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Early Twentieth-Century *Vogue*, George Wolfe Plank and the ‘Freaks of Mayfair’.

Abstract:

Vogue was one of the most influential fashion magazines of the twentieth century. In the 1920s its British edition, launched in 1916, became a focus for various forms of queer visual and cultural expression. The origins of the related ‘amusing style’, which delighted in camp display, can be traced to the romantic and artistic collaboration between the American artist George Wolfe Plank and the British writer E. F. Benson during World War One. The illustrations that Plank produced for Benson’s book of satirical sketches of life in London’s high society, *The Freaks of Mayfair* (1916), shed light on the camp images that Plank designed for the covers of both the American and British editions of the magazine. Therefore, Plank can be understood to have played a key role in the development of queer visual culture during the early twentieth century.

Keywords:

E. F. Benson, camp, fashion, George Wolfe Plank, magazines, queer, *Vogue*

George Wolfe Plank (1883-1965) was an American artist who, although little-known and studied today, was once famous as a leading designer of *Vogue* magazine covers. My examination of his collection of papers draws attention to the importance of connections between queer cultures and lifestyles and the history of the creative arts in Britain. In the past it was sometimes thought that sexuality was an incidental aspect of creative professionals’ lives, or even, when it took the form of same-sex desire, detrimental. By contrast, I will present, through my study of Plank’s practice, an example of queer creativity in which the artistic work in question can only be understood, and indeed be fully appreciated, when seen in the context of its creator’s personal life. This will involve exploring the interaction between queerness as an aspect of same-sex desire and wider contexts in which boundaries of normative roles of gender and sexuality are explicitly or implicitly undermined, parodied or problematised.

Plank was born in Gettysberg, Pennsylvania and taught himself to draw and paint, before moving to Philadelphia in 1907. *Vogue*, which had been founded in the United States in 1892, began to rise swiftly in importance to become America’s premier fashion magazine after it was bought by the entrepreneurial publisher Condé Nast in 1905. This was a period in which illustrated periodicals were produced in the context of rising levels of conspicuous expenditure. Fashion magazines played a prominent role in shaping perceptions about not merely desirable styles of dress but of lifestyles in general. Whilst such publications were aimed primarily at a female audience they were also partly written, illustrated and, indeed, read by men. The development of separate editions of *Vogue* produced from New York,

London and Paris (and briefly from a number of other locations) helped to develop cultural linkages between elite populations in a range of countries.¹

Plank worked for the magazine from 1911 to 1936. For most of this time he lived in Britain, having moved across the Atlantic in 1914 with two close friends, James and Mildred Whitall, who helped him make connections in London society. Plank's life was very much that of a genteel American expatriate, but his friends and associates included leading modernists, notably the bisexual poet Hilda Doolittle ('H. D.') who had moved to London in 1911. Plank spent most of his time in England in Sussex, and in 1927, he moved into a house that had been designed for him there by Edwin Lutyens. Plank became a naturalized Briton in 1945 and died twenty years later in a nearby nursing home.

Plank's work as an artist for *Vogue* has not only an importance for those interested in the history of fashion but also for others focussed on the history of sexuality. Indeed, by the 1920s the British edition of *Vogue* had developed a distinctive identity of its own, even though cover illustrations by Plank and others were used on both the American and British editions. Christopher Reed in his *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture, and Domesticity* (2004) and later in 'Design for (Queer) Living: Sexual Identity, Performance, and Décor in British *Vogue*, 1922-1926' argues that 'almost every page of the arts and culture coverage in British *Vogue* during the 1920s is queer—intriguingly, delightfully, powerfully queer. I intend "queer" here in its broadest sense, to indicate an attitude that delighted in destabilising institutionally sanctioned hierarchies.'² So what at first glance appears to be merely a publication for the rich turns out, on Reed's reading, to have been concerned with establishing high fashion as a radical force in ways that included (even if this was not always made explicit) transgression of norms of gender and sexuality. Reed terms this *Vogue*'s 'amusing style' and he sees it as having been fuelled by a 'queer sensibility'.³

