

# Clifford Hindley: Pederasty and Scholarship

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Both Exaro News and the *Sunday People* broke an important story yesterday concerning a senior civil servant at the Home Office who has been identified as blocking any objections to funding being distributed to the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE). This civil servant was J. Clifford Hindley, who was head of the Home Office's voluntary services unit (VSU) and an assistant secretary at the Home Office, in which capacity he oversaw 'co-ordination of government action in relation to voluntary services and funding of certain voluntary organisations', with the VSU dealing with 'community programmes' (**David Hencke and Alex Varley-Winter, 'Revealed: Whitehall official who blocked objections to fund PIE', *Exaro News*, March 1st, 2014**). Hindley was also secretary to the Devlin Committee on Evidence of Identification in Criminal Cases ('The Age of Consent for Male Homosexuals', *Criminal Law Review* 595-603 (1986)).

One colleague of Hindley's at VSU found that PIE had made a re-application to the department for funding in 1979 or 1980, and raised concerns with Hindley on the grounds that the organisation campaigned to legalise sexual relations with children. However, Hindley apparently just took away the paperwork and told his colleague to drop his objections. This individual recently approached Labour MP and leading anti-abuse campaigner Tom Watson, who took up the issue with current Home Secretary Theresa May, who ordered the permanent secretary at the Home Office, Mark Sedwill, to investigate; the individual has also been speaking to Operation Fernbridge, who are looking into grave allegations of children being procured for VIP guests at Elm Guest House in Barnes (ibid; see also **Tom Watson, 'After 30 years without an answer it's time to find out who protected the infamous Paedophile Information Exchange', *Mirror*, November 21st, 2013**; and **Stephen Wright, Tim Shipman and James Slack, 'Labour MP calls for probe into state cash for Paedophile Information Exchange after claims files that prove it received taxpayers' money have been shredded', *Daily Mail*, February 25th, 2014**; on Operation Fernbridge, see the range of articles [here](#)). Between 1977 and 1980, a total of £70 000 (equivalent to around £400 000 today) is said to have been given to PIE by both Labour and Conservative governments; the grant re-application which came up in 1979-80 was probably a renewal of a grant given since 1977. A Freedom of Information investigation has revealed that all Home Office files about PIE since

1979 have (legally) been destroyed. During the period of PIE's official existence, 1974-1984, the Home Secretaries were Roy Jenkins (1974-1976), Merlyn Rees (1976-1979), William Whitelaw (1979-1983) and Leon Brittan (1983-1985); Ministers for Home Affairs were Lord Harris (1974-1979), Alex Lyon (1974-1976), Brynmor John (1976-1979), Lord Boston (Jan-May 1979), Leon Brittan (1979-1981), Timothy Raison (1979-1983), Patrick Mayhew (1981-1983), and David Waddington (1983-1987); Junior Ministers and Parliamentary Private Secretaries were Shirley Summerskill (1974-1979), Lord Belstead (1979-1982), Lord Elston (1982-1984), David Mellor (1983-1986) and Lord Glenarthur (1984-1986). It is not yet known whether any of these were aware or consulted about PIE's funding.

The period in question falls within that during which PIE was affiliated to the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) and incorporates the police raid in 1978 on the flat of PIE member 'Mr Henderson', the alias of former High Commissioner to Canada and deputy head of MI6, Sir Peter Hayman, who was later named in Parliament by Geoffrey Dickens (Hayman was jailed in 1984 on charges of possession of child pornography, and died in 1992) (**Kier Mudie and Nick Dorman, 'Huge sums of TAXPAYER'S cash 'handed to vile child pervert group' by Home Office officials', *The People*, March 2nd, 2014**, at ; see also **David Hencke, 'Revealed: The civil servant in the Home Office's PIE funding inquiry and his academic articles on boy love', March 1st, 2014**).

But Hindley is also a figure well-familiar to all of those of us interested in the operas of Benjamin Britten; in light of the revelation that he looks very likely to have been responsible for ensuring PIE's government funding, I wish to consider a selection of his written work and in particular its recurrent and unhealthy fixation upon the theme of pederasty.

Hindley studied classics and philosophy at Oxford, then theology at Cambridge. Following this, he worked for a period as a minister in England, and also as a New Testament scholar, taking a position as Professor New Testament Studies at Serampore College, West Bengal, from 1959 (also serving as Deputy Librarian there, as well as literary editor for the *Indian Journal of Theology*) as well as being active in the church union movement in North India and publishing several articles (listed in the bibliography at the end). In 1964 he was a joint leader of the Protestant wing of joint Catholic-Protestant meeting on Christian social action problems at St Mary's College, Kureseong, organised by Jesuit fathers ('Joint Action', *The Anchor*, Vol.8, No. 29, July 16th, 1964, p. 16). He finished his term at Serampore in 1968 (Katherine Smith Diehl, *Carey Library Pamphlets: Secular Series; A Catalogue* (Serampore, India: The Council of Serampore College, 1968), p. xi). Some time after this (it is not clear whether he left India straight away), Hindley joined the civil service (and appears to have abandoned his theological activities from this point onwards), whilst

maintaining a strong interest in music as an amateur pianist and choral singer (see biographies of Hindley in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (Spring 1994), p. 175 and Mervyn Cooke (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. vii, and [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). He was friendly with former Liberal Party leader Jeremy Thorpe (born 1929), who famously was tried (and acquitted) in 1979 on charges of attempted murder of and conspiracy to murder his lover Norman Scott; Thorpe and Hindley dined together at the Reform Club in London (Mudie and Dorman, ‘Huge sums of TAXPAYER’S cash ‘handed to vile child pervert group’’). Hindley retired from the Home Office in June 1982 ([‘People’, Community Care, May 20th, 1982](#)), though three years later published a paper on the ‘The Age of Consent for Male Homosexuals’, (*Criminal Law Review* 595-603 (1986)), arguing against the recommendations of the Policy Advisory Committee on Sexual Offences (P.A.C.) who in a 1981 report had recommended reducing the male homosexual age of consent to 18; Hindley drew upon various other evidence to argue for equalisation of heterosexual and homosexual ages of consent.

Otherwise, following his retirement until his death in 2006, Hindley lived at least some of the time in Brent Way in Finchley (which address is given at the bottom of the first of his articles on Xenophon) and turned to writing academic articles on musical subjects, predominantly the operas of Benjamin Britten, and also on aspects of sexuality in Ancient Greece, before his death in 2006 (it is not clear if he knew Britten personally, as has been claimed; Hindley’s name does not appear in any of the Britten biographies). One biography cited him as in retirement as having specifically made a study ‘of aspects of ancient Greek pederasty’ (‘Notes on Contributors’, *History Workshop Journal*, No. 40 (Autumn, 1995), p. 295). The uncomfortable nature of some of these writings may provide a clue to understanding Hindley’s attitudes and inclinations.

It is very hard to deny that there are pederastic themes in some of Britten’s operas: most obviously *The Turn of the Screw* (1954) and *Death in Venice* (1971-73, rev. 1973-74) (relating to the arguable presence of such themes in the original literary works of Henry James and Thomas Mann respectively, though modified through librettists and Britten’s musical settings); and possibly also in *Peter Grimes* and *Let’s Make an Opera (The Little Sweep)*. The works are however generally ambiguous, and for that reason have generated a variety of interpretations, in which context Hindley’s stand out for their unequivocality. Various biographers (not least the late Humphrey Carpenter in his *Benjamin Britten: A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992) and John Bridcut in *Britten’s Children* (London: Faber & Faber, 2006)) have gone to immense lengths to find out whether there was anything untoward in Britten’s relationships with the numerous boys with whom he worked for performances of his operas, works of children’s choirs, and so on; whilst it seems clear that Britten

certainly greatly enjoyed the company of young boys, and appears to have been sexually attracted to them, only a small amount of evidence has been uncovered of any exploitation through enactment of these desires. That evidence there is includes the testimony of Harry Morris, who did accuse Britten of abuse (see Bridcut, *Britten's Children*, pp. 46-53), and also various accounts chronicled by Bridcut of naked swimming and sharing of beds with boys aged as young as 11.

