

A Certain Homosexual Salience: a Sensitive Man Who Lives Ideas

Critical Responses to James Gleeson

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Abstract:

This paper initially focuses on critical issues surrounding Australian Surrealist James Gleeson's inclusion as "one of Australia's best-known and most influential artists" in the 1997 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, particularly that described by Dr Ted Gott (then curator of European art at the National Gallery of Australia) as "gayification." In particular I question whether gay publicity – that is, publicity as *gay* – necessarily involves a restriction of critical scope together with loss of broader public valency, as Gott argues. I then step backwards to examine, by sampling the work of Sandra McGrath and Renee Free, how earlier art writing on Gleeson had, in any case, already been infected by the insinuating and veiling mechanisms informing closet operations. In this way I propose that the question of whether or not Gleeson is better off in or out of the closet is finally a moot one – as he is trapped within a swinging glass door with only the oddest parts of his anatomy occasionally showing! This paper is a condensation of a larger study of critical writing on Gleeson and other Australian modernist painters. This was part of an extended thesis on visuality and its relation to anality and Queer.

The Paper:

Writing in *Outrage* in 1997, Dr Ted Gott expressed reservations about the inclusion of Australia's most important surrealist painter, James Gleeson, in the exhibition programme of that year's Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Acknowledging Gleeson's own fears about being "exhibited in a gay context"ⁱ he proceeded to support Gleeson's anxiety that once so exhibited "the rest of his work will be reinterpreted from this perspective."ⁱⁱ He referred to this distinctly *perspectival* threat as "queering" or "gayification."ⁱⁱⁱ

But what is meant by these two terms, especially when Gott, describing how Gleeson had never "sought to deliberately target a gay audience,"^{iv} nonetheless acknowledges that his homoerotic images have, with the artist's explicit endorsement, long been in the public domain.^v More particularly, one wonders how this Mardi Gras "display of erotic, indeed highly homoerotic drawings" (the *Time Retrieved* cycle of 1977-8) constitutes the first time this work was "exhibited in a gay context"^{vi} when gay contexts are to be found whenever and wherever there are gay men happy to explore, as the Mardi Gras publicity blurb puts it, "the sensual possibility of the male form."^{vii} In any case, Gleeson's ongoing production over several decades of usually undated soft-porn canvases (averaging 15 x 20cm and often generically titled *Figure in Psychoscape*) for a select male clientele indicate that gay men have been viewing his work "in a gay context" for some considerable time.^{viii}

But the rub of Gott's argument is its requirement of a troublesome equation between expanded gay identification and restricted critical probity. To "deliberately target" a "gay audience" he argues, is to "invite a focus on the homoerotic form of the works in preference to their wide-ranging, and eclectic content and meaning."^{ix} So a whole sequence of concatenations seems involved. Widespread gay public reception (i.e. gayification) funnels the (already?) Queer viewer towards scopic fixation/condensation upon key male nude components (homoerotic form) which, in turn, compels a "narrowing of focus"^x necessitating exclusion of all that is considered non-homoerotic. To illustrate the non-sexy latter, Gott gives the personal examples of "knowing Bosch and Breugel" together with "Michelangelo's blending of homoerotic form and Neoplatonic philosophical content" and the "deeper perspective" of the paintings as commentary on "a world racked with war and the emergence of fascism."^{xi}

But why should the assumption be that gay men (and Gott readily admits he is one) are cognitively impaired and epistemologically delinquent once they get the merest visual scent of "the naked male form"? Such trivialises the polysemous nature of viewing via an acute fetishization of the gaze. It also demands a now essentialized, and indeed, infantilized "gay" gaze – one performing only apart from historical, philosophical and academic savvy.^{xii}

I cannot further pursue Gott's thesis here. Instead, I wish to seize upon his important observation that "the homoeroticism that runs through James Gleeson's art as a constant undercurrent from 1938 to the present

day has never been discussed in critical writing on the artist.^{xiii} More particularly, I wish to bend it to propose the opposite: that in line with what Eve Kosofsky has famously described as the "epistemology of the closet," the homoerotic undercurrent has long been kept vigilantly alive in critical writing on Gleeson via technologies of feigned and deliberately imperfect silence.^{xiv}

