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C.P. CAVAFY AND THE POETICS OF THE INNOCENT FORM

Being "I" is home.

Stephen Spender

In this short essay we are interested neither in genetic or constructivist theories about homosexual behaviour nor in their application to Cavafy's poetry; we are simply interested in addressing the issue of how Cavafy constituted the homosexual within his subjectivity and how he represented it with his poetry. More specifically, we will discuss the formal representations he chose to employ in order to make each one of his poems chronicles of the creative need that generated them and, at the same time, we will attempt to problematise the homosexual as a literary dimension in his work. However, we don't in any way wish to hypostatise and substantify the particularity of his behaviour or to transform it into a "core-quality" of being, as an essential element of his existence. The homosexual in Cavafy's poems is the specific expression of the need for self-realisation, as every erotic behaviour indeed is; but the actualisation of this need takes place in given social formations and spatial frames which essentially make its representation a symbol of lived experience and temporal self-understanding – and in this Cavafy's poems map the territory of the homosexual representation in its own terms, in opposition to the dominant forms of heterosexist or hetero-imitative modes of symbolic articulation.

Paraphrasing one of his unpublished verses, Cavafy's poetry is characterised by the "erotic aesthetics" of a worldview in which young men appear in their nakedness as visions of beauty in the most mundane environments. Furthermore, most of his poems are recollections of a past event, although Cavafy constantly emphasises the importance of the recollection in its present duration and its immediate proximity to the poet's living space – an emphasis which has not been appropriately understood by criticism presenting him predominantly as the poet of memory. As George Steiner said "remembrance is always now"¹, and we can see Cavafy as the poet who perceives the present moment with the full thrust of his senses in all its diversity and with the act of recollection always

constituting for him the uniting thread between the multidimensional aspects of the lived experience of *nowness*.

In his most successful poems, Cavafy always exhibits a strong tendency for lucid and sculpted formal representations; he depicts, in almost realistic details, incidents of the past by delineating the physical presence of his protagonists within their own particular environment and in their specific relation to things. Photographs increasingly became a critical symbol of absence in his unpublished poems, as though the poet himself was not certain about their poetic effectiveness and was somewhat diffident about incorporating such symbols of modernity into his published work.

Moreover, Cavafy's poetic snapshots, the places and the landscape in which they occur are inhabited by a very strong energy, which somehow transfigures forms into something that both extends beyond them and is contained within them. The vision of a naked man becomes a "peak experience" which leads the poet to greater wholeness and integration. By looking at forms and then giving poetic *ekphrasis* to their presence, his own subject becomes reunified and transfigured, fusing in them the Freudian "pleasure" and "reality principles", and thus gaining self-consistency, unity and wholeness. Such "peak-experiences" solidify the unity of Cavafy's poetic subject and make its poetic articulation more immediate and complete.

Cavafy's poetry culminated with this poetic utterance which was made rather late in his life:

*he stood then naked everywhere;
flawless in beauty; a miracle.²*

This performative statement made in 1932 is essentially the end of a journey, which progressively established Cavafy's poetic language as the crystallisation of a unique vision of corporeality and poetic phenomenality. Cavafy's poetic formation began with incredible aesthetic confusion and identity diffusion. As he was becoming aware of himself as an individual with his own libidinal structure and behaviour, he dissociated his art from the clichés and the stereotypes of a discourse which could not articulate his personal experience and structuring of reality. Undoubtedly, it took him at least thirty years to invent a language, which could give voice to his aesthetic vision and, at the same time, locate his poetic idiom within a post-romantic and post-Victorian pre-modernist tradition. This process of articulating his poetic I, as a unique gaze over reality, is probably the most profoundly ethical element in Cavafy's work.

Cavafy was very lucky that he lived in a community of deracinated multicultural upper class families, which had no emotional connection to the place or even, in

practical terms, with the legal system of the country, because this enabled him to avoid developing a sense of sin and transgression. Essentially, these wealthy families from various ethnic backgrounds were above the law and under the sway of the customs and practices of their interaction. Cavafy grew up in a heterogenous cultural background and thus institutional, ethical and political fluidity was the dominant reality during his maturation process, thus preventing him from internalising the feelings of guilt and resentment that presuppose social stability, conceptual fixity and systemic cohesion in values and practices. His gradual differentiation was not due to any kind of repression, or actual oppression, but to his own need to establish a medium for acting out the inner complexity of his selfhood within the environment of an upper-class bourgeoisie which could never question its actions and presence in the land without losing at the same time its own legitimacy for its political and economic exploitation of Egypt.

