



OSCAR WILDE

A Writer for the
Nineties

Princeton University Library
1995



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MICHAEL CADDEN & MARY ANN JENSEN

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Frontispiece: Oscar Wilde and John Toole – Garrick Club – '93. Caricature by Max Beerbohm (item 32). J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries. Reproduced by permission of Mrs. Eva Reichmann.

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OSCAR WILDE

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Preface

“Oscar Wilde: A Writer for the Nineties,” as it opened in the main exhibition gallery at Firestone Library on 30 April 1995, was not the exhibition I had envisioned some years ago when the idea of commemorating Wilde in 1995 occurred to me. But of the ten or more exhibitions of which I have been curator over the last three decades, this is the one with which I am most pleased and grateful to have been associated. That gratitude is extended to the many colleagues and friends who worked with me in my capacity as coordinator of the presentation.

First on that long list is Michael Cadden, Chair of the Program in Theatre and Dance, and Lecturer in the Council of the Humanities at Princeton University. Most of the choices and all of the scholarship pertaining to the exhibition were his, and for both I have great admiration and appreciation. Dr. Cadden joins me in acknowledging the generosity of Mark Samuels Lasner, who not only lent splendid items from his private collection but also gave us extraordinary amounts of time, effort, and personal knowledge to make this catalogue possible. We are immensely in his debt.

As the coordinator for this endeavor I was well aware that exhibitions are not put forth by one or two people. My thanks go out to all who helped along the way, especially those who are not always publicly acknowledged for their labors. Joann Blackman, Charles E. Greene, Adriana Popescu, Jane Snedeker, and Paul Stevens were unfailingly ready for assistance whenever needed. Mahlon Lovett designed the poster and the invitation to the opening. Paula M. Morgan edited the labels almost as quickly as they were written. Nora Q. Lin, who designed and typed the labels, also contributed her editorial skills to that aspect of the process. Two people who have become an invaluable

part of the departmental staff when exhibitions are installed are Henry Pelham-Burn and Susan Share, preparateurs extraordinaire. Annalee Pauls not only cheerfully retrieved the books and manuscripts included in the exhibition, but also those considered but eventually rejected. Her contributions are not yet completed, for the materials must one day be returned to the shelves. My curatorial colleagues, Mark Farrell, Stephen Ferguson, Ben Primer, and Don Skemer provided suggestions and cooperation well beyond mere professional courtesies. Professor Elaine Showalter lent scholarly counsel as well as a poster to the cause.

To Merlin Holland, Donald P. Hartz, and James L. Shannon, who contributed programs from the dedication of the Wilde window in the Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, on 14 February of this year, I am also indebted. These gifts truly bridged the century from 1895 to 1995, adding an exclamation point to the statement the exhibition has attempted to make. Finally, I must acknowledge William L. Joyce, Associate University Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections, for his support despite an initial concern that we would not have sufficient material for such an exhibition. Indeed, the treasury that comprises the Princeton University Libraries has all that was brought forth, and more.

MARY ANN JENSEN
Curator
William Seymour Theatre Collection

Princeton, New Jersey
June 1995

Oscar Wilde: 1895–1995

The 1890s in Great Britain were characterized by endings and beginnings, traditionalism and iconoclasm, decadence and regeneration. At the center of it all stood Oscar Wilde, whose work and life made him the embodiment of his contradictory age. Born in Dublin in 1854, Wilde became an Irishman who conquered England, a Protestant who loved Catholicism, a married man who loved other men, a socialist who courted West End audiences, and a romantic in an age of realism. In *De Profundis*, he wrote, “I was a man who stood in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age.” When he died in 1900, he took his age with him.

1895 was Wilde’s *annus mirabilis* and his *annus horribilis*. At the beginning of the year, two of his plays—*An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*—opened to critical and popular acclaim. But on the first night of *Earnest*, the Marquess of Queensberry, father of Wilde’s lover Lord Alfred Douglas, nearly created a scene with a bouquet of carrots and turnips. A few days later, he left his card at Wilde’s club addressed “To Oscar Wilde posing Somdomite [sic].” Wilde sued Queensberry for libel, lost, and was then himself arrested for “acts of gross indecency” with other “male persons.” Although this second trial ended in a hung jury, a third convicted him; Wilde was sentenced to two years’ hard labor.

After his release from prison in 1897, Wilde left for Europe, never to return to the scene of his earlier successes. He and his publisher both thought it prudent to leave his name off of the work he brought out in what turned out to be the final years of his life. Consequently, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* was published as the work of “C. 3. 3,” Wilde’s cell number; *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* appeared as the work of “The Author of Lady Windermere’s Fan.” These pseudonyms were not

calculated to deceive an ignorant public; Wilde's authorship was, as he put it, "an open secret." But the scandal of the trials required Wilde to do obeisance to the hypocrisy of his age. One hundred years after his imprisonment, the name "Wilde" has been restored to his work, available in paperback editions in every bookstore in the world. His work has earned him a central role in literary and theatrical history; his life has made him a key figure in the history of sexuality.

MICHAEL CADDEN

Princeton, New Jersey
April 1995

OSCAR WILDE: THE LIFE

Even before the 1895 trials, Wilde's life drew the attention of his contemporaries. At Oxford, he was a stellar student, a prize-winning poet, and an ostentatious talker and dresser. He furnished his rooms with lilies in vases of blue china and was said to have remarked, "I find it harder and harder every day to live up to my blue china." Soon after arriving on the London scene, he became a favorite subject of caricaturists looking to mock aestheticism. In 1881, Gilbert and Sullivan immortalized the image he was creating for himself in *Patience*; their character Bunthorne has "walked down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in his medieval hand" in Wildean fashion. After opening *Patience* in New York, Richard D'Oyly Carte sent Wilde on a lecture tour of the United States to familiarize Americans with the target of its satire. After the trials, it became harder to laugh at the excesses of Wilde's life. His wife and children had been irreparably harmed by his actions and those of the men who caused his downfall. He himself suffered through what he called "a poor ending." Despite the fact that Wilde has proved to be a favorite subject for biographers over the last century, many feel that his life is best forgotten. However, as Wilde's most reliable biographer, Richard Ellmann, suggests in his last lines, the Wilde we have inherited is an odd mix of the textual and the corporeal, a body of work and a very human body: "Now, beyond the reach of scandal, his best writings validated by time, he comes before us still, a towering figure, laughing and weeping, with parables and paradoxes, so generous, so amusing, and so right." (*Oscar Wilde*)

1. [OSCAR WILDE]. *An Ideal Husband*. London: Leonard Smithers and Co., 1899. First edition. Cover design by Charles Shannon. Presentation copy inscribed by

Wilde to Christian Frederick Gauss “from his friend the author in esteem: in recognition.” Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Christian Gauss met Wilde while working as a newspaper reporter in Paris. He was later among Princeton University’s best known and best loved figures, serving as one of Woodrow Wilson’s original preceptors, Class of 1900 Professor of Modern Languages, and Dean of the College. A seminar series at Princeton is named in his honor.

2. Photogravure reproduction of photograph (circa 1895) of Oscar Wilde. Sylvia Beach Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

3. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Leonard Smithers, 9 January 1898. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde looks forward to an American edition of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, but recognizes that, like the English edition, it should probably be published anonymously; earlier in the letter, he writes, “I see it is my *name* which terrifies. ... I cannot advise about what should be done, but it seems to me that the withdrawal of my name is essential in America as elsewhere. And the public like an open secret. Half of the success of Marie Corelli is due to the no doubt unfounded rumour that she is a woman. In other respects pray do as you like about America, but do see that there is *some* edition.” Marie Corelli (pseudonym of Mary Mackay) was a popular woman novelist of the period, famous for her portraits of *femmes fatales*.

4. Group of modern paperback editions of Wilde’s work. Lent by Michael Cadden, Mary Ann Jensen, and Micawber Books.

5. APE (pseudonym of Carlo Pellegrini). *Oscar*. Lithograph. Published in *Vanity Fair*, 24 May 1884. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

6. MAX BEERBOHM. Letter to John Middleton Murray, 7 August 1920. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Twenty-five years after the Wilde trials and twenty years after Wilde's death, Beerbohm declines Middleton Murray's request to review Frank Harris's biography of Wilde and suggests that Middleton Murray get someone to do a piece on Oscar Wilde the writer, "leaving O. W., the man, out of it." Of the Harris book, he comments that "all that raking-up of the old Sodomitic cesspool—the cesspool that was opened in 1895, and re-opened in recent years by various law-suits—seemed to me a disservice (howsoever well-meant) to poor old O. W.'s memory."

7. OSCAR WILDE. *De Profundis*. London: Methuen and Co., 1905. First edition, one of 200 special copies printed on English handmade paper. Lettering and cover design by Charles Ricketts. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

An autobiographical memoir extracted by Robert Ross, Wilde's literary executor, from a letter to Lord Alfred Douglas which Wilde wrote while in Reading Gaol. In his preface, Ross hopes "that *De Profundis*, which renders so vividly, and so painfully, the effect of social débâcle and imprisonment on a highly intellectual and artificial nature, will give my readers a different impression of the witty and delightful writer."

8. LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. *Oscar Wilde and Myself*. London: John Long, Limited, 1914. First edition.

Signed by the author. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Douglas's first attempt to tell the story of his relationship with Wilde. Douglas later claimed that this angry and vituperative attack was largely written by T. W. H. Crossland, an assistant editor at a magazine Douglas edited.

9. GEORGE DU MAURIER. *Maudle on the Choice of a Profession*. Pen and ink drawing, circa 1881. Inscribed and signed by the artist. Published in *Punch*, 12 February 1881. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Du Maurier, who later wrote the nineties thriller *Trilby* (1894), regularly caricatured Wilde as the poet Maudle in the pages of *Punch*, the famous humor magazine.

10. FRANK HARRIS. *Oscar Wilde: His Life & Confessions, Including the hitherto unpublished Full and Final Confession by Lord Alfred Douglas and My Memories of Oscar Wilde by Bernard Shaw*. New York: Covici, Friede, 1930. First edition. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

One of the few of Wilde's friends to prove supportive after the trials, Harris produced a long string of Wilde-related memoirs throughout his life.

OSCAR WILDE: THE WORK

Wilde demonstrated his literary versatility by working in a variety of forms and genres. In addition to the novel (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*) and the play (*The Importance of Being Earnest*) for which he is best known, he published books of poetry, short stories, critical essays, children's

stories, and one political tract. From his prison cell, Wilde summed up his own sense of his literary career: “[D]rama, novel, poem in rhyme, poem in prose, subtle or fantastic dialogue, whatever I touched I made beautiful in a new mode of beauty: to truth itself I gave what is false no less than what is true its rightful province, and showed that the false and the true are merely forms of intellectual existence. I treated Art as the supreme reality, and life as a mere mode of fiction: I awoke the imagination of my century so that it created myth and legend around me: I summed up all systems in a phrase, and all existence in an epigram.”

11. MAX BEERBOHM. *The House of Pomegranates by The Master*. Pen and ink drawing, circa 1891–92. Inscribed and signed by the artist. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

12. OSCAR WILDE. *A House of Pomegranates*. London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., 1891. First edition. Design and illustrations by Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon. Presentation copy of this book of children’s stories, inscribed to Arthur Clifton “from his friend, his admirer, the author.” Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

13. OSCAR WILDE. *Ravenna*. Oxford: Thos. Shrimpton and Son, 1878. First edition. Wilde’s first book. Presentation copy inscribed “To Seymour Lucas with the author’s compliments.” Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde won the prestigious Newdigate Prize for this poem and recited it in the Theatre at Oxford University on 26 June 1878.