Hindley wrote eleven different articles on Britten during his retirement, almost all of which maintain an intense focus on the male homosexual/erotic elements to be discerned in the operas. He was far from alone or the first (or last) in this respect – such concerns are equally central to the writings of Philip Brett, Michael Wilcox or Stephen McClatchie, for example – but some of Hindley's articles differed from the writings of these and others through their specific focus, sometimes quite obsessive, on man-boy love.

Hindley's first published essay on Britten (Hindley, 'Love and Salvation in Britten's 'Billy Budd', *Music & Letters*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Aug., 1989), pp. 363-381) dealt with the opera *Billy Budd* (1950-51), whose libretto was fashioned after Melville's novella by Eric Crozier and E.M. Forster. This is a fastidious piece of research in which Hindley mines the archives to examine different drafts of the libretto, all of which inform his interpretations of parallel doomed homosexual interactions between Billy and the malevolent Master-at-Arms Claggart on one hand, and Billy and the Captain of the ship, Vere ('Starry Vere' to Billy), on the other. The character of Billy is certainly highly youthful, sings in sometimes abnormally high registers for a baritone when excited (as in his ode to Vere towards the end of Act 1), and is described by Vere as 'such a fine specimen of the *genus homo*, who in the nude might have posed for a statue of a young Adam before the Fall', and is supposed to look at Vere as 'a dog of generous breed might turn upon his mater'. Elsewhere he is referred to as 'Baby' (by Dansker) or 'Beauty' (by Claggart), whilst one of the shanties includes the words 'My Aunt willy-nilly was winking at Billy' and 'She'll cut up her Billy for pie, For all he's a catch on the eye'. Vere comes across in Hindley's interpretation as a type of tortured father-figure for Billy; nonetheless, there is no obvious implication of Billy's representing any type of pre-pubescent figure, simply an archetype of youth, strength (a 'flower of masculine beauty and strength' to Claggart) and a type of innocence married to an upright moral sense. But in this essay, Hindley makes explicit his belief that:

Whatever may be true of some of Britten's other operas, the question of paedophilia is, I think, not to the point in *Billy Budd*. While there is some difference in age (unspecified in the opera) between Vere and Billy, they are both grown men, acting in a world of men. They may be contrasted with the midshipmen, who are portrayed as boys with unbroken voices. (p. 364, n. 8)

However, in another article from two years later ('Britten's "Billy Budd": The "Interview Chords" Again', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Spring, 1994), pp. 99-126), Hindley looks in detail at one notorious passage from the opera, from Act 2, Scene 2, where a series of thirty-four triadic chords (the so-called 'interview chords') are heard whilst Vere communicates to Billy (in a room offstage) the verdict of the drumhead court that he is to be sentenced to death. This passage had been extensively analysed by others (most notably in Arnold Whittall, 'Twisted Relations': Method and Meaning in Britten's *Billy Budd*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1990), pp. 145-171) in terms of their dominant tonal centre and recurrence elsewhere in the opera, and how a gradual resolution of the more remote harmonies this might be interpreted in terms of themes of Vere's redemption. Hindley (pp. 99-103) interprets these chords as effecting a modulation from F major into C major, against which the F major opening of the next scene, where Billy lays in irons, acts to convey a sense of a 'fresh start'. Furthermore (pp. 103-106) he deduces, by an examination of its recurrences through the course of the opera, that the key of F minor can be seen to represent 'malign fate', also drawing attention to how deeply the concept of fate which stands above human agency has been analysed in Melville's novella, not least by poet William Plomer, a friend of both Forster and Britten. With this in mind, Billy (who Hindley argues 'is not the childish subordinate depicted by Melville, but a man capable of reflecting on fate' (p. 106)) is seen as the instrument by which Vere is 'saved' from such fate, by virtue of being loved by him; a love which cannot be made explicit since the opera was written at a time when homosexuality was still illegal in the UK and deeply taboo (pp. 106-107). Viewing F major as the key associated with Billy, and C major as that with Vere, Hindley presents the chord sequence (which becomes increasingly tranquil) as ultimately representing a calming of Vere from the distraught figure he was when faced by the prospect of informing Billy of his forthcoming execution; 'Vere's peace of mind is secured through Billy's love, which accepts that the duty of the commander must override the feelings of the lover' (p. 110).

But it is at this point where Hindley looks to link this passage with others in Britten's output with more clearly pederastic elements. First he evokes an essay by Christopher Palmer examining the third of Britten's *Sechs Hölderlin-Fragmente*, specifically his setting of Hölderlin's *Sokrates und Alcibiades* (Christopher Palmer (ed), *The Britten Companion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 264), in which Palmer points out Britten used a similar sequence of triads:

Warum huldigest du, heiliger Sokrates,  
Diesem Jünglinge stets? Kennest du Größers nicht,  
Warum siehet mit Liebe,  
Wie auf Götter, dein Aug' auf ihn?"

[...]

[Why do you court, holy Socrates/Always this youth? Do you know of nothing greater?/Why do you gaze with love/As if at the Gods, your eyes on him?]

Furthermore, Hindley cites Humphrey Carpenter's suggestion (Carpenter, Britten, p. 137) that W.S., to whom the song is dedicated, was Wolfgang "Wulff" Scherchen, son of the conductor Hermann Scherchen, who Britten met in 1934, when the boy was just thirteen (Bridcut, *Britten's Children*, p. 55), and has been claimed to be 'the figure who embodied Aschenbach's (and Britten's own) dilemma in *Death in Venice*: the enchantment he found in the beauty of boys' (ibid). Some more recent scholarship has concluded more definitely that a sexual relationship was consummated between Britten and the young Scherchen, but not until four years later (Paul Kildea, *Benjamin Britten: A Life in the Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), pp. 138-145), the only such sexual encounter Britten apparently had with anyone other than his long-term lover Peter Pears. Carpenter, as cited by Hindley, suggested the song implied a happy love affair; Hindley seems very keen to link this (at a time before Kildea's dating of their sexual encounter) with the relationship between Billy and Vere, and brings in his own link with (around fourteen-year old) Tadzio in *Death in Venice*, by remarking on Britten's use of a triadic sequence when Aschenbach's desires are first stirred by the boy in Act 1, Scene 5 of the later opera, writing 'Whilst most of these passages were composed later than *Billy Budd*, a number of earlier triadic sequences within the opera itself seem already to have come to signify a form of erotic desire' (p. 111). To Hindley, the use of triadic sequences signifies an 'erotic desire' which is primarily to be linked to its later pederastic manifestations. Later in the essay, Hindley also links a hint of a Lydian inflection in C in the triadic sequence in *Budd* to a use of a similar musical device in Britten's early work for piano and orchestra *Young Apollo* op. 16 (1939), known through Britten's letters to have been inspired by Wulff, and also to Tadzio's music in *Death in Venice* (Hindley, pp. 113-114).

