

THE PATER NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WALTER PATER SOCIETY

EDITOR

Lene Østermark-Johansen, University of Copenhagen

DEPUTY EDITOR

Lesley Higgins, York University, Toronto

PRODUCTION EDITOR

Sylvia Vance, Toronto

WEB EDITOR

Elicia Clements, York University, Toronto

EDITORIAL BOARD

James Eli Adams, Columbia University
Elisa Bizzotto, IUAV University of Venice
Laurel Brake, Birkbeck College, University of London, Emerita
Barrie Bullen, University of Reading, Emeritus
Bénédicte Coste, University of Bourgogne, Dijon
Stefano Evangelista, University of Oxford
Lesley Higgins, York University, Toronto
Billie Andrew Inman, University of Arizona, Emerita
Catherine Maxwell, Queen Mary College, University of London
Noriyuki Nozue, Osaka City University
Robert Seiler, University of Calgary
Jonah Siegel, Rutgers University

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

Catherine Maxwell, Queen Mary College, University of London

BIBLIOGRAPHER

Kenneth Daley, Columbia College, Chicago

ANNOTATORS

Kit Andrews, University of Oregon
Matthew Bradley, University of Liverpool
Kenneth Daley, Columbia College, Chicago
Andrew Eastham
Stefano Evangelista, University of Oxford
Anne-Florence Gillard-Estrada, Université de Rouen
Laura Giovannelli, University of Pisa

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Lene Østermark-Johansen, Department of English, German and
Romance Studies, University of Copenhagen, 128 Njalsgade, Building 24,
DK-2300 Copenhagen K, Denmark
e-mail: oesterm@hum.ku.dk
tel. (+45) 35328583

IWPS OFFICERS

President, Laurel Brake, Birkbeck College, University of London, Emerita
Vice-President, Lesley Higgins, York University, Toronto

**INTERNATIONAL WALTER PATER SOCIETY
CORRESPONDENCE**

Laurel Brake, Centre for Extramural Studies, Birkbeck College, Russell
Square, London UK WC1B 5DQ
e-mail: l.brake@bbk.ac.uk

Lesley Higgins, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
e-mail: ljhiggins@aol.com
tel. 416 736 2100, x22344

The *Pater Newsletter* (ISSN 0264-8342) is published twice yearly by the International Walter Pater Society. Items appearing in the *Pater Newsletter* may not be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the Editor, except in accordance with copyright laws and except for classroom use in colleges and universities.

Current subscription rate is \$30.00 for two years. Subscription can only be purchased or renewed via PayPal at the journal's website: www.paternewsletter.org

The *Pater Newsletter* accepts articles, reviews, conference reports, and notes on Walter Pater. Submissions via e-mail are strongly encouraged, in Microsoft Word format only, please. Manuscripts should include all of the author's contact information and follow the prescription of British MHRA style sheet, downloadable for free: www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml.

© 2012 by The International Walter Pater Society. All Rights Reserved.

THE PATER NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 63 SPRING 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE	I
ESSAYS	
'NEITHER FOR GOD NOR FOR HIS ENEMIES': HERESY AND DISINTERESTEDNESS IN WALTER PATER'S 'BOTTICELLI' <i>Sara Lyons</i>	5
PLATONIC COMMUNION IN PATER'S 'UNFINISHED ROMANCE' <i>Adam Lee</i>	25
OSCAR WILDE AND THE CRIMINALIZATION OF PATERIAN THOUGHT <i>Joseph Bristow</i>	45
SETTLING SCORES: EDMUND GOSSE ON MALLOCK AND PATER <i>Anthony Kearney</i>	67
TWO LETTERS TO GEORGE BAINTON <i>Gerald Monsman</i>	73
EXHIBITION REVIEW	
PATER AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITES <i>Catherine Maxwell</i>	77
CALL FOR PAPERS	
PATER CONFERENCE AT THE SORBONNE, PARIS 2014	91
COLLECTED WORKS NEWS	
UPDATE: <i>THE COLLECTED WORKS OF WALTER PATER</i> <i>Lesley Higgins and David Latham</i>	95

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

MATTHEW POTOLSKY, *THE DECADENT REPUBLIC OF LETTERS: TASTE, POLITICS AND COSMOPOLITAN COMMUNITY FROM BAUDELAIRE TO BEARDSLEY* 97
Stefano Evangelista

BÉNÉDICTE COSTE, *WALTER PATER, ESTHÉTIQUE* 101
Charlotte Ribeyrol

ANDREW EASTHAM, *AESTHETIC AFTERLIVES: IRONY, LITERARY MODERNITY, AND THE ENDS OF BEAUTY* 104
Hugh Stevens

BOOK CHAPTERS 107

ESSAYS 110

ESSAYS WITH NOTABLE REFERENCES TO PATER 114

CONTRIBUTORS 117

EDITOR'S NOTE



hen putting together the essays for this volume of the *Pater Newsletter* I was very pleased at the opportunity to publish pieces by two young scholars who have just completed their PhDs on Pater, for it seems to me that ideally the journal should be a forum for Pater scholars at all levels of their careers. Sara Lyons has already appeared in a couple of the previous issues as a highly competent book reviewer with an astute critical sense, and her piece on heresy and disinterestedness in the 'Botticelli' essay adds thought-provoking new readings to an essay which has otherwise received many different interpretations already. Adam Lee explores the issue of Pater's Platonism in *Gaston de Latour*, in complex, multilayered, intertextual dialogue with not only Plato, but also Montaigne and Wilde. Pater's lectures on *Plato and Platonism* (1893) are thus seen in the context of his fiction, and the strong sense of the cohesion between all of Pater's writings is strengthened.

The contextualization of Pater's writings continues in the two essays by more established scholars: Joseph Bristow's essay on Pater, Wilde, Lamb, and Wainewright elegantly demonstrates the intricacies of the Romantic heritage in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the flirtation with the darker sides of the creative and artistic temper, while Anthony Kearney's piece engages with slander, parody, and mythmaking among Pater, W. H. Mallock, and Edmund Gosse. I am also delighted that my call for more unpublished Pater letters was heard, so that we yet again can present a couple of additions to Lawrence Evans's slim blue volume of letters. Gerald Monsman promptly took up the challenge and produced a couple of letters to George Bainton. If there are any more unpublished letters, please do remember that we are keen to publish them in preparation for the volume of letters which will be part of the new Oxford English Texts project unfolding over the next decade.

Lesley Higgins and David Latham have provided us with the latest news of the *Collected Works of Walter Pater*: volume editors for all but two of the ten volumes which will constitute the Oxford English Texts Edition of Pater have

now been found, and with some luck the last volumes will have found editors by the next issue of the *Newsletter*. I am sure that over the next decade or so the development of this exciting project will be reflected in the pages of the journal in more ways than one, so we have a stimulating few years ahead of us.

Our book review editor, Catherine Maxwell, has experimented with a new side of herself and produced an exhibition review of the recent Pre-Raphaelite exhibition at Tate Britain, which transferred to Washington in the spring of 2013. What began as a brief review soon turned into a lengthy exploration of which works by the Pre-Raphaelite painters Pater might have known; consult her piece for plenty of detail on this matter. And then three lengthy book reviews follow: Pater in the context of the decadent republic of letters in Stefano Evangelista's review of Matthew Potolsky's recent book; Pater's aesthetic afterlife among other afterlives in Hugh Stevens's review of Andrew Eastham's book; and Charlotte Ribeyrol's review and summary of Bénédicte Coste's French monograph on Pater the aesthete. Together with a rich section of annotations, the reviews testify to the central part played by Pater in much of the current scholarship on aestheticism and decadence.