On the other hand, Cavafy's upbringing in the wider context of Victorian tradition had instilled him into the perceptions of Oxonian Hellenism, of the British cult of ancient Greece as expressed through the works of major Victorian writers, the British educational system and especially the works of Algernon Charles Swinburne, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, John Addington Symonds etc. Actually, the concept of Hellenic love, as essentially meaning sexual and not ethnic identity, is the main symbol that Cavafy adopted from this tradition of highly idealised and Platonised versions of ancient Greek dedications to *hetairous*³. But his erotic Hellenism must not be perceived as homosexual in the modern sense of the word; needless to say, the concept had not yet been established and his poetry, especially his early poems, was still employed almost heterosexual imagery to convey emotions.

Cavafy's departure from this tradition occurred only after the 1890s with the death of his mother (who was obviously the stumbling block to the maturation process of her son) and then the gradual financial decline of his family, which eventually compelled him to work as a public servant and to partly abandon, or more accurately be excluded from, the privileges of his social class. Of course, Cavafy was still privileged in comparison to the local population, but he didn't enjoy the status and the recognition of his early days, surrounded as he was then by the prestige and the superiority of a financially successful family. However, the impact of financial decline, family dispersion and the change in his social status brought about a radical reorientation in his self-perception and, consequently, its poetic articulation:

*For one who has failed, one brought low
how difficult it is to learn poverty's
new language, its new manners.*⁴

It is extremely important to follow the invention of this “new language” after the 1890s and the gradual emergence of Cavafy’s new poetic idiom, which was due not simply to aesthetic necessity but also to the social repositioning of the poet himself and his distancing from his own class. It was as if he was discovering a world beyond the confines of his family environment and creating a new visual field for something that could not be seen until then.

However, during this transitional period, Cavafy realised that he had a problem with poetic language; the problem was how to express himself as a distinct individual with his own idiosyncrasies and what sort of articulation he had to establish in order to creatively present his identity structure as public discourse. Even though his early poems were based on the commonplaces and patterns of the purist tradition in Greece, which lacked the element of innovation and departure, his versification already signified certain new musical tonalities. In the 1890s, Cavafy was seduced by symbolism and esotericism⁵, but his overall output was only experimental and rather preparatory. This period left a number of so-called philosophical poems, which persisted till the beginning of 1914 only to gradually vanish in a creative fusion with his more personal and historical poems.

Moreover, Cavafy’s historical poems function as synecdoches of wider configurations. In them the poet tried to imaginatively empathise with analogous past experiences and to situate his presence within a context of symbolic diachrony. In these poems, there is almost always a substratum of strong sexual undertones and, at the same time, the tendency to talk about those who have fallen from grace or lost their social position. Cavafy had a very pragmatic view of history, constantly stressing that the winner takes it all. And yet his poetry, being the work of someone who has lost his capital, his position and his name within his class, addresses (especially after World War I) questions of subjectivity and poetic language, questions that had not been addressed by Greek poetry up until then and which had never been thought of as poetic themes at all. “Capital” means both power and the phallic confidence of a social ideology with its colonialist underpinning and authoritarian personality structure, an ideology which would later become the conscious target of Cavafy’s deconstructively anti-romantic language. Losing your “capital” indicates a kind of symbolic castration and annihilation of the phallic potency, as found in the existing languages of masculine literary expression.

Cavafy invented a new language with a feeling of personal loss and phallic aphania. The absent capital, still vestigially present around him, raised the issue of the absent father; Cavafy’s heroes are all fatherless, abandoned in many cases in a world of dominant women, with their only asset being the “miracle” of their naked body. There is no one to help them. There is only a need for personal affirmation through their corporeal recognition by the gaze of another:

*But how am I, a ruined man, to blame?
I'm down and out, just trying to patch a life together.*⁶