14. OSCAR WILDE. *Poems*. London: David Bogue, 1881. First edition. Wilde's first collection of poems. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

15. OSCAR WILDE. Manuscript of "Helas!," poetic preamble for the 1881 edition of his *Poems*. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

16. [OSCAR WILDE]. *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*. London: Leonard Smithers and Co., 1899. First edition, number 10 of 12 special copies signed by Wilde, printed on Japanese vellum and bound in vellum. Cover design by Charles Shannon. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

17. OSCAR WILDE. *The Soul of Man*. London: Privately printed [by Arthur Humphreys], 1895. First edition of 50 copies. Inscribed by the publisher: "This is a genuine copy of the original issue." Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

In part provoked by a lecture by George Bernard Shaw, Wilde's essay "The Soul of Man under Socialism" first appeared in *The Fortnightly Review*, edited by Frank Harris. This book version drops the politically charged part of Wilde's original title.

18. OSCAR WILDE. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London, New York and Melbourne: Ward, Lock and Co., 1891. First English edition of the novel in book form, number 197 of 250 Edition de Luxe copies signed by Wilde. Cover, title-page, and half-title designs by Charles Ricketts. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

19. OSCAR WILDE. *Intentions*. London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., 1891. First edition. Cover design by Charles Ricketts. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

A collection of essays, including "The Decay of Lying," "Pen, Pencil and Poison," "The Critic as Artist," and "The Truth of Masks."

IBSENISM

The serious drama of Wilde's age was dominated by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. Although he was by no means the most popular dramatist of the day, his work attracted the public's attention as did no one else's. Audiences and critics reacted to his work with zealous praise or vituperative blame. Hostesses demanded that there be no talk of Ibsen at their tables.

Oscar Wilde saw Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* twice in 1891 and wrote to Elizabeth Robins, the actress who played Hedda, that it was "a real masterpiece of art." While Wilde saw the tragic sense of life embodied in Ibsen's work, others saw only impropriety or indecency—particularly in what they viewed as Ibsen's attacks on family life. Shaw, Archer, Robins and other women and men of the theatre refused to be daunted by the bad press. The actress Florence Farr, who later published a series of essays entitled "Ibsen's Women" and directed Wilde's *Salomé*, was one of many who identified in Ibsen's work the potential for a radical redefinition of Victorian gender roles. In the 1890s, to be modern was to be an Ibsenite.

In the letter displayed in this case, Wilde praises George Bernard Shaw, who along with William Archer was the foremost champion of Ibsen's cause in London, for

The Quintessence of Ibsenism: “[Y]our little book on Ibsenism and Ibsen is such a delight to me that I constantly take it up, and always find it stimulating and refreshing: England is the land of intellectual fogs but you have done much to clear the air. ...” Shaw, like Wilde an Irishman hungry for literary success in London, nonetheless courted failure as Wilde never did in following the Norwegian’s call to the artist to serve as “an enemy of the people”—to “Torpedo the Ark!” of bourgeois society.

20. MAX BEERBOHM. *Mr. William Archer*. Pencil, ink, and watercolor drawing, circa 1896. Inscribed and signed by the artist. Published in *The Chap-Book*, October 1896. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

William Archer, a drama critic and promoter of the “new drama” of the 1890s, was Ibsen’s principal translator in England.

21. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to George Bernard Shaw, postmarked 23 February 1893. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

In a letter accompanying a presentation copy of *Salomé*, Wilde compliments Shaw on his condemnation of stage censorship and on his book *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. Wilde and Shaw were both victims of the Lord Chamberlain’s power over the licensing of plays. *Salomé* itself could not receive a public performance because it represented Biblical characters.

22. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. London: Walter Scott, 1891. First edition. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

When Ibsen complained in a speech to the Norwegian Women’s Rights League, “I have been more of a poet and

less a social philosopher than people generally seem inclined to believe," he might have been commenting on Shaw's *Quintessence*. In this book-length version of lectures first delivered to the Fabian Society in the spring of 1890, Shaw made Ibsen a spokesman for the Society's progressive political and cultural agenda. Shaw's analysis of Ibsen's treatment of "the Woman Question" reflected contemporary British debates: "The sum of the matter is that unless Woman repudiates her womanliness, her duty to her husband, to her children, to her society, to the law and to everyone but herself, she cannot emancipate herself."

23. Photograph of Henrik Ibsen, circa 1890. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

24. HENRIK IBSEN. *Et Dukkehjem: Skuespil I Tre Akter*. Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag (F. Hegel & Son), 1879. First edition of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

25. HENRIK IBSEN. *A Doll's House: Play in Three Acts*. Translated by William Archer. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889. First edition in English, number 58 of 115 deluxe copies signed by the publisher. Illustrated with photographs of the original cast. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

The 1889 performance of William Archer's translation at the Novelty Theatre in Kingsway marked Ibsen's breakthrough on the English stage. This photogravure shows the play's producers in two of the leading roles: Janet Achurch as Nora and Charles Charrington as Dr. Rank.

26. F. ANSTEY (pseudonym of Thomas Anstey Guthrie). *Mr. Punch's Pocket Ibsen: Some of the Master's Best-*

Known Dramas Condensed, Revised, and Slightly Rearranged for the Benefit of the Earnest Student. New York: Macmillan and Company, 1893. First American edition. Illustrations by J. Bernard Partridge. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Ibsen was a favorite target of *Punch* and other humor magazines.

27. Photograph of George Bernard Shaw, circa 1902. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

28. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. Letter to Alma Murray (Mrs. Alfred Forman), 25 November 1890. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Shaw worked hard to engineer Ibsen's successful reception in England. In this letter, he warns an actress interested in *Rosmersholm* that it is about to be produced, and suggests she consider *The Lady from the Sea* instead: "A rumor has just reached me about your Ibsenite plans which suggests to me that you may be a little in the dark as to activity in other quarters: They tell me that you have designs on *Rosmersholm*. Well, Miss Florence Farr, who lately played in Todhunter's *Sicilian Idyll*, is going to do *Rosmersholm* with Waring as Rosmer; and I am the person who persuaded her thereto." Shaw goes on to inform Murray of the translation problems Farr encountered and their resolution by William and Charles Archer: "She is already studying the part from his proofs. If you wish to do Rebecca, that is the translation you must use, as Archer practically cannot be touched as the Ibsen translator *par excellence*. But since Miss Achurch has 'created' Nora, and Miss Farr will 'create' Rebecca, why do you not set to at once to get up a performance of *The Lady from the Sea*, and 'create' Ellida?"

29. Florence Farr's prompt copy of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, in a translation by Charles Archer. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Florence Farr played Rebecca West in the first London production of Ibsen's play. It was given two matinees at the Vaudeville Theatre in the Strand in February of 1891 and met with the usual horrified press reaction. This prompt book records considerable cuts and retranslations, as well as Farr's attempt to picture herself at one of the play's most critical moments.

30. AUBREY BEARDSLEY. Illustration for Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Act I. Pen and ink drawing, from the artist's scrap book, circa 1890. Gallatin Beardsley Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Beardsley has depicted the scene from Ibsen's most controversial play in which Pastor Manders, Mrs. Alving, and her son Oswald converse.

31. HENRIK IBSEN. *Hedda Gabler: A Drama in Four Acts, Translated from the Norwegian by Edmund Gosse*. London: William Heinemann, 1891. First edition, one of 100 large paper copies. Illustrated with photogravures of Ibsen and of the Vaudeville Theatre production. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

William Archer and his brother were not the only English translators of Ibsen. Edmund Gosse, a leading man of letters of his day now remembered for his autobiography *Father and Son* (1907), devoted much of his life to the popularization of Scandinavian literature and culture. His attempts to champion Ibsen began in 1872 and culminated in his biography *Henrik Ibsen* (1907). Although Archer denounced Gosse's translation of *Hedda Gabler* as "one of the very worst ... on record," he included Gosse's biography in his edition of *The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen*.

WILDE, SHAW, AND THE CELTIC SCHOOL

Although strongly attracted to Ibsenism and many of its acolytes, Wilde opted to work within the commercial mainstream of British theatre. He met with considerable success writing variations on the “woman with a past” play.

Lady Windermere's Fan and *A Woman of No Importance* are examples of this genre, which flirts with impropriety by centering on women forced to leave society because of a sexual scandal; as a rule, such plays never completely indict either society's laws or its tolerance of a sexual double standard. Although he worked in different theatrical venues than Shaw, Wilde nonetheless felt that he and Shaw had enough in common to constitute “the great Celtic School.”

32. MAX BEERBOHM. *Oscar Wilde and John Toole – Garrick Club – '93*. Pen and ink and watercolor drawing, 1898. Inscribed and signed by the artist. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Beerbohm's caricature of Wilde and the comic actor John Toole features the infamous green carnation. As an opening night publicity stunt for *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Wilde asked one of the actors and various male friends to sport these odd combinations of nature and artificiality in their buttonholes. When asked what they meant, Wilde replied, “Nothing whatever, but that is just what nobody will guess.” Many of Wilde's contemporaries and some modern scholars assume a homosexual meaning; the painted green carnation may have been used in Paris by men interested in signalling other men as to their sexual availability. Lawrence Danson writes of this portrait: “The Wildean flesh—chins, fat hands, dowager breasts—suggests a fatal limitation in Wilde's self-creation. ... In

Max's version, Oscar's heavy, tinted flesh suggests the immutability of his personality—not just its ridiculous but its tragic immutability. His pose says you can't escape yourself." (*Max Beerbohm and the Act of Writing*)

33. OSCAR WILDE. *Lady Windermere's Fan: A Play About a Good Woman*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1893. First edition. Cover design by Charles Shannon. Presentation copy inscribed by the author to his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas ("Bosie"). Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

34. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to George Bernard Shaw, postmarked 9 May 1893. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde thanks Shaw for sending a copy of *Widowers' Houses* and praises him for "the horrible flesh and blood of [his] characters." Wilde refers to his fellow Irishman's play as "Op. 2 of the great Celtic School" and goes on to allude to Op. 4 and 5. Hesketh Pearson was the first to interpret Wilde's numbering system: "Op. 1 was obviously *Lady Windermere's Fan*; Op. 2 *Widowers' Houses*; Op. 3 *A Woman of No Importance*, then running at the Haymarket; Op. 4 Shaw's next play, *The Philanderer*; Op. 5 Wilde's next play, *An Ideal Husband*. And so on. Wilde thus paid Shaw the compliment of ranking their works together in the dramatic literature of the age, though he had just scored his second huge success with *A Woman of No Importance*, while Shaw's *Widowers' Houses* had practically been hooted from the stage the previous December." (*G. B. S.: A Postscript*)

35. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. *Widowers' Houses: A Comedy, Being Number One of the Independent Theatre Se-*

ries of Plays, edited by J. T. Grein. London: Henry and Co., 1893. First edition. Presentation copy of Shaw's first play, inscribed by the author to Bertha Newcombe. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Shaw's play was the first of Grein's new series to be published. In his preface, Grein comments that "The works produced by the Independent Theatre are not merely plays to be seen: they are plays to be read." He also announces his contentment with having attracted literary men and women not involved in the theatre, like Shaw, to write for the stage: "Bernard Shaw is one of the men who deserve to be called to the boards; and I trust that the result will prompt him to persevere after his first fairly successful effort."

36. Theatre program for the first production of Shaw's *The Philanderer*, February–March 1907. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

As the 1907 subtitle "A Topical Comedy, in Four Acts, of the early Eighteen Nineties" suggests, by the time Shaw's 1893 play about the Ibsen craze (and his romantic relationships with Florence Farr and Jenny Patterson) reached the stage, it had become something of a period piece.

37. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant: The First Volume, containing the three Unpleasant Plays.* London: Grant Richards, 1898. First edition. Presentation copy inscribed by Shaw to Vera Tsaritzen. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Shaw set the second act of *The Philanderer*, his comedy about the effects of the Ibsen craze on British romance, in the library of a non-existent Ibsen Club. A bust of Ibsen dominates the action. The two other "unpleasant" plays included in this volume are *Widowers' Houses* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*.

