in their history as song forms. In a treatise enormously influential for English Parnassian poets, the French poet and critic, Théodore De Banville, commented that poetry without the connection with song is dead: a purely material thing.³⁵ De Banville drew, after all, from Theophile Gautier's belief in the primacy of sound over sense – the music or colour of words rather than their semantic value – and believed that 'il n'y a pas de poésie et de vers en dehors du chant. Tous les vers sont destinés à être chantés et n'existent qu'à cette condition' (p. 3).³⁶ Yet if he seems to protest too much, it is because he lives in an age in which this idea is being roundly challenged, as he implicitly goes on to admit: 'Ce n'est que par une fiction et par une convention des âges de décadence qu'on admet comme poèmes des ouvrages destinés à être lus et non à être chantés' (p. 3).³⁷

Yet it is precisely a material thing that it often became for the English poets. Unlike Gautier, Edmund Gosse opposes it to song and likens it instead to the plastic (physically moulded) arts. He fully acknowledges their origin in song (p. 57), but he sees them as

‘delicate work[s] of art’ rather than spontaneous songs (p. 66). His conception of Parnassian poetry is one particularly likened to sculpture: ‘To make immortal art out of transient feeling, to give the impression of a finite mind infinite expansion, to chisel material beauty out of passing thoughts and emotions, -- this is the labour of the poet’ (p. 53). ‘Every artist in verse’, he asserts, is conscious that his work ‘is in its essence plastic’ (p. 53). This material, tangible plasticity, he sets against something vocal and immaterial: ‘the warblings of poetic improvisation’: ‘the purely spontaneous and untutored expression’ (p. 53). This is a real challenge to the oral/aural identity of nineteenth-century lyric. Indeed, when fashioned in English, the French forms were often accused of killing the wholesome aural energy of English lyric, offering instead a highly wrought and rhetorical form, focused on pattern on the page. No matter how much the Parnassian poems might give the impression of ease and facility in their naivety they are repeatedly contrasted to a Romantic ideal of lyric song. While the ballad is associated with spontaneous song, the ballade is associated with material craft.

Moreover, this new idea of what ‘lyric’ poetry might be connected Parnassian poetry not just with sculpted material forms but with the domestic decorative arts (crockery and interior design particularly), and ‘decoration’ is a key concept for understanding the vogue. Cosmo Monkhouse writes of the ‘close analogy between the art of decoration and the art of “fixed forms”’, and it is the centrality of insistent repetition – which creates stylized pattern – that is chiefly responsible for this feature (p. 246). Crucially, a renewed interest in a decorative element in the arts at this time is linked to the influence of Japanese aesthetics. Arthur Symonds’ essays comment interestingly on the importation of the concept of decoration into fin-de-siècle British painting, writing of Whistler:

of all modern painters he is the only one who completely realized that a picture is part of the decoration of a wall, and of the wall of a modern room. [...] At the present day there is only one country in which the sense of decoration exists, or is allowed to have its way; and it was from the artists of Japan that Whistler learnt the alphabet of decorative painting.³⁸

The recuperation of the decorative element in art connects, here, Japan with the modernisation of Western art. High modernism may have made the idea of art-as-

decoration an anathema in a way that has stuck, but for the preceding generation it was precisely a route to a modern aesthetics: both as a move towards abstraction, and because it was part of the breaking down of the hierarchy between high art, which hung in art galleries, and popular domestic forms of decoration. I will go on to explore both of these claims.