Responsibility for the 'queer' quality of British *Vogue*—in terms of tendencies toward challenging norms as a result of personal experience of same-sex desire— appears most obviously to rest with Dorothy Todd who was its editor from 1922 to 1926. Todd lived in a house in Chelsea, London, with Madge Garland who was both her lover and her assistant at the magazine. The couple gave parties that were attended by various members of the Bloomsbury Group, including Virginia Woolf, whom Todd persuaded to become a contributor.⁴ The homosexual ballet-dancer and choreographer Frederick Ashton also lived at the same address and in 1926 produced a ballet, *A Tragedy of Fashion*, that included a cigar-smoking woman based on Todd. It may have been homophobia that got her into trouble or it may simply have been that her high-brow literary tastes were not shared by all of her readers since the sales of the British edition were not strong in this period. Garland also walked out when Todd was sacked by the New York headquarters of the publication, but she returned to work as a *Vogue* fashion editor from 1932 to 1941. In another article on this topic, 'A *Vogue* that Dare Not Speak its Name: Sexual Subculture during the Editorship of Dorothy Todd, 1922-26', Reed focusses on this period in the magazine's history. He sees Todd's aim as not simply being to raise the artistic tone of the publication, but also to provide tutorials in 'how to recognise and take queer pleasures'.⁵ Theatre columns under her editorship were especially instructive because they 'inducted readers into the sensibility now identified by the term "camp"'.⁶

Camp is a central concept in relation to supposed effeminacy, but the nature of its relationship to same-sex desire has long been controversial. Its appearance in the critical literature is often credited to Susan Sontag's short essay 'Notes on "Camp"' which appeared in 1964.⁷ This highly personal and idiosyncratic piece of work has been interpreted as a coded expression of Sontag's ambivalent feelings toward her own sexuality and upbringing. The literary critic Terry Castle thinks that this is why this essay, which Sontag dedicated to Oscar Wilde, effectively mocks camp for representing the tastes of a 'fey cohort of (pseudoaristocratic) patron-connoisseurs'.⁸ Ironic recuperation of otherwise outdated modes and styles could, however, be seen in more positive terms as acts of creativity that combined self-mockery with subtle strategies of self-expression.⁹ Such camp self-fashioning employs knowing reference to both historical and contemporary styles in the construction of new forms of visual expression. Furthermore, such activity that acts to problematize normative assumptions of gender and sexual desire can be identified as queer even when its originator cannot be easily proven to have been a homosexual or, once the term had come into widespread use, a lesbian or gay man. The case for the queerness of camp as deployed in *Vogue* in the 1920s, as Reed underscores, is reliant on reading between visual and literary forms and the purposes and lives of their creators.

What is startling, however, is that the amusingly camp style preceded the time of Todd at *Vogue* in at least one key respect: namely the design of the magazine's covers such as that by Plank that appeared in the American edition for 15 October 1917 (fig. 1).¹⁰ The figure he created is by no means a typical image of a fashion model. Her unrealistically etiolated body appears as little more than a series of disconnected adjuncts (a drooping hand, an elongated foot) to a ballooning frock that is not a typical specimen of contemporary fashion. In images such as this Plank offered the viewer more or less outré fantasies of feminine insouciance; a fact that led one later commentator to opine that there was a 'certain shadow' of fin-de-siècle decadence about such a delight in 'bizarre and improbable' clothing.¹¹

Some of the same flavour can also be seen in art produced by Helen Dryden, who was another prominent cover illustrator of the time, but Plank's work was characteristically more exaggerated in ways that suggested that high style was all about artificiality and performativity.¹² Aesthetic circles around Oscar Wilde had popularised the idea that sexual perversity was a sophisticated aspect of high society. As I will go on to show there is good evidence for Plank's aesthetically informed sexual non-conformity. This may explain why Plank's style was sometimes noticeably influenced by Aubrey Beardsley (who if not homosexual himself was very interested in sexual perversity). All this suggests that the ultimate progenitor of the queer 'amusing style' lay as far back as 1887-89 with the illustrations commissioned for *The Woman's World* by its then editor Oscar Wilde from the artist Charles Ricketts, which were, like those of Plank aesthetic statements first and fashion documents second.¹³ The same-sex partnership of Ricketts with fellow artist Charles Shannon is well documented, but no such equivalent has hitherto been known for Plank. However, the fragmentary evidence that survives of his life is, I believe, sufficient also to position him as a homosexual who contributed to, and perhaps even partly originated, the queerly 'amusing style' that was so prominent in British *Vogue* during the 1920s.