WILDE'S LONDON STAGE

Wilde sought theatrical success for the fame and money he hoped it would bring him. While the plays of Ibsen and Shaw were presented in alternative venues or at matinee performances, Wilde's society dramas played to society. *A Woman of No Importance*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* opened at two of the most fashionable West End theatres—the Haymarket and the St. James's—where Wilde's collaborators included many of the most celebrated actors of his day: Herbert Beerbohm Tree, George Alexander, Marion Terry, Charles Hawtrey, Irene Vanbrugh, Evelyn Millard, and Rose Leclercq. Like the problem plays of Arthur Wing Pinero, which could also be seen at the St. James's, Wilde's dramas were considerably more sophisticated than the melodramatic fare offered elsewhere, but not quite as daring as the work produced by more Ibsenite playwrights like Shaw.

38. MAX BEERBOHM. *Mr. Beerbohm Tree*. Pencil, ink, and colored crayon drawing, circa 1895. Inscribed and signed by the artist. Published in *The Savoy*, January 1896. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

The actor-manager who commissioned, produced, and starred (as Lord Illingworth) in Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* was the artist's half-brother. According to Kerry Powell, Tree was also "directly involved in at least the revision of the play." (*Oscar Wilde and the Theatre of the 1890s*)

39. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Herbert Beerbohm Tree, circa 1 September 1892. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde offers his condolences on the death of Tree's father and announces that *A Woman of No Importance* is al-

most finished: "My Dear Tree, My wife and I were much shocked to hear of your father's death. I remember having had the pleasure of meeting him at supper at the Haymarket, and how proud he was of your success in art."

40. OSCAR WILDE. *A Woman of No Importance*. London: John Lane, 1894. First edition. Cover design by Charles Shannon. Presentation copy inscribed by Wilde: "Herbert Beerbohm-Tree from the author. In recognition of his beautiful production and brilliant performance at the Haymarket Theatre." Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

This copy also features a later inscription from the playwright Terence Rattigan "To Paul Dehn. Brilliant collaborator of Oscar Wilde." Dehn adapted the play for a 1967 production.

41. HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE. Letter to Oscar Wilde, 13 October 1892. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Tree's agreement to produce Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* at the Haymarket Theatre, London.

42. Theatre program for the revival of *A Woman of No Importance*, Theatre Royal Haymarket, London, 1992. Lent by Michael Cadden.

As this cover indicates, the Haymarket is as fashionable now as it was in 1893, when the play premiered there. Philip Prowse first directed this Royal Shakespeare Company production at the RSC's Barbican Theatre in September of 1991 before its transfer to the West End in June of 1992.

43. ARTHUR WING PINERO. *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray: An Original Play in Four Acts*. London: Privately

printed by J. Miles and Co., 1892. First edition. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Produced by George Alexander, who was also responsible for *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* was one of the biggest financial and critical hits of the 1890s. Like *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *A Woman of No Importance*, it featured "a woman with a past."

44. Photograph of Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the title role of Pinero's *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries. • Theatre program for her run at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle-on-Tyne, March 1899. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Beatrice Stella (Mrs. Patrick) Campbell, one of the great actresses of Wilde's day, enjoyed success in a number of "woman with a past" plays, including Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* and *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* and Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. As this program indicates, she also played the heroine in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (the staging in Newcastle was the copyright performance).

45. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. London: Grant Richards, 1902. First separate edition. Illustrated with photographs by Frederick H. Evans of the Stage Society production. Presentation copy inscribed by the author to Siegfried Trebitsch. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

In *Mrs. Warren*, Shaw challenged the conventions of the "woman with a past" genre by presenting not a remorseful woman who had once fallen but an unashamed prostitute. In the scene represented here, Mrs. Warren confronts her daughter Vivie, a "New Woman"—and one with a future.

THE NEW WOMAN

The term "New Woman" was coined in 1894 by Sarah Grand and Ouida, two novelists of the period, during a debate on a new social type that seemed to be emerging—the independent woman. Not all women were shocked by Ibsen's horrific vision of bourgeois society, but when Nora slammed the door on her husband and children in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, the echo reverberated throughout the world. "New Women" did not necessarily share a single political agenda: many were feminists, some were not; many wanted the vote, others demurred; many demanded sexual autonomy, others championed motherhood. Nonetheless, most insisted on a release from childish dependence and domestic tyranny. Writers like George Egerton, Sarah Grand, Florence Farr, and Mona Caird gave voice to a generation of women whose social and literary ambitions threatened to turn British society upside down.

In revolt against the tyranny of the "Old Man," the "New Woman" did not always find the "New Man" any better. Sarah Grand, one of the inventors of the term, found Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* "the outcome of an unlovely mind." "New Women" also resented male writers who took up the cause for satirical or sensational reasons. Sydney Grundy, the most successful playwright of the 1890s, made fun of the new breed of social reformers in his 1894 play *The New Woman*; Grant Allen used the novel to indulge his sexual fantasies about *The Woman Who Did* (1895); in *Jude the Obscure* (also 1895), Thomas Hardy made his "New Woman," Sue Bridehead, a modern version of the *femme fatale* destined to undo men.

With the exception of Shaw, most male writers found reason to fear this feminist revolt and what it might do to the British male. During the Wilde trials, a conservative columnist for *Reynolds's Newspapers* opined that "in the era of the 'new woman,' it is not astonishing to discover that

the sex-problem is putting on a new face, and making a new course for itself."

Wilde played a role in this redefinition of gender when, after becoming editor of *The Lady's World* in 1887, he re-titled it *The Woman's World*. As he explained to his board of directors, "The present name of the magazine has a certain taint of vulgarity about it, that will always militate against the success of the new issue, and is also extremely misleading. It is quite applicable to the magazine in its present state; it will not be applicable to a magazine that aims at being an organ of women of intellect, culture, and position."

46. "Donna Quixote." Cartoon (and accompanying poem) in *Punch*, 28 April 1894. Princeton University Libraries.

Sporting "rational dress" and armed with the latchkey to her own front door, two of the most potent symbols of the New Woman's independence, "Donna Quixote" fights the dragon of decorum and "Tyrant Man" on a literary diet of Ibsen, Tolstoi, Mona Caird, Sarah Grand, George Egerton, and other "advanced" novelists. The cartoon (by Lindley Sambourne) suggests that, like the Cervantes original, this modern-day tilter at windmills has been done in by books.

47. GEORGE EGERTON (pseudonym of Mary Chavelita Dunne). *Keynotes*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1893. First edition. Cover and title-page design by Aubrey Beardsley. Gallatin Beardsley Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

This volume of short stories lent its title to a fiction series published by Elkin Mathews and John Lane (and later by Lane alone) that was central to the "New Woman" debate.

48. GEORGE EGERTON (pseudonym of Mary Chavelita Dunne). Letter to her father, Captain John J. Dunne, 15 March 1891. Mary Chavelita (Dunne) Bright Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Egerton mocks the British reaction to Ibsen's *Ghosts* and states that she sees "more to be shocked at in one walk through the Strand or Leicester Square let us say at 11 p.m." She also writes: "They are all going into virtuous fits here because of Ibsen's *Ghosts* at the Independent Theatre and because some women went to see it. I am afraid my sensibilities are blunted, considering that every little hospital nurse knows of the existence of syphilis, every married woman, and a large number of the unmarried ones and that every day's paper has a 'horror' of some kind or other. I don't see where the shockingness comes in—It is all humbug, part of this the most positive British doctrine, of commit adultery, seduce any woman you can, in fact sin as you please but don't be found out it's all right so long as you don't shock us by letting us know."

49. Prospectus for *The Yellow Book*, Vol. I, April 1894. Cover design by Aubrey Beardsley. Gallatin Beardsley Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

The firm of Elkin Mathews and John Lane, The Bodley Head, obviously had the "New Woman" reader in mind when it had Beardsley design this advertisement for their new publishing venture.

50. FLORENCE FARR. *The Dancing Faun*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1894. Volume III in the Keynotes Series. First edition. Cover and title-page design by Aubrey Beardsley. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

While Shaw fictionalized his romantic relationship with Farr in *The Philanderer*, she returned the favor in this por-

trait of Shaw as half-goat and half-man. The face of the faun in Beardsley's design is a caricature of the painter James McNeill Whistler.

51. Theatre program for the opening night of the first production of Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, Avenue Theatre, London, 21 April 1894. Design on first page by Aubrey Beardsley. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Shaw wrote the role of Louka for Farr. The production was financed by another "New Woman"—Annie Horniman, the mother of the modern repertory theatre movement, who went on to build Dublin's Abbey Theatre and to head the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester.

52. Florence Farr as Louka in Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, 1894. From *Florence Farr: Bernard Shaw's "New Woman."* Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975. Princeton University Libraries.

53. GRANT ALLEN. *The Woman Who Did*. London: John Lane, 1895. Volume VIII in the Keynotes Series. First edition. Cover and title-page design by Aubrey Beardsley. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Women readers and critics were angered by Allen's emphasis on free love in this best-selling male contribution to the "New Woman" novel. George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells found his heroine unconvincing. Others saw an effort to cash in on a popular genre. As Elaine Showalter notes, in non-fictional venues, Allen espoused anti-feminist views. (*Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*)

54. GRANT ALLEN. Letter to Oscar Wilde, 6 February 1891. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

As a writer eager to impress a fellow craftsman in his field, Allen offers Wilde effusive praise for the sentiments expressed in "The Soul of Man under Socialism": "Will you allow me to thank you most heartily for your noble and beautiful essay in this month's Fortnightly? I would have written every line of it myself—if only I had known how. There's hardly a word or a clause in it with which I don't agree most cordially. It comes home to me all the more because I am one of those poor devils who work for daily bread, and have therefore never been able to do any artistic realization of my own individuality."

55. SARAH GRAND (pseudonym of Frances Elizabeth McFall). *The Heavenly Twins*. London: William Heinemann, 1893. First edition. Princeton University Libraries.

Taking up the Ibsenite subjects of sex-role conditioning, venereal disease, and women's rights, Sarah Grand's precursor of the "New Woman" novel sold 20,000 copies in its first week of publication.

56. SARAH GRAND (pseudonym of Frances Elizabeth McFall). Letter to Mr. Goodman, 7 August 1891. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Born in Ireland, McFall became one of the best-selling novelists of the 1890s with the publication of *The Heavenly Twins* (1893). In this letter, she registers a negative reaction to the recently-published *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and to the man who conceived it: "I am just reading *Dorian Gray* and I find it only exasperating so far—the outcome of an unlovely mind, I should say—poor, forced stuff, conceited, untrue to all that is elevating in nature & in art, and not improved by being polished up in passages of a

laboured smartness, which one's head acknowledges but one's heart abhors. The personality of the writer oppresses one all through. I know very little of him personally, & feel now that I should certainly hate him if I knew more."

57. Theatre program for Sydney Grundy's *The New Woman*, Comedy Theatre, London, 1894. Scrapbook of Eva Humphreys Turnbull. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries. Gift of Marguerite Loud McAneny.