Renee Free is stunning in the perfunctory nature of her psychoanalytic approach to the life, times and art of James Gleeson. As early as page thirteen of her major monograph *James Gleeson: Images From the Shadows* (1993) she declares a compelling case for a full-blown Oedipus Complex:

Gleeson was born in Sydney in 1915. His father died in the great flu epidemic in 1919, and he was brought up in the company of women - mother, sister, aunt - the latter fostering his artistic talent. His mother had a heart condition, gradually becoming an invalid. From 1942 until her death in 1958 Gleeson looked after her, because his sister had her own family. After his first visit to Europe in 1948, he did not dare leave her to go again until 1958. His mother died three months after he left, while he was in Greece. It seems a scenario for a strong Oedipus complex, with ensuing guilt and the need for penance.^{xv}

In hagiographic diagnostic dependence and without once mentioning the word "homosexual" she proceeds to squeeze Gleeson's life and art into the aetiological outlines of Freud's second model of male homosexuality as exemplified in his classic study of Leonardo da Vinci.^{xvi} Utilizing "Oedipus" as a euphemistic portmanteau term for homosexuality itself (of the strictly passive mother-fearing kind) she is able to identify him (as a forever struggling one) at every interpretative turn. It also grants permission to treat the paintings as buried symptoms. Just one example will suffice to capture the tenor. Considering Gleeson's famous 1945 oil *The Citadel*, she discerns:

Citadel is a milestone of Australian art, It is a psychological counterpart to Dali's *The Face of War*, with skulls in mouth and eyes, and shows how far Gleeson has developed his own language. Interpreted on a psychological level, *Citadel* shows the triumph of the unconscious. Only the hand of the man, mankind, the artist, is not swallowed by a classic vagina dentata, in a cliff face of tumorous flesh. The painting shows the return to the womb and death, the death instincts triumphant.^{xvii}

By proposing that Gleeson's psyche is "coffined" and haunted by the prospect of re-entering the womb "under sway of the death instincts"^{xviii} she conjures and then substantiates the fundamental image of Gleeson as a man perpetually faced with annihilation – via maternal ingestion - as a man! This, in turn, enables her to pursue her larger quest of proposing Gleeson as a particularly sensitive, even prophetic artist because fated with the deadly prospect of incorporation not just by women as gnashing vaginas but entire world construed as only a larger version of the same.

While purporting to show extensive links between Gleeson and his art, Free's failure to mention of Gleeson's life-long partnership with Frank O'Keefe creates a textural lacunae through which what might have been tumblers phantasmagorically out. That O'Keefe only scrapes a single mention in the acknowledgements and then only in fifth place as a collector stacked under the picture credits speaks to the zealotry of her own repressive mechanisms. In so carefully scissoring away Frank O'Keefe whom Gleeson met as gorgeously buffed and oiled muscle-bound hired studio model – one immediately recognised as his "Atlas" and maintained as idealized template for all ensuing nude male studies, she recycles, albeit backwards, the fact, itself replayed by Freud, that da Vinci's own fall into "suspicion" was connected to his having "employed a boy of bad reputation as a model."^{xix} And just as she so busily rubs poor Frank out, James is found, always presciently, pasting him, constantly and lovingly, back in. So spectacularly populating and repopulating the scene of art with look-alike Frank hunks cut from men's muscle magazines, Gleeson revokes, even while anticipating, the erasure of homosexuality from the compulsive visual sphere of heterosexuality itself. Need we mention the convulsive sphere of art writing?

By way of further exemplification of closet mechanics, Sandra McGrath's 1967 *Art and Australia* profile on Gleeson proves rewarding.^{xx} As does Free, she aims for biographical candour steeped in psycho-poetics, though, in her case, it is laced with a journalist's painterly touch.

She recognises the events between 1931 and 1941 as those which "burned their troubled image on the mind of Gleeson forever."^{xxi} Not only does her metaphor claim history as what might traumatically inscribe itself on Gleeson's awareness but it proposes him as so much tender tissue to be thus scored. In immediately continuing "[t]hey determined his attitude as a man and his style as an artist"^{xxii} she constructs Gleeson as magical Zeitgeist empowered by psychic wounding.

