Can collaboration produce a masterpiece? Or, to offer an apparently less old-fashioned formulation: how does the recognition of the labor of more than one hand affect our relationship to an admired object of aesthetic appreciation? The romance of collaboration is alive in many forms in contemporary culture. But there are reasons to be concerned, as I am here, with the inadequacy of this romance when faced with what might be described as asymmetrical collaborative structures, those typically present in the fine arts in what has been variously called the "studio," the "workshop," and the "school" of an artist. The reattribution of artworks that resulted from the growing systematization of art history and connoisseurship in the nineteenth century affected the reputation and reception of artists long admired for the creation of objects that had subsequently come under suspicion or that had in fact been removed from their canons as the work of others. Our own era has not simply continued this practice but has also seen a sporadic interest in a complementary one: celebrating the production of a member of a studio under his or her own name. Toward the end of this essay I will turn to a nineteenth-century treatment of the issue of masters and students in the world of art that is still surprisingly complex, even disturbing. In order to appreciate Walter Pater's account of schools, however, and the troubling play of power and desire running through it, it is important not only to locate it historically, but to keep sight of something more current and pressing: the difficult and far from stable response in our own day to the work of many hands. I will begin with a controversy about laurels.

In an article on Bernini (1598-1680) first published in the New York Review of Books a few years ago, and recently reprinted in his collection Leonardo's Nephew, James Fenton halts the flow of his appre-
ciation of the baroque sculptor to address a question which—for all its apparently technical, even academic, nature—provokes in him a good deal of emotion. The work under discussion is Bernini’s celebrated *Apollo and Daphne* (1625), a group representing the nymph just as she is metamorphosing into a laurel to escape from the god—her fingers becoming leaves, her toes transforming into roots (fig. 1). The hand of the god, Ovid tells us, feels her heart beat beneath emergent bark. Here is Fenton responding to a number of recent developments in the study of art history, particularly the reascription of parts of the statue to one of Bernini’s assistants:

I have to confess myself shocked by Jennifer Montagu’s argument in an essay called “Bernini Sculptures Not by Bernini,” that, while the design and most of the execution of the *Apollo and Daphne* are by Bernini himself, the “metamorphosis of the block of marble into delicate roots and twigs, and into floating tresses was largely the work of Giuliano Finelli.” The evidence for this comes mainly from sources Montagu states to be hostile to Bernini, but it is taken up by Boucher: “Of course, Bernini did not carve the *Apollo and Daphne* alone; Giuliano Finelli (1601-1657) was responsible for some of the more dazzling passages of tendrils and sprouting leaves. . . .” Dazzling passages of tendrils? Daphne is turning into a laurel, not a sweet pea, a tree (as per Ovid), not a climbing plant.

I will return to the botanical challenge Fenton raises, but first I want to cite another example of his impatience with an art historian, one who agrees with Montagu in a manner that most clearly distresses the critic:

Charles Avery. . . concludes that Bernini “succumbed to the temptation of claiming as all his own work virtuoso passages of carving that ethically he perhaps ought to have declared as the morceau de réception of a gifted newcomer.” But a passage, even a brilliant passage, that is a part of someone else’s sculpture can hardly be termed—even in a loose figurative sense—a morceau de réception.
Fig. 1. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Apollo and Daphne. Rome, Villa Borghese.
Copyright Alinari/Art Resource, NY.
Returning to Montagu's article we find that she has apportioned the "roots and twigs and floating tresses" to Finelli on the grounds that they demonstrate the kind of use of the sculptor's drill at which he elsewhere excelled. Finelli, Montagu tells us, grew tired of seeing his triumphs enriching another, and so "left Bernini's studio and set up on his own, seeking the opportunity to demonstrate that it was he who had produced these admired carvings." But what was the outcome? Montagu adds in a footnote that "in his independent work [Finelli] does not achieve (and probably did not seek) the extraordinary finesse Bernini required of him." In other words, brilliant though he might have been, he was not as brilliant without Bernini as he had been under his instruction. If so, it seems wrong to speculate (for that is all that it amounts to) that the virtuoso passages in this famous work can be attributed to someone other than Bernini.

I cite this review because it demonstrates the contemporary relevance of the issues I'm concerned with. Fenton and his nemesis touch on all the key questions: attribution, the role of the studio or workshop, current notions of admiration versus prior artistic practices and expectations, the role of instruction (Finelli "was not as brilliant without Bernini as he had been under his instruction," notes Fenton), and the value of technical skill in relation to the idea of a work (Fenton wants Finelli to be understood as a mere drill man, while Montagu wants Finelli to want to demonstrate the importance of the role of his drill work). Motivating the argument on both sides, however, is a similar position on ethics (Avery uses the term)—the ethics of attribution. Ultimately, Fenton, Avery, and Montagu demonstrate a related motivating supposition: that artistic achievement calls for recognition, and that this recognition only comes with the identification of the responsible party by the separation of the work of art into its attributable elements—this part by Bernini, this part by Finelli, say the art historians; all of it that matters by Bernini, says Fenton. While Fenton, an attentive reader and passionate advocate, is quite right in expressing skepticism that deft passages of drill work on someone else's statue might ever be understood to constitute a *morceau de réception*, he might also
have pointed out the odd anachronism of discussing work of the baroque studio in terms best suited for the art institutions of a later era (the morceau de réception was provided on admittance to an academy, a substantially later development). But Fenton himself is driven to intemperate and damning language in his defense of Bernini. If some art historians are deeply invested in recovering Finelli as an artist in terms impossible to conceive of in his own day, Fenton gives the impression that he would like to forget Finelli's part altogether.