Symons articulates the former clearly in an essay on Aubrey Beardsley. Beardsley is for Symons above all ‘a decorative artist, and not anything else’, and this decorative element is modern because it enables abstraction. Again, crucially for my purposes, it is seen as an influence from Japan:

From almost the very first [...] he set himself to see things as pattern. Taking freely all that the Japanese could give him, that release from the bondage of what we call real things, which comes to one mad from an intense spirituality, to another from a consciousness of material form so intense that it becomes abstract, he made the world over again in his head [...].³⁹

The role of a Japanese aesthetic in a turn-of-the-century revolution in Western visual art has been well documented,⁴⁰ and was seen to bring an aesthetic governed by decorative and formal principles as much as by representational principles.⁴¹ What does it mean, though, to take those principles into poetry? Such a move is usually credited to the experiments of, for example, Ezra Pound with the haiku. However, in turning to disciplined and complex verse patterns, the English Parnassians practiced a detachment and a formalism based on similar principles.⁴² Both are, arguably, part of the same revolt against naturalism, or the modes of representation that had become naturalistic in English literature. If we think about Parnassian poetry’s focus on pattern as moving towards a kind of formalist aesthetic, it is clearly not the minimalist one that modernism imbibed from Japan but a kind of decorative maximalism whose inspiration was also credited to ‘the East’.⁴³

A poem such as John Payne’s villanelle published in Davenport Adam’s anthology (pp. 314-5) raises quite directly a comparison with the haiku not just in terms of the fresh impetus it brings in opposition to native English forms and meters, but also in subject

matter and mode. Like the haiku and the imagist poem, it works by overlaying two different images separated, in this case, temporally. The two seasons are not just juxtaposed but somehow superimposed in order to create what Ezra Pound termed an ‘intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time’.⁴⁴ The two refrains connote mid-winter – ‘The air is white with snow-flakes clinging’ – and spring -- ‘Methinks I hear the woodlark singing’ – and the alternating of both produces the effect of overlay that is continued in content through reference to the appearance of other migratory spring birds (the swallow) and the possibility of the scent of spring flowers. The poem resolves by revealing that these hints of spring in mid-winter are brought not by a seasonal synchronicity but by his ‘lady’ whose voice is birdsong and whose eyes are violets. Of course, the imagist poem would be less likely to resolve the image dialectic in this, or any other, way, but both search for a kind of new poetic energy in similar ways, both enabled by an idea of Japanese aesthetics.

Japan was also seen to provide a model that enabled high aesthetic value and domestic decoration to intertwine. For Symons, Whistler’s *Peacock Room* is the epitome of this trend in the visual arts – what Symons calls ‘a sort of shrine for the lovely picture, *La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine*’ (*From Toulouse-Lautrec to Rodin*, p. 196). For Symons, this modernization of art is not about abandoning taste and quality for the market, but about relocating it. He continues to write of Whistler that ‘When he is greatest [...] he is only more, and not less, decorative’. Prising the concept of decoration away from ‘mere decoration’, he asserts it is a principle that involves ‘no compromise with taste’ – an important signal that the decorative element is re-evaluated within a hierarchy of taste (p. 197). In the period of the second industrial revolution, art’s status in relation to the commodity was a key question. The aesthetes, particularly, were interested in the possibility of art as continuous with the every-day bourgeois domestic environment – and Japan was seen to provide the model for how this might be. Indeed, it is no accident that A. Mary F. Robinson’s *Italian Garden*, with its songs from France and its pan-European identity, is bound in Japanese vellum: a decorative binding loved by the aesthetes and (like the Chinese border to Spode’s crockery) a very literal frame from ‘the East’ for her European cosmopolitanism.