Another essay of Hindley's, from the same year as the first essay on Budd, is this time concerned with *The Turn of the Screw* (Hindley, 'Why Does Miles Die? A Study of Britten's "The Turn of the Screw"', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (1990), pp. 1-17) (a two part video of the opera can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#)). Here, drawing upon the earlier work of Patricia Howard (Patricia Howard (ed), *Benjamin Britten: The Turn of the Screw* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)), Hindley considers two categories of interpretation for Henry James's novella: the first being that the ghosts of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, who hover around the children Miles and Flora respectively, represent some objective form of evil which the figure of the Governess battles against; the second holds that they represent an externalisation of the Governess's own neuroses. Whilst allowing that James's work is ambiguous,

Hindley (pp. 1-2) maintains that the second interpretation is not applicable to the opera by Britten, with libretto by Myfanwy Piper (with whom Hindley had corresponded in 1989, though I have not had an opportunity to read the correspondence – it is kept at Tate Gallery Archive GB 70, Reference Number GB 70 TGA 200410/1/1/1846, dated August 15th, 1989 – see [here](#)). Drawing attention to the fact that there is one scene (the closing scene in Act 1) in which Miles and Quint interact without the Governess's being present, Hindley argues if Quint was a figment of her imagination, then so must be Miles (not allowing that this scene, and that in Act 2, Scene 5 also discussed, might both simply be projections of her most feverish paranoia).

Piper gives words to both Quint and Miss Jessel; Hindley is little interested in the latter (whose presence, musical characterisation, and ambiguity in relationship to Flora are to my mind more striking than those between Quint and Miles, even if they do assume a secondary plot role). To Hindley, Quint's words communicate 'ambition, adventure, wealth, a degree of double-dealing, admittedly ("the smooth world's double face"), but above all the realization of mysterious but deep desires', and he goes on to write:

Quint expresses a desire for power in leading on the natural curiosity of the boy and the responsiveness which he shows to an older man. But the same may be said of the Governess in her wish to dominate Miles. In none of this do we feel the kind of ghoulish evil which will demand a death. (p. 3 – Miles dies at the end of the opera)

In order to present as benevolent a view of Quint as possible, and thus absolve the possibility he might be viewed as a mysterious and predatory stranger seeking to manipulate and sexually abuse a young boy, Hindley draws once again upon Christopher Palmer's work, arguing that Quint's music, making extensive use of celesta and harp, with pentatonic harmonies, has roots in the exotic music of the Balinese gamelan (which Britten had come to know through the work of Colin McPhee, who he met in New York when Britten had left the country at a time of military conscription in 1939, and with whom he would later record some of McPhee's Balinese transcriptions for two pianos – see [\*\*Adam Sherkin, 'The fateful meeting of Benjamin Britten and Colin McPhee', \*Musical Toronto\*, November 10th, 2013\*\*](#)) to produce a music which represents to Miles 'the opening of magic casements, a world of enchantment and glamour, of preternatural, supernatural, unattainable beauty' (Christopher Palmer, 'The colour of the music', in Howard (ed), *The Turn of the Screw*, p. 105, cited Hindley p. 3). Palmer interprets this as being associated with evil, but Hindley, drawing upon the fact mentioned by Palmer, that Britten avoids the conventional symbol of evil, the interval of a tritone, the diabolus in musica, holds that the score implies 'beauty and goodness' for the situation between Quint and Miles. As the late Philip Brett pointed out, however, the orientalist

tropes upon which Britten draws can equally signify dread as well as allure, and as such might be read other than as unequivocally affirmative (Philip Brett, 'Eros and Orientalism in Britten's Operas', in Brett, *Music and Sexuality in Britten: Selected Essays*, edited George E. Haggerty, with introduction by Susan McClary and afterward by Jenny Doctor (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), p. 142). If there is 'evil' in the *Screw*, for Hindley (rarely very interested in female characters at all) this has to be assigned to Miss Jessel rather than Quint (p. 4).

Piper drew upon a line from W.B. Yeats' poem *The Second Coming* – 'The ceremony of innocence is drowned' – in her libretto (sung by Quint and Miss Jessel at the beginning of Act 2), which she said Britten suggested was a theme of the whole work (Piper cited in Patricia Howard, 'Myfanwy Piper's *The Turn of the Screw*: libretto and synopsis', in Howard (ed), *The Turn of the Screw*, p. 49). Against conventional malign interpretations of this line, Hindley argues:

What is "the ceremony of innocence," and is its drowning a bad thing? A ceremony is an artificial sequence of actions which may have a meaning assigned to it by convention and tradition but which has no intrinsic rightness or authority. Applied to a child, the phrase suggests that in infancy the child accepts everything it is told: its standards of behaviour are derivative. Whether in obedience or disobedience, it follows the judgments imposed upon it by adults. But this acceptance of conventional standards (for no other reason than that they are conventional) can last long into adulthood. In that sense, adults, too, can engage in the "ceremony of innocence." They can have a kind of unquestioning naïveté about what is going on. They, too, can be described as "innocents". Drowning the ceremony of innocence, therefore, while it may be taken to refer to a corruption of primal purity, may equally well signify the release of the convention-bound spirit into a world of more mature and sophisticated experience. (p. 5; in n. 6 of this page Hindley draws a parallel with Yeats' evocation of the breakdown of conventional standards in Europe as a result of the First World War)

When such 'drowning' entails the sexual abuse of a child by an adult, it might well suit the purposes of the adult in question to portray this as a 'release of the convention-bound spirit into a world of more mature and sophisticated experience' (and here we begin to enter the sort of rhetoric to be found in the PIE journal *Magpie* – see my earlier posts [here](#) and [here](#)). There is, however, a perfectly reasonable way of arriving at Hindley's type of argument above, if one views the drowning of innocence as a by-product of emerging sexuality in general. Hindley, citing the words sung by both Quint and Miss Jessel, 'Day by day the bars we break/Break the love that wraps them round', argues that 'sooner or later the bars [the love of parents or guardians] must be broken if the child is to grow up' (p. 6). This would concur with an interpretation of the Governess as an over-protective figure who cannot cope with the children developing a will – and a sexual being – of their own, and also resonates with Britten's routinely misogynistic characterisation of matriarchal figures (as with Miss Sedley (and, in a more complex fashion, Ellen



Orford) in *Grimes*, both Albert's mother and Lady Billows in *Albert Herring*, Miss Wingrave in *Owen Wingrave* and others).

But Hindley goes much further than this. First he writes of the appearance of these lines that 'It has the mien of an affirmation rather than a threat' (p. 6), then presents the 'innocence' which is lost as being that of the *Governess*, her 'unquestioning and naïve acceptance of conventional values, a world in which conflict is virtually unknown and where there are no mysteries' (p. 7 – I find it hard to imagine that Hindley's sentiments could not equally be applied to many social or child protection workers). Then he examines Quint's vocal music, and considers Peter Evans' interpretation of Quint's opening calls to Miles as 'the directly exercised evil influence of the ghosts on the children and, through the terrifying spectacle of the increasing guile and malice which floods their still childish natures, its extension to the governess' (Peter Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1979), p. 215, cited Hindley p. 8), as well as Patricia Howard's identification of the fact that the music by which the Governess expresses her wish to protect the children is almost identical to that used by Quint to corrupt them (Howard, 'Structures: an overall view', in Howard (ed), *The Turn of the Screw*, p. 72f), but rejecting this interpretation as follows:

But once Quint's influence is no longer seen as intrinsically evil, but (potentially, at least) as beneficial, then a solution to the problem suggests itself, one which arises out of the interpretation here offered of the phrase "the ceremony of innocence is drowned." Read as a metaphor for the maturing of experience, the phrase need not carry the disquieting overtones of "corruption." To replace the restrictions and limitations of childhood by the free and wide experience of the adult is more gain than loss. No doubt in this process each must make his or her own way, but (as Socrates said of philosophy) governesses, tutors, and the whole process of nurture and education should be the midwives to assist at the birth of the mature personality. (p. 9)