Gleeson's difference then, the one that would make of him *both* artist and gay man (and perhaps here they are, at least eventually, to mean the same thing) comes to dwell, she now elaborately figures, in his capacity to harbour, at his very "core," his reactive assimilation of invading forces, not in fleshy form, but as ideas:

For Gleeson is a man who lives ideas, Ideas are to him what football scores, night-trotting and surfboard riding are to another man. This is the very core of Gleeson...the man in love with ideas. He ranges from subject to subject with articulate grace.^{xxiii}

The implication is audacious: the core possession of thoughts *per se* would signify his interiorized separation from those *other* men who *are* men precisely to the degree that they play footie. Likewise, his ability to range "from subject to subject with articulate grace" comes to map his "make-up" or "reach" as someone so ideationally balletic that his very deftness would, at least if on the football field, render him suspect. That, in addition, as "a critic he does not bite hard enough or deep enough,"^{xxiv} and that many times "he camouflages his denunciation in pleasant verbal arabesques"^{xxv} would only seem to confirm how an articulate disposition concerned more with decorative niceties than getting out a "hard" and rugged sporting view would spell an effeminacy cast as Orientalist flourish! And, like parchment of even a photosensitive sort, Gleeson is a primed to receive, to register. "Articulate, informed, sensitive, Gleeson quickly responds to the cultural atmosphere around him"^{xxvi} she informs.

That McGrath now ventriloquizes Gleeson's voice underscores his now clearly uncanny susceptibility to impression. In tones of the romantic sublime she intones "[t]hen, [the dark uncertainty of the sixteenth century] as now, the artist feels himself to be living in the eye of a hurricane waiting for the winds to wheel and scatter the store of values he has managed to save from its previous onslaught"^{xxvii} only to follow up with an immediate extrapolation as though the statement had really come from him:

There is much of Gleeson in this statement, much that relates to his own private view of the world as a man and an artist. The canvases of Gleeson often reveal a figure menaced and threatened by an environment that he has no control over. The small nudes of his later paintings seem engulfed in a world that is going to drown them. Gleeson's figures are menaced, or corroded, broken or dissected. They grapple, grasp and gyrate in dramatically heaving landscapes often coloured in purples, blues and greens.^{xxviii}

Via the substitution of Gleeson for the "figure" in the painting, we are returned to the image of a painted man, helplessly passive, awaiting impressions by an external world itself metonymically compressed into avenging weapon. Even the landscapes, luridly coloured in "purples, blues and greens" with which the menaced, corroded, broken or dissected men are forced to heavingly grapple, grasp and gyrate, become representative of bodily ruptures and bruises. It is as though the very landscape is sodomizing him!

Yet McGrath, unlike Free, is deliberate in her eventual "articulation" of Gleeson as a homosexual, even if, in so doing, her own style would be required to perform arabesques rather than indulge in outright naming:

To see Gleeson in his environment is also to understand somewhat his likes and prejudices. He is surrounded by natural and man-made objects that are constant reminders of forms, of colours, of history, of time present and past. He has a beautiful collection of snuff-bottles in all shapes and sizes, in amber and jade, in ivory and crystal. Greek coins with horse-drawn chariots stamped on them, a pre-Columbian head with the face of a Botticelli angel, platters of flat polished stones in deep reds, browns and greens combined with pods and pines from trees and bushes all converge to reveal a man sensitive to the many varied aspects of life and nature. In this atmosphere, in a Northern suburb, Gleeson lives with his secretary and sometime model Frank O'Keefe. O'Keefe is part protector and part companion for Gleeson. He is vital, warm, and chatty. He balances the more withdrawn and reticent qualities of Gleeson's personality.^{xxix}

McGrath cinematically zooms upon the artful particular – as evidence to be collected, amassed, until it composes, in its gathered opulence, a singularly irresistible case. With the headily aromatic nuances of a *fin de siècle* poet she relishes, fondles, coaxes out the exotic glimmer of amber, ivory and crystal, the Greek coins with horse-drawn chariots stamped upon them, the sensual (aesthete) intoxication of deep reds, browns and greens combined with pods, all the time compounding a picture of a man so "sensitive to many varied aspects of life and nature" that his whole 'atmosphere' would be exhibited here, as are the two men themselves as *items*.^{xxx} The room itself works as synecdoche for their homosexuality according to a chain of excessively aesthetic signifiers all gathered together under the rubric of a compulsive collecting addiction.