Queer Lives: Benson and Plank

In 1916 the prolific novelist E. F. (Fred) Benson published his latest book *The Freaks of Mayfair*, which is a set of satirical sketches of snobbish characters in London's high society. Its production should be seen in the context of concern about the war effort. On the one hand, there was nostalgia on the home front for more pleasurable times, but on the other, there was suspicion of those who continued to enjoy lives of aristocratic ease. This had the effect, for those who eschewed hard-line moralism, of giving an amusingly decadent cast to social activities that had once seemed unremarkable for the elite (such as dressing in high fashion and attending the theatre). Plank, who was moving in such circles in London at the time, provided the volume with a set of illustrations strongly influenced by the style of Beardsley. The women, like those in his *Vogue* covers, are shown wearing frocks that are out of line with the narrowing silhouettes of their day and which, in fact, evoke the atmosphere of the end of the nineteenth century. The layout of the pages, with very wide margins, also recalled that of aesthetic publications of the fin-de-siècle.¹⁴

The style of the social satire applied in *The Freaks of Mayfair* and its focus on the phenomenon of snobbery place it, textually speaking, in a line of descent from the work of the English novelist, William Makepeace Thackeray.¹⁵ We are introduced to a range of society eminences and aspirants including a fan of spiritual séances, a male gossip, a widow of utter respectability, an unsuccessful debutante, men and women who refuse to grow old gracefully ('grizzly kittens'), and a number of social climbers, some of whom are successful ('perpendicular') and others less so ('horizontal'). The scene illustrative of successful social ascent shows women lavishly dressed at a performance at the theatre (fig. 2). This image bears striking resemblance in its employment of camp exaggerations of dress and gesture (compare the splayed hands of the left-hand woman on the rearmost row of seats and the giant coronets on the heads of the ladies in the front row) to many of Plank's *Vogue* covers such as that which was published in the American edition on 15 October 1919 (fig. 3). The costume of the main woman depicted here is startlingly impractical in relation to the task in hand (playing the piano) and the overall effect is of delight in affectation rather than any attempt to depict a real woman modelling something that could ever be worn.

Men who appear not to be of the marrying kind make repeated appearances in the various chapters of *The Freaks of Mayfair*. We are introduced to a trendy society reverend (unmarried) and to young men described as 'Piping Bullfinches': 'a large quantity of young or youngish unmarried men who, living in bachelor chambers or flats, find it both more economical and pleasanter to sing for their dinner... and they are therefore prepared to make themselves extremely agreeable for the price of their food.'¹⁶ Such activity, it is made clear, is a form of work. Of one such young man, it is commented that 'he has no intention at present of marrying, since even a rich wife would interfere with his career, and he is certainly incapable of falling in love with a poor one.'¹⁷

Then there is 'Aunt Georgie' who is presented, in essence, as an invert, namely a person with a man's body but a woman's mind: 'He was in fact an infant of the male sex according to physical equipment, but it became perfectly obvious even when he was quite a little boy that he was quite a little girl. He played with dolls rather than lead soldiers, and cried when he was promoted to knicker-bockers.'¹⁸ Benson makes clear that Georgie is not, physically speaking, an androgyne: 'He did not like boys' games, but being tall and strong

and well-made, and being forced to take part in them, he played them with considerable success'.¹⁹ However Plank, nevertheless, depicts him in a manner that is rooted in deep-seated British stereotypes of male effeminacy (fig. 4).²⁰ His figure, like those of many of Plank's women is elongated and limp when not manifesting exaggerated gestures that have no practical function (as in the extended pinkie finger of Georgie's right hand. This figure, whilst clearly male, is not presented in any sense as a conventionally sturdy and physically self-contained man. This character appears to be a direct prototype of Georgie Pillson in Benson's famous 'Mapp and Lucia' series of novels (published between 1920 and 1939), from his taste in needlework to his distress when his attractive chauffeur marries a parlour maid. That these characters were categorised as 'freaks' might imply Benson and Plank's hostility to 'queer' characters in society. However, their own personal lives appear to underline, by contrast, that what we may be seeing here is sympathetic parody rather than moralistic satire.