On one level Hindley might seem reasonable, but he conveniently brushes over the fact that *Miles is still a child* (his voice has not yet broken, so he has not fully reached puberty). In this light, his sentiments draw upon the rhetoric of paedophiles, presenting their own sexual exploitation of not-yet-sexually-developed children as an essential stage in the children's own maturing, and thus almost as a selfless act in the child's own interests. Were Quint merely a metaphor for something within the child themselves, this would not apply, but for Hindley this is clearly not the case; instead he wishes to suggest it is part of an external educative process for Miles:

The term "tutelage" seems the best available. It has the added merit of implying a degree both of personal concern and of authority or control over the young person committed to one's charge—a form of power which both the Governess and Quint in varying degrees seek to exercise over the boy. Let us then call the music associated with it the "'Tutelage" theme. (p. 10)

From this view, the music associated with the Governess's attempts to protect the children from abuse and exploitation are portrayed by Hindley purely in terms of her own submission to the patriarchal authority of the guardian who has commissioned her (p. 10), when it comes to Quint's music, Hindley affirms:

If the relationship of tutor or governess may deepen into love, we must now address the question which the partial lifting of taboos in recent years has allowed to feature more prominently in the discussion of this opera—the implicit homosexual relationship between Quint and Miles. No doubt the ban on all forms of homosexual relationships at the time the opera was written would have excluded any direct representation of “the love that dare not speak its name.” But given the inevitable reticence of language, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Mrs. Grose's description in Act I, Scene 5, points to a sexual relationship. Quint, she says, was “free with everyone, with little Master Miles.” He “liked them pretty,” and “had his will, morning and night. (pp. 10-11 – Hindley is referring to the real non-ghost Quint who had been present in the house before his death and her arrival).

Hindley is sure to be aware of Oscar Wilde's interpretation, as given in his trial, of Lord Alfred Douglas's 1894 poem *Two Loves*, from which the phrase ‘The love that dare not speak its name’ comes:

“The Love that dare not speak its name” in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the “Love that dare not speak its name,” and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him. That it should be so the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it. (cited in [the transcript of Wilde's trial](#))

What exactly constitutes a ‘young man’ is of course debatable, but the same-sex aspect of such love is not its key attribute, rather the age difference between the participants. Intergenerational sex by no means equates to paedophilia (though research into the former has been used cynically by groups representing the latter – see Veronique Mottier, *Sexuality: A Very Short Introduction*, (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 104-106) nor is there any reason to declare it illegitimate when both parties are of an age where they are deemed able to grant sexual consent, but this is clearly not the case in *The Turn of the Screw*. Hindley goes on to describe this in terms which almost read like a manifesto for sexually abusive teachers:

Whatever textual analysis may yield, for many listeners the matter will be settled by the music given to Quint when he is first heard in the opera. The beauty and yearning of his melismata on the name of Miles betoken love.<sup>15</sup> It is equally clear from the music that this love is much more than a rather furtive physical affair. The music is also, of course, a version of the Tutelage theme. The appositeness of this link is seen when it becomes clear (in Quint's subsequent words) that his relationship with Miles is not just that of a valet or house servant. It is about the opening of magic casements of experience for the boy. We recall that for the ancient Greeks training for adulthood was one of the functions of the socially regulated experience of love between men and boys. As K. J. Dover, probably our most outstanding contemporary authority on ancient Greece, has pointed out, they saw no clear dividing line between the educational and the erotic side of the relationship. (p. 11)

Here Hindley alludes to Kenneth J. Dover's book *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), specifically the following passage towards the end of the book:

Erastes and eromenos [the two pederastic roles; the former the older and active partner, the second the younger and more submissive one] clearly found in each other something which they did not find elsewhere. When Plato (*Phdr.* 255b) said that the eromenos realises that the love offered by his erastes is greater than that of all his family and friends put together, he was speaking of an idealised, 'philosophical' eros, and yet he may have been a little closer than he realised to describing the everyday eros which he despised. Indeed, the philosophical *paiderastiā* which is fundamental to Plato's expositions in *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* is essentially an exaltation, however starved of bodily pleasure, of a consistent Greek tendency to regard homosexual eros as a compound of an educational with a genital relationship. The strength, speed, endurance and masculinity of the eromenos – that is to say, his quality as a potential fighter – were treated (and I offer no opinion on the unexpressed thoughts and feelings of erastai) as the attributes which made him attractive. The Spartans and Cretans went a stage further in professing to have much more regard for qualities of character than for bodily beauty (Ephoros F149; cf Plu. *Agis* 2.1, on the achievement of Agis, as a lame boy, in becoming the eromenos of Lysander). The erastes was expected to win the love of the eromenos by his value as an exemplar and by the patience, devotion and skill which he displayed in training the eromenos. At Sparta (Plu. *Lyc.* 22.8) the educational responsibility of the erastes was so interpreted that he bore the blame for a deficiency in courage manifested by his eromenos. 'Education' is the key-word in Xenophon's evaluation of a chaste homosexual relationship (*Lac.* 2.13, Smp, 8.23), and Spartan terminology ('breathe into ...', 'inspire' [Aelian *Varia Historia* iii 12, Hesychios ε 2475] = 'fall in love with ...', and *eispnēlos* or *eispnēlās* [Kallimachos fr. 68 Pfeiffer, Theokritos 12.13] = 'breather-into' = 'erastes') points to a notion that the erastes was able to transfer qualities from himself into his eromenos. On growing up, in any Greek community, the eromenos graduated from pupil to friend, and the continuance of an erotic relationship was disapproved, as was such a relationship between coevals. Homosexual relationships are not exhaustively divisible, in Greek society or in any other, into those which perform an educational function and those which provoke and relieve genital tension. Most relationships of any kind are complex, and the need for bodily contact and orgasm was one ingredient of the complex of needs met by homosexual eros. (Dover, pp. 202-203)

One shudders to think what safeguarding and child protection agencies would make of the above. Dover's immensely influential book, the first major study of both homosexuality and pederasty in Ancient Greece, can be read as a historical study rather than an advocacy, drawing attention to protocols from Ancient Greece crafted to protect boys from any suggestion that the motivation for sexual relations was pleasure, and how it was socially coded as a rite of passage (see David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 71-72, 141-143), Hindley takes an affirmative view, also linking the Ancient Greek view presented by Dover to that found in writings of Jeremy Bentham and Edward Carpenter (Hindley, p. 11, n. 16).

Dover's book was also greatly favoured in a section of *Magpie*, which presented a 'PIE Top 20' (*Magpie*, Issue No. 14 (Oct.-Dec. 1979), pp. 4-5) of non-fiction books on and about paedophilia, of which Dover's was one; the only others with a Greek theme were J.Z. Eglinton's *Greek Love* (New York: Oliver Lawton Press, 1964), which the *Magpie* writer pointed out argued the case for 'love' of pubescent boys, but ultimately came out against it; and Thorkil Vanggard's *Phallos: A Symbol and its History in the Male World* (New York: International Universities Press, 1972, originally published in Danish in 1969). Eglinton and Vanggard had appeared in a shorter non-fiction book list (alongside the likes of the Dutch book *Sex met Kinderen*) in an earlier issue ('Non-Fiction Book List', *Magpie*, Issue No. 4 (June 1977), p. 8), before Dover had been published in 1978), and a further issue had a more extended consideration of Eglinton ('Review', *Magpie*, Issue No. 8 (no date given); reprinted from *Gay News*, Germany), alongside a detailed examination of a book by Yale professor Parker Rossmann, *Sexual Experience Between Men and Boys* (New York: Association Press, 1976). But Hindley's affirmation of Dover's view resonates strongly with a passage in an essay by the leading Dutch scholar and rights-advocate of paedophilia, Dr. Edward Brongersma, who wrote on multiple occasions for *Magpie*:

It asks for some psychological discernment to see that – and why – some experiences in this field may be a source of fear and anxiety to one child, while to the other they are something unique, fantastic and delicious. Children who haven't been brought up in an unhealthy fear of everything sexual, who have had sexual play with comrades, who were not taught to be disgusted by the body and its functions and who don't have an abnormally weak sexual impulse, will mostly react positively when approached by a sympathetic adult. In more than 50% of the cases they even take the initiative themselves.