A crucial part of this re-evaluation of the division between decorative and high art was the sense that the Japanese decorative aesthetic has expressive value. And this expressive value was similar to that later attributed to abstraction by the formalists: a means of expression that sat in opposition to the socially- or emotionally-engaged values of a long Romanticism. This is something more commonly thought about in relation to the visual arts, but it is fascinating to see Oscar Wilde reading the English vogue for medieval French poetic forms as part of the same development. In an essay that hides these concerns behind a somewhat nebulous title, 'The English Renaissance of Art' (first delivered as a lecture in New York during Wilde's US tour, on January 9th, 1882), he begins by asserting that all 'great eras' of art have been motivated by 'new technical improvements primarily and specially'. For Wilde, the new artistic technology of his age is 'this love of curious French metres like the Ballade, the Villanelle, the Rondel' (he writes about the 'increased value' of 'elaborate alliterations' and 'curious words and refrains'). The 'value' of this poetry is its material workmanship, which has 'in itself incommunicable and eternal qualities of its own, qualities entirely satisfying to the poetic sense and not needing for their æsthetic effect any lofty intellectual vision, any deep criticism of life or even any passionate human emotion at all'.⁴⁵ The value material workmanship has in and of itself, is, for Wilde, something absorbed from 'the East', and from Japanese culture specifically (p. 184).⁴⁶ While the West 'has been laying on art the intolerable burden of its own intellectual doubts and the spiritual tragedy of its own sorrows', the East, according to Wilde, has preserved a sense of what he calls art's 'primary and pictorial conditions' (p. 184). What he means by this is the expressive capacity of decoration. Echoing Walter Pater's 'The School of Giorgione', he writes: "In its primary aspect a painting has no more spiritual message or meaning than an exquisite fragment of Venetian glass or a blue tile from the wall of Damascus: it is a beautifully coloured surface, nothing more" (p. 185).⁴⁷ This, he claims is how art 'touch[es] the soul' – not through 'metaphysical truths' but through its decorative aspect, which has a sensuous, expressive, immediacy. As with the visual arts, so too, he writes, with poetry, whose primary quality comes not from its subject matter but from its 'handling of rhythmical language' (p. 186). Wilde's discourse on decoration in the visual arts and

poetry leads to something surprisingly like a modernist aesthetics of expressive form. Yet this is not the end of the story. The more surprising pay-off to Wilde's discussion lies not in aesthetic matters but in putting Parnassian poetry at the heart of a socialist politics that is one of the most unlikely frames to be considered today in relation to a poetry that is seen as trenchantly disengaged from society.⁴⁸ In the same essay in which Wilde makes the case for the expressive value of decorative art generally, and Parnassian poetic form specifically, he invokes William Morris in order to assert the socialist potential of such work:

For what is decoration but the worker's expression of joy in his work? And not joy merely—that is a great thing yet not enough—but that opportunity of expressing his own individuality which, as it is the essence of all life, is the source of all art. 'I have tried,' I remember William Morris saying to me once, 'I have tried to make each of my workers an artist, and when I say an artist I mean a man.' (p. 210)

The key to this intervention is the ennobling of the material element in art and of material craft; in another essay Wilde asserts that the difference between decorative art and painting is that 'Decorative art emphasises its material: imaginative art annihilates it' (p. 282). This revaluing of the material in aesthetic terms is a key issue at the end of a century of British history defined by an industrial revolution that created a class structure divided between blue- and white-collar workers: a distinction in key part between those who worked with their hands, and those who didn't. To think about the Parnassian vogue in relation to this socialist reclamation of the nobility of the worker brings an entirely new perspective to current considerations of this period of poetic history – one that merits further investigation.

Importantly for my concerns, this revaluing of the decorative aesthetic of Parnassianism connects it with not only a socialist politics, but also, by extension, a cosmopolitan politics that sees the potential for art to bring people together across nations. Wilde stresses the moral value of decorative art both for the nation and for the global community. He refers to Plato to support his assertion that decorative art created a beautiful environment that would morally uplift its inhabitants (pp. 202-3). More than

this, though, he believes in the possibility for decorative art to create ‘a common intellectual atmosphere between all countries’, which he hopes might assert a brotherhood of man that would if not ensure perpetual peace then at least stop nations coming to blows too easily (p. 198-9). While scholars have explored Wilde’s belief in the power of intersecting literary and cultural traditions to create an affiliation that would transcend race and nation, the English Parnassian vogue has not previously been considered within this context. Yet Wilde encourages us to read it in this way because like the Japanese aesthetic it sought to replicate, it is based not on national sorrows, but on abstracted pattern (p. 184). Crucially, his analysis suggests the vogue was both globally and socially engaged, with its emphasis on decoration taking part in a discourse that ennobled material craft and re-evaluated the worker within an aesthetic hierarchy, as well as offering an abstracted aesthetic language that could transcend national boundaries and concerns.