A new website is currently being designed for us by the University of Copenhagen, and we are now in the process of building up an online archive of back issues going right back to the very earliest days of the journal. We are perfectly well aware that availability of especially the early issues is limited in research libraries, and we therefore hope that this new archive will be useful to Pater scholars in the future. It is our hope that the website will be one of the sources people, even with a cursory interest in Pater, might turn to, and we have therefore provided a brief Pater Chronology and are in the process of constructing an annotated Bibliography as useful research tools. We will also be strengthening our list of links to archives, databases, full-text resources as work on the website progresses.

Since the last issue we have been in the process of updating our list of subscribers, and sadly there is still a significant discrepancy between the number of people wishing to subscribe and those who have paid their subscriptions. Some 40 people have paid their dues, while another 100 maintain that they would still like to receive the *Newsletter*. If you happen to belong to the latter category, please

do renew your subscription via the website. As we aim to produce the journal regularly twice a year, and as typesetting, printing, and postage all drain the *Newsletter's* account, it is vitally important that you support us. As things stand at the moment, there are only funds for one more issue, possibly two, in our account, and it would be a shame, I think, to stop the journal at this very exciting point in Pater scholarship when Paterians more than ever need updating on current research activities and to have a forum for discussion. For the current issue we are deeply grateful for financial support from the English Department of Queen Mary College, University of London and from the Department of English, German and Romance Studies at the University of Copenhagen. Furthermore, the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Copenhagen has generously designed our new website without charge.

ESSAYS

Sarah Lyons

'Neither for God nor for His Enemies': Heresy and Disinterestedness in Walter Pater's 'Botticelli'

In her astringent review of Walter Pater's first volume of essays, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), Margaret Oliphant singled out his interpretation of Sandro Botticelli's Madonnas as a prime example of his perversity as a critic. According to Oliphant, Pater's incapacity to fathom the simple Christian sincerity of great artists such as Botticelli led him to project his own 'delicate atheisms' and 'elegant materialism' onto the Italian Renaissance, and produced an 'artificial' and 'fantastic' mode of criticism that persistently lost sight of its alleged subject (604–08). Oliphant understood Pater's aestheticism as a peculiarly narcissistic and appropriative form of secularism: instead of respecting the alterity of the past or the distinctions between belief and unbelief, Pater simply assimilated Christian art to his own secular imagination. John Addington Symonds, himself a religious sceptic and an aesthete, also thought that Pater imputed to Botticelli 'a far greater amount of sceptical self-consciousness than he was at all likely to have possessed'; though he was more appreciative of Pater's reading of Botticelli than was Oliphant, he also felt that Pater's arguments were 'over-refined', and noted that the details Pater took as evidence of Botticelli's 'antagonism' toward Christianity were in fact explicable as perfunctory workmanship (104). For Symonds as for Oliphant, Pater's mode of *ekphrasis* was at once naïve and over-sophisticated: in his eagerness to discover his own cast of mind in Botticelli's sacred art, Pater overlooked the obvious, and strayed into a kind of sceptic's fallacy.

While Oliphant and Symonds were right to detect – and to question – the secularizing logic at work in Pater’s ‘Botticelli’ essay, they failed to notice its complex self-reflexivity. In particular, they overlooked the nature of the secular orientation that Pater ascribes to Botticelli. Rather than simply suggesting that Botticelli’s paintings of the Madonna are really animated by thoroughly worldly preoccupations, Pater claims that such paintings allegorize Botticelli’s desire to break free of the Christian frameworks that were imposed upon him and to pursue aesthetic ends simply for their own sake. Pater proposes that the desire to dispense with an alien, superfluous burden of meaning is at the essence of Botticelli’s sacred art, and he thus places (in an inverted form) the obvious objection to his own interpretation – that is, that he is merely foisting his own secular priorities upon Botticelli, and hallucinating hidden meanings where there are none – at the centre of what he alleges to find in the paintings. Pater does not simply indulge in ‘artificial fancifulness’, as Oliphant charged, and make religious art answer to his scepticism (606). Rather, he makes explicit the element of fantasy and projection involved in appreciating a work of art partly in order to dramatize the problematics of interpreting the West’s cultural inheritance through a secular lens. Two apparently incompatible concepts are central to Pater’s effort to think through this problematic in ‘Botticelli’: heresy and disinterestedness. On the one hand, Pater identifies his own secularizing mode of interpretation with heresy, on the grounds that he reads Christian art against the grain of tradition, and privileges his own interpretive desires over dogma. On the other hand, he lays claim to a special kind of neutrality and freedom; disassociated from any particular religious commitment, he is able to appreciate art’s autonomous value, rather than perceive it as a means to religious ends. Pater’s apparently odd conjuncture of the concepts of heresy and disinterestedness, I suggest, reflects two distinct, often mutually contradictory ways in which modern secularism has tended to constitute itself. In one guise, secularism constitutes itself not as an anti-religious stance but as a creed beyond the complications of creed which aims to overcome religious conflicts by exercising neutrality toward all theological claims; in another, it imagines itself as a decisive and rebellious break with past forms of religious authority and meaning, and as a positive effort to reconstruct the world in exclusively immanent terms.¹ Both models of secularism – or, rather, the contradictions of secularism – circulate in Pater’s early work, generating ambiguities within his aestheticism: on the one hand, he seeks to locate a neutral space beyond religious controversies where ideas

may be explored without definitive choice or self-positioning; and on the other, he often dissociates art from theological conceptions of transcendence and interprets it an effort to affirm a sensual, this-worldly understanding of human nature.

Let me further clarify my use of the term 'secularism' in relation to Pater's work, since Pater never uses it himself, and it has become in recent decades heavily theorized and controversial. 'Secularism' probably would have struck Pater's ears as an ugly neologism. It was coined in 1851 by George Jacob Holyoake, partly as a bid to establish the respectability of atheism – Holyoake had been imprisoned for blasphemy in 1842 – but also as an effort to construct atheism in more expansive and optimistic terms: that is, as an affirmation of this world as the rational locus of human energies, rather than as a merely negative attack on Christianity or as a denial of God's existence.² Yet 'secularism' remained associated with crude, lower-class radicalism throughout the Victorian period; it was T. H. Huxley's 1869 coinage, 'agnosticism', premised upon a Kantian restriction of knowledge to the phenomenal realm, that truly attained respectability in Victorian culture (indeed, many lower-class secularists later refashioned themselves as 'agnostics', and some prominent liberal theologians also endorsed 'agnosticism' as a tenable position for Christian believers).³ Nonetheless, 'agnosticism' and 'secularism', though they had profoundly different class connotations, were not radically different philosophically: both were conceived and understood as attempts to hold contentious theological questions in suspense and to focus attention on the sensible, knowable world.⁴ At the same time, an analogous tendency was unfolding within the bounds of Christianity itself. As Mark Knight and Emma Mason have observed, mid- to late-Victorian Christianity is also broadly characterized by a rejection of the more pessimistic strains within Christian theology in favour of practical, optimistic interpretations of the gospel, as well as a general shift away from transcendence conceived in otherworldly, external terms and toward more incarnational theologies (161–63). In other words, an impetus to rehabilitate a this-worldly perspective and to emphasize the limits of human knowledge and more immanent conceptions of the good was articulated across the broad spectrum of religious and secular positions in the latter half of the Victorian period. Such points of convergence between apparently opposed perspectives may be understood in terms of José Casanova's argument that Western modernity has actually been shaped by two distinct secularizing dynamics, one religious and the other anti-religious. Both secularizing dynamics aim to redress a medieval

Christian dualism which posited two worlds – a ‘religious-spiritual sacred world of salvation’ versus a ‘secular-temporal-profane’ world – and both seek ‘to imbue ... the immanent secular world with a quasi-transcendent meaning as the place for human flourishing’ (Casanova 56–57). Yet where one of these dynamics can be understood as being internal to Christianity itself, and aims to ‘blur ... the boundaries between the religious and the secular, by making the religious secular and the secular religious through mutual reciprocal infusion’, the other assumes the form of ‘laicization’ – it seeks to liberate the social world from theological and ecclesiastical control, and to circumscribe ‘religion’ as a set of private, subjective beliefs (Casanova 56–57). Together these two dynamics also generate the new possibility of an ‘exclusive secularity’ or what the philosopher Charles Taylor would call a ‘closed immanent frame’ – that is, a secularity which annuls the distinction between the religious and the secular not by blurring the categories but by positing the ‘secular’ as an autonomous, self-sufficient reality, a pure immanence which does not understand meaning to be oriented toward anything ‘higher’ or ‘beyond’ this world (Casanova 57; Taylor 550–93).