Nowadays there are more and more expert authors who have an open eye for the positive effects such an affectionate relation may have. No wonder! Could real love, affection, sympathy, tenderness ever have a bad effect on the evolution of a human being? The ancient Greeks had their wisdom about this and in our present day the official Speijer Commission, appointed by the Dutch government, came to

the conclusion that “in a number of cases (heterosexual as well as homosexual) initiation by an adult may result in a better evolution of the boy or girl concerned”. The German scientist Prof. Schlegel advances the opinion that sexual contacts with an adult may be as necessary at puberty as maternal love and tenderness in the first period of life. Mature sexual behaviour has to be learned by children’s sexual play as many ethnological researches show. If our society had better understanding of this, our adolescents would enjoy more sexual liberty and be less tempted to aggressive behaviour. (Dr. Edward Brongersma, ‘Paedophilia: The Effects’, *Magpie*, Issue No. 11 (May 1978), p. 5. It is worth noting how Hindley himself looked very positively at the findings of the Speijer Commission in his ‘The age of consent for male homosexuals’).

The wisdom of the Ancient Greeks could as well be used to legitimise slavery as paedophilia; more importantly, such allusions give such practices a mythical aura such as can be appealing to those purportedly of ‘taste’ rooted in antiquity (a view which permeates Germaine Greer’s odious pederastic book *The Boy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003)), to which is added the view that this is in the interests of the *child*, not the adult exploiting them. It is clear when Hindley writes that ‘Quint has already progressed to a warmth of love which the Governess only begins to approach in the course of the opera’ (p. 12) and that ‘Quint is not a monster but one who opens fascinating new opportunities to the imaginative boy’ (p. 15) where his sympathies lie. And in one footnote, Hindley’s real sympathies become abundantly clear:

In considering this relationship [*between Miles and Quint*] it should be remembered that (for reasons unexplained in the opera) Miles is without father or mother, and, although materially well provided for, he has been virtually abandoned by his only relative-his uncle and guardian. This kind of emotional deprivation is akin to that of a number of the boys described in recent case studies, where it has been found that in some circumstances sexual relationships between men and boys can be gentle, positive, and supportive, with no self-evident negative consequences. Cf. Theo Sandfort, *The Sexual Aspect of Paedophile Relations* (Amsterdam 1982); G. D. Wilson and D. N. Cox, *The Child Lovers: A Study of Paedophiles in Society* (London 1983). (pp. 15-16, n. 21)

(Wilson and Cox’s study was a serious piece of psychological scholarship based upon a sample of volunteers all from PIE, conducted with the aid of Tom O’Carroll)

Compare this to the following by Father Michael Ingram, convicted sex offender and regular contributor to *Magpie*:

What seems to have happened was that the boy was rather deprived of affection from his parents who were cold and undemonstrative. He had often allowed the man to cuddle him, and this sometimes led to the man feeling him inside his trousers. If one can make a strong attempt to mask the disgust this might evoke, and consider the possible damage done to the boy by being starved of love at home, by enduring the anger, fearful interrogation, and most of all by submitting to the formal repetition by the doctor of the acts which were causing all the trouble, one can see that the offender was the last one from who the

boy needed protection. (The Rev Fr Michael Ingram, O.P. "Filthy", reprinted from *Libertarian Education*, in *Magpie*, Issue No. 5 (July, 1977) pp. 5-6.

Or the following description of a cover picture in *Magpie*, saying it:

'...is of a 12 year old boy full of joy and happiness despite being from a home where his own mother didn't know his correct age, and where his father is a thief and a drunkard. This picture of inner peace was made just weeks before the police brutally interrogated him, jailed his benefactor and returned him to the "custody of his parents" with a statement that he "requires psychiatric counselling". (*Magpie*, Issue No. 10 (no date), p. 12).

Around the same time as examining *The Turn of the Screw*, Hindley wrote the first of two articles on Britten's last opera *Death in Venice* (Hindley, 'Contemplation and Reality: A Study in Britten's 'Death in Venice'', *Music and Letters*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Nov., 1990), pp. 511-523). That Mann's 1912 novel *Der Tod in Venedig* deals with the frustrated and ultimately destructive erotic lusting after a boy of around fourteen by a much older man, is not in doubt, whilst the novel's own references to the ideas of Plato have long been explored by critics. As elsewhere, Hindley is rightly concerned to look at the transmutation of Mann's original through its being transformed by the librettist (again Piper) and composer. From the outset, his sympathies are again clear, writing that an analysis of the changes:

suggests that Britten intended to show not only the obsession which destroyed Aschenbach but also the positive possibility of a sublimated love of youthful male beauty along the lines of the Platonic philosophy, a theme which in Mann is treated with the utmost ambivalence. In brief, what in Mann is represented, almost unquestioningly, as progressive self-abandonment to an obsession is transformed in the opera into a double movement, towards and away from a positive realization of the Platonic ideal. (pp. 511-512)

Hindley achieves this by playing up the significance of the Greek allusions, in particular the scene featuring the Games of Apollo, 'a pinnacle of idealism' in Britten/Piper, rather than 'the beginning of a decline' in Mann (p. 512), and a much more straightforward identification of the sun with Apollo and then with Tadzio in Britten/Piper ('No boy, but Phoebus of the golden hair/Driving his horses through the azure sky/Mounting his living chariot shoulder high/Both child and god he lords it in the air') (pp. 512-514). As he would do four years later in his second essay on *Billy Budd* discussed above, Hindley links the use of a Lydian inflection to the earlier *Young Apollo*, and evokes another of Britten's Hölderlin settings, this time to the poem 'Die Jugend' (the fourth of the *Sechs Hölderlin-Fragmente*) and its imagery of the sun as 'Father Helios' (Hindley, p. 514).

In terms of Britten and Piper's rendition of those Platonic ideas which Hindley claims are ambivalent, hesitant and ambiguous in Mann (pp. 514-515), Hindley is once again unequivocally affirmative:

None of these hesitations and ambiguities are found in the treatment of the Platonic philosophy in the opera. On the contrary, the closing scene of Act I is a remarkably lucid exposition of the Platonic teaching on beauty and boy-love, surely intended to affirm an artistic credo, or, at the least, to present a serious option for Aschenbach. The basis of the symbolism here is set out in a letter from Myfanwy Piper to Britten dated 28 January 1972, in which she wrote: 'There is no doubt in my mind that Aschenbach was a devotee of Apollo -that Apollo is the God whom he puts up against Dionysus and that Tadzio therefore also can and does represent Apollo in his mind . '20 It is but a short step to using the Apollo/Tadzio symbolism as a means of presenting Platonic idealism on stage, in terms of music, voice and dance. While there is something in the criticism that the dances are overlong, they (and this whole scene) are no mere extraneous divertissement, but an essential part of the philosophical development. In response to the Voice of Apollo they present the doctrine that the Divine is manifest in a perfect human form. There is no hint of ambiguity (still less, covert sexual desire) in the Chorus's declaration, commenting on the action in the manner of the chorus of ancient Greek drama:

Beauty is the only form  
Of spirit that our eyes can see  
So brings to the outcast soul  
Reflections of divinity.