To entertain his fashionable West End audiences, Grundy mocked the new phenomenon. In Kerry Powell's description, Grundy's male hero "marries a traditional young woman in the last act, abandoning his book-in-progress about 'the Ethics of Marriage' and dropping his feminist friends. ..." (*Oscar Wilde and the Theatre of the 1890s*)

58. THOMAS HARDY. *Jude the Obscure*. London: Osgood, McIlvaine and Co., [1895]. First edition of Hardy's "New Woman" novel. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

"THE LOVE THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME"

While feminist reformers worked to create new possibilities for women, men who loved other men were also looking to remake the world of late Victorian Britain. They often started with the world of words. When Lord Alfred Douglas referred to "the Love that dare not speak its name" in a poem, he alluded to the fact that sex between men was once represented by the euphemism "the sin not

to be named among Christians" (to translate the Latin original). In the nineteenth century, the principal term available was "sodomy." John Addington Symonds and Edward Carpenter were the key figures in this attempt to find a new name for same-sex affection. They and their contemporaries tried out many labels, among them "Uranian love," "inversion," "adhesiveness," "the intermediate sex," and "homosexuality." Wilde generally tried to avoid any word but "love" to describe his feelings for men to whom he was attracted. However, in a letter from 1898, he employs one of the new terms. Protesting against those who objected to his reunion with Douglas, he writes, "A patriot put in prison for loving his country loves his country, and a poet in prison for loving boys loves boys. To have altered my life would have been to have admitted that Uranian love is ignoble. I hold it to be noble—more noble than other forms."

59. JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS. *In the Key of Blue and Other Prose Essays*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1893. First edition, number 1 of 50 large paper copies bound in vellum. Cover design by Charles Ricketts. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

In addition to "Clifton," the volume also includes an essay on Edward Cracroft Lefroy, a Uranian poet Jackson had discovered in *The Artist and Journal of Home Culture*.

60. JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS. Letter to Charles Kains Jackson, 8 January 1893. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

From 1888 until 1894, Jackson edited *The Artist and Journal of Home Culture*, where he published material celebrating the Uranian ("heavenly") love between men and boys described in Plato's *Symposium*. In this letter, Symonds thanks Jackson for his positive response to the

“Clifton” section of *In the Key of Blue*, which elusively records his attraction to a cathedral chorister earlier in his life and the breakdown his feelings caused: “Thanks for your delightful letter. I am so glad you like ‘In the Key of Blue,’ esp. that you like ‘Clifton.’ I wish you could see the diary I kept from Oct 1860 till Oct 1863. It is a curious mélange of prose & verse, from wh. that Essay is but a detached fragment. I cannot tell you how cruelly I suffered in those years, or what havoc was wrought in my health & heart. And then I felt that, (with those feelings in me,) I could never be, what I yearned to be, a poet; & so put the thought of it aside, & choked myself with my own hands & lived a long suicide in fact. It was excessively unfortunate. But I really do not know how I could have acted otherwise.”

61. *The Chameleon*. Volume I, Number 1. London: Gay and Bird, [December 1894]. Number 97 of 100 copies. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

The phrase “the Love that dare not speak its name” first appears in Lord Alfred Douglas’s poem “Two Loves” in the sole issue of this Oxford undergraduate journal aimed at a homosexual clientele and edited by John Bloxam. Douglas alludes to the words “with which Sir Robert Peel forebode to mention sodomy in Parliament, ‘the crime *inter Christianos non nominandum*’ (the crime not to be named among Christians).” (Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out*) The story which follows Douglas’s poem, “The Priest and the Acolyte”—published under the initial “X” but known to be by Bloxam—focuses on a romantic relationship between a priest and an altar boy.

62. JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS. *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Being An Inquiry Into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion, Addressed Especially to Medical Psychologists and*

Jurists. London: [Privately printed], 1901. Number 99 of 100 copies. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Written in 1873, when Symonds was at work on *Studies of the Greek Poets*, this book was first issued in 1888 in an edition of ten copies "privately printed for the Author's use." It later became the basis for one section of *Sexual Inversion*, Symonds's collaboration with sexologist Havelock Ellis. For Symonds, as for many men of the period, Greece provided "the example of a great and highly developed race not only tolerating homosexual passions but deeming them of spiritual value and attempting to utilise them for the benefit of society." (*Sexual Inversion*, 1897)

63. LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. "In Memoriam John Addington Symonds." *The Spirit Lamp: An Aesthetic, Literary, and Critical Magazine*. Volume IV, Number 1. Oxford: James Thornton, May 1893. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

When Lord Alfred Douglas took over the editorship of *The Spirit Lamp*, he solicited contributions from many authors interested in same-sex affections, including Wilde, Symonds, Robert Ross, and Charles Kains Jackson. In this memorial to Symonds, Douglas laments the early loss of a key figure in the fledgling movement.

64. [JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS]. *A Problem in Modern Ethics: Being an Inquiry Into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion. Addressed Especially to Medical Psychologists and Jurists*. London: [Leonard Smithers], 1896. Pirated edition, number 42 of 100 copies. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

First printed in an edition of 50 copies in 1891, *A Problem in Modern Ethics* offered a review of the literature on homosexuality and suggested legal reforms. In his intro-

duction, Symonds discusses the difficulty of finding a proper name for same-sex affections: "Yet I can hardly find a name which will not soil this paper. The accomplished languages of Europe in the nineteenth century supply no term for this persistent feature of human psychology, without importing some implication of disgust, disgrace, vituperation."

WALT WHITMAN AND SAME-SEX AFFECTION

When Wilde visited Whitman twice during his American lecture tour of 1881–82, he paid homage to a great poet and the patron saint of British men trying to redefine same-sex affection at the end of the nineteenth century. Wilde told George Ives, a pioneer on this new sexual frontier, that Whitman made no attempt to conceal his love of men; indeed, Wilde boasted that "The kiss of Walt Whitman is still on my lips." Other British writers found the poet less than forthcoming on the subject. "A Glimpse," a short poem from the "Calamus" section of *Leaves of Grass* explains why Symonds, Carpenter and others turned to Whitman's poetry as the voice of their desire:

A glimpse through an interstice caught,
Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room
 around the stove late of a winter night, and I un-
 remark'd seated in a corner,
Of a youth who loves me and whom I love, silently
 approaching and seating himself near, that he may
 hold me by the hand,
A long while amid the noises of coming and going, of
 drinking and oath and smutty jest,
There we two, content, happy in being together,
 speaking little, perhaps not a word.

65. [WALT WHITMAN]. *Leaves of Grass*. Brooklyn: [printed for the author], 1855. First edition. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Although the elegant binding of this first edition was intended to demand a place in the parlor next to the family Bible, its content was revolutionary. As David Reynolds writes, "The first edition of *Leaves of Grass* was a utopian document, suggesting that boundaries of section, class, and race that had become glaringly visible in America's political arena could be imaginatively dissolved by affirmation of the cross-fertilization of its various cultural arenas." (*Walt Whitman's America*) British readers like Wilde, Symonds, and Carpenter responded both to its embracing vision of democratic comradeship and to its experimental fusion of poetry and prose.

66. Photograph of Walt Whitman, circa 1890. Sylvia Beach Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

67. WALT WHITMAN. *Leaves of Grass*. Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860. Third edition. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

In the third edition of his poem, Whitman clustered material according to its subject matter. "Calamus" deals with same-sex love and comradeship, often referred to in this section as "adhesiveness," a phrenological term. When Symonds asked Whitman about the possible homosexual content of "Calamus," Whitman declared Symonds's "morbid inferences" "damnable." Nonetheless, Whitman later admitted, "My first instinct about all that Symonds writes is violently reactionary—is strong and brutal for no, no, no. Then the thought intervenes that I maybe do not know all my meanings."

68. JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS. *Walt Whitman: A Study*. London: John C. Nimmo, 1893. First edition, number 111 of 208 large paper copies printed on unbleached handmade paper. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Symonds corresponded with Whitman for almost twenty years before he asked the poet whether the “adhesiveness” he celebrated in the “Calamus” section included sexual relations between men. In this study, Symonds remains faithful to Whitman’s angry denial while explaining his own sense of the poems: “Whitman never suggests that comradeship may occasion the development of physical desires. On the other hand, he does not in set terms condemn, deny, or warn his disciples against their perils.”

69. EDWARD CARPENTER. *Towards Democracy*. Manchester: John Heywood, 1885. Second edition. Presentation copy inscribed by the author to Edward von Andel. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

As its cover indicates, Carpenter’s book was meant as an English version of *Leaves of Grass*. Carpenter was attracted by Whitman’s democratic social vision and his celebration of “the love of comrades.” In 1894, the year before the Wilde trials, Carpenter lectured on “Homogenic Love”—his name for same-sex affections. He dedicated his life to socialism, feminism, and an understanding of what he later termed “the intermediate sex.”

70. EDWARD CARPENTER. *Love’s Coming-of-Age: A Series of Papers on the Relations of the Sexes*. Manchester: Labour Press, 1896. First edition. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Although T. Fisher Unwin was set to publish this study, which argues the need to recognize the pleasurable

nature of the sexual act apart from its potential procreative value, the Wilde trial caused them to withdraw.

71. [ROBERT HICHENS]. *The Green Carnation*. London: William Heinemann, 1894. First edition. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

This anonymously published book by another *fin de siècle* homosexual offers a bleakly moralistic view of same-sex affection exactly counter to the celebratory ethos of the Whitman tradition. A barely fictionalized account of the relationship between Oscar Wilde (Mr. Amaranth) and Lord Alfred Douglas (Lord Reggie), *The Green Carnation* suggests that Wilde robbed Douglas of his identity. When it was rumoured that Wilde himself had written the novel, he wrote *The Pall Mall Gazette* to deny it: "I invented that magnificent flower. But with the middle-class and mediocre book that usurps its strangely beautiful name I have, I need hardly to say, nothing whatever to do. The flower is a work of art. The book is not."

JOHN GRAY AND SILVERPOINTS

English poets of the *fin de siècle* often used their verse to sing of same-sex affection. Wilde served as the patron of one such poet, John Gray. According to Richard Ellmann, "During the early months of 1892, Gray was Wilde's constant companion, Alfred Douglas's turn being still to come." (*Oscar Wilde*) Wilde helped to launch the young man's poetic career by agreeing to defray the expenses of Gray's first volume, *Silverpoints*. Gray dropped "Passing the Love of Women" from the collection, perhaps because it dared to speak too clearly.

72. JOHN GRAY. *Silverpoints*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1893. First edition. Typography and cover design by Charles Ricketts. Presentation copy inscribed by the author to his London neighbor, the actor Charles Goodhart. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

73. JOHN GRAY. Manuscript of "Passing the Love of Women," poem written circa 1893. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

The poet John Gray, probably another of Wilde's lovers, was falsely assumed to be the model for Dorian Gray; indeed, in some letters to Wilde he signed himself "Dorian." David's lament over Jonathan from the Second Book of Samuel—"thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women"—was often alluded to by writers who represented same-sex affections. Jacqueline Wesley speculates that this poem was dropped from Gray's *Silverpoints* because of its outspokenness. (*The Book Collector*, Spring 1990)

74. JOHN GRAY. *Silverpoints*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1893. First edition, number 19 of 25 special copies bound in vellum. Typography and cover design by Charles Ricketts. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Gray's collection includes original poems and translations of works by Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé.

75. Contract for the publication of *Silverpoints*, 17 June 1892, signed by Oscar Wilde, Elkin Mathews, and John Lane. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

According to this contract Mathews and Lane were to bring out *Silverpoints* on the condition that Wilde defray their expenses: "We agree to issue the above book in the autumn on your undertaking the cost of the designs—block for same—paper, printing and binding of an edition not exceeding 250 copies." The arrangement did not hold and in the end the publishers issued the book ostensibly at their own risk. Gray's new suitor, the rich "psychologist and littérateur" André Raffalovich, probably replaced Wilde as the guarantor against losses.

76. ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH. *Roses of Shadow*. [London?] Privately printed and not for distribution, [1895]. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

This "duologue" (on which John Gray may have collaborated) served as a curtain-raiser for the Independent Theatre's second-season production of Ibsen's *Ghosts* in 1893.

77. ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH. *Uranisme et Unisexualité: Étude sur différentes manifestations de l'instinct sexuel*. Lyon: A. Storck; Paris: Masson & Cie, 1896. First edition. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Raffalovich's 1895 examination of *L'Affaire Oscar Wilde*, which placed partial blame for Wilde's ways on the national decadence of Great Britain, is included in the first edition of this historical survey of same-sex affections. Published in the year of Raffalovich's conversion to Catholicism, the book—the fifteenth volume in the Bibliothèque de Criminologie series—attacks Wilde and others for seeking physical gratification of their sexual longings and argues instead for celibacy. Raffalovich eventually followed Gray to Edinburgh and helped pay for the building of the church of St. Peter the Apostle, where his friend worked as a Catholic pastor.

SALOMÉ

Written in French in 1891, *Salomé* was inspired by Wilde's visit with the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, whose "Herodiade" also dealt with the beheading of John the Baptist. A favorite subject of French artists and writers of the nineteenth century (Moreau, Flaubert, Huysman, Laforgue), the character of Salomé allowed Wilde to indulge himself in an erotic dream of forbidden love. Aubrey Beardsley, the illustrator of the first English edition of this experiment in symbolist drama, may also be its best interpreter. As Elaine Showalter explains, "Beardsley's conflation of Wilde and Salomé, of female corrosive desire and male homosexual love, brings to the surface the play's buried and coded messages." (*Sexual Anarchy*)

Wilde wrote *Salomé* for Sarah Bernhardt, who was already in rehearsal for an 1892 London production when the show was cancelled because of a law prohibiting the representation of Biblical characters on the British stage. *Salomé* has gone on to have a long and lively stage history, but it is perhaps best known as the source of the libretto for Richard Strauss's tragic opera.

78. OSCAR WILDE. *Salomé: Drame En Un Acte*. Paris: Librairie de l'Art Independant, 1893. First edition, one of 50 special copies printed on Van Gelder paper. Presentation copy inscribed by Wilde to the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne "in sincere admiration." Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde said he had the play bound in "Tyrian purple" with "tired" silver lettering to complement Alfred Douglas's gilt hair.

79. Photograph of Sarah Bernhardt sleeping in her coffin, circa 1890. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Considered by many of her contemporaries to be the greatest actress of her generation, Bernhardt was to play Salomé—in French—in the first production of the play, set for July of 1892. Bernhardt was known for her virtuoso death scenes, for which she evidently rehearsed by sleeping in a coffin kept in her dressing room.

80. AUBREY BEARDSLEY. *Oscar Wilde at Work*. Reproduction of caricature drawn circa 1894. Sylvia Beach Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

An effeminized Wilde at work on *Salomé*—a play Beardsley apparently saw (from the titles of the books depicted) as part Bible, part Swinburne, and part Gauthier.

81. LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. “Salomé: A Critical Overview.” *The Spirit Lamp: An Aesthetic, Literary and Critical Magazine*. Volume IV, Number 1. Oxford: James Thornton, May 1893. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

After Douglas wrote this positive review of the play, Wilde suggested that he translate *Salomé* for the English edition. Wilde was not pleased with the results and redid most of it himself; consequently, the English edition lists no translator on the title-page; instead, Wilde dedicates the play to Douglas as the translator on an inside page.

82. OSCAR WILDE. *Salome: A Tragedy in One Act*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1894. First English edition and first edition in English. Illustrations and cover design by Aubrey Beardsley. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

For the frontispiece, Beardsley depicts Wilde as “The Woman in the Moon.” The illustration was first entitled “The Man in the Moon,” and the confusion over gender

seems appropriate to the play and Beardsley's representations of it. Elaine Showalter points out that, despite earlier assumptions that Beardsley had portrayed Salomé and John the Baptist, the couple staring at the moon are actually men: Naraboth, the young Syrian who kills himself out of jealousy; and the Page of Herodias, who loves Naraboth and urges him to look at the moon rather than at Salomé. Showalter writes: "Wilde here is both a specter of judgment and a gay god of the night who looks down on the lovers. The drawing suggests Adam and Eve covering themselves before Jehovah before they are cast out of paradise; or, in this case, what contemporary slang calls Adam and Steve." (*Sexual Anarchy*)

83. AUBREY BEARDSLEY. Proof of the first state of *Enter Herodias*, 1893. Illustration for the first English edition of Wilde's *Salome*, 1894. Inscribed by the artist (with a poem) to Alfred Lambart. Gallatin Beardsley Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde was not pleased by the portrait of him that appears in the lower-right corner, but Beardsley repeatedly represents the play as Wildean psychodrama. In the poem in the upper left corner, Beardsley records his reaction to the fact that this version of the drawing was suppressed because of its "indecenty."

84. AUBREY BEARDSLEY. *The Black Cape*. Pen and ink drawing, 1894. Illustration for the first English edition of Wilde's *Salome*. Gallatin Beardsley Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

85. Posters for Alla Nazimova's movie version of *Salomé*, 1922. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

The sets and costumes by Natacha Rambova for this famous film were derived from Beardsley's drawings.

86. Poster for Steven Berkoff's production of *Salomé*, first staged at the Gate Theatre, Dublin, before a run at the Royal National Theatre, London, and a transfer to the Phoenix in January of 1990. Signed by the director and cast. Lent by Elaine Showalter.

AUBREY BEARDSLEY

As his ubiquity in the cases of this exhibition indicates, more than anyone else, Aubrey Beardsley gave the 1890s its characteristic visual style. Before his untimely death in 1898 at the age of twenty-five, Beardsley's pen-and-ink illustrations, posters, books, and theatre programs made him the most easily recognizable artist of his age. A shocking intelligence informs almost every Beardsley design; indeed, his illustrations for Wilde's *Salomé* constitute a major act of critical interpretation. As art editor of *The Yellow Book*, he created covers and illustrations that sold copies, before he was purged from the staff following Wilde's arrest in April 1895.

87. WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN. *Aubrey Beardsley*. Chalks drawing, circa 1893. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

William Rothenstein, an English artist who was part of the Wilde circle in the 1890s, was a close friend of Max Beerbohm and Aubrey Beardsley. After a long career as a portraitist, lithographer, war artist, and teacher, he was knighted in 1931.

88. AUBREY BEARDSLEY. Manuscript of "The Art of the Hoarding." Gallatin Beardsley Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

First published in *The New Review* in July 1894, Beardsley's essay offers a spirited defense of poster art: "Advertisement is an absolute necessity of modern life, & if it can be made beautiful as well as obvious, so much the better for the makers of soap & the public who are likely to wash. ... London will soon be resplendent with advertisement, & against a leaden sky, skysigns will trace their formal arabesques. Beauty has laid siege to the city & telegraph wires shall no longer be the sole joy of our aesthetic perceptions."

89. *The Yellow Book: An Illustrated Quarterly*. Volume I, April 1894, and Volume II, July 1894. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane. Covers and title-page designs by Beardsley; illustrations by Beardsley, Rothenstein, John Singer Sargent, Joseph Pennell, Walter Sickert, and others. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

During the second act of *An Ideal Husband*, Mrs. Cheveley, the villain of the piece, announces her preference for books "in yellow covers." Her remark refers both to "improper" French novels of the period and to this new English periodical, whose name teasingly alludes to those scandalous novels. Beardsley designed the covers and title-pages (and did many illustrations) for the first four volumes before his association with Wilde led to his dismissal in 1895. Wilde was reputed to have a yellow book under his arm when he was arrested. As Margaret D. Stetz and Mark Samuels Lasner explain, "Although the book in question appears to have been a yellow-bound copy of the novel *Aphrodite* by Pierre Louÿs, this episode solidified the link, in the public imagination, between the disgraced author and the magazine and rendered it necessary, from a

business point of view, to purge the latter of anyone who could not be trusted to be circumspect." (*The Yellow Book: A Centenary Exhibition*)

90. AUBREY BEARDSLEY. Design on first page of theatre program for the first production of Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, Avenue Theatre, London, 21 April 1894. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

91. AUBREY BEARDSLEY. *J'ai Baisé Ta Bouche Jokanaan: Salomé with the Head of John the Baptist*. Pen and ink drawing, 1893. Published in the inaugural issue of *The Studio*, April 1893. Gallatin Beardsley Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

When John Lane saw this drawing inspired by Beardsley's reading of the French edition of *Salomé* he commissioned the artist to illustrate the 1894 English edition.

EXILE

After his release from prison in May of 1897, Wilde left for Europe, never to return to the society that had once been at his feet. Upon landing in France, he handed Robert Ross the manuscript of *De Profundis*, the indictment of Lord Alfred Douglas which he had written in his last months in prison, and began life as "Sebastian Melmoth" with money Ross had raised from subscriptions. The first part of Wilde's alias was suggested by the saint pierced through with arrows, a favorite subject among homoerotically inclined artists; the second by *Melmoth the Wanderer*, the title of a novel by his great-uncle Charles Maturin. Wilde's wife Constance, who had adopted the surname of

Holland, showed little interest in his plan to become a model husband and father. He turned instead to his writing. In July and August of 1897, Wilde composed *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, his best poem; it was published pseudonymously in February of 1898.

92. Hotel bill for Wilde's stay at the Hôtel de la Plage. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries. • Postcard of Hôtel de la Plage de Berneval-sur-Mer. Sylvia Beach Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Following his release from prison, Wilde lived in Berneval for over three months. The hotel bill records the use of his pseudonym, Sebastian Melmoth.

93. Photograph of Leonard Smithers, circa 1897. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Smithers was the publisher of two of Wilde's plays and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*.

94. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Leonard Smithers, circa November 1897. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde deeply resented the conditions to which he had to agree in order to receive a modest allowance from his wife: "I wish you would start a Society for the Defence of Oppressed Personalities: at present there is a gross European concert headed by brutes and solicitors against us. It is really ridiculous that after my entire life has been wrecked by Society, people should still propose to exercise social tyranny over me, and try to force me to live in solitude—the one thing I can't stand. I lived in silence and solitude for two years in prison. I did not think that on my release my wife, my trustees, the guardians of my children, my few friends, such as they are, and my myriad enemies

would combine to force me by starvation to live in silence and solitude again. After all in prison we had food of some kind: it was revolting, and made as loathesome as possible on purpose, and quite inadequate to sustain life in health. Still, there *was* food of some kind. The scheme now is that I am to live in silence and solitude and have no food at all. Really, the want of imagination in people is appalling. This scheme is put forward on moral grounds! It is proposed to leave me to die of starvation, or to blow my brains out in a Naples urinal."

95. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Leonard Smithers, 19 November 1897. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde was in constant communication with Smithers over the publication of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. In this letter, he explains that the characters of the poem are not based on real-life counterparts at Reading: "With regard to the description of a prison doctor: the passage in which it occurs does not refer to a particular execution, but to executions in general. I was not present at the Reading execution, nor do I know anything about it. I am describing a general scene with general types."

96. C. 3. 3. (pseudonym of Oscar Wilde). *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. London: Leonard Smithers, 1898. First edition. Presentation copy inscribed by the author to Robert Buchanan. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde explained that the use of his cell number as a pseudonym was "not a mere literary caprice, but the actual name for eighteen months of the man who wrote the poem." The recipient of this copy, poet and dramatist Robert Buchanan—famed for his attack on the Pre-Raphaelites

in *The Fleshly School of Poetry* (1872)—had argued for “Christian charity” towards Wilde in a letter published in *The Star*, 15 April 1896.

97. OSCAR WILDE. *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. London: Methuen and Co., 1925. Number 5 of 50 special copies. Woodcut illustrations by Frans Masereel. Graphic Arts Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

A German Expressionist interprets Wilde’s poem.