Conclusion

This essay has been concerned with the English Parnassian vogue as a cosmopolitan poetics: not only as a point of transaction between Britain and France, but also as a mediator for broader cultural contexts that reflect Europe’s global interests at this time. The influence of a Japanese aesthetic on a revolution in the visual arts in this period has been explored extensively, but relatively little consideration has been given to how we might think about this in relation to text prior to modernist poetry. Yet there is plenty of evidence to suggest something poetically equivalent was going on in the Parnassian movement, in which decoration is both foreign and modern. Modern, both because it was reaching toward a type of abstraction or formalism (which we might recognize in spite of modernism’s abhorrence of decoration) in opposition to Romantic sentimentality, and because it was reimagining the role of art in the new age of the commodity. Above all, though, the Parnassian poetics was cosmopolitan in a rich and multiple sense: because it focussed on a sharing of transportable forms across linguistic divisions; because its very forms, when expressed in English, performed an interrogation of the nature of sameness

and difference; and because it mediated the poets' sense of belonging to a global rather than a national community. It is a poetry not usually now recognized as a call for global harmony, perhaps, but Wilde suggests we might do well to consider it in relation to such contexts.

Of course, a cosmopolitan poetics is no more inherently emancipatory than a nationalist one is necessarily reactionary. It is no accident that the increasing interest in cosmopolitanism towards the end of the century coincided with the height of British Imperialism.⁴⁹ Cosmopolitanism is in some sense a product of imperialism – and a cosmopolitan ideal is, in one sense, the natural decadence of imperialism. In Lang's poem referred to above, the ancient Egyptian monument in London may represent London's cosmopolitan culture but it also represents something of the Imperial power and pillage that underpins Britain's sense of its own global identity. A recent history of critique of modern concepts of cosmopolitanism has shown them to be based in a worldview that had Europe and, and later the US, in a privileged position at its center.⁵⁰ Indeed, the idea of Japan appealed to by the Parnassians is embedded in orientalist assumptions that suit the poets' own oppositional purposes as they challenge nationalist discourses; but there is no particular engagement in the lives of those in distant lands or their concerns. The construction of a cosmopolitan aesthetics might represent more a desire to escape from the confines of national concerns than a commitment to embracing the concerns of other nations. An aesthetic version of the current accusation that the cosmopolitan seeks an identification with a global elite – a class-based, rather than national-based, affiliation – might be levelled at this cosmopolitan vision in spite of (or indeed because of) its affiliation with the craftsman.

So, the analysis in this essay should not be taken as an argument that is politically pro-ballade and anti-ballad, or any such simplistic political allegiance, but rather one that aims to better recognize the significance and complexity of the English Parnassian revival within the political context of later-nineteenth-century poetry – and one too that thinks about poetic form playing out in this period tensions between nationalism and cosmopolitanism that are as central to our own times as they were then. *L'art pour l'art*

was, as Benjamin noted, ‘scarcely ever to be taken literally; it was almost always a flag under which sailed a cargo that could not be declared’.⁵¹ For too long the Parnassian vogue has been ignored by scholars of Victorian literature because it has been seen to sit in its own nostalgic aesthetic bubble, divorced from contemporaneous concerns and poor in its content. Yet its politics of form ensure it takes part in these discourses even when its content is determinedly generic. To reinsert English Parnassianism into these broader narratives of the period we need to find ways of reading that do not rest on the intrinsic value of any individual poem, but which read the presence and reception of the movement as a whole in order to recognize the space it occupied within Victorian poetry.

Notes:

¹ Recent work on Andrew Lang and Edmund Gosse has tended to focus on prose rather than poetry (see Nathan Hensley, ‘Network: Andrew Lang and the Distributed Agencies of Literary Production’, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 48:3 [2015], 359-382), but Jordan Kistler’s *Arthur O’Shaughnessy, A Pre-Raphaelite Poet in the British Museum* (London: Routledge, 2016) is particularly relevant here.