Although Pater’s later work, most notably *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), often blurs the boundaries between the religious and the secular in the interests of articulating a ‘sort of religious phase ... possible for the modern mind’ (qtd. Monsman 83), his early aestheticism was broadly recognized – and often condemned – by his contemporaries as an effort to imagine an exclusive secularity, with his affirmation of the autonomy of art interpreted as an affirmation of the autonomy of the secular, its freedom from religious premises and obligations.⁵ Of course, Pater’s aestheticism, which begins as an exploration of the possibilities of new kind of secular self-consciousness, does not issue in a clean break with religious traditions and the crystallization of an absolutely novel and coherent perspective, but generates new kinds of indeterminacy. Pater’s contemporary detractors were often sensitive to these indeterminacies: they attacked his work because it seemed to glamourize unbelief in a prevaricating style, while luxuriating in the ambience of an apparently declining Christianity. W. H. Mallock wittily condenses this critique of Pater when, in *The New Republic* (1877), his satirical *roman à clef*, he has Pater’s avatar, Mr. Rose, opine that ‘religion never lights our lives so beautifully as when it is leaving them like the setting sun. Raphael ... was a luminous cloud in the sunset sky of the *Renaissance* – a cloud that took its fire from a faith that was sunk or sinking’ (276–77). Oliphant articulates another version of

this critique: Pater relies upon Christian art for his sense of aesthetic value even as he denies the real source and nature of that value, and so becomes a curious kind of sceptical fantasist, encountering only the limits of his own imagination in his efforts to appraise figures such as Botticelli. Although this article suggests that Oliphant was broadly right to understand Pater's *Renaissance* as an effort to secularize aesthetic experience, I argue that Pater's 'Botticelli' essay reveals that he was far more alert to the problematic nature of that enterprise than Oliphant's critique allowed.

Heresy

As is the case with two other essays in *Studies in the History the Renaissance*, 'Aucassin and Nicolette' and 'Pico della Mirandola', Pater uses a historical heresy as a point of departure for his own line of interpretation in 'Botticelli'.⁶ Pater gleans from Vasari the story that a painting of the Assumption led Botticelli to be accused of heresy (a painting which was in fact by Francesco Botticini, but Pater follows Vasari's false attribution). Pater suggests that the origin of the heresy lay with the commissioner of the painting, Matteo Palmieri: he was the author of a theological poem called *La Città di vita*, which 'represented the human race as an incarnation of those angels who, in the revolt of Lucifer, were neither for God nor for his enemies' (SR 31).⁷ While acknowledging that the story of Botticelli's heresy may be apocryphal, Pater nonetheless embroiders the idea freely, suggesting not only that Botticelli's most representative work is imbued with this 'wayward dream of Palmieri' (SR 31), but that Palmieri's assessment of humanity – it is angelic in its very neutrality and lack of loyalty to God – is an apt metaphor for the autonomy of art, and particularly for art's essential disaffiliation from religious dogma. Pater contrasts Botticelli's allegedly heretical position with Dante's 'conventional orthodoxy', particularly Dante's reduction of 'all human action to the easy formula of purgatory, heaven and hell', which, according to Pater, 'leaves an insoluble element of prose in the depths of Dante's poetry' (SR 31). Pater is using Dante audaciously: the latter, seemingly a prestigious and incontestable example of the filiation between religion and art in Western culture, is a means of identifying orthodox religious belief with prosiness and artistic failure. Pater uses metaphors of surface and depth to disturb the conventional identification of religion with art throughout the essay: just as Dante's theological commitments embed prose in the 'depths' of his poetry, with the implication that the overt

religious content creates mysterious, subterranean imperfections, Botticelli's genius inheres in the fact that, while he painted religious subjects, he 'painted them with an under-current of original sentiment which touches you as the real matter of the picture through the veil of its ostensible subject' (SR 29). Similarly, Pater claims that he can detect Botticelli's heretical imagination running beneath the surface of his illustrations of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, on the grounds that Botticelli seems to lavish a degree of aesthetic intensity upon his depiction of Centaurs which is surplus to the requirements of Dante's theological vision (SR 30). Pater's criterion for aesthetic value is a kind of pagan imaginative energy that exceeds Christian frameworks and which is paradoxically more vivid and 'real' than the sensible content of the art work or its official purpose. In other words, although Pater constructs his pagan and apparently secular aesthetic ideal in terms of the palpable, the material, and the real – it 'touches' one as the 'real matter' of art – it is also necessarily an elusive and abstract phenomenon, insofar as it must be sifted from the theological sediment in the depths of Dante's poetry or discerned through the veils of religious subject matter in Botticelli's sacred paintings. This paradox in turn licenses baroque hermeneutic flights on the part of the critic when appraising religious art: it is only possible to recover the 'original sentiment' of the artist – that is, his heretical intentions, or the pagan quality of his imagination – by interpreting such works of art against the grain of their apparent meanings, and by privileging the idiosyncrasies of subjective impression over critical and religious orthodoxies.

Pater freely applies the logic of Palmieri's heresy to his reading of Botticelli's Madonnas: as rendered by Botticelli, the Madonna is 'one of those who are neither for God nor for his enemies, and her choice is on her face' (SR 32). This suggestion of a conspicuous choice is a crucial hinge in the essay. The first time Pater glosses the 'neither for God nor for his enemies' idea, he makes it sound like a kind of reverent agnosticism or pacific abstention from choice, and then celebrates this non-committal stance as the supreme desideratum of art:

So just what Dante scorns as unworthy alike of heaven and hell, Botticelli accepts, that middle world in which men take no side in great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make great refusals. He thus sets for himself the limits within which art, undisturbed by any moral ambition, does its most sincere and surest work. (SR 32)

Yet in the ensuing discussion of Botticelli's Madonnas, not favouring God or Lucifer, or adhering to an aesthetic's ideal of art, turns out to be a very distinctive choice: it implies not quietism or impartiality but a preference for the profane over the sacred, the ordinary human world over the possibility of a higher order of meaning. And Pater's delineation of this worldly disposition is not simply evasive or neutral in relation to Christianity; in fact, it seems to entail active iconoclasm. As Paul Tucker explains, Pater's *ekphrasis* systematically de-sacralizes the figure of the Madonna:

Here [the Madonna] is not the type of Christian submission to God's will, but unhappily 'overshadowed' by the 'power of the Highest'. The Mother of God is repulsed by her child.... Her virginity, theologically the guarantee of the incarnated Christ's divinity, appears itself in doubt: 'her *true children*, those others, among whom, in her rude home, the intolerable honour came to her'. The Virgin Birth, Pater's text implies, is a sham ... this Virgin seems an unwilling player in a charade.... The founding event in the Christian story is here rehearsed as the 'intolerable' displacement of desire, the forced abandonment of humanity's 'rude home'[,] (Tucker 124–25)