“A POOR ENDING”

Wilde’s final years were characterized by financial hardship and operatic relationships. Three months after his release from prison, despite admonitions from his wife and friends, Wilde reunited with Douglas. Ignoring his own scathing analysis of his lover in *De Profundis*, Wilde wrote to him, “I feel that it is only with you that I can do anything at all. Do remake my ruined life for me, and then our friendship and love will have a different meaning to the world.” Within four months, their relationship was at an end. In April of 1898, Constance Wilde died after an operation to treat her spinal paralysis. Wilde was baptized into the Catholic Church before his own death in November of 1900. Douglas paid for the funeral.

98. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Leonard Smithers, circa 10 December 1897. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

In this letter, Wilde objects to the fact that his friends Robert Ross and More Adey have not protested his wife’s decision to list Lord Alfred Douglas among the “disreputable persons” he must avoid living with if he is to con-

tinue to receive an allowance from her: "I do not deny that Alfred Douglas is a gilded pillar of infamy, but I do deny that he can be properly described in a *legal* document as a disreputable person, and I felt that some little stand might have been made by his friends and mine, for both Robbie and More Adey have been on friendly terms with Alfred Douglas and been with him in Paris. Indeed Robbie spent two months in Capri with him last year. Of course they could not have prevented my wife doing what she wished, but they could have protested, and that protest would have helped me. *Hinc illae lachrymae.*"

99. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Leonard Smithers, circa 30 November 1897. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde continuously wrote to Smithers about his financial difficulties. In this letter, he discloses that he is also suffering emotional hardships: "My handwriting—once Greek and gracious—is now illegible: I am very sorry: but I really am a wreck of nerves. I don't eat or sleep: I live on cigarettes."

100. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Leonard Smithers, circa 8 May 1898. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

By this point, Wilde relied almost entirely on what little money his publisher could send: "Nothing has arrived this morning. I hope to get a little from you in the course of the day, as I am in a very bad way, and had no dinner on Friday and Saturday last."

101. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Herbert Charles Pollitt, postmarked 26 November 1898. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

During 1898–99 Wilde carried on an epistolary romance with Pollitt, a collector (of Beardsley and Whistler), dancer, and drama enthusiast. In this letter, he complains that he is “always worried by that mosquito, money,” and says: “Peace is as requisite to the artist as the saint: my soul is made mean by sordid anxieties. It is a poor ending, but I had been accustomed to purple and gold.”

102. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Herbert Charles Pollitt, 3 December 1898. J. Harlin O’Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde thanks Pollitt for two photographs of himself which he has sent: “Mrs. [Ada] Levenson, a recognised authority for the colour of young men’s hair, assured me you were quite golden, and I have always thought of you as a sort of gilt sunbeam masquerading in clothes, but, no doubt, you are Protean, and have many forms. When you come to Paris be golden entirely, and leave your more serious aspect in charge of [Leonard] Smithers, who needs, indeed, some stern monitor for his manner of living.”

103. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Herbert Charles Pollitt, postmarked 31 December 1898. J. Harlin O’Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde describes Napoule, on the Riviera, where Frank Harris has taken him on vacation: “It is a little fishing village, on the Golfe de Juan, close to Cannes. The inhabitants have beautiful eyes, crisp hair of a hyacinth colour, and no morals—an ideal race. At times, being morbid, I am bored by the lack of intellect: but that is a grave fault: I attribute it to Oxford. None of us survive culture.”

104. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Leonard Smithers, postmarked 8 June 1899. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde recounts a particularly vivacious luncheon Lord Alfred Douglas has enjoyed and celebrates the anonymous publication of Douglas's volume of poetry, *The City of the Soul*. The review Wilde mentions, entitled "A Great Unknown" and also published anonymously, was in fact written by Lionel Johnson: "The luncheon at Maire's lasted from 12:30 to 5:15. Burgundy, Champagne and Cognac of 1800 were consumed in goblets. Bosie had vine-leaves in his hair and saw the moon at mid-day; the evening was agitating. Bosie is naturally in high spirits over his first review in the *Outlook*; it certainly is splendid. It arrived while we were dining together at Avenue Kleber, and we celebrated the glory of the 'Great Unknown' at the Horse-Shoe Bar."

105. [LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS]. *The City of the Soul*. London: Grant Richards, 1899. First edition. Presentation copy of Douglas's second volume of poetry, inscribed by the author to Philip Walsingham Sergeant. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

In the wake of the trials, it was deemed still advisable for Douglas to publish this volume of verse anonymously.

THE NEW ENGLISH RENAISSANCE

While at Oxford, Wilde pursued a degree in *Literae humaniores*—"Greats," as the curriculum is still nicknamed. Linda Dowling observes that in Wilde's day this course of classical studies, pursued by most Oxonians, reflected the attempt of Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol College, "to shift the curricular bias ... both away from Latin and toward Greek, and away from the narrowly grammatical

emphasis in reading ancient texts and toward a powerfully engaged mode of reading which insisted on the vivid contemporaneity and philosophical depths of these works." (*Hellenism and Homosexuality at Oxford*) Jowett hoped that exposure to the classical tradition, with Plato at the center, would undermine the hold of religious authority on undergraduates and open them up to the contemporary progressive thought which he believed would bring a new renaissance to Great Britain.

"Greats" tutors like Walter Pater were expected to encourage their students to read the past on its own terms, not from a Christian standpoint. As Dowling notes, one by-product of this education was exposure to the idea—and sometimes the practice—of *paiderastia*, the "boy love" at the heart of Athenian culture. In the defenses of same-sex affection produced by Wilde, Douglas, John Addington Symonds and other Oxonians who argued for the legitimization of what is now referred to as homosexuality, "Platonic," "Greek," or "Uranian" love is inevitably invoked as a historical precedent. The emphasis of the "Greats" course of study on the otherness of the past inspired many to look at the first English Renaissance—the period of Shakespeare and Marlowe—in a similarly historicist and similarly homoerotic fashion. The title of Wilde's lecture in America on modern British culture, "The English Renaissance of Art," registered his belief that Jowett's plan was beginning to work.

106. MAX BEERBOHM. *Oxford 1891. Mr. Walter Pater Taking His Walk Through the Meadows*. Pencil, ink, and watercolor drawing, 1926. Inscribed and signed by the artist. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Walter Pater, Fellow and Tutor at Brasenose College, Oxford University, was the author of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, one of the most influential books of the

late nineteenth century. His career at Oxford was tainted by the revelation of his romantic involvement with an undergraduate named William Money Hardinge.

107. WALTER PATER. *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1873. First edition. Henry James's copy of Pater's first book. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Wilde referred to Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* as "my golden book"; in *De Profundis* he described it as a "book which has had such a strange influence on my life." It affected many of Wilde's contemporaries in equally strong ways. Richard Ellmann has called it the "pivotal jolt" in Henry James's life and fiction. This copy belonged to James and bears his ownership signature on the title-page.

108. OSCAR WILDE. *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: David Nutt, 1888. First edition. Illustrations and cover design by Walter Crane and Jacomb Hood. Presentation copy inscribed by the author to "R. Tristram Ross," e.g. Robert Ross. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde wrote to a friend that these tales were "meant partly for children, and partly for those who have kept the childlike faculties of wonder and joy, and who find in simplicity a subtle strangeness."

109. WALTER PATER. Letter to Oscar Wilde, 12 June 1888. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Although he did not attend Pater's lectures while at Oxford, Wilde became friendly with him there and later

praised his essays as “the golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty.” Wilde must have been gratified to receive this enthusiastic response to *The Happy Prince* from a writer he admired so deeply: “I am confined to my room with gout, but have been consoling myself with ‘The Happy Prince,’ and feel it would be ungrateful not to send a line to tell you how delightful I have found him and his companions. ... The whole, too brief, book abounds with delicate touches and pure English.”

110. WALTER PATER. *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1873. First edition. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

This copy is open to the “Conclusion” of the book, which Pater was persuaded to drop in later editions for fear of its immoral influence on young men. At least one young man was seduced by the call “to burn” with a “hard, gemlike flame”: Dorian Gray quotes the “Conclusion” without acknowledgement.

111. OSCAR WILDE. *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* London: Privately printed (probably by Leonard Smithers), circa 1904. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde’s essay originally appeared in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, July 1889. In fictional form, it concerns a series of men attempting to discover the secret of Shakespeare’s sonnets—a secret thought to lodge in the poet’s affection for a boy-actor—and may have been inspired by Wilde’s first homosexual relationship, which began in 1886, with the seventeen-year-old Robert Ross. At the first trial, Wilde was asked whether he had “written an article to show that Shakespeare’s sonnets were suggestive of unnatural vice.” He replied, “On the contrary, I have written

an article to show that they are not. I objected to such a perversion being put upon Shakespeare." Wilde's essay implies that we interpret according to the shape of our own desires.

112. MAX BEERBOHM. *Had Shakespeare Asked Me...* Pen and ink and watercolor drawing, 1896. Inscribed by the artist. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Wilde's friend Frank Harris, the notoriously heterosexual author of the pornographic classic *My Life and Loves*, denied any interest in homosexuality. But Harris's *The Man Shakespeare* (1909), a highly speculative piece of biographical criticism, reflects *fin de siècle* fascination with Shakespeare's sexual identity. Beerbohm's caricature records Harris's remark about the one exception he might have been willing to make.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STAGING EARNEST: 1895–1993

Wilde's comic masterpiece fell out of the repertoire briefly following the trials, but it soon assumed canonical status on the stage and in the classroom. In 1895, William Archer proved the play's best critic: "Mr. Pater, I think (or is it someone else?), has an essay on the tendency of all art to verge towards, and merge in, the absolute art—music. He might have found an example in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which imitates nothing, means nothing, is nothing, except a sort of *rondo capriccioso*, in which the artist's fingers run with crisp irresponsibility up and down the keyboard of life. Why attempt to analyze and class such a play?"

113. OSCAR WILDE. Letter to Leonard Smithers, 14 December 1898. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde arranges to dedicate *The Importance of Being Earnest* to Robert Ross, his first male lover and eventual literary executor: "The dedication of the play is To Robert Baldwin Ross in appreciation in affection."

114. [OSCAR WILDE]. *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*. London: Leonard Smithers and Co., 1899. First edition. Cover design by Charles Shannon. Presentation copy inscribed by the author to Jerome [Herbert Charles] Pollitt. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde's name could not appear on the title-page, but he personalized this gift to an epistolary friend, who "preferred Jerome to his own Christian name."

115. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. *Dramatic Opinions and Essays, Containing as well a Word on the Dramatic Opinions and Essays of G. Bernard Shaw by James Huneker*. New York: Brentano's, 1906. First edition, unauthorized. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Shaw did not care for *The Importance of Being Earnest* when he reviewed the original production for *The Saturday Review*. He never reformed his opinion and later dismissed it as "heartless" and "hateful"—"a real degeneracy produced by his debaucheries."

116. Theatre program from the original production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, St. James's Theatre, London, 14 February 1895. Signed by Wilde. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries. • Photographs of three members of the play's first cast: George Alexander as John

Worthing, Irene Vanbrugh as Gwendolen, and Evelyn Millard as Cicely. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries. • Box office receipt from the 38th performance at the St. James's Theatre. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

117. Theatre program for John Gielgud's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Royale Theatre, New York, 1947, with Gielgud as John Worthing and Edith Evans as Lady Bracknell. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

118. Advertisement for production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, McCarter Theatre, Princeton University, 1989. Lent by Michael Cadden.

119. Photograph of Ellis Rabb and Rosemary Harris in production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, McCarter Theatre, Princeton University, 1960. Gift of Allison Delarue. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

120. Theatre program and souvenir brochure for the revival of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Aldwych Theatre, London, 1993. Lent by Michael Cadden.

Giovanni Boldini's portrait of the beautiful Lady Colin Campbell (an acquaintance of Wilde who once referred to him as "The Great White Slug") graces the cover of this program for the recent revival directed by Nicholas Hytner. The souvenir brochure shows Maggie Smith as Lady Bracknell and Bob Crowley's extraordinary peacock set for Act II.