The thought is reaffirmed at the conclusion of the Games ('Beauty is the mirror of spirit'), at which point Apollo demonstrates his identification with the boy's beauty by taking over his theme. (pp. 515-516)

Hindley links this to a wider interest in Plato's writings on male love amongst literary homosexual circles in England of which Britten and Pears were part, as well as the setting of Hölderlin's *Sokrates und Alkibiades* mentioned before. But nowhere does he distinguish between love for an adult, or at least one who has reached an age of sexual maturity, and that for a child. On the contrary:

When the Voice of Apollo sings 'He who loves beauty worships me . . .', the opera invites us to see this new experience, mediated through Tadzio, as the culmination of Aschenbach's artistic quest, the quest of one who in his maturity had built his art on simplicity, beauty, form, and one who 'strives to create beauty'. But what is the next step? For Plato, it is to commune with the beautiful beloved in a relationship which will 'beget spiritual children'-'virtues and qualities and actions which mark a good man' (p. 516, citing the *Symposium*).

Hindley also locates some text omitted from the final version of the libretto, from the reflection on artistic inspiration following the Games: 'When genius leaves

contemplation for one moment of reality/[When the flower is fruited, the child of body and mind...]/Then Eros is in the word' (passage in square brackets omitted), and argues for a Platonic interpretation of these as 'the engendering of 'spiritual' children (whether moral virtue or high art) through devoted association with a beautiful youth', again in contrast to Mann, where they are associated with debauchery (pp. 520-521). And as in his interpretation of the Screw, Hindley maintains that when the Lady of the Pearls attempts to protect her son from Aschenbach, 'she embodies the reaction of conventional society whose hostility to even a 'Platonic' and sublimated relationship Aschenbach, the famous writer, could not openly defy', so that 'she (and through her, society) must share in the responsibility for deflecting Aschenbach from a potentially ideal relationship which could have brought him fulfilment as an artist and as a man' (p. 522). Actually, such a relationship might be just as likely to earn Aschenbach a prison sentence, and Tadzio a lifetime of bitterness, estrangement and self-hatred for allowing himself to be the victim, no matter Hindley's implication (somewhat in the manner of Brongersma above) that through his smile at Aschenbach he is the agent of desire to which Aschenbach finds himself unable to do other than submit. If as Hindley argues, in Mann 'any concern for the youth other than as an occasion for the artist's self-expression is explicitly repudiated' (p. 523), in the opera he sees 'an affirmative vision of Platonism as a genuine option for the artist, developed and amplified by an emphasis on the significance of a real relationship with the beloved for the artist himself', so that 'Refusal of that ideal ... leads to introverted sterility and degradation' (ibid). Not only is pederasty to be celebrated, according to Hindley, but not to act upon it is to be met with patronising derision.

In a second article on the opera from two years later (Hindley, 'Platonic Elements in Britten's 'Death in Venice', *Music and Letters*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Aug., 1992), pp. 407-429), Hindley looks more deeply at the roots of the opera in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, presenting clearly his view of Plato's teaching on *eros* and beauty as follows:

The visible beauty of this world (particularly the beauty of a lovely youth) is a manifestation (in a myriad particular exemplars) of the eternal essence of Beauty, which in Plato's thought is identical with the Form of the Good or ultimate reality. What moves men to respond to this beauty and share in this vision is *eros* or 'love', but Plato also taught that in its highest manifestation such love of beauty stops short of physical love-making, expressing itself rather in a communion of contemplation with the beloved and the begetting of 'spiritual children' such as wisdom and virtue. It is Plato's later interpreters who applied this teaching to the work of the creative artist, who in creating beauty mediates an experience of the transcendent or, as others would express it, 'the divine'. (pp. 407-408)

To Hindley, the first act of Britten's *Death in Venice* is a presentation of this philosophy in terms of Aschenbach's relationship to Tadzio, and the second demonstrates the destructive consequences of failing to act upon it (p. 408), in



contrast to the view of Mann, in which the destruction is a result of occasioning upon this way of thinking in the first place. And the passage of Hindley above goes as far as to interpret Plato's own interpreters (he cites R.C. Cross and A.D. Woozley, *Plato's Republic: a Philosophical Commentary* (London: Macmillan, 1956) and W.K.C. Guthrie's *History of Greek Philosophy. 4: Plato: the man and his dialogues, earlier period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975)) as implying that artistic creation amounts to a displaced pederasty. Throughout this essay (which contains a good deal of astute musical observations) the boy Tadzio is presented by Hindley as the embodiment of some transcendent beauty as well as an object of sexual desire, a Platonic ideal who is nonetheless viewed in utterly eroticised terms. If the pederastic themes are disguised in a somewhat high-flown philosophical, mythological and musical language by Hindley, there are no less palpable as a result, any more than in the ongoing theme of Platonic 'sublimation' which Hindley identifies in the opera and relates to Britten's own biography (pp. 422-423). But this latter is something Hindley may regret in Britten:

In fact we are dealing with relationships between males, and that not in ancient Greece but in near-contemporary society. Even after the partial decriminalization of homosexual acts in England in 1967 it was difficult (particularly for those brought up under the previous era of repression) to advance such thoughts. If Britten had wished to advance them, he would undeniably have felt inhibited by the social pressures which dictated that such things should not be spoken of. Or was it that he was tortured by the tension between a commitment to the ideal of 'sublimation' and the urgent (but resisted) desire for a physical consummation? Could he have allowed himself to wonder, whatever his own rule of life may have been, whether to follow the normal Greek route of love for an adolescent boy might, in Aschenbach's case, have yielded more for the artist than the austere path laid down by Plato? In either case, we would have an explanation both of the late appearance of the thought 'The flower is fruited' in the composition process and the decision to abandon it. (p. 423)

Britten *did* realise same-sex physical consummation (at least as far as is believed by his biographers) through his relationship with Pears, despite the repressive climate for the majority of his life which made such consummation illegal. To bemoan this repressive situation is more than legitimate, and would be in line with the reflections of many other commentators; but Hindley is going a stage much further in lashing out against the 'social pressures' which specifically forbade (and rightly continue to forbid) that such consummation could be achieved with an adolescent boy.

Hindley's other Britten essays deal with operas in which such themes are less obvious, though. Since the appearance of Philip Brett's article 'Britten and Grimes' (*The Musical Times*, Vol. 118, No. 1618 (Dec., 1977), pp. 995-1000, reproduced in Brett (ed), *Benjamin Britten: Peter Grimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 180-189), many commentators have interpreted the ostracisation of Grimes by the inhabitants of his village as a metaphor for societal estrangement of

homosexuals. As Hindley himself points out in an essay partially devoted to this opera (Hindley, 'Homosexual Self-Affirmation and Self-Oppression in Two Britten Operas', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (Summer 1992), pp. 143-168), Brett went on to examine how earlier drafts for the opera made the theme of the love of Grimes for his boy apprentice explicit, only to be suppressed in later versions (Brett, 'Fiery visions' (and revisions): *Peter Grimes* in progress', in Brett (ed), *Peter Grimes*, pp. 47-87), as pointed out by Hindley. Had they remained explicit, the opera would likely have been a much more contentious work both at the time of its premiere in 1945 and perhaps equally if not more so today (as some aspects of exploitation of child labour are deemed less acceptable, and awareness has heightened of child abuse). But Hindley is concerned to show how clues to a 'specifically intergenerational homoeroticism' (p. 143) can be found in the final work as it stands. The Grimes of George Crabbe's original poem was a cruel exploiter of child labour, probably the murderer of the first apprentice, but Hindley argues that the Grimes of the opera is quite different; he is 'innocent of that charge' of murder of the first boy, to Hindley, on the grounds of the coroner's acquittal (a remarkable statement of Hindley's faith in the judicial process), whilst 'the subsequent scenes of hallucination and even madness effectively exonerate him' because 'They carry the stamp of authenticity when Peter recalls his agony at having witnessed two deaths which he was powerless to prevent' (p. 144). Even the most obvious indication of Grimes's brutality, the bruise found by Ellen Orford on the second boy's neck near the beginning of Act 2, to Hindley shows that 'Grimes has a callous harshness, no doubt exacerbated by his ostracism from society, but such a temper falls short of sadistic cruelty' (ibid). At all costs Hindley is concerned to defend Grimes, with callous disregard for the welfare of the boy (I would personally argue that the supposedly saintly character of Ellen is actually the primary villainess of the opera, as she is the only one of the townspeople actively to volunteer to help Grimes procure more child labour, and her aria to the boy upon discovering the bruise, 'Child, you're not too young to know', and attempts to diminish the significance of his own physical ordeals compared to her affairs of the heart – the boy's bruise serves mostly as an obstacle on the road towards her own dreams of union with Grimes – demonstrating self-serving hypocrisy, but that is for another article).