At a later point in his article Fenton spends time glorying in the existence of, and growing interest in, Bernini's sketches in clay, objects which not only show the pure intention of the artist, but sometimes come complete with Bernini's fingerprints or nail marks—warrants of authenticity which the F.B.I. has helped identify. The critic's admiration for the clay sketches recognizably marked by the master's hand, is of a piece with his ire about the art historians' treatment of the group at the Villa Borghese. Apollo is, of course, the god of music, the deity presiding over all the muses in Parnassus. The laurel into which Daphne is changed, and from which Apollo wove himself a wreath, is the vegetable symbol of recognized human achievement. When he offers his horticultural critique of Boucher's descriptive language, we can understand Fenton's argument as engaging laurels in this metaphoric sense. "a laurel," he writes, "not a sweet pea, a tree (as per Ovid), not a climbing plant." It is the freestanding tree that produces laurels and deserves them; dependent foliage will not support recognition.

If morceau de réception is an anachronistic term, there is a precursor and alternative that Avery might have used—masterpiece. The term masterpiece is used today to describe consummate artistic achievement. Originally, however, the word had a different technical meaning, which the Oxford English Dictionary summarizes as follows: "the piece of work by which a craftsman gained from his guild the recognized rank of 'master.'" A masterpiece used to be a work that marked the break between student and teacher, master and apprentice: it announced the arrival of a new master. As the Bernini example indicates, the recognition of more than one master per work causes problems. What happens when we discover that an admired work of
art is not the work of a master, or not the work of a master alone? This was the question confronting the world of art around the middle of the nineteenth century and, as I have tried briefly to suggest, it is one still not satisfactorily settled today.

Thirty years ago Foucault offered a paraphrase of Beckett as a central ethical question of the day: "What does it matter who is speaking?" As in the title of the lecture in which the question is raised—"What Is an Author?"—the intent of the interrogative form is not to suggest inquiry. It is to raise a doubt, to put authorship in question, to imagine a situation in which it will not matter who is speaking. Later criticism has often seemed to follow Foucault's lead. Collaboration is sometimes presented as an important alternative or corrective to the simple celebration of the individual artist. Foucault and those who have come after him even approach a kind of wistful nostalgia when they suggest that the modern notion of the individual creative genius that came to predominate in the nineteenth century has obscured longer-standing traditions in which aesthetic objects were the products of free-flowing anonymous and collaborative creation. It has been suggested that it is a moral responsibility to recognize individually the several hands that together have formed a work of art, and that this recognition offers a way out of an outdated model of creativity, which has depended on the model of the author or artist as an originary, free-standing genius.

Aside from the not inconsiderable professional imperative to make discoveries and the development of ever more powerful tools of analysis that allow the possibility of uncovering the unknown or the unheralded, the recent interest in recuperating collaboration and collaborators is attributable to two drives that, for all their apparent incompatibility, have often come to overlap or blur in the course of particular analyses; we might usefully label these recovery and demystification. The desire to recover occluded individuals, to give full credit to creative agents whose work has gone unacknowledged, is often the evident motivation for an emphasis on collaborators. A quite anti-
theoretical motivation is the desire of demystification: not to recover the achievement of particular workers, but to do away altogether with authorship as it is generally understood, to suggest that creative production is less the result of individual attainment than of broader cultural developments, themselves hidden by standard author-centric accounts of creativity. The emphasis in projects of recovery is often biographical, the argument ethical-psychological; in demystification, projects tend to the historical, illuminating cultural structures rather than individual lives or relationships. Sometimes recovery borrows the tools of demystification in order to broaden the account of creative achievement, or demystification draws on the political claims of recovery so as to demonstrate the weakness of author-centered accounts of creativity. Nevertheless, the ultimate goals and intellectual validation of the two drives are quite distinct. While the moral force of demystification resides in its bold abandonment of a system of evaluation that needlessly constrains meaning, recovery generally aims to offer its subjects not freedom from the existing system, but the privileges of authorship long denied.

While there may well be a valid moral claim to be made in certain cases for establishing the role of unrecognized coworkers, my chief concern is with a further conceptual step which has often accompanied (or even inspired) the discussion of collaborative work: the demystificatory claim that to recognize collaboration is to challenge notions of the individual and of creativity, which are regarded as outmoded inheritances of the nineteenth century. This line of thought requires two propositions to be true, one historical and the other conceptual; in order to argue that the recognition of collaboration presents a challenge to later views by recovering the occluded fact of earlier practices, not only must it be believed that working together is the prior form of creative practice, but that the current concept of collaboration offers an adequate description of that activity. Etymological evidence may prove troubling to both propositions: the first use of collaboration given in the Oxford English Dictionary dates from no earlier than 1871; the term itself needs to be recognized as essentially a late-nineteenth-century coinage. This may be taken to mean only that
it had not previously been necessary to give a name to the common practice of working together ("To work in conjunction with another or others, to co-operate; esp. in a literary or artistic production, or the like"). However, it is more accurate to say that collaboration itself is how working together is described within an already individualistic concept of creativity; the term identifies two individuals working together, rather than the loss of, or indifference to, individuality. Also worth noting is collaboration's more recent meaning, which dates to seventy years after the first meaning gained currency and has an exclusively pejorative significance: to work alongside an adversary and against one's own interests ("To co-operate traitorously with the enemy"). Is it really possible to believe that giving a name to each person who participates in the creation of an aesthetic object offers an escape from individualism rather than simply an elaboration of that very idea? We may compare the principle of selection in a recent compendium of instances of modern collaboration between lovers, Whitney Chadwick and Isabel de Courtivron's *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership*: "We have... chosen to omit couples in which one person—however influential on the other—is a 'silent' (that is, unrecognized) partner." To work together as has been done at almost all times and at almost all places is to work anonymously, silently, without credit; such a form of labor was richly theorized in the nineteenth century, but it troubles an era for which collaboration readily shades into self-betrayal.