Benson's life, in contrast to that of Plank, is well documented, not simply as a result of his copious writings but due to his family connections. He was the son of Edward White Benson, who was headmaster of Wellington College and who subsequently became the Archbishop of Canterbury. Benson studied at Oxford University where he moved in the circles of Lord Alfred Douglas and, therefore, can be located on the fringes of the decadent literary scene. From 1892 to 1895 Benson worked as an archaeologist, but following on from the success of his first novel, *Dodo*, published in 1893, he established himself as a writer in London. He made the capital his home until the latter part of World War One after which time he lived for most of the year at Lamb House, in Rye, Sussex, which had been the home of Henry James. Benson held the position of the Mayor of Rye from 1934 to 1937 and died three years later.

It should be remembered when judging Benson's early novels that Britain in the aftermath of the trials of Oscar Wilde in 1895 was not a place that was amenable to the open expression of same-sex desire. It is perhaps as result of this climate that Benson lived a carefully closeted life and specialised in writing camp social satire. It is important to stress, however, that his sensibility had been shaped by the world of aestheticism.²¹ It may also have been strongly influenced by Benson's own family, bearing in mind that none of his siblings married and his mother, his sister and one of his brothers have been associated with expressions of same-sex desire.²² For instance, his mother Mary Benson had had an intense relationship, often involving sharing a bed, with Lucy Tait who was the daughter of the previous Archbishop of Canterbury. E. F. Benson's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* opines that he lived alone at Rye, 'never married and many of his novels suggest that he had a generalized dislike of women'.²³ The historian Steven Runciman, who was himself homosexual, knew Benson in the 1920s and said that he found the older man hard to connect with.²⁴ In a similar way, the characters in Benson's satirical novels are not presented in ways that invite emotional empathy and sexual identification.²⁵ Rather their universe is one of amoral scheming achieved within the realm of a carefully stylised comedy of manners.²⁶

While elements of homoeroticism surfaced from time to time in Benson's fiction, the overall impression is of carefully closeted discretion and this sense is reinforced when his novels are juxtaposed with his volumes of autobiography and cultural commentary. Thus, in *As We Were: A Victorian Peep Show* (1930), Oscar Wilde appears neither as a disgrace nor a

hero, but rather as something of an eccentric; or, one might say, a ‘freak of Mayfair’.²⁷ Benson’s recollections in this book of holidaying on Capri before the war are suffused with something of a glow, but one that fails to illuminate the queer aspects of the island’s life at this time in anything other than very general terms.²⁸ The atmosphere is one of homosocial insouciance, as in the conversation that Benson has with his house-mate, John Ellingham Brooks, on hearing of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 in Sarajevo:

“Never heard of it... I want to go to Monte Salaro after tea. Do come. Those tawny lillies should be in flower,”

“Too hot,” said he. “Besides, I must water the garden.”²⁹

The clearest evidence of a love affair in this published material is that chaste, filial one which Benson enjoyed with his mother.³⁰ Moreover, it has been suggested that the discretely queer life that he lived at Lamb House was inspired both by that of Henry James, its previous owner, and by that of his own mother’s domestic arrangements.³¹

Benson’s biographer, Brian Masters, has, however, noted that a letter survives to Plank which is signed off ‘best love’, a salutation not apparently granted to anybody else.³² It is intriguing, therefore, not to find in Benson’s *Final Edition: Informal Autobiography* (1940), which was published in the year of his death, any overt mention of Plank. This absence may be contrasted with the testimony left by E. F. Benson’s brother, Arthur Benson, sometime master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, who in his diary confessed to having fallen in love with the scholar Dadie Rylands. Masters concludes that ‘Plank’s total exclusion from Benson’s memory is suspicious, but of course one can draw no conclusions from it, as Benson made sure one would not’.³³ However, further examination of the George Plank papers preserved in the Beinecke Library at Yale University strongly implies that not only did Benson and Plank share an (at least emotionally) passionate relationship, but that that shared experience helped to shape their literary and artistic careers. In what follows I will lay out some of the key evidence and leave it up to the reader to draw their own view on the nature of the relationship between these two men.