That she should so clearly award a literal or even literary partiality to O'Keefe as "part protector" and "part companion" exasperates the begged question of his bodily presence as other than prop in the *mise en scene*. It is as though, as lover and companion, he is rendered himself *partial* because divided by the bifurcatory structures of visibility/invisibility - one half, that is, exclusively there for his boyfriend (as model, companion, collector, lover) and the other stranded on the side of 'straight' normalcy where pretence and masquerade non-disclosure as trusty live-in secretary is mandatory and, just possibly, socially acceptable.

Concludes McGrath in the last flourish of her piece:

Amidst Gleeson's enormous art library, shells, flowers, pebbles, beautiful art works and some of his most abstract canvases (which he indulged in briefly), the two men inhabit a world that is eminently cultivated, and at the same time quaintly personal.^{xxxix}

The enormous world is compressed into that terrible because interminable quirkiness. For this "at the same time quaintly personal" would kill off – by virtue of its reference to that castratory little "quaint" - any real scope for a freedom *beyond* the grotesquely eccentric. Those robust footballers (who in their right mind would ever call a footballer "quaint") are never far away.

Conceived in the light of this thanatological dramaturgy, her own parting words sting:

It seems the right atmosphere for a man who for thirty years has been the articulate, wide-searching, progressive, and literate being who has cajoled museum officials, preached to collectors, taught history to art students, praised and blamed artists, supported movements alien to the time, interpreted the meaning of art to the few who cared, painted, written, in summation been at one time or another most of the things that all cultivated men cherish...the philosopher, the poet and the painter. And the order in which we place them is unimportant.^{xxxix}

But isn't the order in which we place "them" important, after-all? If Gleeson is to be forced back from being a player in the hierarchical or veridical world of real men, then it is clear that McGrath must offer him something more than an incumbent or flat-out eternity locked in with his boyfriend in a *cabinet extraordinaire*.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Ted Gott, 1997, "Figure of Fantasy", *Outrage*, Number 165, pp. 56-8.

ⁱⁱ *ibid.*, p. 58.

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.*, p. 59.

^{iv} *ibid.*

^v Gott writes: "A similar group of drawings from the "Time Retrieved" series, from the collection of James Agapitos and Ray Wilson, was displayed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1993, toured to regional galleries in New South Wales, Queensland the ACT, and subsequently published in book form. These are not works which the artist has sought to keep hidden. Nor, however, are they works which James Gleeson has ever sought to deliberately target at a gay audience, an act which could potentially invite a focus on the homoerotic form of the works in preference to their wide-ranging and eclectic content and meaning" (*ibid.*).

^{vi} *ibid.*

^{vii} Quoted, Gott, *ibid.*, p. 58.

^{viii} I have written earlier on Gott's response. See my article, "Dobell's Posthumous Closet: The Bottom Line" in *Outrage*, Number 166, March 1997, pp. 36-39.

^{ix} Gott, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

^x *ibid.*

^{xi} *ibid.*

^{xii} Gott admits that as a frustrated teenager he responded to Gleeson's tantalising naked male forms in the 'safe' context of "voyeurism of the 'forbidden', with just a dash of art interest." But having now studied art history he has progressed, he assures us, from "the simplistic level of ocular ravishment" stimulated by an appreciation of the lush nude male forms predominant in Gleeson's sexy canvases of the 1940s and 1950s to the enjoyment of a "deeper satisfaction" (*ibid.*). Such presumes not only that younger men don't dig deep but that older ones invariably do, issues of neo-platonism naturally aside!

^{xiii} *ibid.*

^{xiv} In *Epistemology of the Closet*, University of California Press' Berkeley, 1990, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes of the epistemological privilege of unknowing that enables not only the radical taxonomic incoherencies of homo/heterosexual definition but also empowers silence to performatively act as all-too

revealing, all-too telling speech act: “ ‘Closetedness’ itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence – not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularity by fits and starts, in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it” (p.3).