I began with the instance of Fenton and his nemeses in order to underline the fact that in our own day the response to the person or persons behind the created object is still far from indifference. The argument Fenton joins illustrates two points I want to emphasize: that for all the talk of the death of the artist over the last thirty years, it still matters very much who has spoken (or painted, or carved), and that recourse to collaboration is far from offering, as it is sometimes taken to do, an escape from individualizing values. The subtle perversity of Walter Pater's engagement with the topic of schools is traceable to the interplay between emerging concepts of attribution (which are still
troubling today) and nineteenth-century notions of creativity (which many feel have been left behind). Pater’s response to developments in art history anticipates the manner in which the recognition that more than one artist may have had a hand in a work of art is liable to provoke a complex de-stabilization of ideas about art, works, and workers that still play an important role in contemporary culture.

In a remarkable shift in the history of reputation, starting in the middle years of the nineteenth century but continuing to our day, critics reversed the once common practice of ascribing as many works as possible to artists of note. New methods of analysis along with the increasing value placed on scarcity made it more interesting and important not to swell the pages of the catalogues, but to reduce the number of works ascribed to a celebrated artist of the past. Pater was extremely responsive to the implications of this process, and offers a remarkable challenge to the implied concepts of authorship and art that motivated (and often still motivate) such reascriptions.

While Pater is typical of his era in his concern with the topic of schools, he is quite atypical in what he manages to recover from the term. To start with, he insists on something that his contemporaries tend to acknowledge only gradually and as an unfortunate secondary consideration. The title of his 1877 essay, “The School of Giorgione” (not, it is to be noted, “Giorgione and his School”) makes the work of the scholars central, not ancillary. Citing the important revisionist work of Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s History of Painting in North Italy (1871), Pater gives the initial impression of being disturbed by its far-reaching reduction of the canon of Giorgione’s work, by the fact that “the great traditional reputation, woven with so profuse demand on men’s admiration, has been scrutinised thread by thread; and what remains of the most vivid and stimulating of Venetian masters . . . has been reduced almost to a name by most recent critics.” He responds to the challenge of such a reduction by proposing to explain not only the experience of the works of art themselves, but the history of the repu-
tation in which they participate and which they support; provoking imitation of a sort that results in unclear attributions becomes a characteristic of Giorgione’s style and achievement.

Pater’s most surprising engagement with the theme of attribution, influence, and the work of many hands is to be found, however, in his earlier and far more audacious essay on Leonardo (1869). In that seminal piece, Pater acknowledges the challenge of the de-attributions decimating Leonardo’s canon. But he finds in this development not a loss but the possibility of a still greater intimacy with the artist. If Giorgione’s style is so diffuse as to make the fact of diffusion itself part of his style, Pater is well aware that a key element in Leonardo’s reputation is the idea of individual recognition. The Baptism of Christ (1469-1480) by Leonardo’s master, Verrocchio, is famous in art history because Vasari tells us that one of the angels was the work of the student’s hand. After seeing the work of the younger man, Vasari claims in a much cited anecdote, Verrocchio abandoned painting altogether. But the topic of identification in Leonardo is generally less clear than the neat story of recognition relayed by Vasari: the painter’s images were copied in his own day; his style imitated; his workshop produced copies and adaptations. Canvases on which he is known or thought to have participated are still scanned, weighed, and reconsidered by art historians in the hope of ascertaining the precise elements attesting to the presence of his hand.

Pater raises the possibility of engaging in such an activity only to dismiss it, or to cast doubt on its value for the kind of appreciation in which he is engaged:

For others remain the editing of the thirteen books of his manuscripts, and the separation by technical criticism of what in his reputed works is really his, from what is only half his, or the work of his pupils. But a lover of strange souls may still analyse for himself the impression made on him by those works, and try to reach through it a definition of the chief elements of Leonardo’s genius.

The challenge to the reader of Pater is to establish what it may mean to, on one hand, admit that “technical criticism” has removed
certain canvases from Leonardo’s catalogue, while, on the other hand, still propose that these very same works may be analyzed so as to reveal something of Leonardo’s genius. Evidently, such a process of analysis is only possible if a quite radical notion of self-expression is at play, one in which the members of a particular school—artistic epigoni—become in themselves works of art. It is an argument that anticipates recent debates on attribution and the role of the workshop while in fact moving beyond them. Pater does not simply admit the value of the workshop and surrender the ambition of limiting admiration to the certified brush strokes of the master; as I will suggest below, he suggests that the school, rather than being the essentially uninteresting site of a mere falling away from an originary creative genius, is in itself further evidence of that genius and an important achievement in art.