After the momentous events of 1890s, we must imagine Cavafy searching for a new medium of expression. His brief encounter with symbolism can be seen as an unhappy interlude in the process of eliminating abstract constructs from his poetic practice, avoiding metaphor or other rhetorical devices in his conscious attempt to talk about the things themselves. After 1900 there is a kind of phenomenological retrieval of the real in his work and the strong sense that what mattered for his poetry were the modes of appearing, the intensity of the phenomenal world and, finally, the domains of objects framed by his gaze. During this period, Cavafy discovered how objects constituted themselves in his consciousness and were depicted within the intentional structures of his own mind. However, what Cavafy privileged and foregrounded then could no longer be validated appropriately. The male body was still invisible, hidden behind the symbols of power and authority, let alone the prudish morality of fashion designers (and Cavafy wrote an extremely high camp fetishistic glorification of army uniforms of British soldiers, presenting them as symbols of phallic mythologisation, in his unpublished prose poem “The Regiment of Pleasure”⁷). With the exception of the classical male body (nude, not naked, and idealised), only the female body had gained valency in the arts through Baudelaire’s poetry and the impressionist paintings of the second half of the 19th century, especially in France. So, Cavafy’s poetry until then had managed to evade the formal crystallisation of its own phenomenological structure of concreteness and particularity by talking reflectively and often abstractly about experiences and objects. The invisibility of the male body established the territory of the quest for moral certainties in generalised sentences of “universal value”, thus transforming the poet in his so-called philosophical poetry into a mediator and messenger of gods:

*Mortals know present events.
The gods know those in the future,
sole and full presides over all the light.
of what is to come the wise notice
what is imminent. Their hearing*

*now and then, in times of sombre study,
is violently disrupted. The secret roar
of things approaching comes to them.
And they give reverent attention. Whereas outdoors
in the road, the common sort hear nothing whatsoever.*⁸

Cavafy's gaze, however, always remained close to the objects he was referring to; and even when he was recollecting them, the act of remembering would take place at a specific moment in time: in the now of its actual translation into language. So proximity to things must be seen as an eidetic experience, which reveals their very reality and transfigures them linguistically into a kind of active, or actualised, intuition of the real. This is the reason why most of Cavafy's mature poems are about space and the configurations that occur within space after the presence or the absence of a human body. In his poems after 1910, space means a formal arrangement of movement and, at the same time, the transformation (through typography) of ordinary symbols (mirrors, beds, furniture, ties, handkerchiefs, newspapers etc.) into experiential catalysts. Cavafy's poems till the end of his life are characterised by a unifying conceptual vision, which diversifies itself as the poet evolves poetically and makes his poetry more and more personal. As we have already mentioned, this photographic quality of his poems, although becoming extremely strong, failed to portray the whole vision in them. And quite frequently this made some of his poems (especially the unpublished ones) reminiscent of tourist post-cards full of trivial undertones and the occasional allure of the subcultural.

The formal arrangement of his material with its symmetry, frontality and stillness essentially gives us the sense of ancient Greek sculpture in which vital rhythms are often missing. However, after 1910, Cavafy manages to avoid rigidity and monotony by making all of his poems vibrate with his personal search for self-constitution. The conceptual realism of his poems locates his feelings and simultaneously frames within their verbal configurations dissonant voices, some unexpected tonalities of existential panic, as he tries to establish a new poetic utterance for the homosexual experience (which becomes the dominant imaginative principle during the last two decades of his life).

Greek criticism following Giorgos Seferis, dictum that when "Cavafy's eroticism is lost from sight, is really absorbed and he becomes extremely interesting"⁹ has conveniently been used to avoid any discussion of the homosexual self-constitution of imagery and language in his mature poems. Cavafy, however, was not alone in this quest for an idiom for the homosexual in his work; it had already been expressed by Walt Whitman in his *Leaves of Grass* and, of course, by many poets in Victorian England. At the same time, the work of Edward Carpenter (1844–1929) had already popularised enough Whitman's erotic philosophy of comradeship. In 1886, Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* paved the way for the emergence of a discourse on homo-sexuality in the public domain, whereas Havelock Ellis' *Sexual Inversion* (1897) gave a new perception of homosexual behaviour as "neither a disease nor a crime".

The discussion also raged after Oscar Wilde's sentence in England, although we don't know to what extent Cavafy was informed about all of these issues. However, the

domination of the Hellenic culture of Platonism and the idealised relationship between teacher and student was always in the intellectual horizon of his society – we must not forget that Platonic dialogues are mentioned frequently as legitimising references in a number of his poems. But most of these artists, as also occurred with Stephan George in Germany and even Federico Garcia Lorca in Spain, adopted the logotypic model employed by previous poets which depicted the special qualities of male-female relationships – especially under the enduring influence of the troubadours and the *dolce stil nuovo* of Dante, Petrarca and the Renaissance poets who followed them (Michelangelo's poetry was not well-known but it can be seen within the same tradition).

