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Less objectively, but sure to inspire similar fannish glee, we have the pairing of The Smiths' *Under Review* from MVD with [*Morrissey: The Pageant of His Bleeding Heart*](#) by Gavin Hopps. A greedy handful of the *Under Review* series has been crucial to the rock documentary canon — the Velvet Underground, the Captain Beefheart, and this one (to choose some right off the top of my head). Interviews with Stephen Street, Saint Morrissey author Mark Simpson, journalist Paul Morley, and Manchester mogul Tony Wilson (Factory Records). This “independent critical analysis” is rewatchable many times just for the generous sampling of clips of The Smiths playing songs like “Bigmouth

Strikes Again,” “Panic,” and “Girlfriend In A Coma,” but the tragic vermiculation of the bands’ career isn’t avoided as the great music made in personal conflict and trauma is brightly lauded. Gantries are made between Morrissey’s personal, literary and pop culture based aspirations, and the brilliant music the whole of The Smiths made.

But... back to Morrissey for a moment. (He wouldn’t mind, I gather.) Hopps gives him plenty of passionate, well-informed attention in *The Pagaent of His Bleeding Heart*, a stylish and seductive hardcover from Continuum that reflects the love and devotion of its author to the subject’s worldview and musical expression. This is not a rote biography or analysis of the shebeens and spielers with collaborators, but an ideal inquiry into the aesthetic and forces which shape Morrissey’s lyrics, persona, and own influence on worldwide music culture.

With astonishing knowledge and vim, Hopps, this Research Council’s UK Academic Fellow in the School of Divinity at St. Mary’s College (!) critically connects how the romantic works of Oscar Wilde and Lord Byron may have been channeled into the religious adoration by Catholic Latins and others whose orthodox culture otherwise may seem to be at odds with a homoerotic Brit who belted “This Charming Man” and “There’s A Place In Hell For Me And My Friends.” This dialectical hero-worship has been a profound mystery to many Smiths and Morrissey fans, and while Hopps may be creatively extrpolating in his lit-crit comparisons, he wonderfully explores the seeming conurbations of faith and failure, sex and death, belief and blasphemy in Morrissey’s City underground. Hopps doesn’t stop at Nietzsche though — the Warhol-lust and other Moz-obsessions are also delightfully mined for meaning.

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