It would seem on first consideration that, if nowhere else, the relationship between love and knowledge should be straightforward enough in the realm of art appreciation. And yet, throughout the nineteenth century, and to this day, developments in art history and connoisseurship have offered important challenges to the bases of the love of art.

As she comes to the close of her account of Leonardo in her influential popular guide of 1845, Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters, Anna Jameson offers the following insights: “We have mentioned a few of the genuine works of Lionardo da Vinci; they are exceedingly rare. It appears certain that not one-third of the pictures attributed to him and bearing his name were the production of his own hand.” Jameson is here passing on to her readers a realization widespread among art historians by the middle of the century. Indeed, the acknowledgment of the need to reduce the number of works attributed to Leonardo becomes a standard form of closure in period discussions of the artist.

We may cite Charles Clément, whose Michel-Ange, Léonard de Vinci, Raphael (1861) was a principal source for Pater’s essay on Leonardo: “the easel paintings that we may attribute to Leonardo da Vinci with certainty are exceedingly rare...we must remove from his oeuvre
paintings of great beauty and importance.” Both authors go on for several paragraphs, carefully indicating which works in the major galleries are indeed the productions of Leonardo’s hand. In spite of the strength of their claims to rigor, by modern standards both authors are still modest in the number of works they exclude. More striking is the fact that Jameson and Clément are surprisingly full of praise for the objects they do remove from the canon (“paintings of great beauty and importance,” writes Clément).

More intriguing still, both authors almost immediately salvage something of what they give up. Jameson follows the acknowledgment that “not one-third of the pictures attributed to him and bearing his name were the productions of his hand” with the recuperative suggestion that nevertheless “they were the creation of his mind, for he generally furnished the cartoons or designs from which his pupils executed pictures of various degrees of excellence.” It is the recognition of a “school” that recovers the value of Leonardoesque works. Clément is more emphatic in his language: “Leader of a fervent and skillful school, his students often worked from his drawings or cartoons, and it is sometimes so difficult to tell their works from his that the most competent connoisseurs can be fooled.” By this account, the confusion of the art historians is due to the force of Leonardo’s influence on his students; it is evidence of the direct role he had in designing and inspiring their works.

We might ask why Jameson and Clément need to offer these consolations—to insist on Leonardo’s participation in these works by other hands? One important reason is that the challenge presented by the reshaping of an artist’s canon is more than practical. To become aware of the recalibration of the canon is to become uncertain about an important part of the hermeneutic circle; when art objects which had been identified as central to an artist’s achievement are no longer even accredited parts of the artist’s corpus, it seems impossible not to feel some discomfort with the evaluation of artistic merit itself. At the very least, the new knowledge may provoke a revaluation of the terms by which that merit is established. The problem of reattribution finds some resolution in the idea of the school, the suggestion that what the
viewer may be admiring is a work at some point touched by the mind of Leonardo. But this solution is an uncertain recovery from a double loss—of the object that once was held to be the work of the artist’s hand, and of the simple certainty that what is of value is the experience of a product directly produced by the creator’s hand.

As the field of art history was consolidated in the nineteenth century, it came to be characterized by an increasing concern with methodology, by the need to establish the criteria by which art objects could be ascribed to old masters. Nevertheless, the history of attribution and de-attribution should in no way be understood as one of simple progress in methodology. As Carol Gibson-Wood has indicated in *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship*, attitudes toward attribution are themselves conditioned by a number of issues in the valuation of art. She notes that the “variability of attributions over the ages” is traceable to the fact that connoisseurs have not always been engaged in the same activity when they have ascribed a painting to an artist. The history of attribution itself is as much influenced by changing attitudes toward art as by technical discoveries. Among what she refers to as “changeable attitudes,” Gibson-Wood places “the importance assigned to an artist’s participation in his works.” As she points out, Vasari might well have regarded the origins of a painting in Giotto’s workshop as sufficient reason for attributing it to Giotto. That later connoisseurs have tended not to want to stop at that conclusion without clear evidence of the touch of the master’s hand has more to do with developments in concepts of the artist or of art work than with breakthroughs in methods of analysis.

If *attribution* is a historically bound and changing concept, the same and more is true of the *school*. In his discussion of the term, the Dutch art historian J. Bruyn emphasizes the remarkable range of distinct kinds of art objects the term has been able to subsume, from works produced by the actual studio workers or apprentices of a painter, to those produced by the imitators of his style. Indeed, Bruyn’s “The Concept of School” underlines the breadth of what has come to be included in the category. “Time-honoured usage,” he notes, “has given the word *school* a wider meaning, comprising works by artists in
their own right, which bear stylistically and technically a close resemblance to those of a greater artist who was their teacher and model, or may be so considered.” Bruyn’s “or may be so considered” is telling; work of such diverse provenance may be included in the term that it is best understood, not as a practical identification, but as an evaluative descriptor. The art historian notes that “the word is currently applied (and has been so for more than two hundred years) to imply different, mostly vague and often negative, notions rather than positive ones concerning the attribution of works of art.” By “negative” Bruyn in part means that the school has been a place in which art history has come to locate objects about which it is uncertain; he also means, of course, that belonging to a school has generally been seen in current thought as indicative of a lesser achievement. There is then a double negativity implied in the school: of information and of value.