In another peripheral country of Europe, Russia, the poets of the Silver Age, and especially Mikhail Kuzmin, Vyacheslav Ivanov and Nikolai Kliuev, discovered as early as 1906 the *Greek Anthology* and adopted the style of ancient Greek poets to address the homoerotic experience in their work. It was the discovery of the *Greek Anthology* that liberated modern poetry from the rigidity of metronomic versification and gave a new impetus to experimentation, as is obvious with Imagist Poetry. However, in all those cases, the homosexual was articulated as a hetero-imitative construct, based on the dominant pattern of expressing emotional involvement between male and female. It didn't possess or construct its own linguistic field of articulating potentialities within the established discourses of the Greek language, whereas the Whitmanesque model with its strong defiant individual proclamation of desire and its rebellious language of a new ethnos could not be conceived within the Greek language of the day.

We must therefore see Cavafy's poetry, after the 1890s, as a constant exploration of its medium and of himself; and as the exploration was happening new unities and conceptual schemata emerged which avoided epithets or any other abstraction. (Whenever Cavafy uses abstractions, it's quite deliberate and somehow oratorical.) Cavafy's poetic language privileged referentiality by stressing the irreducible singularity of an incident, the unrepeatable uniqueness of an experience. Cavafy's peak experiences are moments of full temporality, irreducible to any other principle beyond themselves – either religious or philosophical. It is the phenomenology of sight that interests him more than anything else; the *thauma idesthai* of Homeric anthropology that forces the naked male body to be seen under the different light of temporality and impermanence. However, Cavafy's epiphanies are not of religious or quasi-religious origin; the autonomy of the object seen is delineated by the space in which the act of seeing takes place; this space is not empty but, on the contrary, connects and fuses the seen and the seer in an emotional unity. Emptiness of space would have meant religiosity or, its opposite, secularity. For Cavafy space perception energises forms and visuality as moments of active imagination in time; that is, as moments of form-making, of creating new Gestalt-unities for experience, thus giving meaning and

generating empathy for events that would otherwise have passed unnoticed or would have been infused with feelings of negativity and guilt.

Most of these epiphanic poems of naked men are Cavafy's depiction of "felt temporality", of the moments when his personal gaze is fused through the "adhesive" force of sexual attraction with the socially and the historically other. In order to articulate such visual otherness, Cavafy had to abandon the "double articulation" of his early 20th century poems and to develop the language of his reality without falling into the trap of copying an inverted heterosexist language based on the value systems of Western capitalist heteropatriarchy. In this he followed Whitman's "Calamus Poems"¹⁰ and the homoerotic "mish-mash" language of ancient Greek poetry¹¹. His mixed language reflected and refracted the fluidity of values and practices experienced by him in an atmosphere of double meanings that he had to employ in order to talk about his own selfhood. To such double articulation he added his own rhythms by gradually adopting oral tonalities and colloquial registers in order to depict the transitoriness of the lived experience; with the passage of time, Cavafy's language, especially in his so-called erotic poems and even in his dramatic monologues with a historical subject, tends to adopt aural and oral qualities in order to frame the experience in the context of momentary illuminations and instantaneous visions.

So Cavafy's mature poetry structures and articulates the homosexual not on hetero-imitative patterns of binary oppositions. Cavafy reserves such a bipolar way of thinking for open and closed spaces, light and dark areas. However, the male naked body breaks down the binary divisions of the Platonic and rationalistic traditions and introduces an element of fused individuality beyond the articulating practices of a society based on structural dissimilarities and oppositional subordination. The seen becomes one with the seer; the naked male body is not simply the recollection of an experience but the social body without its hegemonic discourse of subjection and dominance. Through Cavafy's representational strategies, the social underdog and the cultural sub-altern is empowered to perceive itself as a symbol of completeness and self-totalisation. The poet recovers the lost paternity and the absent phallus; his representation thus of the homosexual centralises its existential reality in a kind of renewed masculinity without the violence or the aggression of the egotistical heterosexist tradition.

Furthermore, Cavafy's "miraculous" homosexual representations essentially resacralise the male body as the only site of order and awe in everyday life. And such resacralisation must be seen within the context of the secularisation process that took place during the 19th century, which stripped the human body of its mystique and presented as a mechanical artefact of the grand and omnipotent master-narrative, the narrative of the violent and aggressive Darwinian Nature. Cavafy's naked bodies present themselves as ordered universes of revelation and transcendence; they reveal themselves, the meaning

of their being, and, at the same time, act as catalysts of transcendence for those who participate in their existence. His bodies are symbols of unity and confluence, the loci of innocence and purity, where the erotic establishes bonds of transpersonal “homeliness”. If history and society throw the individual into the despair of homelessness and scarcity, erotic bonding restores the pristine innocence of the mind within the closed space of corporeal union and orgasmic ecstasy. For Cavafy the male body is a theophanic announcement; it transfigures existence not by projecting an idealised or even sublimated version of the self onto the other, but by foregrounding the ultimate otherness of the individual, the admiration of the other body in its complete alterity.