Pater startlingly suggests that the aversion supposedly felt by Botticelli's Madonna toward the infant Christ is in fact a universal sentiment: Christ's 'sweet look of devotion' is something 'which men have never been able altogether to love, and which still makes the born saint an object almost of suspicion to his earthly brethren' (*SR* 32–33). This is so delicately phrased that it sounds as if Pater might be remarking piously upon the frailty of humanity, which is incorrigibly attracted to 'earthly' things and finds divine love hard to bear or to comprehend. Yet in the context of the essay as a whole, it is Botticelli's indulgent attitude toward this apparent infirmity that Pater acclaims as the hallmark of his achievement as an artist, and this makes his comment about an essential human alienation from saintliness and divine love register not piously but blasphemously – that is, as a vindication of the carnal, this-worldly nature of human nature. This argument is particularly disconcerting because Pater is reflecting upon a representation of God in incarnate, infant form – that is, a moment which would seem to soften

or even dissolve the distinction between divine and human love. And yet Pater's *ekphrasis* suggests that Botticelli's painting actually reveals the intransigence of this distinction – indeed, that it captures an essential human resistance to the claims of the divine. Moreover, Pater reads the usual identification of Christian piety with sorrow – particularly as it is embodied in the idea of Mary as *Mater Dolorosa* – against itself: the Madonna is 'saddened' not by a premonition of Christ's eventual fate or by the sufferings of humanity but by the fact that she has to submit to a grandiose, otherworldly scheme (*SR* 32). Pater heightens the jarring effect of this reading by displacing the sorrow and purity conventionally associated with the figure of the Madonna on to the figure of Venus in the latter part of the essay. If Pater finds Botticelli's Madonnas strangely carnal and worldly, he finds Botticelli's Venus strangely sad and chaste, and he accounts for this apparent incongruity by suggesting that Botticelli's rendering of Venus reflects his melancholic awareness of the distance between the Christian and the pagan. In other words, Pater suggests that Botticelli's representation of Venus mirrors the drama of his Madonna paintings: like his sacred paintings, his depiction of Venus articulates a desire for worldly pleasure which has been 'subdued and chilled' – one assumes by the legacy of Christianity – and this image of a 'cadaverous' Venus seems to elicit in Pater the very sense of pathos that representations of the Virgin Mary are conventionally intended to elicit (*SR* 33). Pater alternately addresses his *ekphrasis* directly to the reader, 'you', and conflates himself with the reader, so that it is 'we' or 'us' sharing in his perceptions. Pater emphasizes the provisional, ramifying quality of his and 'our' interpretations: first Botticelli seems merely to represent the 'delightful quality of natural things'; then we discern a 'spirit' upon his work which seems at first morbid and 'cold'; then we appreciate that this spirit, though apparently borne of the imaginative legacy of medieval Christianity, is also a poignant 'aspiration' toward a renewal of the Hellenic spirit (*SR* 33–34). By underscoring that his and 'our' interpretation of Botticelli entails a fluid process of speculation, imaginative wandering, and self-revision, Pater keeps in view the possibility that the chiasmic confusions discovered in Botticelli's art (his Madonnas are Venus-like, and his Venus, Madonna-like) are not simply a feature of Renaissance artistic culture but also belong to the modern beholder, who similarly confounds the sacred and the secular, the visionary and the real.

Pater's suggestion that Botticelli represents the Madonna as a figure coerced into a theological drama from which she would rather 'shrink' and who just

craves ordinary, mortal life, or 'a warmer, lower humanity', allegorizes a secular, aestheticist theory of art: while art may be coerced into religious aims, it always betrays a wish to be free of such obligations and dedicate its energies wholly to the things of this world (*SR* 34). Pater urges the simple intuitiveness of his own secularizing logic by presenting it in terms of what is everywhere and plain to see if we would only look: the real choice of Botticelli's Madonna, the fact that the 'high cold words' of Christianity 'have no meaning for her', is quite simply 'on her face' (*SR* 32–33). (Pater articulates his sense that a secular orientation is really written 'on the face' of art even more forcefully in his 'Winckelmann' essay, where he announces, 'For a time art dealt with Christian subjects as its patrons required; but its true freedom was in the life of the senses and the blood – blood no longer dropping from the hands in sacrifice, as with Angelico, but, as with Titian, burning in the face for desire and love' [*SR* 14].) Yet if Pater's suggestion that Botticelli's Madonnas are 'peevish-looking' (*SR* 32) because they resent having been co-opted by Christianity strikes us as scandalous in its iconoclasm or its sheer counter-intuitiveness, Pater implies that he is only mirroring Botticelli's own wayward imagination:

But the genius of which Botticelli is the type usurps the data before it as the exponent of ideas, moods, visions of its own; with this interest it plays fast and loose with those data, rejecting some and isolating others, and always combining them anew. To him, as to Dante, the scene, the colour, the outward image or gesture, comes with all its decisive and importunate reality; but awakes in him, moreover, by some subtle structure of his own, a mood which it awakes in no one else, of which it is the double or repetition, and which it clothes, that all may share it, with sensuous circumstances. (*SR* 31)

In this twisting sentence, the reader is invited to lose track of the referent of the pronouns, and to perceive that Pater is insinuating himself as a 'double or repetition' of Botticelli: like Botticelli himself, Pater plays 'fast and loose' with the ostensibly religious content of Botticelli's paintings to locate within them a sensuous 'mood' of his own – and yet, Pater suggests, he is only being true to Botticelli's own art by 'usurp[ing]' its 'data' in this fashion. In the same stroke, however, Pater problematizes such a usurpation of the surface meanings of a work of

art in the name of other, more 'visionary' meanings or ulterior purposes. According to Pater, Botticelli's paintings of the Madonna dramatize art's essential resistance to any expropriation by transcendent meanings: just as Botticelli supposedly wishes to be free of Christian frameworks so that he may simply pursue art for its own sensuous sake, his Madonnas resist having an alien, Christian narrative imposed upon them, and wish to remain in their 'rude home[s]', at the level of a 'warmer, lower humanity'. Pater's *ekphrasis* thus turns upon a self-reflexive irony: Pater claims to find an allegory of art's desire for a kind of sensual worldliness and autonomy within Botticelli's sacred art, but in order to make this claim, he has to pursue an elaborately fanciful, 'visionary' reading of Botticelli's work, one which is obviously open to the charge that he is merely 'usurping' the surface data of Botticelli's paintings in order to impose a 'wayward dream' of his own. In other words, the effort to discover a purely secular aesthetic meaning within examples of religious art has to rely upon the very sort of counter-intuitive, 'visionary' hermeneutics that such a reading presumably aims to displace in order to affirm the sensuous immediacy of art or the primacy of reality in the here and now.