Much of the correspondence in the Plank archive consists of letters sent by the artist to his sister, Amy Plank Cocke (Mrs. Charles Hartwell Cocke, Jr), who remained in the United States. Plank also designed a considerable number of bookplates for his sister, one of which shows a decidedly un-cute cat scratching on a tree-trunk, implying that she was an assertive woman.³⁴ At the time of his arrival in England in 1914, Plank is found writing to her of his delight at the enthusiasm of Ricketts and Shannon, the forementioned artists and same-sex couple, for his *Vogue* covers.³⁵ By the following year, Plank had embarked on an intense correspondence with Mary Benson, who wrote to him on 28 March 1915 to say how pleased she was that he had got to know her son Fred, especially since ‘you understand him so well’.³⁶ At this time Mary Benson was 74, Fred Benson—‘adorable, witty, childlike’—was 47 and Plank was 22.³⁷

A letter of Plank to his sister Amy of 11 February 1916 includes mention of a set of drawings that he had recently made for Benson. These showed ‘snobs, climbers, scandal-mongers, High-Church fiends, and the usual lot of asses that infest any great city. My

drawings are in black and white and rather cruel in their satire but oh, such fun!’ He and Benson, we hear, giggled over them.³⁸ Early in that year, Plank wrote to Amy that he was seeing Benson ‘all the time’ in London and would be ‘lost without him’.³⁹ In Benson’s *Final Edition* we get a hint concerning how this friendship between Plank and Benson was developing. Following Henry James’ death in February 1916, Lamb House ‘was let to an American lady, and she, being obliged to winter in the south, left her housekeeper there, and asked a very intimate friend of mine to occupy it if he wished for a month or so, and he in turn asked me to share his tenancy’. Benson also notes that ‘Lamb House began faintly to assume a home-like aspect, for coming back [from London] on Friday afternoon I knew I would find my friend there. He was of neutral nationality, an artist of whimsical and imaginative work’.⁴⁰ It seems clear, therefore, that this unnamed artist was Plank and that it was he who had brought Benson into residence at Rye.

On 22 March 1916 Plank wrote to Amy of his delight at being not only in James’ house, but also having the use of the great American writer’s personal effects: ‘His wonderful library is there, all his beautiful furniture, plate and linen’. Benson, it is then noted, had come up with a plan to rent the place on a longer-term basis.⁴¹ Amy was told that ‘I am so much in love with the house and garden, with the village and all the country about that I feel like staying here forever and ever.’⁴² Meanwhile Mary Benson wrote to Plank later that month in a letter addressed to Lamb House to say that she had only just learned that he had been down there with her son ‘all this time’.⁴³ Plank, it seems, was in love with England, with Lamb House and, implicitly with Benson. On 14 May he tells Amy, ‘Spring is here with all its magic, and there is an intimacy and gentleness and luxuriousness in England at this season that is beyond belief.’ The house is like ‘one happy family’ and he felt ‘so lucky to be in the country in this lovely house with a good friend’.⁴⁴

Something, however, seems to have gone wrong with the relationship in the course of the following months. By 27 September, Plank is reporting that Benson wants to take Lamb House permanently: ‘He wants the house but said he wouldn’t take it unless I went there with him’. Plank then relates his concerns that he could not afford to pay his part of the expenses that this would involve and that Benson was becoming very stressed.⁴⁵ Later still Mary Benson was writing, perhaps significantly, to Plank’s London address in Thurloe Square, and complaining that Plank had ceased to write to her.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, through 1917 and 1918 affectionate letters were being sent by Benson to Plank, such as the aforementioned example which concluded, ‘I send you my love, if I may make so bold’.⁴⁷ On 27 March 1918, Benson invited Plank to stay with him again in Sussex.⁴⁸ Only two months later Mary Benson was dead and in her last letters to Plank she often mentioned her son, as if she wished the two of them would get back together.⁴⁹

As a result of this insecurity, Benson appears to have spiralled into depression that autumn in a way that triggered a degree of boredom and irritation in the younger man.⁵⁰ Still, on 6 April 1919, Benson signed off a letter to Plank with the words, ‘I want you’.⁵¹ And the two did spend time together that summer, including during August at Cley beach in Norfolk, where they bathed naked in the sea and then baked ‘with no clothes on’ one or twice a day.⁵² By the autumn, however, the affair was coming to its close. On 7 November Plank wrote to his sister to say that Benson was pestering him to stay at Lamb House, where he demanded that they went on long walks even in bad weather.⁵³ Plank agreed to come down only for

occasional weekends before ceasing to visit entirely. Finally, on 20 May 1921 he wrote to Amy to say that Benson had become peculiarly religious and snobbish. He had become given to ‘unbalanced views about things and people’ and, pretending to be an aristocrat, was wont to rail against the lower classes. Consequently, Plank, we read, planned to give him ‘a pretty wide berth’ in London.⁵⁴ We cannot tell from the evidence of this correspondence whether the relationship between Benson and Plank had been physically sexual, but it was clearly one of great emotional significance to both men and one that by 1921, was at an end.