However, we must not try to confine Cavafy’s poetry within the very narrow limits of contemporary gay/queer studies. His poetry does not simply reveal the articulation of the homosexual through the implied criticism of models of masculinity and social acceptance. Beyond this, his work maps out the intellectual and experiential journey of an individual towards imagining himself as a creative agent for his culture. Cavafy’s poetry depicts an identity which goes beyond its own constituting parts; if his poetic universe is axonised around sexual self-affirmation, it doesn’t mean that this is the complete picture of itself. Cavafy’s sexual imagination creates the incarnational humanisation of desire in history; sexuality is the thread for wandering around the existential labyrinth of the fluidity of self-identity and through the structural fissures of social belonging. Cavafy is afraid of the formless and the chaotic; his poetry gives formal completion to existential finitude by resignifying the visual and verbal schemata of self-sufficient referentiality. In his mature poetry, nothing refers to anything beyond itself; the strong attachment and identification of word and object stresses the sculpted objecthood of Cavafy’s poems and makes them the free agents of renewed referentiality, according to the new conceptual paradigms of each era. His poems synthesise and totalise the represented objects within the changing patterns of subjective understanding:

*I won't put this photograph in a frame*¹²

he wrote in one of his later poems; if each era gives the frame, Cavafy’s work is the photograph, precise and yet constantly expanding, like in the aesthetics of ancient Greek sculpture, in which the Parthenon becomes a mathematical symbol of formal illusion without ever losing its very tangible and ordered materiality. Cavafy’ poetry articulates the space of the innocent subject and constructs the form of an immediate and unmediated knowledge of the Other. His poems depict the extreme strangeness of the unmediated event and occupy the middle ground between the self-conscious subject of modernity and the polyphonic subject of postmodernity. His rage against romanticism

expressed his rejection of the disembodied self and of the overdependence on abstractions. His sexualising gaze situated the body within a community of material culture and therefore of a community of people. His naked youths are sites of community cohesion and cultural empowerment in themselves; their visual language signifies an ordered and comprehensive reality, still in pleromatic sufficiency of its existence and, at the same time, in the euphoric plenitude of its carnality.

Undoubtedly, there are some interesting shadows felt throughout his poems; the shadow of a masculine self being relegated to the position of a mere observer; the shadow of the non-eroticised female body being the only embodiment of a generalised nationhood and collectivity; finally, the shadow of the absent father as signifier and as the originary event of being. To this we must add the absence of the *agape* experience in his poems (whenever he uses the term it means sexual attraction), as if Cavafy had reverted to the powerful Platonic eros and had abolished the civilising process of the Christian *agape*, as *caritas*. However, even such shadows make his work really relevant today, when the dominant transcendentalism of representations has totally replaced the experiential ethics of imagination.

Cavafy's poetics of the innocent form economise a concrete and crystallised vision of personal identity and of physical space without delving into the problematic of identity politics or being trapped in the problematisation of physicality. His innocence lies in his vision of the body as the ultimate signifier whereas its formal configurations construct the semantic fields within which meaning is possible. After Cavafy, modernism fragmented the human body into sites of complete meaninglessness; and during postmodernism, the body lost its interiority by being completely visualised and, therefore, totally fetishised by being transformed into a completely instrumentalised macho "mechanical scattering ... homosexual pick-up machine" as G. Hocquenghem formulated the dominant gay-ideology since the early 70s¹³.

Cavafy stands at the very beginning of such transformation; his vision of the male body as the ultimate site of meaning production and self-understanding expresses the innocence of an era which struggled to discover how the homosexual could be articulated and participate in the cultural debates of the day without marginalising itself or losing itself in an opaque interiority. Cavafy's poetics of the innocent form express the incarnational phenomenology of being as an autarchic self that validates its actions through its own emotional authenticity. If there is something missing in Cavafy's poetry it is something beyond personal emotions; it is the transpersonal realm of shared commonality, the grey areas of the self in osmosis:

*He has never loved with such immense passion.
But the beautiful fulfilment of eros is not there;*

*that fulfilment which needs two who long
with one intensity.*¹⁴

The question is not if Cavafy ever loved or if he ever succeeded in expressing his need for reciprocity in his poems. The experiential content is born by a subject formed through complex cultural potentialities of self-understanding; the question is how his own self-understanding can be contextualised within the cultural condition and conditioning of his era. Is for example the Cavafian subject the self-conscious individual that Cartesian dualism and Hegelian dialectics delineated in a world which has lost its enchantment? Can the miracle of the human body be expressed in a world devoid of sacredness after the Nietzschean proclamation of the death of God? When Cavafy wants to revive the peak-experiences of his past, does he re-sacralise the empty spaces of modern existence in urban anonymity?