The word 'heresy' comes from the Greek *hairesis*, which means 'a taking or choosing, a choice', 'course of action', or 'to take for oneself' (*OED*). Pater seems characteristically sensitive to this etymology in his rendering of Botticelli's supposed 'heresy' when he remarks of his Madonnas that their 'choice' – that is, their desire for mere sensuous habitation of this world, and to shirk their role in a divine plan – is on their 'face[s]'. Yet this alleged heresy is paradoxical. Pater suggests that what Botticelli's Madonnas actually desire is the freedom not to choose: they wish to eschew theological binaries altogether in favour of the ordinary, 'mixed' condition of human life (*SR* 32); they are representatives of that 'middle world in which men take no side in great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make great refusals'. This curiously inverts the conventional Christian definition of the 'heretic' as a person obdurately committed to a subversive interpretation of doctrine; 'heresy' was usually understood to lie not simply in espousing an errant theological opinion, but in refusing to relinquish that opinion.⁸ Moreover, as Valentine Cunningham points out, a 'heretic', by contrast to an 'apostate' or an 'infidel', is by definition an ardent believer, one who challenges religious authority in the name of a superior religious truth (3). Yet Pater seems attracted to the 'wayward dream of Palmieri' precisely because it allows him to imagine a heresy which is radical by virtue of arising from an utter lack of religious commitment or passion – indeed, from a

desire to disengage from religious questions altogether – and he clearly wishes to ennoble this kind of indifference, and the sensual, this-worldly orientation he identifies with it, as both an aesthetic and ethical virtue. Although Pater stipulates that art does its ‘best work’ when it repudiates all ‘moral ambition’, he does not in fact valorize a purely amoral ideal of art here but rather elevates a secularist ethics over a Christian one: he praises Botticelli’s ‘neither for God nor for his enemies’ stance not because it is genuinely impartial or value-free, but because it allows a sympathetic imagination of humanity’s desire for the sensual and mundane, and enables Botticelli to escape Dante’s theological categories. In the conclusion of the essay, Pater takes this argument further and credits Botticelli not simply with a ‘sympathy for humanity’ but with a special insight into ‘the true complexion of humanity’, and links this insight with Botticelli’s representation of Madonnas who ‘shrink’ from ‘great things’ (SR 34). Thus Palmieri’s heresy becomes, by the end of the essay, not just Botticelli’s but Pater’s estimate of human nature, and his standard of both ethical and aesthetic judgment. Pater’s closing flourish is to note that Botticelli’s image of *Veritas* in his allegorical painting, *The Calumny of Apelles*, is strikingly akin to his image of Venus, and to underscore the ‘suggestiveness’ of this kinship (SR 34–35). Pater does not spell it out, but he is clearly gesturing at the idea that Botticelli identifies carnal love with truth, and by extension, the truths of the carnal with art. Through such speculative leaps of association, Pater does not simply reveal the ‘heretical’ character of Botticelli’s imagination but actually performs a heretical reading: he takes a marginal, probably apocryphal detail – the story of Palmieri’s influence on Botticelli – and extends its logic until it displaces established religious meanings and can be posited as a superior truth.

Disinterestedness

It is well known that Pater derived part of his self-consciously ‘heretical’ reading of Botticelli from Algernon Charles Swinburne, who also found a ‘love of soft hints and veiled meaning’ in Botticelli’s art, and who proposed that a ‘suppressed leaning to grotesque invention and a hunger after heathen liberty ... break out whenever [Botticelli] is released from the mill-horse round of mythologic virginity and sacred childhood’ (23–25). Although Pater’s tone is much milder than Swinburne’s, he actually goes further than Swinburne in attributing anti-Christian intentions to Botticelli; where Swinburne only claims to perceive a repressed pagan energy in Botticelli’s paintings on secular subjects, Pater claims to find an elaborate

allegory of a secular, art-for-art's-sake agenda in Botticelli's sacred art. It is thus surprising that John Coates thinks that Pater's 'Botticelli' essay aims to counter 'the rhetoric of anti-Christian rebellion and sexual unorthodoxy' (Coates 19) that Swinburne projected onto Botticelli. Coates arrives at this argument partly by overlooking what Oliphant and Symonds found so flagrant in Pater's essay – its anti-Christian interpretation of Botticelli's Madonnas – yet the fact that Pater's essay is susceptible to Coates's reading is itself instructive. Coates elevates Pater above Swinburne by suggesting that Swinburne's anti-Christian position leads him to a perverse and tendentious reading of Botticelli, while Pater's 'reticence, restraint and self-conscious detachment' permits a more 'delicate' and 'subtle' perception of the 'interfusion' of pagan and Christian elements in Botticelli, and of the necessary balance between flesh and spirit (5 and 7). While this seems to me a misreading, it is nonetheless an insightful misreading, since it is produced by crediting Pater with a commitment to critical disinterestedness. In Coates's view, Pater is genuinely 'neither for God nor for his enemies': he transcends Swinburne's atheism and sexual prurience, and gives a scrupulously balanced account of the attractions of the pagan and the Christian, the earthly and the spiritual.

The notion of the autonomy of art has a tangled and ambiguous relationship to the notion of 'disinterestedness' in Pater's work and within the discourses of Victorian aestheticism more generally. The idea that the distinctive character of aesthetic experience inheres in its 'disinterested' and contemplative quality is conventionally traced to eighteenth-century British moral philosophy and aesthetics, specifically to the works of Francis Hutcheson and Anthony Ashley-Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, as well as to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790), and such philosophical accounts of the uniqueness of aesthetic experience are often thought to have prepared the ground for nineteenth-century assertions of art's autonomous status, including Pater's (Bell-Villada, 19–24; Dowling, 3–24). Pater seems aware that the axiom of art-for-art's-sake has the concept of disinterestedness in its genetic code in the final lines of the 1888, revised version of the 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance*, when he glosses the 'love of art for its own sake' as one of the forms of 'enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise' which give us a 'quickened sense of life' (SR, 1888, 252). Yet the concept of 'disinterest' led a complicated life in Victorian culture, and as Amanda Anderson has shown, it was associated with diverse forms of 'cultivated detachment', ranging from an ideal of scientific objectivity to models of liberal cosmopolitanism. Of

course, the most famous Victorian spokesman of critical disinterestedness was Matthew Arnold, and, as Anderson notes, the term registers fluidly within his work: he uses it to evoke an ideal of rational objectivity, to advocate non-partisan political and religious debate, and to celebrate the pleasures of aesthetic free play (93). Although Pater is conventionally understood as a major Victorian exponent of the autonomy of art, it is also often suggested that he swerved from Kantian and Arnoldian conceptions of 'disinterestedness', which attempt to give aesthetic response universal and rational horizons, in order to pursue a frankly relativistic and subjectivist theory of aesthetics (Clay 9–12; Harris 739–41; and Wallen 301–32). While it is certainly true that Pater often vindicates the idiosyncrasies of subjective response and dwells upon the sensual and irrational aspects of aesthetic experience in a way that runs counter to both Kantian and Arnoldian models of disinterestedness, the notion that aesthetic experience requires or enables a peculiar kind of ironic detachment clearly persists in his work, if only in a nebulous and ungrounded form. Indeed, in 'Coleridge's Writings' (1866), his first published essay, Pater actually suggests that the concept of disinterestedness has value precisely because it is nebulous and ungrounded, and now functions as a surrogate for lost religious faith:

The spiritualities of the Christian life have often drawn men on, little by little, into the broader spiritualities of systems opposed to it... Many in our own generation, through religion, have become dead to religion. How often do we look for some feature of the ancient religious life, not in a modern saint, but in a modern artist or philosopher! For those who have passed out of Christianity, perhaps its most precious souvenir is the ideal of a transcendental disinterestedness. (*CW* 127)