Conclusions

From the evidence of the archives at Yale it is clear that Plank was not merely the commissioned artist for *The Freaks of Mayfair* but that the book, in the form it was published, was a collaborative enterprise that resulted from a same-sex love affair. Benson was familiar with the circle and mores of Wilde and so was Plank, albeit at a generation’s remove, since he referred to Wilde along with the artist Edward Burne-Jones as ‘great and interesting personalities’.⁵⁵ On the face of it, Benson and Plank produced a stereotype of the homosexual as an effeminate invert; a type that also appeared in the writings of Marcel Proust.⁵⁶ As I have discussed in *Picturing the Closet: Male Secrecy and Homosexual Visibility in Britain* (2015) Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick characterised such representations as making a ‘spectacle of the closet’; a mode which she attacked in her book *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) as fundamentally oppressive.⁵⁷ And indeed, it is hard not to think in such terms of internalised homophobia when reading of the character of Aunt Georgie that:

When he entertained at his own house, his guests were chiefly young men with rather waggly walks and little jerky movements of their hands, and old ladies with whom he was always a great success, for he understood them so well. He called them all, young men and old ladies alike, ‘my dear,’ and they had great gossips together, and they often said Georgie was very wicked, which was a lie.⁵⁸

Yet it is worth thinking about what *Vogue* said in its review of Benson’s book, namely that it turned ‘the searchlight of a humorous and not unkindly satire on the shams and absurdities of London society... with that quiet enjoyment of the foibles of one’s neighbours which adds so much to the joy of life.’⁵⁹ In other words, if people of fashion are ‘freaks’ and some of them are decidedly ‘queer freaks’, such people populate society and are included amongst the country’s elite. Moreover, bearing in mind that Benson was in the habit of writing to *George Plank* as ‘Plankino dear’, it seems possible that he was, in some sense, the inspiration for Aunt Georgie and for the later character of Georgie Pillson (who was often referred to as ‘Georgino’).⁶⁰ Plank, I believe, was instrumental in providing a model for queer characterisation in Benson’s work and, arguably, contributed towards the writer’s greatest spell of commercial success with best-selling novels such as *Queen Lucia* (1920) and *Miss Mapp* (1922).⁶¹ Not only that, but Plank too was to enjoy perhaps his greatest period of artistic success during and immediately following the period of his relationship with Benson. For it was at this time that Plank produced a steady stream of amusing cover images for *Vogue* that closely aligned fashion and camp sensibility. The alignment of same-sex desire

with the 'amusing style' identified by Reed can, therefore, be seen as pre-dating the arrival of Dorothy Todd as editor of British *Vogue* in 1922.

In conclusion, there are many good reasons for championing the subversive qualities of the 'amusing style' and Plank, it seems, was distinctly self-aware about the nature of his camp images and performances. As early as latter part of World War One Plank was producing images that implied that fashionable circles in high society were comfortable with the idea that gendered performances by women (and some men) were artificial creations and were all the more valuable for that. Such a viewpoint created space for a range of 'freak' eccentricities, including implicitly same-sex desire, to become established not as shameful private secrets but as chic social accomplishments. Plank was inspired by his own experiences of at least one same-sex love affair (that with Benson), which was also an artistic collaboration. In the course of this experience both he and his partner found camp humour to be a medium through which they could express aspects of their own personal questioning of normative understandings of gender and sexuality. Therefore, it is important when retrieving the reputation of George Wolfe Plank from relative obscurity to acknowledge him as having played a key role in both the development and the trans-Atlantic dissemination of queer visual culture during the early twentieth century.

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Figure 1, George Wolfe Plank, *Vogue* (American edition) 50, no. 8, October 15, 1917: cover.