^{xv} Rene Free, *James Gleeson: Images from the Shadows*, Craftsman House, Roseville East, second edition 1996, p. 13. To capture the spirit of her ruthless chronicling let’s merely touch upon her extensive list of insights: Gleeson’s ambivalent crippled relationship with mother (“he describes her as a wonderful woman – his conscious attitude – yet he must have resented her role, and resented looking after her for years” [p.14]; his painterly recognition of her as a castrating device (“*Deposition*, 1939, shows Christ threatened by a castrating saw-toothed mother image...” [p. 18]; his secret wish, nonetheless, to be sexually conquered/nurtured by the phallic mother (“In his paintings of Crucifixions, of which there are several, Gleeson identifies with Christ – the abandoned Son”) [p. 18]; his idealist quest for viable male role models construed as quest for missing father (“his father’s death meant that he would have felt his father had abandoned him, feeling a need for a powerful father figure) [p. 14]; failure to find a wife (or any suitable mother-substitute) because women *per se* are cast as threatening (“mother, sister, aunt are felt as a threat”) [p. 15]; frequent compulsive trips overseas as bids to escape stress of negative Oedipal triangulation [p. 13] (no mention here of his passionately consummated affairs with European men); enduring guilt because he libidinally kills his mother by having fun (“[h]is mother died three months after he left, while he was in Greece. It seems a scenario for a strong Oedipus complex”) [p.15]; chronic castration anxiety (“dread of his mother’s smothering has reduced him to a tiny skeletal fossil”) [p.17] and finally, and with some Jungian archetypal theory tossed in for good measure, the inevitable same sex attraction that occurs when the masculine self has interpolated and triggered primary feminine identificatory structures (“[t]he unconscious projects these archetypes onto others, the anima onto a person of the opposite sex, the persona onto someone of the same sex....[t]he persona image, based perhaps on the ideal father figure, is more important in the later works, replacing the anima as the major player”) [p.19].

^{xvi} See Sigmund Freud, “Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood” (1910) in *The Standard Edition of the complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, Volume 11, Hogarth Press, London, 1953-1975, p. 65, where he denotes, as does Free the artist as man of “feminine delicacy of feeling.” Also similarly, her careful and deliberate omission of any reference to Gleeson’s sexual relationships is so loaded with portentous significance that it exceeds Freud’s considerable own. Writes Freud: “If a biographical study is really intended to arrive at an understanding of its hero’s mental life it must not - as happens in the majority of biographies as a result of discretion or prudishness - silently pass over its subject’s sexual activity or sexual individuality. What is known of Leonardo in this respect is little: but that little is full of significance.” (p. 69). In reference to the third model of homosexuality, it can be found initially drawn from the famous 1910 footnote in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (reprinted in *On Sexuality*, The Penguin Freud Library, Volume Seven, Penguin, London:, 1977, pp. 88-126). There Freud writes: “In all the cases we have examined we have established the fact that the future inverts, in the earliest years of their childhood, pass through a phase of very intense, but short-lived fixation to a woman (usually their mother) and that, after leaving this behind, they identify themselves with a woman and take *themselves* as their sexual object. That is to say, proceeding from a basis of narcissism, they look for a young man who resembles themselves and whom *they* may love as their mother loved *them*. Moreover, we have frequently found that alleged inverts have been by no means insusceptible to the charms of women, but have continually transposed the excitation aroused by women on to a male object, They have thus repeated all through their lives the mechanism by which their inversion arouse. Their compulsive longing for men has turned out to be determined by their ceaseless flight from women” (p. 56). This would fit in so very nicely with Free’s assertion that Gleeson is constantly seeking escape from “the company of women”.

^{xvii} Free, op. cit., p. 25.

^{xviii} *ibid.*

^{xix} Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci*, op. cit., p. 72. On this point of studios, masters and boys, Freud might also be read against himself. He notes: “When he had become a Master, he surrounded himself with handsome boys and youths whom he took as pupils. The last of these pupils, Francesco Melzi, accompanied him to France, remained with him up to his death and was named by him as his heir” (p. 73). But what is the basis of Freud’s assumption, expressed by his “we can assume,” that a sexual liaison was not involved? His rational that it would be beneath a “great man” appears peculiarly thin, as does his recourse to the proverbial customs of the time: “[w]ithout sharing in the certainty of his modern biographers, who naturally reject the possibility that there was a sexual relationship between him and his pupils as a baseless insult to the great man, we may take it as much more probable that Leonardo’s affectionate relations with young men who - as was the custom with pupils at that time - shared his existence did not extend to sexual activity. Moreover, a high degree of sexual activity is not to be attributed to him” (*ibid.*). But why not?