Pater's sensitivity to the extent to which the ideal of 'disinterestedness' retains a spiritual ambience even when it actually marks a critical distance from Christian belief is also clear in his essay on 'Botticelli', where the aestheticist ideal of being 'neither for God nor for his enemies' seems to identify a lack of religious conviction with an angelic impartiality. Moreover, as Pater seems to calculate, the fact that he is using an ideal of disinterestedness to suggest indifference or apathy in the face of religious claims to transcendence does not disperse the transcendental aura of

the ideal; being 'neither for God nor for his enemies' hints, ironically, at a God-like omniscience and benevolence, even as it sounds like it might be a confession of sympathy with the devil. At least in this early phase of his career, Pater does not seem prepared to renounce Arnoldian or Kantian ideals of disinterestedness in favour of an avowedly subjectivist mode of criticism; rather, he remains attached to disinterestedness as a 'precious souvenir' of Christian belief, apparently because it is capable of bestowing a quasi-sacral value upon post-Christian intellectual positions.⁹ Pater does not specify how one distinguishes Christian from secularised, post-Christian forms of 'transcendental disinterestedness', or even explain why this particular concept remains especially vital for those who have 'passed out of Christianity', but his suggestion that it now has the status of a 'souvenir' – with the implication that it persists in a nostalgic, but diminished, form – is telling. For Pater as for many subsequent theorists of secularization, Christianity is itself the prime agent of secularization: in a Hegelian fashion, its internal logic contains the seeds of its own negation, and thereby creates unbelievers who have become 'dead' to religion through religion.¹⁰ Such unbelievers, Pater suggests, are free to lay claim to any Christian 'souvenirs' they like as they journey into new systems 'opposed' to Christianity, with the implication that religious concepts can be assimilated into new, secular contexts without any real friction or loss. Indeed, this is one of the key premises of 'Coleridge's Writings' as a whole. Pater seeks to counter the common Victorian perception that the loss of religious belief entails profound emotional or cultural privation by arguing that much of what is really valuable in religion is not in fact essentially religious, and can thus be fully appreciated in aesthetic terms:

There are aspects of the religious character which have an artistic worth distinct from their religious import. Longing, a chastened temper, spiritual joy, are precious states of mind, not because.... God has commanded them, still less because they are means of obtaining a reward, but because like culture itself they are remote, refined, intense.... If there is no other world, art in its own interest must cherish such characteristics as beautiful spectacles. Stephen's face, 'like the face of an angel', has a worth of its own, even if the opened heaven is but a dream. (*CW* 126)

In recent years, secularism has been subject to vigorous critique within the humanities, partly for the reason that Kantian and Arnoldian notions of 'disinterestedness' were often the focus of critical suspicion in the closing decades of the twentieth century.¹¹ Secularism, like disinterestedness, is now frequently unmasked as a spurious form of neutrality, whether it is construed as an ideology of state neutrality toward religion, or as the tacit horizon of rational intellectual discourse, or simply as a natural, non-ideological way of inhabiting the world. Secularism's critics argue that, far from being impartial and value-free, it in fact prescribes a distinctive and potentially oppressive set of norms, and often serves to naturalize a this-worldly, or even atheistic, perspective, at the expense of genuine religious pluralism.¹² In other words, secularism, while affecting to be a form of disinterestedness and 'neither for God nor his enemies', actually has its choice on its face – it aims to marginalize religion and to universalize a purely immanent conception of the good. Certainly, it is possible to discern the slippage between fantasies of a transcendent neutrality and the desire to elevate a this-worldly perspective over a religious one in the aestheticist ideal of art that Pater delineates in 'Botticelli'. Although Pater suggests that 'being neither for God nor his enemies' is a pacific and modest position – indeed, less a distinct position than a 'refusal' of the binaries which structure the taking of a position on religious questions – this non-position does turn out to have strong content: it presses the claims of a 'lower, warmer' humanity, the pagan truths of senses, the appeal of ordinary, mundane life over religious promises of salvation and transcendence. Yet Pater playfully undermines this identification of a secularizing logic with neutrality even as he proposes it by calling attention to the extent to which his aesthetic mode of interpretation is a series of heretical 'choices' motivated by subjective desire. By reading Botticelli's paintings as dramas of strangely displaced and expropriated meanings – Botticelli's Madonnas resist expropriation by a Christian narrative, and wish they were goddesses of sexual love; in turn, Botticelli's Venus resists her role as a symbol of pure sexuality, and suffers the burden of a Madonna-like sorrow for humanity – Pater calls attention to the extent to which his own, secularizing reading of Botticelli is also a series of displaced and expropriated meanings.

Oliphant's complaint that Pater's readings are 'mad' and 'fantastical' insofar as he winnows out the religious content of works of art and makes them conform to his own sceptical prejudices implies that he seeks to conceal the willfulness and fantasy at work in his interpretations (Oliphant 605). In fact, Pater foregrounds

both the idea of the fantasy and the workings of his own interpretive will in 'Botticelli'. From the start, he characterizes Palmieri's 'neither for God nor for his enemies' heresy as a 'fantasy' or a 'dream' (SR 31). And throughout the essay, Pater draws attention to the extent to which his secularizing reading of Botticelli is itself an imaginative act: it has to be conjured out of apocrypha, minor details, intuitive leaps, and a sympathetic identification with – even usurpation of – the 'visionary' prerogatives of the artist. Pater even calls attention to his desire to tamper with inconvenient facts: in the opening paragraph of the essay, he confesses that the notion of Botticelli being overcome by 'religious melancholy' in his old age is so out of keeping with his preferred vision of the artist that he wishes that a 'document might come to light which [would] fix ... the date of his death earlier' (SR 29–30). This is phrased so that it sounds as if Pater is merely struck by the pathos of Botticelli in 'dejected old age' (SR 30), but the comment also registers as a mild, self-reflexive joke about the impulse of critics and historians to manipulate evidence in order to gratify their own interpretive whims. Significantly, Pater characterizes his essay as a 'fragment' (SR 35), no doubt as a gesture to both German and British traditions of Romanticism, which celebrate the 'fragment' as a genre (or anti-genre) that allows for a special kind of poetic and philosophical license.¹³ Defining the essay as a 'fragment' also allows Pater to underscore the speculative, discontinuous nature of his own *ekphrasis*. His process of 'wayward' or heretical reading does not simply secularize Botticelli's sacred art but dramatizes the twisting ambiguities produced by his desire to do so.

WORKS CITED

- Anonymous, 'Modern Cyrenaicism', *Examiner* (April 1873), 381–82
- Anderson, Amanda, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001)
- Asad, Talal, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003)
- Bell, Villada, *Art for Art's Sake and Literary Life: How Politics and Markets Helped Shape the Ideology and Culture of Aestheticism, 1790–1990* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996)
- Casanova, José, 'Secularism, Secularizations, Secularisms', *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Joanathan VanAntwerpen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 54–74

- Clay, Daniel, 'The Religion of Culture: Arnold's Priest and Pater's Mystic', *Victorian Newsletter* 72 (1987), 9–12
- Coates, John, *The Rhetorical Use of Provocation as a Means of Persuasion in the Writings of Walter Pater: Pater as Controversialist* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011)
- Connolly, William E., *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)
- Cunningham, Valentine, 'Introduction: The Necessity of Heresy', *Figures of Heresy: Radical Theology in English and American Writing 1800–2000*, ed. by Andrew Dix and Jonathan Taylor (Brighton: Sussex Press, 2006), 1–18
- Dowling, Linda, *The Vulgarization of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1996)
- Franke, Damon, *Modernist Heresies: British Literary History, 1883–1924* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2008)
- Freemantle, W. H., 'The New Reformation', *Fortnightly Review*, 41.243 (1887), 442–58
- Janowitz, Annie, 'The Romantic Fragment', *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. by Duncan Wu (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 442–51
- Kant, Immanuel (1790), *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952)
- Kant, Immanuel (1785), *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Knight, Mark, and Emma Mason, *Nineteenth-Century Religion and Literature: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Lightman, Bernard, *The Origins of Agnosticism: Victorian Unbelief and the Limits of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987)
- Levine, George, 'Saving Disinterest: Aesthetics, Contingency, and Mixed Conditions', *New Literary History*, 32.4 (2001), 907–931
- Mackarness, John, 'A Charge Delivered to the Diocese of Oxford' (1875), extract rpt. in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by R. M. Seiler (London: Routledge, 1980)
- Mahmood, Saba, 'Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation', *Public Culture*, 18.2 (2006), 323–47
- Mallock, W. H., *The New Republic: or, Culture, Faith and Philosophy in an English Country House* (New York: Scribner, Welford & Armstrong, 1878)
- Marsh, Joss, *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)