THE WILDE TRIALS OF 1895

Angry over Wilde's relationship with his son, the Marquess of Queensberry, father of Lord Alfred Douglas, left a card at the Albemarle Club addressed "To Oscar Wilde posing sodomite [sic]." After consultation with a solicitor who was in the dark about Wilde's sexuality, Wilde sued Queensberry for libel and lost the case. At a second trial, Wilde himself stood accused—of "gross indecency" and "sodomy." A hung jury led to a third trial, which ended with Wilde's conviction and sentencing to two years' hard labor.

It was not only Oscar Wilde the man on trial. Throughout the proceedings, Wilde was required to defend his work and that of other writers with whom he was associated. Much of the art and culture of his age stood in the dock with him.

121. *The Great West-End Scandal: Oscar Wilde Exposed*. London: [Reynolds's Newspaper,] 1895. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Ironically enough, in the introductory editorial to this digest of the trials from *Reynolds's Newspaper*, the author bemoans the public's fascination with them: "The morbid interest which the persons in the street have taken in the case throughout suggests that there is a lack of moral stiffening—a decadence—in the community." The author refuses to be surprised, however: "In the era of the 'new woman,' it is not astonishing to discover that the sex-problem is putting on a new face, and making out a fresh course for itself."

As this account indicates, Wilde's trials were made possible by the Labouchère Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, the so-called "blackmailer's charter": "Any male person who, in public or private, commits,

or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.”

122. *Just Out, Complete: The Life of Oscar Wilde as Prosecutor and Prisoner*. London: Published for the proprietors, 1895. J. Harlin O’Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Another newspaper-based account of the trials, which reports how Wilde was questioned about an extravagantly worded love letter to Douglas; “The Priest and the Acolyte,” a short story in a magazine to which he contributed; and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which Wilde’s cross-examiner thought a “perverted novel.”

123. *The Chameleon*. Volume I, Number 1. London: Gay and Bird, [December 1894]. Presentation copy. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

At the trials Wilde was repeatedly questioned about material printed in this Oxford-based homosexual journal edited by John Bloxam, whose last name makes an appearance in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Wilde defended Douglas’s poem “Two Loves” in his immortal courtroom speech on “The Love that dare not speak its name.” When asked whether he thought “The Priest and the Acolyte,” a story in *The Chameleon* concerning a romantic relationship between a priest and an altar boy, was immoral, he replied, “It was worse. It was badly written.”

124. OSCAR WILDE. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Lippincott’s *Monthly Magazine*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott,

July 1890. First appearance of the novel. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

In the first trial, Wilde was questioned about the *Lippincott's* magazine version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* rather than the later book edition. Edward Carson, Queensberry's barrister, suggested that Wilde had revised the text of the novel to answer critics who found the book immoral—one charged it was only fit for “outlawed noblemen and perverted telegraph boys” (a reference to an earlier homosexual scandal). Wilde countered that he had made one change: “In one case, it was pointed out to me—not in a newspaper or anything of that sort, but by the only critic of the century whose opinion I set high, Mr. Walter Pater—that a certain passage was liable to misconstruction, and I made an addition.” Twenty years earlier, Pater had dropped the “Conclusion” from *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* because it might be liable to immoral misconstruction.

125. [OSCAR WILDE]. *Oscariana: Epigrams*. London: Privately printed by Arthur Humphreys, 1895. First edition of 50 copies. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Collected from Wilde's work by his wife Constance, this volume opens with a section entitled “Credo,” a reprint of “The Preface” from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Epigrams from this preface were used against Wilde at the trials. One example: “There is no such thing as an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all.”

126. ARTHUR HUMPHREYS. Letter to Oscar Wilde, 11 March 1895. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Arthur Humphreys was an author, publisher and bookseller who produced two privately printed Wilde volumes in 1895: *Oscariana*, a collection of epigrams from Wilde's

work selected by Constance Wilde, and *The Soul of Man*. In this letter, Humphreys offers his support during the first of the trials and alludes to Wilde's solicitor, C. O. Humphreys, who was unrelated to him: "I am confident in your success as is everyone & particularly pleased to think that more than one person named Humphreys is sticking up for you."

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS, THE BELOVED "BOSIE"

Wilde was introduced to the twenty-year-old Lord Alfred Douglas in the summer of 1891 by Douglas's Oxford friend and former schoolmate, Lionel Johnson, who himself was in love with Wilde. In the spring of 1892, Wilde and Douglas became lovers. Their intimacy ultimately provoked Douglas's father, the Marquess of Queensberry, into the insult that led to the trials of 1895. Douglas and Wilde reunited soon after the latter's release from prison in 1897. Although they were often out of love in the final years of Wilde's life, Douglas paid for Wilde's funeral.

In 1902, Douglas eloped with Olive Custance, a contributor to *The Yellow Book* whose poetry was published by John Lane. Although their relationship proved difficult, they had one child, a son. Late in the first decade of the new century, Douglas began a career in journalism as editor of *The Academy*, but it ended in the kind of litigious quarrels that characterized his middle years. In particular, he feuded with Robert Ross, Wilde's literary executor, over the use of *De Profundis*, the prison manuscript Wilde had written as a letter to Douglas. Over the course of his life, Douglas published many volumes of poetry and numerous accounts of his years with Wilde.

127. Photogravure reproduction of photograph (1893) of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas at Oxford. Sylvia Beach Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

128. OSCAR WILDE. *Poems*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1892. Author's edition of 220 copies signed by Wilde. Title-page, limitation notice, endpapers, and cover design by Charles Ricketts. Presentation copy inscribed by Wilde to Lord Alfred Douglas. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Wilde's inscription reads: "From Oscar To the gilt-mailed Boy at Oxford in the heart of June." The use of the phrase "gilt-mailed" may allude not only to Douglas's blonde hair but also, ironically, to the incident that drew them together. In the spring of 1892, Douglas was being "blackmailed" over an indiscreet letter and turned to Wilde for assistance. This so-called "Author's Edition," the first volume issued under the joint imprint of Elkin Mathews and John Lane, consisted of the unsold sheets from the fifth edition of the 1881 *Poems* done up with new preliminary leaves and a binding designed by Charles Ricketts.

129. BERNARD BERENSON. Letter to Raymond Mortimer, 6 November 1949. Raymond Mortimer Collection, Princeton University Libraries. Gift of The Viscountess Eccles.

Many of Wilde's friends and admirers worried about his relationship with the reckless Lord Alfred Douglas. As a young American in England in the 1880s, Bernard Berenson, later to distinguish himself as an art connoisseur, became friendly with the Wilde circle. Although he resisted Wilde's sexual advances, he admired him enough to worry about his connection to Douglas. In this letter, he says that he warned Wilde "that A. D. would bring him to the

gutter,” and he recounts a meeting with Wilde in 1894: “He came to Florence & A. D. (as I learned) was with him. Oscar invited me to dinner, & I accepted on condition that Douglas would not be there. He was, & looked dissipated, batty, a fucked out whore & I was furious.” Wilde apologizes but breaks with Berenson over his disapproval of Douglas: “Bernard, I always imitate my Maker & like him I want nothing but praise.”

130. *The Spirit Lamp: An Aesthetic, Literary and Critical Magazine*. Volume IV, Number II. Oxford: James Thornton, June 1893. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

When Lord Alfred Douglas took over the editorship of this Oxford undergraduate magazine, he contacted former Oxonians interested in same-sex affections like Wilde and John Addington Symonds, as well as up-and-coming undergraduates like H. M. (Max) Beerbohm.

131. LIONEL JOHNSON. Letter to More Adey, 13 July 1895. J. Harlin O’Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Johnson, a poet and critic, introduced Lord Alfred Douglas to Wilde in 1891. Here, four years later, and a few weeks after Wilde’s sentencing, he was trying to persuade friends to visit the disconsolate Douglas in France: “I am going over next week to see Bosie at Havre, for a couple of days. Lady Queensberry is anxious to know about his movements: can you tell me, when you will be able to join him again, or go to Sorrento with him? It is very important for Bosie’s health and peace of mind, that he should be alone as little as possible. I am absolutely fixed here by my work, and most of his Oxford friends seem unable or unwilling, for various reasons, to accompany him.”

132. LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. *Poems*. Paris: Mercure de France, 1896. First edition, one of 25 large paper copies printed on special paper. Frontispiece portrait of the author by Walter Spindler. Presentation copy of Douglas's first book, inscribed to Ernest La Jeunesse, "En témoignage d'admiration et d'amitié affectueuse. Alfred Douglas. November 1896. Naples." Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Douglas arranged for publication of his poems after he fled England for Europe during the third and last of Wilde's trials. The bilingual volume (English verse with French prose translations) includes two of the poems from *The Chameleon* which were used against Wilde in the trials—"In Praise of Shame" and "Two Loves." Wilde refused Douglas's request that he be allowed to dedicate the volume to Wilde. Ernest La Jeunesse, to whom the author presented this copy, was a French poet, critic, and friend of Wilde.

133. LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. Typescript of unpublished article intended for *Mercure de France*, 1895. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

In the introduction to her book *Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas: A Correspondence*, Mary Hyde explains the origins of this document: "In August Douglas was still deep in his writing campaign [for Wilde's release], working on an article for *Mercure de France*, an eloquent and poetic argument in support of Wilde. It included three beautiful but compromising letters from Wilde, one written the night before the final session of the libel trial, one while Wilde was on bail between the second and third trials, and one written while [Alfred] Taylor was being tried. Robert Sherard, who lived in Paris, a devoted friend of Wilde though not a member of the coterie, cautioned Douglas—

without success—against using the letters. Shortly after this, Sherard visited Wilde in prison and, during their twenty minutes together, told Wilde of Douglas's proposed article. Wilde was horrified to hear that Douglas intended to publish his intimate letters and begged Sherard to stop him. When Sherard returned to Paris he was able to persuade the *Mercure de France* to omit the letters, but Douglas refused to publish the article without them. Thus it was never published, though typescripts survive."

134. LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. Manuscript of "All's Well With England," poem written probably in 1915. J. Harlin O'Connell Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Although he kept in touch with many in the Wilde circle after he married Olive Custance in 1902, Douglas broke with most of his old friends after the 1912 publication of Arthur Ransome's *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study*. Written with the help of Robert Ross, Wilde's literary executor (and first male lover), the book blamed Douglas, without naming him, for Wilde's fall and alluded to unpublished portions of Wilde's *De Profundis* as evidence. Douglas sued Ransome for libel, claiming never to have known that *De Profundis* was based on a letter addressed to him. His loss in court had a profound effect on Douglas. As Mary Hyde writes, "The exposure of *De Profundis* turned Douglas against Wilde's memory. In anger and bitterness, he answered his charges in *Oscar Wilde and Myself* (1914), an attack on Wilde and a vindication of his own behaviour." (*Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas: A Correspondence*) In 1914, Ross sued Douglas for libelling him by accusing him of homosexuality and blackmail. This time, the jury could not reach a verdict, and Douglas was acquitted. Douglas was furious when Ross's friends the next year offered the man he had called "the filthiest and most

notorious Bugger in London” a £700 gift and testimonial complete with an encomium by Edmund Gosse. This sonnet, “All’s Well With England,” was Douglas’s “patriotic” response:

Scorn not the ‘literary executor.’
He is officially condoned, for he
Has lifted Oscar Wilde from obloquy
And planted him in our hearts’ inmost core.
Behold the signatories take the floor!
Plymouth and Beauchamp, Gosse and Wells, and see
Budding around the genial Beerbohm Tree,
Schiff, Schiller, Schuster, Spielman and some more.

Out there in Flanders all the trampled ground
Is red with English blood, our children pass
Through fire to Moloch. Who will count the cost?
Since here at home sits merry Margot, crowned
With Lesbian fillets, while with front of brass,
‘Old Squiffy’ hands the purse to Robert Ross.

135. LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. *The Rossiad*. Galashiele: Robert Dawson & Son, 1916. First edition. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

Even after battling him in court, Douglas continued to attack Ross in public. This mock epic poem declares “The German” and “The Sodomite” the two great enemies of wartime England. In his satirical explanatory notes, Douglas writes: “Mr. Robert Ross, in accepting the testimonial and gift of money, gracefully intimates that he would like to devote the latter to a ‘public object.’ The Senate of the University of London thereupon gives evidence of ‘humour and resource’ by accepting the money to found a scholarship for boys, to be called the ‘Robert Ross Scholarship.’” With Ross’s death in 1918, Douglas began to take a less choleric view of his Wilde years.

THE SPHINX AND THE MINX

When Elkin Mathews and John Lane published Wilde's poem *The Sphinx*, they produced one of the most beautiful examples of *fin de siècle* bookmaking. Wilde began the poem at Oxford in his student days, completed it in Paris in 1883, and finally brought it out in 1894. In the poem, a poet of "some twenty summers" explores and ultimately chastens his erotic imagination through his interrogation of a sphinx, either an *objet d'art* or a creature of his perfer-vid imagination. The poem's linguistic excesses, combined with Charles Ricketts's extraordinary design, made *The Sphinx* an easy target for parody. Wilde's friend Ada Leveson did the honors, with the help of illustrator Edward Tennyson Reed. Leveson's *Punch* send-up of Wilde's obsession with the *femme fatale* transforms her into that more familiar domestic creature, The Minx. The following year, Leveson turned her parodic skills to Wilde's plays, including her take-off on *The Importance of Being Earnest*, entitled "The Advisability of Not Being Brought Up in a Handbag: A Trivial Tragedy for Wonderful People."

136. OSCAR WILDE. *The Sphinx*. London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1894. First edition. Illustrations, typography, and cover design by Charles Ricketts. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

This volume's vellum and gilt binding, unusual typography, and use of green, red, and black ink make it one of the most remarkable examples of 1890s art nouveau bookmaking in England. The poem itself, which Wilde started working on in the 1870s, is one of his many explorations of the *femme fatale*.

137. CHARLES RICKETTS. *The Moon Horn'd Io*. Pen and ink drawing, 1893. Illustration for Wilde's *The Sphinx*,

1894. Signed and dated by the artist. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

In his *A Defence of the Revival of Printing* (1899), Ricketts writes, "In the pictures [for *The Sphinx*] I have striven to combine... those affinities in line work broadcast in all epochs. My attempt there as elsewhere was to evolve what one might imagine as possible in one charmed moment or place."

138. EDWARD TENNYSON REED. *The Minx*. Pen and ink drawing, 1894. Published in *Punch*, 21 July 1894. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

This drawing illustrated Ada Leverson's "The Minx: A Poem in Prose," a parody of Wilde's *The Sphinx*, by parodying Charles Ricketts's designs for the Wilde poem.

139. ADA LEVERSON. "The Minx.: A Poem in Prose." *Punch*, 21 July 1894. Princeton University Libraries.

A parody of *The Sphinx* by one of Wilde's best friends. According to Alfred L. Bush (*Wilde and The Nineties: An Exhibition in the Princeton University Library*), "Mrs. Leverson, whom Wilde had called 'The Sphinx' from the beginning of their friendship two years before the publication of [*The Sphinx*], was the wife of a diamond merchant of considerable fortune, later a successful novelist herself, and the center of a salon which included most of the literati of the decade. Responding to her playful satire, Wilde wrote that '*Punch* is delightful and the drawing a masterpiece of clever caricature. I am afraid she really was a minx after all. You are the only Sphinx.'"

140. OSCAR WILDE. *Ballade de la Geôle de Reading*. Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1898. First French edition, with English text and French translations by

Henry D. Davrey on facing pages. Presentation copy inscribed by Wilde to Ada Levenson: "To the Sphinx of Pleasure: From the Singer of Pain." Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND

Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* opened to critical and popular acclaim at the Haymarket Theatre, London, on 3 January 1895; the first audience included the Prince of Wales and many high-ranking government ministers. Wilde's story of a "man with a past" focuses on a rising statesman who started his climb to the top with a corrupt deal and now faces blackmail. In what, retrospectively, reads as autobiographical wish fulfillment, the hero's reputation and marriage are ultimately rescued by a Wildean dandy. Recently revived in London by Sir Peter Hall, this society drama's investigation of the relationship between private and public morality still resonates.

141. OSCAR WILDE. Typescript of *An Ideal Husband* used for the original production of the play, 1895. Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

This heavily annotated typescript was used as a production, rehearsal or prompt copy during the first production of *An Ideal Husband*, which went into rehearsal in December of 1894 and opened on 3 January 1895. The script records textual cuts and changes, additional dialogue, stage directions, cues, and a pencilled-in cast list. Many of the notes are in Wilde's own hand, but not this prescient rewrite of Mrs. Cheveley's confrontation with Lord Goring in Act I: "In old days scandals used to lend charm or at any rate interest to a man. Now they crush him. Not a

year passes in this England of yours without someone disappearing and yours would be a very nasty scandal." A few months later Wilde and his play would disappear as the result of "a very nasty scandal."

142. Theatre program for the first production of *An Ideal Husband*, Haymarket Theatre, London, 1895. Lent by Mark Samuels Lasner.

Although the program announces a coming transfer to the Criterion Theatre, the show was closed down in the wake of Wilde's arrest.

143. Photographs of three members of the original cast of *An Ideal Husband*: Lewis Waller as Sir Robert Chiltern, Julia Neilson as Lady Chiltern, and Charles Hawtrey as Lord Goring. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

144. [OSCAR WILDE]. *An Ideal Husband*. London: Leonard Smithers and Co., 1899. First edition. Cover design by Charles Shannon. Presentation copy inscribed by Wilde to John Strange Winter. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

John Strange Winter was the pen name of the successful novelist Henrietta Eliza Vaughan Palmer (Mrs. Arthur) Stannard, best known for her 1885 best-seller, *Bootles' Baby*. She befriended Wilde when he arrived in France after his release from prison.

145. Theatre program for the revival of *An Ideal Husband*, Globe Theatre, London, 1992. Lent by Michael Cadden.

Sir Peter Hall directed this successful production. A program note calls the audience's attention both to the

play's reception in 1895 and to the problems caused by the Wilde trials.

146. OSCAR WILDE. Manuscript of "Epigrams." Robert H. Taylor Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

Like most of Wilde's work, *An Ideal Husband* abounds in epigrammatic wit. This manuscript shows Wilde gathering together some examples:

It is only those who are in debt that can afford the luxuries of life.

To produce a colour-effect on others is a note of culture.

The tragedy of Beauty is that it dies. The tragedy of genius is that it lives on.

Only the shallow know themselves.

The well-bred contradict other people. The wise contradict themselves.

One should never listen. To listen is a sign of indifference to one's hearers.

No crime is vulgar, but all vulgarity is a crime. Vulgarity is the conduct of other people.

To be really mediaeval one should have no body. To be really modern one should have no soul.

To be really Greek one should have no clothes.

There is something tragic about the enormous number of young men there are in England at the present moment who start life with perfect profiles and end by adopting some useful profession.

147. HENRIK IBSEN. *Ibsen's Prose Dramas: The League of Youth, The Pillars of Society, and A Doll's House, Translated and edited by William Archer*. London: Walter Scott, 1890. First edition. Princeton University Libraries.

Kerry Powell comments that Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* borrowed "the favorite Ibsenite device of the idealized man with a sordid history" from *The Pillars of Society*. (*Oscar Wilde and the Theatre of the 1890s*) But whereas Ibsen's play requires the revelation and expiation of a public man's secret shame, Wilde's allows the hero to escape public humiliation and, indeed, to accept a seat in the Cabinet.

148. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. London: Walter Scott, 1891. First edition. Rare Books Division, Princeton University Libraries.

According to Kerry Powell (*Oscar Wilde and the Theatre of the 1890s*), Wilde may have borrowed his title from Shaw's analysis of *A Doll's House*, in which he repeatedly refers to Torvald as "the ideal husband."

APOTHEOSIS

One hundred years after the trials which temporarily robbed him of his name, Oscar Wilde has returned to reclaim his centrality not only to the story of the 1890s but also to the history of letters and the history of sexuality. On 14 February 1995, the centenary of the opening night of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a window with Wilde's name was commemorated in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner. Among the celebrants were Wilde's descendants and the heirs of Lord Alfred Douglas.

Although Wilde has never been absent from the stages of the world, he has gained a new prominence in the acad-

emy as feminist and gay literary and cultural critics have begun to establish his role in the redefinition of gender at the end of the nineteenth century.

149. NEIL BARTLETT. *Who Was That Man? A Present for Mr. Oscar Wilde*. London: Serpent's Tail, 1988. First edition. Lent by Michael Cadden.

A contemporary gay novelist, playwright, and director meditates on his love-hate relationship with Wilde, based on the difference a century can make. In the fall of 1994, Bartlett initiated his tenure as artistic director of the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, with a stage adaptation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

150. ED COHEN. *Talk on the Wilde Side: Toward a Genealogy of Discourse on Male Sexualities*. New York: Routledge, 1993. First edition. Lent by Michael Cadden.

Cohen, Associate Professor of English at Rutgers University, argues that the Wilde trials marked a turning point in the history of sexuality by establishing the modern distinction between "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality."

151. JEFF NUNOKAWA. *Oscar Wilde*. New York: Chelsea House, 1995. First edition. Lent by Michael Cadden.

Nunokawa, Associate Professor of English and Donald A. Stauffer Bicentennial Preceptor at Princeton University, inscribes Wilde into the history of same-sex affections in this contribution to a series on "Lives of Notable Gay Men and Lesbians."

152. ELAINE SHOWALTER. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. New York: Viking, 1990. First edition. Presentation copy. Lent by Michael Cadden.

Showalter, Avalon Professor of the Humanities and Professor of English at Princeton University, sees Wilde as a central figure in the redefinition of gender categories and possibilities at the end of the nineteenth century.

153. *Gay Times*. Issue 193, October 1994. Lent by Michael Cadden.

For its cover story on "The Oscar Wilde Centenary," this British periodical provides a very 1990s picture of Dorian Gray.

154. ALAN SINFIELD. *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment*. London: Cassell, 1994. Lent by Michael Cadden. • [American edition]. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Lent by Mary Ann Jensen.

The front cover of the British edition of this study of Wilde emphasizes the "Queer" of Sinfield's subtitle by using a T-shirt from OutRage!, a British gay rights group of the 1990s. The American edition takes a less political approach, stressing the book's analysis of "Effeminacy."

155. Program for Oscar Wilde's installation in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, 14 February 1995. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries. Gift of Donald P. Hartz and James L. Shannon.

156. Program for Oscar Wilde's installation in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, 14 February 1995. Large version. Theatre Collection, Princeton University Libraries. Gift of Merlin Holland.

Two programs were printed for the window dedication at Westminster Abbey on 14 February 1995 marking the centenary of the opening night of *The Importance of Being*

Earnest. The smaller one was done up by the Abbey to be distributed to the overflow crowd. Merlin Holland, Oscar Wilde's grandson, commissioned a larger and more handsome souvenir, which the Abbey staff apparently neglected to pass out at the occasion; the example on display was presented to the Library by Mr. Holland following his visit to this exhibition on 28 May 1995.

157. "Poetic Wilde has last word." *The Guardian*, 15 February 1995. Princeton University Libraries.

A report on Wilde's installation in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey, with a photograph of his memorial window. Wilde's grandson quipped of the appropriateness of the choice of a window, "He's neither in nor out."