As is the case with concepts of attribution, so with the concept of the school—the meaning of both varies with the account of the artist accepted in a given period. In particular, the implications of the word depend on whether the artist may be understood as the author of a design that might be effected by others, or solely, as Bruyn puts it, as the “creator of highly individual works of art, which could only be fully appreciated because of the artist’s own increasingly personal treatment of material.” The dictionary offers what appears to be quite a neutral definition, but the stigma that has typically attached itself to work belonging to the school is clearly suggested—particularly when the definition turns to art:

The body of persons that are or have been taught by a particular master (in philosophy, science, art, etc.); hence, in wider sense, a body or succession of persons who in some department of speculation or practice are disciples of the same master, or who are united by a general similarity of principles and methods. Also, in descriptions of works of art...

school of (an artist), used to designate an anonymous work produced in the school of a particular artist.
Between discipleship and anonymity little room is left in which the "scholar" may shine. Art history has voted with its feet in this matter: the works of Leonardo's "scholars" have little place in modern accounts of the painter's work, or anywhere outside specialized, often regional, studies. To take an author who represents an important transition between the nineteenth century and a more recognizably modern aesthetic, we may ask what Bernard Berenson did with Leonardo's schools. In his *North Italian Painters* of 1907 he identifies the issue I have been discussing when he treats "a line of Renaissance painting in Milan grouped around the artist who so determined its character and shaped its course that it has ever since been known as his school—the school of Leonardo da Vinci—while its finest products have commonly passed for his own." In one awkward line Berenson opens the door to the scholars and then closes it. "Take away Leonardo's share in these compositions," he suggests, "and you have taken away nearly all that gave them worth."

Berenson does, at least, mention these artists. Current guides to the art of the Renaissance have little room for the followers of Leonardo, particularly as his "scholars." A notable exception may prove the rule. Martin Kemp's "The Madonna of the 'Yarnwinder' in the Buccleuch Collection reconsidered in the context of Leonardo's Studio's Practice" shows signs of the recent resurgence of interest in the studio (a more precise subdivision of the school), but in the following passage this distinguished scholar is unable to avoid suggesting a number of probably unsustainable distinctions:

I should like to propose that we consider the possibility of two more or less distinct levels of pictures which may be called "Leonardos." One level comprises a handful of *fully autograph*, intensely *personal*, slowly-executed *masterpieces* which either stood from the first or subsequently moved outside the normal process of commission and payment; while the other level consists of high-quality products, generally small in scale, which were made with varying degrees of participation by the master and emerged from the studio as saleable objects. (italics mine)
Kemp is willing to concede that what he calls “the conventional search for the ‘original’” is misguided insofar as the “original is assumed to be a unique product of Leonardo’s hand alone.” And yet, his proposal of a two-tier system of evaluation openly privileges works he can imagine to be by Leonardo’s hand—working alone.

In the nineteenth century, the solution to the problem of de-attribution, the school, raised two distinct but related challenges. For one thing, what to do with works that seem—but are not, or not entirely—the works of people we admire? For another, what are we to think of disciples? The nineteenth century was a particularly unfortunate time to be identified as a follower in the world of art (its principal competition in this regard was, of course, the century that followed). We may note that, for all its classical cachet, the first instance of the term *epigone* given in the Oxford English Dictionary is from the nineteenth century, and that then, as today, it is usually a pejorative term. “One of a succeeding generation. Chiefly in plural the less distinguished successors of an illustrious generation.” In literature proper, the contempt for followers is endemic to the early years of the twentieth century. In 1928, Ezra Pound, for example, divides writers into categories, of which the first three (in descending order) are “The inventors,” “The masters,” and “The diluters.” The last set are described as follows: “these who follow either the inventors or the ‘great writers,’ and who produce something of lower intensity, some flabbier variant, some diffuseness or tumidity in the wake of the valid.” George Bernard Shaw, writing the year before Berenson’s *North Italian Painters*, is even more emphatic than Pound: “the first great comer . . . reaps the whole harvest and reduces those who come after to the rank of mere gleaners, or, worse than that, fools who go laboriously through all the motions of the reaper and binder in an empty field.” Berenson’s response to the followers of Leonardo is temperate given the climate in which he was writing; what is there to say about the flabby, the diffuse, the gleaners and fools who follow in the wake or reap in an empty field?

Having challenged the attitudes of critics like Pound and Shaw, recent criticism has attempted to get beyond what is taken to be a late
remnant of Romantic ideology in order to recuperate the work of collaboration. Pater offers a surprisingly complex response to the challenge of the school, but it is one that salvages the value of the works of followers by making it reside in what they demonstrate about the originary master. The presence of the characteristics of an artist, in spite of the absence of any physical work on his part, becomes a manifestation of the powers of that artist to make others in his own creative image. When Pater notes that, where there were once many, there are now few paintings that can be traced directly to the labor of Giorgione, he asks "why the legend grew up above the name, why the name attached itself in many instances to the bravest works of other men." Where the concept of the school might seem to offer a challenge to nineteenth-century notions of artistic originality, Pater finds in it the possibility of an achievement all the more pervasive than any available in merely physical production. Elusive attribution becomes an essential rather than accidental characteristic of Giorgione's style:

Although the number of Giorgione's extant works has been thus limited by recent criticism, all is not done when the real and the traditional elements in what concerns him have been discriminated; for, in what is connected with a great name, much that is not real is often very stimulating. For the aesthetic philosopher, therefore, over and above the real Giorgione and his authentic extant works, there remains the Giorgionesque also—an influence, a spirit or type in art, active in men so different as those to whom many of his supposed works are really assignable. A veritable school, in fact, grew together out of all those fascinating works rightly or wrongly attributed to him; out of many copies from, or variations on him, by unknown or uncertain workmen, whose drawings and designs were, for various reasons, prized as his; out of the immediate impression he made upon his contemporaries, and with which he continued in men's minds; out of many traditions of subject and treatment, which really descend from him to our time, and by retracing which we fill out the original image.