- Monsman, Gerald, *Walter Pater* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977)
- Morley, John, 'Mr. Pater's Essays', *Fortnightly Review*, 13.76 (1873), 469–77
- Oliphant, Margaret, 'New Books', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 114 (1873 November), 604–09
- Pater, Walter, 'Coleridge's Writings', *Westminster Review*, 29.1 (1866), 106–32
- , *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1888)
- , *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), ed. by Matthew Beaumont (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- Pecora, Vincent, *Secularization and Cultural Criticism: Religion, Nation and Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)
- Shuter, William, 'History as Palingenesis in Pater and Hegel', *PMLA*, 86.3 (1971), 411–21
- Siedel, George Joseph, *Toward a Hermeneutic of Spirit* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2000)
- Symonds, John Addington, 'Art and Archaeology'. *Academy*, 4.68 (March 1873), 103–05
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 'Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence', *Fortnightly Review*, 4.19 (1868), 16–40
- Tauber, Zvi, 'Aesthetic Education for Morality', *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40.3 (2006), 22–47
- Taylor, Charles, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007)
- Tucker, Paul, 'Reanimate Greek: Pater and Ruskin on Botticelli', *Transparencies of Desire*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Lesley Higgins, and Carolyn Williams (Greensboro: ELT Press, 2002), 119–32
- Wallen, Jeffrey, 'Reflection and Self-Reflection: Narcissistic or Aesthetic Criticism?', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 34.3 (1992), 301–22
- Williams, Carolyn, *Transfigured World: Walter Pater's Aesthetic Historicism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989)
- Wister, Sarah, 'Pater, Rio, and Burckhardt', *North American Review* (July 1875), 156–72, rpt. in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by R. M. Seiler (London: Routledge, 1980)

NOTES

¹ I am drawing upon Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, which thoroughly anatomizes how modern secularism imagines itself, on the one hand, in terms of various kinds of neutrality – whether it is construed as a kind of disengaged reason, an ideal of a non-religious state and public realm, or as a recognition of an impersonal cosmic order – and, on the other, as a positive affirmation of worldliness and of human flourishing in the here and now. Taylor discusses these varieties of secularism in relation

to the nineteenth-century. See Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 1–22, 283–95, 377–419, and 574–93.

² For analysis of Holyoake's secularism in relation to Victorian class distinctions and standards of respectability, see Joss Marsh's *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 109–26.

³ See Bernard Lightman's *The Origins of Agnosticism: Victorian Unbelief and the Limits of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). For a Christian adoption of 'agnosticism', see W. H. Freemantle, 'The New Reformation', *Fortnightly Review*, 41.243 (1887), 442–58. Tellingly, the name of Holyoake's journal, the *Secular Review*, was changed to the *Agnostic Journal* under the editorship of Charles Watts in 1889.

⁴ Cf. Marsh, 124; and Lightman, 14.

⁵ The scandal that greeted Pater's *Renaissance* needs little rehearsal for readers of this journal. Its most dramatic expression was in a sermon by the Bishop of Oxford, John Mackarness, who identified Pater's aestheticism as evidence of the 'progress of unbelief' and an effort to 'dispose of religion' (95–96). Other commentators adopted a more sardonic tone: an anonymous writer in *The Examiner* emphasized that there is nothing novel in Pater's aestheticism, which is 'incompatible with any creed short of atheism' (381), but only represents a rehash of the teaching of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristippus; Sarah Wister suggested that Pater was 'trying to be a [heathen]', but, like Algernon Charles Swinburne, only succeeded in 'being godless' (105). In contrast, the positivist John Morley welcomed Pater's *Renaissance* as an effort to beautify secularism; he claimed Pater displayed 'a simple and happy unconsciousness of the very existence of the conventional gods', and construed Pater's 'love of art for art's sake' as an index of his indifference to 'things heavenly' and a sign of 'how void the old theologies have become' (476).

⁶ Damon Franke has rightly emphasized the importance of the concept of 'heresy' to Pater's work as a whole, but his discussion overlooks the 'Botticelli' essay. Franke also focusses on the 'syncretic' type of heresy in Pater's work and in modern literature generally (i.e., the attempt to fuse Christian and pagan traditions). Yet as Franke's own reading of 'Pico della Mirandola' registers, Pater was sceptical of such efforts at reconciliation in the *Renaissance* phase of his career; his desire to reconcile the pagan and the Christian is an aspect of his later work. See Franke, *Modernist Heresies: British Literary History, 1883–1924* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2008), 2–3 and 155–57.

⁷ Pater mistakenly calls the poem *La Città Divina*. See Beaumont's notes to Pater's *Renaissance*, 151.

⁸ For example, Gordon Leff observes that, in the medieval period, 'heresy was not just a matter of doctrine but also one of discipline – pertinacious error. The heretic was one who persisted in his mistake, refusing correction after his fault had been shown to him'. See Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent, 1250–1450* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 1.

⁹ As Monsman notes, 'Pater's earliest published studies espouse the predominantly Positivist philosophy of the *Westminster Review* in which they were published'. See Monsman, *Walter Pater*, 28.

¹⁰ Vincent Pecora provides a useful account of the often-rehearsed argument that Christianity itself engenders secularization, rather than being assailed from without by secularizing forces; see *Secularization and Cultural Criticism: Religion, Nation and Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 25–66. William Shuter argues that Pater's work frequently affirms Hegel's notion that all things carry the seeds of their negation within themselves; see 'History as Palingenesis in Pater and Hegel', *PMLA*, 86.3 (1971), 415.

¹¹ For a discussion of modern critical suspicion of notions of 'disinterestedness', see George Levine, 'Saving Disinterest: Aesthetics, Contingency, and Mixed Conditions', *New Literary History*, 32.4 (2001), 907–31.

¹² For a sampling of some of the most influential recent critiques of secularism, see Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); William E. Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); and Saba Mahmood, 'Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation', *Public Culture*, 18.2 (2006), 323–47.

¹³ For discussion of the 'fragment' within the Romantic tradition, see Annie Janowitz, 'The Romantic Fragment' in *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. Duncan Wu (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 442–51.

Adam Lee

Platonic Communion in Pater's 'Unfinished Romance'

When Walter Pater's friend Charles Shadwell published *Gaston de Latour* posthumously in 1896, adding two more manuscript chapters to the five already published in 1888, he suitably subtitled the work *An Unfinished Romance*, leading one to think of a *roman* whose fictional narrative describes a hero's quest for love. Shadwell compared it to *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), as Gaston, also set within an age of transition – the religious wars of sixteenth-century France – 'would have centred round the spiritual development of a refined and cultivated mind, capable of keen enjoyment in the pleasures of the senses and of the intellect, but destined to find its complete satisfaction in that which transcends both'.¹ As an unfinished novel, the question as to what form Gaston's transcendence was destined to take leaves the possible ending much more mysterious than the final moment of *Marius*; but, still, the sense of *Gaston* as a spiritual journey may be discovered in the narrative's method.

From the beginning, it is established that the hero's house is incomplete; and yet the narrator suggests that 'the expert architectural mind, peeping acutely into recondite motives and half-accomplished purposes in such matters, could detect the circumstance which had determined that so noticeable irregularity² of ground-plan'.³ Pater makes the comparison between author and architect explicit in 'Style' (1888) shortly afterwards, suggesting that a critic may discover a work's blueprint, even if unfinished.⁴

References to *The Odyssey* and the biblical Song of Songs emerge throughout *Gaston de Latour*, emphasizing personal narratives of longing and return; into these are braided Platonic narratives from the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* that

lift one towards intellectual and spiritual love. Platonic love is conveyed through Gaston's personal, intellectual contact with writers ever more spiritual, most exemplified through the historical figures of Michel de Montaigne and Giordano Bruno, with whom Gaston experiences Platonic communion in various degrees of success. The narrative is complicated, however, and often frustrated by not being a straightforward ascension; indeed all of Gaston's relationships are more or less disappointing with respect to some possible further, future contact with an unknown person beyond the horizon. In comparison, Oscar Wilde would emulate some of Pater's Platonic narrative structures, while, in doing so, actually impeding the very work he so admired. By investigating some of the Platonism that they seem to share, a new aspect of Pater's and Wilde's famous literary relationship may come to light.