² As was noted in 1887: ‘The last fifteen years only have sufficed to produce the superabundant material of which Mr White’s interesting volume is merely a selection’ (Anon, Review of Gleeson White’s *Ballades and Rondeaux*, *The Saturday Review* Dec. 3rd, 1887: 769).

³ The term ‘cosmopolitan’ will be used in this essay to denote a globally outward-looking, internationalist, poetics that situates itself in relation to literary traditions and influences that transcend national boundaries (this accords with the late-nineteenth-century use of the term Julia Prewitt Brown explores in *Cosmopolitan Criticism* [University of Virginia Press, 1999]). This is not to ignore the strongly pejorative ways in which it was used in the nineteenth century (a richness that Tanya Agathocleous and Jason R. Rudy explore in ‘Victorian Cosmopolitanisms: an Introduction’, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 38, No. 2 [2010]: 389-397); indeed, as I go on to suggest, it was the Victorian suspicion of such globalist perspectives that helped to make it an appealing concept for some of the late-century counter-cultural aesthetes and modernizers.

⁴ See Christopher M. Keirstead, *Victorian Poetry, Europe, and the Challenge of Cosmopolitanism* (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2011), p. 33. Discussions of cosmopolitanism

in literary form and style were initially dominated by work on prose, but Jahan Ramazani's *A Transnational Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) marked a new wave of work on poetic form.

⁵ For the latter, see, particularly, the special issue of *Comparative Critical Studies* 10.2 (2013) on 'Fin-de-Siècle Cosmopolitanism' ed. Stefano Evangelista and Richard Hibbitt, and the special issue of *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 53:3 (2017) on 'Literary Communities in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: Space, Place and Identity' ed. Philip Ross Bullock, Stefano Evangelista, and Gesa Stedman.

⁶ See Frank M. Tierney 'Edmund Gosse and the Revival of French Fixed Forms', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 14.3 (Jan 1 1971): 191-199, and Christopher Harris, "'English Parnassianism" and the Place of France in the English Canon', *Working With English: Medieval and Modern Language, Literature and Drama* 2.1 (2006): 37-46.

⁷ Gleeson White, ed. *Ballades and Rondeaux*. London: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., 1887, p. 87. W. Davenport Adams (ed.), *Latter-Day Lyrics* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), p. 318.

⁸ I have written elsewhere about the Parnassian turn to the past as a very deliberate anachronism (Thain, *The Lyric Poem and Aestheticism* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016], pp. 91-4).

⁹ A. Mary F. Robinson, *An Italian Garden* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1886).

¹⁰ See Ana Parejo Vadillo, 'Cosmopolitan Aestheticism: The Affective 'Italian' Ethics of A. Mary F. Robinson', *Comparative Critical Studies* 10.2 (2013): 163-182.

¹¹ Edmund Gosse, 'A Plea for certain Exotic forms of Verse', *The Cornhill*, xxxvi, 1887: 53, 55.

¹² Austin Dobson, 'A Note on Some Foreign Forms of Verse', in W. Davenport Adams (ed.), *Latter-Day Lyrics* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878): 335.

¹³ Anon, 'Artificial Forms of Verse', *The Athenaeum* 3141 (Jan 7, 1888): 13.

¹⁴ See, for example, Meredith Martin's 2012 *The Rise and Fall of Meter, Poetry and English National Culture, 1860-1930* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012).

¹⁵ Substantial considerations of the Parnassian movement are rare, but in a recent notable example Vincent Sherry identifies the Villanelle as structurally enacting the dying fall of decadence and the failure of ambitions of empire (*Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014], p. 72). In a sense, Parnassian form represents the failure of the heroic nationalism that some linked to English meter in the period.

¹⁶ For the rules of the form see Gleeson White's Introduction (pp. xlix-lii).