The decimation of the canon allows the appreciation of Giorgione's achievement in ways that the simple work of his hand never could
have. The school is evidence of a kind of force of personality which it is
Pater's aim to celebrate. Not surprisingly, it also becomes a site for the
exploration of the kinds of teacher-pupil relationships which fascinate
the critic. In order to understand what it may mean to be a disciple in
Pater's work, it is important to bear in mind the erotic component only
suggested in the above description of the chain of influence originat-
ing in Giorgione.

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Pater's *Renaissance* (1873) returns repeatedly to the erotics of
learning, to accounts of learning as an erotic process deeply enmeshed
with the acquisition or expression of mastery. The first tale in "Two
Early French Stories," which is the first essay in the book, is that of
Héloïse and Abélard—"how the old priest had testified his love for her
by giving her an education then unrivalled." Education as the testimo-
ny of love: in this process, the intellectual life is not interrupted by
physical passion even while it provokes temptation by lessening the
bonds of quotidian morality. If the manifestation of Abélard's passion
is pedagogic, its initial impetus is no less intellectual: "You conceive
the temptations of the scholar," notes Pater, the second-person ad-
dress being in itself a gesture of seduction, "and that for one who knew
so well how to assign its exact value to every abstract thought, those
restraints which lie on the consciences of other men had been re-
laxed." Pater's Abélard is meant to be exemplary. He is said to prefig-
ure "the character of the Renaissance, that movement in which, in
various ways, the human mind wins for itself a new kingdom of feeling
and sensation and thought." The erotic-intellectual interplay of the
scholar's life is a characteristic result of the freeing of the mind that
Pater associates with the period from which he took the name for his
book.

Time and again, Pater returns to the ties binding the passions and
the life of the mind, the erotic and the pedagogic. The relation be-
tween Ficino and his student Pico della Mirandola is more than simply
intellectual. Thus, in Pater's description of their first encounter, the
older man is shown burning a lamp before a bust of Plato, as before a
saint, and of the younger one it is said that "his hair [was] yellow and abundant," and trimmed with more than the usual artifice of the time." The point to note is the interpenetration of erotic power and intellectual tutelage. As in psychoanalysis, the elements do not merely coexist; they are component parts of each other. It is in the interweaving of the desire of the instructor and that of the student that knowledge and passion emerge together. This interweaving shapes the treatment of schools in Pater's very first essay on a visual artist, his account of Leonardo da Vinci. I will close my own discussion by demonstrating the remarkable and still challenging manner in which the topic of schools and scholars is marked in this important piece.

As might be expected, very recent studies (especially those focusing on the art of northern Italy and in northern Italian collections) have begun to identify the particular achievements of individual followers of Leonardo. David Alan Brown, for example, in a recent discussion of Andrea Solario, emphasizes the variety to be found among Leonardo's followers. "To their imitation of Leonardo," he writes, "his pupils and followers brought a number of outlooks, conditioned in each case by their previous training, their own individual temperaments and goals, and their sources in other artists' work." This is sophisticated and entirely convincing, but it is a recuperation openly based on the desire to escape the stigma of the school: "Solario in particular," Brown notes, "does not deserve the negative epithet of 'follower.' Instead he represents what we might call constructive or creative imitation... he treats his Leonardoesque prototypes in a highly personal way, combining them with other sources or styles and in so doing transforming them." While the force of an achievement not based on claims of full originality is likely to be greeted more sympathetically today than in the early part of the last century, it is important to realize that this is precisely not Pater's argument. Like the art historians working to reclaim the original work of Finelli within the workshop context, Brown wants to argue for the real mastery of Solario even as the painter works in an idiom established by Leonardo. Be-
cause Pater takes the notion of school as more than a simple category in which to place works of art whose direct links to the admired artist are in question, he is able to use the productions of the school of Leonardo to illuminate the attainments of Leonardo himself. He engages the works of Leonardo's students as manifestations, ultimately, of Leonardo's own genius. Rather than shying away from works which, at the time he is writing, are known or suspected to be mixed productions, or by other hands entirely, he uses them as evidence of Leonardo's achievement, no less than are his unquestionably certified pieces.

Pater's treatment of Leonardo's drawings is telling. As much of the work of the essay is done by unexpected juxtaposition rather than by direct argument, it will be necessary to quote at length. In the drawings, Pater finds "Leonardo's type of womanly beauty" (fig. 2). His description of this type, however, is quite oblique, and its abstractions have provoked a number of interpretations. Looked at in context, it becomes evident that the abstraction is required because what Pater is describing is something far different from physical beauty; it is the ideal type of the most perfect form of influence:

They are not of the Christian family, or of Raphael's. They are the clairvoyants, through whom, as through delicate instruments, one becomes aware of the subtler forces of nature, and the modes of their action, all that is magnetic in it, all those finer conditions wherein material things rise to that subtlety of operation which constitutes them spiritual, where only the finer nerves and the keener touch can follow. It is as if in certain significant examples we actually saw those forces at their work on human flesh. Nervous, electric, faint always with some inexplicable faintness, these people seem to be subject to exceptional conditions, to feel powers at work in the common air unfelt by others, to become, as it were, the receptacle of them, and pass them on to us in a chain of secret influences.