Figure 2. George Wolf Plank. 'Climbers: The Perpendicular', in E. F. Benson, *The Freaks of Mayfair*, opposite 168. London: Foulis, 1916.



Climbers. The Perpendicular

Figure 3. George Wolfe Plank, *Vogue* (American edition) 55, no. 8, October 15, 1919: cover.



Figure 4, George Wolfe Plank, 'Aunt Georgie', in E. F. Benson, *The Freaks of Mayfair*, opposite 40. London: Foulis, 1916.



¹ Garrity, 'Selling culture.'

² Reed, 'Design for (Queer) Living', 377.

³ Reed, 'Design for (Queer) Living', 396.

⁴ Pender, "'Modernist Madonnas'", 520.

⁵ Reed, 'A Vogue', 57-58.

⁶ Reed, 'A Vogue', 59.

⁷ Sontag, 'Note on Camp'. For more recent studies that take camp seriously, and often positively, as a creative, cultural form see Bergman, *Camp Grounds*; Meyer, *The Politics*; Harris, 'The death', and Cleto, *Camp*.

⁸ Castle, 'Some notes', 25.

⁹ Pellegrini, 'After Sontag', 184.

¹⁰ Extensive efforts have been made to trace the owner of the Estate of George Plank without success. Images by Plank are therefore reproduced as orphan works. Anyone with information about the ownership of his Estate should contact the author.

¹¹ Packer, *The Art of Vogue*, 16-17.

¹² Evans, 'Jean Patou's', 259.

¹³ Clark, "'Cleverly drawn'".

¹⁴ Berman, 'Whistler and the printed page', 68.

¹⁵ Thackeray, *The Snobs of England*.

¹⁶ Benson, *The Freaks*, 202.

¹⁷ Benson, *The Freaks*, 210.

¹⁸ Benson, *The Freaks*, 33.

¹⁹ Benson, *The Freaks*, 34.

²⁰ Janes, *Oscar Wilde*.

²¹ Downend, 'Benson', 54.

²² Janes, *Visions*, 145-7 and Goldhill, *A Very Queer Family*.

²³ Basu, 'Benson', unpaginated.

²⁴ Vickers, 'Introduction', unpaginated.

²⁵ Kiernan, *Frivolity Unbound*, 86.

²⁶ Kiernan, *Frivolity Unbound*, 78-80.

²⁷ Benson, *As We Were*, 210.

²⁸ Benson, *As We Were*, 294.

²⁹ Benson, *As We Were*, 294.

³⁰ Masters, *The Life*, 287.

³¹ Benson, *As We Were*, 295.

³² Masters, *The Life*, 251.

³³ Masters, *The Life*, 251.

³⁴ Series II, box 8, folder 127; see also Blatchley, *The Bookplates*.

³⁵ The George Plank Papers are in the Beinecke Library, Yale University. His correspondence is classified under YCAL MSS 28. The following end-notes provide the sub-references; in this first case, series 1, box 1, folder 13.

³⁶ Series 1, box 1, folder 6.

³⁷ Series 1, box 1, folder 14.

³⁸ Series 1, box 1, folder 15.

³⁹ Series 1, box 1, folder 16.

⁴⁰ Benson, *Final Edition*, 142.

⁴¹ Series 1, box 1, folder 15.

⁴² Series 1, box 1, folder 15.

⁴³ Series 1, box 1, folder 6.

⁴⁴ Series 1, box 1, folder 16.

⁴⁵ Series 1, box 1, folder 16.

⁴⁶ Series 1, box 1, folder 6.

⁴⁷ Series 1, box 1, folder 5.

⁴⁸ Series 1, box 1, folder 17.

⁴⁹ Series 1, box 1, folder 6.

⁵⁰ Series 1, box 1, folder 17.

⁵¹ Series 1, box 1, folder 5.

⁵² Series 1, box 2, folder 19.

⁵³ Series 1, box 2, folder 19.

⁵⁴ Series 1, box 2, folder 23.

⁵⁵ Series 1, box 1, folder 16.

⁵⁶ Discussed in Janes, *Picturing*, 4-8.

⁵⁷ Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, 71.

⁵⁸ Benson, *The Freaks*, 39.

⁵⁹ Anon., "What they read" (1918), 74.

⁶⁰ Series 1, box 1, folder 5.

⁶¹ Adrian, 'Introduction', xiii.