When we read Cavafy's poems we are struck by their very idiographic quality: they are not simply re-enacting the experience of one particular person but more than this they construct a spatial form for it that blends time and space in an irreducible particularity. Cavafian spatial form centres and crystallises experience in order to make obvious the particular. Cavafy is not evading proper names; he does not use metaphors or allegorise the immediate. His spatial forms frame semantic fields of reference in which the immediate is dramaturgically re-enacted by resurrecting the interior forces that made it possible. His poetic forms reconstruct patterns of experience unmediated by dominant ideologies or practices; by focusing on the particular or the insignificant, they add a new dimension to the language that engendered them. They add the dimension of innocence since they don't propagate an ideal or an idealised version of reality; on the contrary they dissolve the ideological intersections between dominant perceptions of masculinity, paternity, sexuality and history by introducing into their articulating discourses the multiple polysemy of individual experience which cannot be deduced or reduced to any pre-existing form of understanding and interpretation. Cavafy's poetry crystallises the poetics of the innocent form through which the individual separates itself from dominant typologies of masculinity and identity in order to re-invent its own self and determine its own ethos.

In that respect Cavafy's naked youths are symbols of the "quest of the hero" in urban spaces, in which the disenchantment of the landscape has charged the male body with a powerful numinosity. This feeling of the *mysterium fascinans* of the body is probably the strongest expression of Cavafy's search for new rituals and new initiations in the antagonistic and demystified public sphere of modernity. But instead of simply debunking or destroying the narratives of the past, as high modernism did with Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, Cavafy established a new medium for the constellated reaffirmation of

experience. Without drowning the subject in its own interiority or completely abandoning it to its external shaping forces, Cavafy's innocent form gives to the corporeal self its dynamic centrality for the validation of the individual beyond the master narratives of class, ideology, ethnicity or religion. Cavafy's "morphurgic" poetry expresses the problematic of corporeality in a social formation that has denigrated or instrumentalised the body; and through its innocence it re-sacralises its representation in a typically Platonic fashion, as a cosmological vision of unity, order and balance. And through such empowered individuality is actualised what Cavafy himself envisaged in one of his most ethical poems:

*Whoever desires to strengthen his spirit,
let him leave behind respect, submission.
He will keep certain laws,
but the most part he will break
both laws and customs, and leave
the acceptable, inadequate straight way behind.
He will be taught much by the pleasures of the flesh.
He will not fear the catastrophic deed;
half the house must be demolished.
So he will evolve virtuously in wisdom.¹⁵*

NOTES

- 1 George Steiner, *After Babel*, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 134.
- 2 Constantine Cavafy, *Before Time Could Change Them*, p. 184.
- 3 See Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1994, especially ch. 3 ("The Socratic Eros").
- 4 Constantine Cavafy, op. cit., p. 221.
- 5 Diana Haas, "Early Cavafy and the European 'Esoteric' Movement", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, vol. 2, October 1984, pp. 209–224.
- 6 Constantine Cavafy, op. cit., p. 179.
- 7 *ibid*, p. 275.
- 8 *ibid*, p. 5.
- 9 Giorgos Seferis, *Cavafy*, p. 215 (in Greek).
- 10 For Whitman's "erotic language" especially in the Calamus poems look in Vivian R. Pollak, *The Erotic Whitman*, University of California Press, 2000, p. 136–152.

- 11 The term belongs to Daryl Hine in *Puerilities, Erotic Epigrams of The Greek Anthology*, translated by Daryl Hine, Princeton University Press, 2001, p. xvi.
- 12 Constantine Cavafy, *op. cit.*, p. 274.
- 13 Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, translated by Daniella Dangoor, preface to the 1978 edition by Jeffrey Weeks, new Introduction by Michael Moon, Duke University Press, 1993, pp. 130–131.
- 14 Constantine Cavafy, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
- 15 *ibid.*, p. 250.