But among the more youthful heads there is one at Florence which Love chooses for its own—the head of a young man, which may well be the likeness of Andrea Salaino, beloved of Leonardo for his curled and waving hair...and afterwards his favourite
pupil and servant...[A]nd in return Salaino identified himself so entirely with Leonardo, that the picture of *St. Anne*, in the Louvre, has been attributed to him.

The key to the passage lies in the unmotivated turn to pupils and to love indicated in the strangely agent-less choice made by a personified "Love" ("there is one at Florence which Love chooses for its own").
Pater is interested in identifying the particular form of beauty represented in Leonardo's work with the perfect modulation and transmission of influence. These beautiful beings, at once receptacles and transmitters, are the students in Leonardo's school. They are not simply weak imitators of the achievement of another; rather, they are perfect conduits of the force of genius. They are beautiful because of this perfection. At this moment in the essay influence itself openly becomes Pater's theme, and in Leonardo's school he finds the beauty of its full manifestation. The unlikely "But" that moves the reader from one paragraph to the next suggests not contrast but continuity. Salaino, the young man who had been with him since the age of ten, and was to become Leonardo's student and heir, functions as a passionate embodiment of that perfect transmission of influence which earlier he had described so abstractly. (His name was not in fact Salaino, but Salai; Pater is confused by his sources.) The impossibly perfect student becomes an instance of what Pater's Leonardo sought in his pupils, which is a combination of erotic charm and fantastic malleability; their malleability, a combination of intellectual sympathy and selflessness, becomes by far the most important part of his students' appeal. The passage continues—the "But" which marked the earlier undermotivated transition between paragraphs is answered by an "And" with a similar effect:

It illustrates Leonardo's usual choice of pupils, men of some natural charm of person or intercourse like Salaino, or men of birth and princely habits of life...men with just enough genius to be capable of initiation into his secret, for the sake of which they were ready to efface their own individuality...Out of the secret places of a unique temperament he brought strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown; and for him, the novel impression conveyed, the exquisite effect woven, counted as an end in itself—a perfect end.

And these pupils of his acquired his manner so thoroughly, that though the number of Leonardo's authentic works is very small indeed, there is a multitude of other men's pictures through which we undoubtedly see him, and come very near to his genius.
Sometimes, as in the little picture of the *Madonna of the Balances* ... we have a hand, rough enough by contrast, working upon some fine hint or sketch of his. Sometimes, as in the subjects of the *Daughter of Herodias* and the *Head of John the Baptist*, the lost originals have been re-echoed and varied upon again by Luini and others. At other times the original remains, but has been a mere theme or motive, a type of which the accessories might be modified or changed: and these variations have but brought out the more the purpose, or expression of the original.
The “And” here, like that important later one in the description of the Mona Lisa ("Hers is the head upon which all ‘the ends of the world are come,’ and the eyelids are a little weary"), suggests an incommensurate relation and causality. The “novel impression,” “exquisite effect,” the perfect “end in itself” is the pupil who has effaced himself enough to become a manifestation of the artistic will of the master.
Pater's presentation of the intertwined lines of passion, creativity, and self-effacement in the drawings culminates not with a drawing, but with a provocative treatment of a painting, Leonardo's *Saint John the Baptist* (fig. 3). After drawing out the perverse seductiveness of a figure "whose delicate brown flesh and woman's hair no one would go out into the wilderness to see, and whose treacherous smile would have us understand something far beyond the outward gesture or circumstance," Pater traces the (progressively less religious) variations on this work effected by Leonardo's epigoni, concluding that "No one ever ruled over the mere subject in hand more entirely than Leonardo, or bent it more dexterously to purely artistic ends." It is by looking at what he claims Leonardo's students saw that Pater finds the conviction of what he claims they recognized, that "though he handles sacred subjects continually, he is the most profane of painters: the given person or subject"—he lists a number of religious ones—"is often merely the pretext for a kind of work which carries one altogether beyond the range of its conventional associations." Pater is particularly intrigued by the case of the *Bacchus* at the Louvre (fig. 4), a painting the uncertainty of whose attribution to Leonardo is not unrelated to its clear basis in that artist's *Saint John the Baptist*. In Pater's account, the slippage from the representation of a figure of divine asceticism to the representation of a god of wine and fecund pleasures suggests the essentially erotic impulses motivating the original painting of a beautiful young man. For more recent students of art, the presence of desire in the religious and even ascetic drives may be less shocking than the near complete surrender of artistic originality evident in the work of Leonardo's students, Salai among them (fig. 5). However, Pater's prose works to inextricably bind the two phenomena, to demonstrate in its own seductive misdirections that together they constitute the complex and moving form of influence discoverable in the school.