¹⁷ Anne Marie Drury's recent study of translation in Victorian poetry provides a broader context for the evidence I go on to provide here; although she doesn't explore the Parnassian vogue, she

does show how the nineteenth-century nation's spirit was thought to be expressed particularly through its verse forms (*Translation as Transformation in Victorian Poetry* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015], p. 23 and passim).

¹⁸ William Sharp (ed.), *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy* (London: Walter Scott, 1888), p. vii.

¹⁹ See Anon, 'Artificial Forms of Verse', already cited, and also Anon, 'Recent Poetry and Verse', *The Graphic* 37.946 (Jan 14, 1888), which calls these forms 'artificial to the last degree' (p. 46).

²⁰ Cosmo Monkhouse notes the 'paucity of rhymes in English' as a key problem: Review of Gleeson White's *Ballades and Rondeaux*, *The Academy* 806 (Oct 15th, 1887): 246.

²¹ Lauren Goodlad calls for scholars to find ways to recognize and negotiate 'transnational experiences that are structurally embedded but personally embodied' ('Cosmopolitanism's Actually Existing Beyond; Toward a Victorian Geopolitical Aesthetic', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 38, No. 2 [2010]: 406): the Parnassians dual engagement through the body and through poetic form offers an interesting case study.

²² Tierney, 'Edmund Gosse and the Revival of French Fixed Forms', gives more detailed biographical information (p. 195).

²³ Stewart, Susan, 'Scandals of the Ballad', *Representations* No. 32 (Autumn, 1990): 136. Rudy, Jason R., 'On Cultural Neoformalism, Spasmodic Poetry, and the Victorian Ballad', *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Winter, 2003): 592.

²⁴ See Krishnan, Lakshmi, 'Editing Swinburne's Border Ballads', *The Modern Language Review* Vol. 104, No. 2 (April 2009): 334-338.

²⁵ See Daniel G. Williams' discussion in chapter 3 of *Ethnicity and Cultural Authority* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 144.

²⁶ Ramazani's term 'organic poetic transnationalism' might be co-opted to describe these translations because they integrate materials from more than one culture 'without playing up their unlikeness' (Ramazani, p. 20).

²⁷ Andrew Lang, *Ballades in Blue China* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1880), pp. 15-16.

²⁸ Levine, Caroline, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015). Levine bring this term from the design world into the study of literature and culture to signify the potential for particular literary forms to carry between contexts particular enabling structures, and possibilities for action.

²⁹ Andrew Lang, 'Théodore de Banville', in *Essays in Little* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897): 75.

³⁰ Rossetti, *Poems* (London: F.S. Ellis, 1870), p. 179.

³¹ Where he termed it the '*pantun*' (William Marsden, *A Grammar of the Malayan Language* [London: printed for the author by Cox and Baylis, 1812], p. 128).

³² Austin Dobson, *Proverbs in Porcelain* (London: Henry S. King, 1877), pp. 1-2.

³³ Pam Woolliscroft, a ceramic specialist who worked in the Spode museum, gives a brief history of Spode's 'Italian' on her website: <http://spodehistory.blogspot.com/p/spode-and-italian.html> (last accessed July 2018).

³⁴ This is not to say that East-Asian porcelain did not also appear as an image for the French Parnassian poem. Albert Méral's 'Les Fleurs de Pommiers' in *Le Parnasse Contemporain* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1876), 283-4, is one example; but it is a relatively unusual image in the French movement in comparison with the idea of the cold, hard, gemstone.

³⁵ Théodore De Banville, *Petit Traité de Poésie Française* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'écho de la Sorbonne, 1872), p. 103.

³⁶ 'there is no poetry outside of song. All verse is destined to be sung and exists only under this condition'.