^{xx} Sandra McGrath, 1967, “Profile: James Gleeson,” *Art and Australia*, Vol. 5, Number 3, pp. 519- 23.

^{xxi} *ibid.*, p. p.519.

^{xxii} *ibid.*

^{xxiii} McGrath, *op. cit.* p. 520.

^{xxiv} Leonardo da Vinci's "character" according to Freud, evinced similar "feminine delicacy of feeling". In *Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910) he writes: "At a time when everyone was trying to gain the widest scope for his activity – a goal unattainable without the development of energetic aggressiveness towards other people – Leonardo was notable for his quiet peacebleness and his avoidance of all antagonism and controversy. He was gentle and kindly to everyone; he declined, it is said, to eat meat, since he did not think it justifiable to deprive animals of their lives; and he took particular pleasure in buying birds in the market and setting them free. He condemned war and bloodshed and described man as not so much the king of the animal world but rather the worst of the wild beasts. But this feminine delicacy of feeling did not deter him from accompanying condemned criminals on their way to execution in order to study their features distorted by fear and to sketch them in his notebook" (*The Standard Edition, op. cit., p. 69*). It is interesting that just as Freud is suggesting that da Vinci's "feminine delicacy of feeling" would extend itself to an acute observation of human travail, even down to the grimace of a condemned man, so also would McGrath suggest that Gleeson's sensitivity would lead him – unflinchingly? – towards an apprehension of a world in which "the Stalins and Hitlers" could monstrously perform: "Within this same period of time there was the rise of the Third Reich, and the explosion into the Second World War. Again man's fate, his ability to survive, were brought into sharp focus. Around the globe there were the Stalins and Hitlers. The whole fabric of society was being torn into small bullet-size bits....Gleeson felt the impact of these events emotionally and philosophically. A sensitive young artist, he sought solutions and reasons, he found a civilisation that was sick..." (McGrath, *op. cit.*, p. 519).

^{xxv} McGrath, *ibid.*

^{xxvi} *ibid.*, p. 520.

^{xxvii} *ibid.*, p. 523.

^{xxviii} McGrath, *loc. cit.*

^{xxix} McGrath, *loc. cit.*

^{xxx} In *Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910), Freud engages in a similar litany of da Vinci's personality refinements – ones extending to his environment which thereby becomes a mirror of the "supremely eloquent" world(man?) within: "he was tall and well-proportioned; his features were of consummate beauty and his physical strength unusual; he was charming in his manner, supremely eloquent, and cheerful and amiable to everyone. He loved beauty in the things that surrounded him; he was fond of magnificent clothing and valued every refinement of living". Freud then refers to da Vinci's writings on himself: "In a passage from the treatise on painting, which reveals his lively capacity for enjoyment, he compares painting to its sister arts and describes the hardships that await the sculptor: "For his face is smeared and dusted all over with marble powder so that he looks like a baker, and he is completely covered with little chips of marble, so that it seems as if his back has been snowed on, and his house is full of splinters of stone and dust. In the case of the painter it is quite different...for the painter sits in front of his work in perfect comfort. He is well-dressed and handles the lightest of brushes which he dips in pleasant colours. He wears the clothes he likes; and his house is full of delightful paintings and is spotlessly clean. He is often accompanied by music or by men who read from a variety of beautiful works, and he can listen to these with great pleasure and without the din of hammers and other noises" (*op. cit.*, pp. 64-5). That in this house full of "delightful paintings" and "spotlessly clean," men might so easily be substituted for the accompaniment of music and be equally well listened to "with great pleasure and without the din of hammers and other noises" would speak perhaps to the homoerotic virtues of the Renaissance. That McGrath would colour Gleeson as an altogether clever Renaissance man enables her to draw upon this trope whereby a love for beauty would be insignia of a love of men. Gleeson, like da Vinci, has his own male accompaniment in the form of a live-in lover who presumably, can also "read from a variety of beautiful works" and thereby exceptionally and musically charm the portal of Gleeson's "ear".

^{xxx} McGrath, *loc. cit.*

^{xxxii} McGrath, *loc. cit.*