Hindley mentions a reference in an earlier draft of the libretto to a 'nine-tailed cat', about which Grimes says to the boy in the hut 'Will you move/If the cat starts making love?', a clear indication of sadism (p. 144), but as this was removed, the clear evidence for the Borough's suspicions is apparently absent (that questions about what really happened with the first boy might be more than idle gossip is not countenanced by Hindley as a possibility). So Hindley looks to establish that Grimes as ostracised homosexual outsider is not merely a metaphorical or allegorical interpretation of the work, but a way of viewing its actuality. From Ellen's Act 1 aria 'Let her among you without fault cast the first stone', relating to the biblical story of a woman taken in

adultery, Hindley reads that Ellen is implicitly accusing the other villagers themselves of sexual misdemeanours (rather than her using a well-known phrase out of its original biblical context, which seems entirely reasonable), referencing the promiscuous urges of Ned Keene and Bob Boles (when drunk), the flirtatious nature of the nieces, and for that matter Mrs Sedley's addiction to laudanum. The chant of the congregation, just out of the church, in Act 2, 'Grimes is at his exercise', is ominous in Crabbe's poem ('None put the question, – "Peter, dost thou give / The boy his food? – What, man! the lad must live / Consider, Peter, let the child have bread, / He'll serve the better if he's stroked and fed." / None reason'd thus – and some, on hearing cries, / Said calmly, "Grimes is at his exercise." // Pinn'd, beaten, cold, pinch'd, threaten'd, and abused – / His efforts punish'd and his food refused, – / Awake tormented, – soon aroused from sleep, – / Struck if he wept, and yet compell'd to weep, / The trembling boy dropp'd down and strove to pray, / Received a blow, and trembling turn'd away, / Or sobb'd and hid his piteous face; – while he, / The savage master, grinn'd in horrid glee: / He'd now the power he ever loved to show, / A feeling being subject to his blow'). In the opera, however, Hindley interprets the fact that this is a canon based upon the last line sung by Grimes before exiting as indicating that 'Grimes's fault, whatever it was, is to be seen as on a level with the failings of the rest of the Borough' (p. 145, citing the setting of the phrase 'Each one's at his exercise'). But that very last line came right after Grimes physically hit Ellen, the woman who loves him, and Hindley is able to make light of both domestic violence and child sexual abuse in one foul swoop. For Brett, the break with Ellen at this moment 'is only symbolic of his [Grimes's] final capitulation to the values and judgment of society at large' (Brett, 'Britten and Grimes', p. 997). For Hindley, however:

I differ with Brett concerning the point at which self-oppression begins its corrosive work in Grimes's personality. It seems to me that at the moment of climax, when he cries "So be it, and God have mercy upon me," Grimes is not abasing himself before the Borough, but is defiantly affirming his right to go his own way. It is only later that he succumbs to the unremitting campaign of ostracism and unfounded accusations, and buckles under the strain to the point of suicide. [...]

The cause of the rupture between Peter and Ellen is her conclusion that he can never succeed in his proposed program of rehabilitation [in terms of becoming rich through fishing, and achieving bourgeois respectability that way, as discussed earlier by Hindley]. In considering his violent response, we must be aware of the psychological tension behind it. The one person to whom Peter had looked for help has repudiated him. As if to underscore Ellen's words, the congregation sings "Amen," and Peter, picking up their affirmation, declares "So be it! And God have mercy upon me." Practically everything conspires to emphasize the climactic nature of this utterance. In particular, the music prepares for it by a reiterated pedal of 28 measures on F for the horns (Figs. 16-17), against which Ellen and Peter exchange words in a tonally ambivalent manner. Peter's expostulations are in B-flat minor, and at the climax the role of the pedal F as a dominant is clarified by the cadence to B-flat major in which Peter's

words are set (Ex. 3). This phrase is then repeated (in diminution) by the orchestra to set off the extended chorus, which is dominated by the words “Grimes is at his exercise.” [...]

[On the omission of a stage direction ‘The boy screams’, after Grimes hits Ellen, from an earlier version of the libretto, followed by Grimes saying ‘Now we’ll see, young stranger, come / Where the road leads. Young stranger home’:]

The sequence of changes, however, suggests three inferences: (1) that Britten wished to avoid the original suggestion of “La” that the resolution of Grimes’s problems might lie in defiantly setting up an open relationship with the boy; (2) that the composer required, instead, some decisive verbal formula to match the musical climax denoted by the resolution of the reiterated pedal on F, referred to above; and (3) that the implications of the first suggestion (“To hell then”) were unsatisfactory. (pp. 147-148)

It should not be too difficult to arrive at a straightforward explanation for this scene: a frustrated Grimes lashes out violently at someone closest to him, who is also physically weaker, the townspeople are horrified, picking up on his final utterance in a cattish manner (perhaps also motivated by more abstract musical requirements for Britten), but continue to distrust Ellen herself for continuing to stand by a man who is violent towards both the woman who loves him and also the boy who has been entrusted to him. But this does not suit the twisted world-view of a Hindley: Grimes is presented as isolated through no fault of his own, driven to violence by abandonment by Ellen (who does not abandon him, simply loses faith in his mission) in a manner which comes close to blaming her for bringing the violence upon herself, but the road to true fulfilment is through the ‘open relationship with the boy’ which Britten ultimately shied away from including explicitly. Partner violence and the sexual abuse of children are both equally legitimised. The only character for whom Hindley shows any regard is Grimes himself; all the others (including the boys) are there to be despised as representatives of the much-detested society around or simply there to serve him.

Hindley’s two writings on Xenophon (Hindley, ‘Eros and Military Command in Xenophon’, *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 44, No. 2 (1994), pp. 347-366, and ‘Xenophon on Male Love’, *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 49, No. 1 (1999), pp. 74-99) focused upon the relatively small sub-section of Xenophon’s work dealing with eroticism and love, draw further upon ideas from Dover’s work. Here once again he misses no opportunity to dwell upon pederastic themes:

[A]s Sir Kenneth Dover has pointed out, the story of Episthenes in Xenophon’s *Anabasis* reflects the same belief in stiffening a fighting force with the powerful bonds of *erōs*. The historian himself, it will be remembered, intervened on behalf of this lover of boys and the young man he was seeking to save from execution, and spoke to Seuthes, the local ruler in whose service he then was, sympathetically of

the company of fighting youths whom Episthenes had raised, chosen on the basis of their good looks. ('Eros and Military Command', p. 347)

Vice offers a life of pleasure, in which Herakles need not concern himself with weighty matters of war and public affairs, but may plan his life around the choice of whatever will delight him by way of the senses, including the love of boys. Nor need he be too scrupulous about the means employed to attain these ends. (ibid. p. 348)

For Xenophon the need for self-control and the perils of enslavement to bodily pleasure (above all, sex) are particularly important in those who exercise any kind of authority. Even when it comes to appointing a farm bailiff, he suggests, one should avoid a man who is excessively in love, because concern with his boy lover (paidika) may interfere with the punctilious performance of his duties." Not surprisingly, then, the virtue of self-control is seen as essential for those who exercise military command. (ibid. p. 349)