³⁷ 'It is only by a fiction and by a convention of the decadent age that one admits as poems works destined to be read and not to be sung'. Note that 'lus' in this context could mean read either silently or aloud, but there are good contextual reasons to think that the contrast made here is between vocalized song and silent reading. This is supported by studies showing that at this time the verb 'lire' was used more for reading silently, in comparison with 'dire un poème' (literally, to speak a poem), which was used for reading poetry aloud (Laurence Tibi, *La Lyre désenchantée: L'instrument de musique et la voix humaine dans la littérature française du XIXème siècle* [Paris: Honoré Champion, 2003], pp. 9-15 and *passim*).

³⁸ *From Toulouse-Lautrec to Rodin* (London: John Lane, 1929), p. 196.

³⁹ Arthur Symonds, *The Memoirs of Arthur Symonds: Life and Art in the 1890s*, ed. Karl Beckson (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), p. 180.

⁴⁰ For a summary of features credited to the influence from Japan see Yoko Chiba, 'Japonisme: East-West Renaissance in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (June 1998): 6.

⁴¹ Scholars have argued, for example, that the lack of perspective in South-East Asian artwork was a result of the need for versatility in the representations that allowed them to be used to decorate vases as much as to hang on walls within flat planes (Henry Adams, 'John La Farge's Discovery of Japanese Art: A New Perspective on the Origins of Japonisme', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 67, No. 3 [Sept., 1985]: 476).

⁴² Indeed, Michael Hurley has argued that one might go so far as to say that 1877 was a moment of poetic formal reinvigoration in a way equivalent to the modernist reinvigoration of 1910 ('On or About July 1877', in *Victorian Transformations*, ed. Bianca Treddenick [Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011]: 61-77).

⁴³ Some contemporaneous critics saw Japanese art (with its emphasis on concision and allusiveness) as a key motivator for the late-century British recuperation of short poetic forms (Sadakichi Hartmann, *Japanese Art* [Boston: L. C. Page, 1903], p. 161).

⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays*, ed. T. S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1918), 4.

⁴⁵ Oscar Wilde, *Essays and Lectures*, ed. Robert Ross. (London: Methuen, 1913; first published 1908), p. 172.

⁴⁶ Julia Prewitt Brown's analysis of Wilde's theory of 'cosmopolitan criticism' is well known and his cosmopolitanism is usually located with particular reference to 'The Critic as Artist'.

However, 'The English Renaissance in Art' was written before 'The Critic as Artist' (the latter based on his 1890 periodical article, 'The True Function and Value of Criticism'), showing how that cosmopolitan sentiment was formed, and showing its connection with the Parnassian vogue.

⁴⁷ In 'The School of Giorgione' essay, Pater writes that 'essential pictorial qualities' must first and foremost 'delight the sense, delight it as directly and sensuously as a fragment of Venetian glass' (Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* [London: Macmillan, 1902; first pub. 1873]: 132-3)

⁴⁸ In the 2012 *New Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* Virginia Jackson writes that 'at the end of the 19th c., the tendency to work variations on lyric in relation to social complexity moved toward an idea of lyric as a refuge from mod[ern] life' (*The New Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012; fourth edition]: 832). This echoes influential narratives from scholars such as Herbert Tucker that saw this kind of 'art for art's sake' poetry as an aberration in the story of nineteenth-century poetic modernization, and a movement against the responsive, dialogic, and socially-engaged modes of Tennyson and Browning ('Dramatic Monologue and the Overhearing of Lyric' in Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker [eds.] *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985]: 239).

⁴⁹ Tanya Agathocleous has traced the close, and often disturbing, relationship between imperialism and the formation of cosmopolitan sentiments in the nineteenth century (*Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination* [Cambridge UP, 2011], ch. 1).

⁵⁰ Timothy Brennan's *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997) was a formative text for this debate, which continued in the literary sphere in, for

example, Janet Lyon's review of Rebecca L. Walkowitz's *Cosmopolitan Style* (*Politics and Culture* 2 [2007]). What is at stake, in key part, is the relationship between cosmopolitanism and a form of globalization that enshrines Western capitalism.

⁵¹ Walter Benjamin, 'Surrealism: the Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia', in *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz (Schocken, 1986), 183-4.