It is no accident that Pater's discussion of Leonardo's school ends with what he presents as Leonardo's transgressive remaking of sacred themes into profane manifestations of his own desires. The achievement of the painter is evident in the force with which he makes into reflections of his own will entities that might be understood to offer
the greatest resistance to such remaking: sacred images, other artists. For Pater, an important part of the pleasure offered by Leonardo’s work is the possibility of witnessing the subtle but pervasive work of personal influence, whether it consist in making a St. John into a Bacchus or a Caprotti (Salai) into a Leonardo. In his treatment of Leonardo’s school, as so often, Pater carries out his own project of creative reinvention. He also anticipates a paradox made characteristically more open in the writing of his own followers (Oscar Wilde in particu-
lar): the possibility that individuals themselves may be understood as works of art insofar as they are recognized as formed in a web of influence. The school of Leonardo, as presented by Pater, becomes far more than a heuristic dumping ground for works of dubious attribution. Because Pater’s aim is to touch the most intimate depths of the “strange soul” of the artist, Leonardo’s effect on his followers is as rich a source for that contact as autograph paintings accredited by the archives or the connoisseurs. The student Luini is as much a masterpiece as the *Mona Lisa* or Salai. Pater manages to use the fact of the school to recuperate a sense of intimacy and admiration for the power of the artist that runs the risk of being lost should the recalibration of the canon continue to decimate the authenticated work of his hand. The fact of the school is evidence of the success of the personality. The work of Leonardo’s scholars becomes an illustration of the power of creative influence.

Because Pater has slighter biographical sources for the essay on Giorgione, he cannot tell the same story of a passionate disciple. Giorgione offers an instance of an influence even more ineffable and more diffuse. It is in tracing the charm of a personality that could inspire so much imitation, along with observing the fascination of influence itself at work, that Pater finds reparations for the losses visited on art lovers by the new scholarship:

As regards Giorgione himself, we have indeed to take note of all those negations and exceptions, by which, at first sight, a “new Vasari” seems merely to have confused our apprehension of a delightful object, to have explained away in our inheritance from past time what seemed of high value there. Yet it is not with a full understanding even of those exceptions that one can leave off just at this point. Properly qualified, such exceptions are but a salt of genuineness in our knowledge: and beyond all those strictly ascertained facts, we must take note of that indirect influence by which one like Giorgione, for instance, enlarges his permanent efficacy and really makes himself felt in our culture. In a just impression of that, is the essential truth, the *vrai verité*, concerning him.
Bruyn and Gibson-Wood are convincing when they claim that what is determining in the treatment of schools and of attribution at a given time is nothing less than the reigning notion of what an artist is and how that way of being is manifested in his or her creations. I have tried to suggest ways in which Pater is responding to a particular development in culture that is far from having achieved resolution in our own day. By not looking away from the effects on the artistic canon of contemporary developments in connoisseurship and the history of art, Pater arrives at a more complex and richer account of the relation of artist and school than that which has been available in later eras, when, aside from a few recent exceptions (notably, the work of Svetlana Alpers on Rembrandt's studio and that of Thomas Crow on David and his entourage), the work of followers, once so important, has largely fallen out of accounts of artistic achievement.

An important element in Pater's engagement with the topic of schools is his emphasis on the erotics of instruction, which is, arguably, what gives his discussion its most provocative edge. Recent work on the erotics of literary and artistic collaboration seems at once citable and yet inadequate when faced with what Pater describes, a more unbalanced set of relationships than such a term should probably encompass, one involving a disturbing relation of power on one hand and self-effacement on the other. By not needing the physical work of the artist to locate the artist's achievement, Pater uses nineteenth-century scholarship to offer a vision of what art may be that is at once an apotheosis of the claims of artistic power we tend to associate with the period, and something stranger. Ultimately, his ideas on art may be more shocking today than those open gestures toward transgressive sexuality that have been identified by recent critics. They are not, however, separable. Pater presents us with a recovery of the work of the school that at once challenges traditional notions of individual artistic achievement and any simple sense that the acknowledgment of working together will always and necessarily undermine the notion of the creative force of a single individual as the determinant quality re-
quired for the admiration of art. The works of Leonardo’s scholars—Luini, Menzi, even the less highly regarded Caprotti (Salai)—become visible in Pater’s essay, in ways that they are not in the current accounts of art history, but the artists themselves are understood as masterpieces by Leonardo da Vinci. Their beauty is the beauty of influence, and it is a beauty, as always in Pater, following Baudelaire, “mixed with strangeness.”

To return, in closing, to my opening instance, it seems evident that, while Pater would not fear Finelli, it is difficult to imagine that he would not, like Fenton, give the laurels to Bernini. Pater offers what may be a more productive choice than that between two masters. Or, rather, he offers the possibility of not choosing. He may inspire us instead to dwell on the relations involved in mastery, in schooling—relations no less fascinating for being beautiful and strange. Pater will not help as much with the choice between Finelli and Bernini as he might lead us to observe that as Apollo reaches for Daphne, who is paradoxically eluding the control of his grasp by becoming eternally rooted to the spot, the foliage that indicates her escape also serves to physically bind the figures of the group into a unity. The leaves that will mark achievement in the arts which the god has in his care emerge in the passionate interplay of power, desire, and escape, in a troubling dynamic process which includes the passions of the viewer and those of the sculptors. Toes run into the earth in the form of roots; fingers reach toward the sky as leaves. But Daphne ultimately does and does not elude Apollo; she is rooted to the spot, forever changing but bound to her pursuer by a network of foliage and by a fate that makes her an emblem not simply of his desire, but of those moments in which unsatisfiable desire and an impossible escape come together to form uncanny beauty.