The phrase [a Greek phrase which Hindley translates as 'a very fine young fellow'] commonly denotes moral worthiness and is used by Xenophon as a term of general approbation, applicable as well to a slave as to a general. One wonders however whether its application to a youth who has no part to play except as an associate of Alketas, does not bring to the surface an underlying aesthetic reference, in a way which elsewhere requires further specification. In this sense, Rex Warner translates, 'He was a fine attractive boy.' However that may be, Xenophon's narrative seems clearly to imply that the Spartan commander's neglect of his duties in pursuit of this boy had resulted in a significant military reverse. (ibid. p. 350)

Hindley goes on to suggest that the Greek term *λακωνίζεω*, sometimes used to indicate unambiguously taking the Spartan side in a political sense, or to speaking the language concerned or with a certain accent, could be 'used without further specification – in its reference to pederasty' (p. 353). This he does by further extensive reference to Dover (who also suggested it could have meant 'to have anal intercourse, irrespective of the sex of the person penetrated'), taking up the bulk of the article (pp. 353-362). Not being a classical scholar, I am not in a position to judge the veracity or otherwise of Hindley's arguments; suffice to say that this is clearly the primary motivation behind his interest in Xenophon, which he can then trace in terms of the accounts depicted. In his second Xenophon article, Hindley turns to the theme of pederasty on the first page, in order to address the belief (as apparently presented in Eva Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992) and Bruce S. Thornton, *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997)) that 'there has been a tendency to regard Xenophon as opposed to pederasty (or at least its physical expression outright' (Hindley, 'Xenophon on Male Love', p. 74). Hindley portrays Xenophon as belonging to 'the upper-class gentry [in Athenian society] who, while not aspiring to the heights of Platonic philosophy, might be prepared to think about their relationships with boys'

(ibid), and considers how Xenophon was aware of different views on pederasty within various Greek traditions, before going on to consider how the Greek historian's editorial comments serve as reflections upon the formal discussions of pederasty which he attributes to others in his writings. There can be no doubting the thoroughness of Hindley's application to this task; once again, whilst unqualified to remark in more detail upon his exegesis (unlike with Hindley's musicological work), the obsessiveness of this theme is unmistakable to any reader, its erudition and continual eliding of the boundaries between plain same-sex and pederastic desire (or simply subsuming the former into the latter) in no way mitigating from the sordid and exploitative nature of the philosophy upon which he lavishes attention. He summarises one passage from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (1.3.8-15) as follows:

- (a) Xenophon acknowledges homosexual desire in himself (a not surprising fact, but a not unimportant one either).
- (b) he challenges Sokrates' rigorist view on grounds of common sense.
- (c) he acknowledges circumstances (though circumscribed) in which the physical expression of sex with boys may be accepted by the mind without harmful consequences. It is for the individual *ψυχή* to regulate these matters.
- (d) while Sokrates' practice of abstinence is to be admired, it may be questioned whether this rule is to be made universal, since even the master allowed some relaxation. (p. 85)

Xenophon's character Kritoboulos is 'a willing pupil of Sokrates' but 'The one point at which he seems to resist Sokrates' teaching is over his associations with young men' (p. 85). Elsewhere, Hindley loves to find every reference to 'boy-love', and concludes that as 'self-control is not to be identified with celibacy', Xenophon's retention of Sokrates sacrificing of the pleasures of the body towards those of the mind were mostly in order to defend his teacher from charges of 'corrupting the young' (p. 98), concluding:

What I hope I have demonstrated, however, is an interest on his part in right sexual relationships between older and younger men and boys, and the articulation of a viewpoint, if not a theory, on this subject which stands in tension (and, by the time of the Hiero self-conscious tension) with Sokrates' absolutist rejection of all genital relations between males. It may be termed a way of moderation. It embraces love of body and love of mind, in which the older respects the younger partner and what he offers. It maintains self-discipline over physical expression without denying the latter its place, and finds pleasure in a freely given (sexual) love as an ingredient in friendship. (pp. 98-99).

And in a further essay on Ancient Greece ('Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens', *Past & Present*, No. 133 (Nov., 1991), pp. 167-183), Hindley continues the same themes with reference to Dover's work:

Initial doubts are prompted by two passages which clearly imply that there was no law against intercourse between citizens and free-born boys. In the oft-quoted speech of Pausanias from Plato's Symposium, the speaker, while advocating the love of older youths, says that "There ought to be a law forbidding love of young boys, to avoid expending a great deal of trouble on an uncertain venture". The argument is of course jocular, but it would make no sense at all if everyone knew that the law did in fact forbid intercourse of this kind. The same conclusion follows from Aeschines' statement that, while the lawgiver prohibited a slave from loving a free-born boy, "he did not prevent the free man from loving, associating with and following [a boy]".

May, however, a closer study of the law of hubris, particularly as regards the "shame" involved in pederasty, require us to override these apparently clear statements? Recent studies agree that when applied to law, the term hubris is to be understood in its everyday usage. But this involves an enormous range of meaning: for example, eating and drinking in an excessive or disorderly manner; fighting and doing physical harm to people; depriving someone of his possessions or rights; or the unrestrained use of personal power by a tyrant. The list will also include sexual violation, but this is only one among many applications, and it is going too far to assert that the words hubris and hubrizein "have a strong sexual connotation". (pp. 168-169)

No doubt in a general sense the *hubris* law did protect children – by prohibiting forcible interference with them. But to interpret the summarizing function of this law more widely would conflict with Aeschines' statement that the law does not forbid a free man to love a boy, and with the orator's own acceptance that he himself was *erōtikos* – a lover of boys. (p. 177)

While therefore younger boys are not excluded, there are sufficient instances of older *erōmenoi* to rule out any argument based on the essentially "feminine" characteristics of pre-pubertal boys, inability to ejaculate, lack of testicles and so forth. Similar considerations preclude the application of arguments about the "shame" of yielding to an *erastēs* based on the chaperonage rules to the whole range of pederastic relationships. While the evidence suggests that there was no "age of consent" below which intercourse was per se unlawful, one might well speak of an "age of protection" which the rules regulating opening hours for schools and gymnasia and the custom of oversight by a *paidagōgos* were designed to maintain. (p. 179)

This far from exhaustive account of Hindley's writings in retirement should leave no doubt as to what a central role pederasty played in much of his thought. Beneath a scholarly and deeply learned exterior, steeped in antiquity, lies an obsessiveness and distorted morality which is not so different to that to be found in the more obviously explicit writings to be found in *Magpie* and other paedophile publications. I do not believe we should censor Hindley's work, by any means, nor that it is without worth. But if the allegations about his having facilitated government financial support for one of the most insidious of all paedophile organisations – members of which have been linked to child pornography and abuse rings and international networks, ritual exploitation of those in children's homes, and a whole host of cases of sexual

predation upon very young boys in other institutions – are proved correct, as looks likely, then Hindley’s scholarly legacy should be afforded a good deal more critical treatment than has hitherto been the case. And above all, in no sense should Hindley’s work be seen as representative of wider gay-focused studies and scholarship. There is no more intrinsic link between same-sex desire and paedophilia as there is for opposite-sex desire; both remain minority inclinations belonging to those in desperate need of help before they do untold damage. It is to Hindley’s discredit that he attempted to dissolve such distinctions, and legitimise paedophilia as the most natural representation of same-sex desire, in exactly the manner in which paedophile groups appropriated the language and rhetoric of gay rights to suit their own twisted ends.

### **Articles by Clifford Hindley**

(some articles were published as ‘J.C. Hindley’, ‘The Rev. J.C. Hindley’ or ‘J. Clifford Hindley’)

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