Montaigne

One can see how Pater would have been drawn to Montaigne through a shared appreciation of Plato. With perhaps the exception of Cicero, Plato is referenced in the *Essais* more than anyone; and if one includes Socrates as an extension of Plato, the philosopher is only the second leading figure to Montaigne himself. The goal of the entire essays, 'to know thyself', is always attributed to Plato, and to Socrates through Plato.⁵

As seen in *Plato and Platonism* (1893), Montaigne helps shape Pater's view of the ancient philosophy. Besides reading in Montaigne that Plato was not dogmatic about his theories, and that the Platonic Socrates emphasized sensuousness, Pater found in Montaigne the epitome of Academic scepticism.⁶ His motto is said to speak for this strain of Platonism: '*Que scais-je?*' [sic] it cries, in the words of Montaigne; but in the spirit also of the Platonic Socrates, with whom such dubitation had been nothing less than a religious duty or service.⁷ The scepticism practised by Montaigne is rather a suspension of certainty that clears a space for hope than a profane doubt. In the chapter 'Suspended Judgement', Gaston learns from Montaigne that Socratic ignorance is akin to a sort of religious faith by being a suspension of disbelief.⁸ Yet it is with Montaigne the reader, as much as the sceptic, that *Gaston* is concerned. The two great surprises of Montaigne's life, declares the narrator, are his reading of classics and his friendship with Etienne de la Boétie. These two loves are not unrelated, for his 'classical reading' is as intimate to him as knowing a person, and 'had been for him nothing less than

personal contact'.⁹ As a reader, Pater describes Montaigne as travelling not to mere shadows, but to a greater 'degree of reality' in the person of the author.

Pater himself practises this literary sympathy as a reader in recreating Montaigne's person in *Gaston*. Montaigne makes this possible through the intimacy of his style, which the narrator praises, calling him even a 'lover of style'.¹⁰ Pater would have read Montaigne declaring that every day he amuses himself with writers' style rather than with their subject because 'I hunt after the conversation of any eminent wit, not that he may teach me, but that I may know him'.¹¹ And it was through the written word that Montaigne first acquainted himself with Etienne de la Boétie, when he read the latter's *La Servitude Volontaire*,¹² setting the foundation of the great intellectual fortune of his life – a friendship, he says, one might see once in three centuries.

The narrator describes their attraction Platonically, as a 'magnetic' force reminiscent of what the poetic interpreters feel in Plato's *Ion*,¹³ which originates in the Muse.¹⁴ 'For once, his sleepless habit of analysis had been checked by the inexplicable, the absolute,' observes Pater: 'amid his jealously guarded indifference of soul he had been summoned to yield, and had yielded, to the magnetic power of another'.¹⁵ The irrational attraction felt before the dominion of another's soul resembles the irrationality of an artist when truly inspired by enthusiasm for the muses. In Montaigne's essays Pater finds the same acknowledgement that, 'As Plato had said, "twas to no purpose for a sober-minded man to knock at the door of poesy," or, if truth were spoken, of any other high matter of doing or making'.¹⁶ Thus Pater describes Montaigne as undergoing the *mania* of the lover in Plato's *Phaedrus*, a combination of μαντική, prophecy, and μανική, frenzy, found in both poets and prophets.¹⁷

Although Platonic fury typically reveals itself in poetry, Pater declares with Montaigne that the rapture can be traced in prose:

In art, as in poetry, there are the 'transports' which lift the artist out of, as they are not of, himself; for orators also, 'those extraordinary motions which sometimes carry them above their design.' Himself, 'in the necessity and heat of combat', had sometimes made answers that went 'through and through', beyond hope. The work, by its own force and fortune, sometimes out-strips the workman. And then, in defiance of

the proprieties, whereas poets sometimes 'flag, and languish in a prosaic manner', prose will shine with the lustre, vigour and boldness, with the 'fury', of poetry.¹⁸

Pater not only sympathizes with the idea that the prose writer is even more susceptible to Platonic transports, but significantly he finds Montaigne capable of such heights as the pre-eminent essayist: the form Pater claims best suited to replace dialogues for conveying modern ideas.¹⁹ Furthermore, this *mania* ensures that the writer's work undergoes a kind of religious transcendence, as 'beyond hope' suggests, and is capable of achieving more than the artist intends in creative ecstasy, a literally going beyond one's self. Some authors, it seems, because of their mania, will leave traces in their work of the 'inexplicable, the absolute', evidence of their communion with muses.

In order to portray literally a reader's sympathy with Montaigne, Gaston takes residency with him. *Gaston's* narrator reminds us that Montaigne 'wrote for companionship, "if but one sincere man would make his acquaintance"; speaking on paper as he "did to the first person he met."—"If there be any person, any knot of good company, in France or elsewhere, who can like my humour, and whose humours I can like, let them but whistle, and I will run".²⁰ In *Gaston*, Pater heeds Montaigne's call. Pater exhibits the same skill for which he praises Montaigne, the ability to convey ideas in a personal manner: "Those essays, as happens with epoch-marking books, were themselves a life, the power which makes them what they are having accumulated in them imperceptibly by a thousand repeated modifications, like character in a person."²¹ Montaigne is praised for revealing himself; Pater emulates his critical faculty by recreating him in *Gaston*. Furthermore, in the character of Gaston he attempts to create someone with a rich internal life, an individual soul with an undulating temper, who might have interested Montaigne, enough even to have influenced him; for Gaston meets Montaigne before his great work is written.

Montaigne's own relationship with Etienne de la Boétie is described in terms of love from Plato's *Symposium*: "We were halves throughout," Pater quotes Montaigne, "so that methinks by outliving him I defraud him of his part. I was so grown to be always his double in all things that methinks I am no more than half of myself. There is no action or thought of mine wherein I do not miss him, as I know that he would have missed me."²² The speech of Aristophanes in the

Symposium describes how men, women, and hermaphrodites were split in two by the gods for their impiety, causing halves to search perpetually for their other.²³ The men who pursue men are said to have the finest and ‘most manly nature’. They want to be joined in the closest possible union, as long as they live, so that they share one life, are in fact one, rather than two.²⁴ In order not to be separated again we must now revere Love and try to find our favourite, whose nature is exactly to our mind (*noûs*). The god will restore us to our ancient life, heal us and help us into the happiness of the blest.²⁵ Pater’s criticism might be modelled on this union of souls; perhaps a similar love motivates some of his critical appreciations, as one mind might intellectually unite with another through reading.

Gaston stays a very significant nine months with the essayist. Montaigne himself recalls Plato’s metaphor of gestation for the Socratic method, someone who, ‘in his virile and mental love,’ helps with ‘the faculty of bringing forth’²⁶ – recalling writers such as Seneca and Plutarch, who, along with Plato, write in a maieutic style. In the *Symposium*, Socrates explains that Love is a seeker of wisdom,²⁷ and that ‘love loves the good to be one’s own for ever’.²⁸ He explains that all men are pregnant, and engendering is a divine affair, so when they feel themselves in the presence of the beautiful, ‘its possessor can relieve him of his heavy pangs’.²⁹ This pregnant feeling comes from wanting to give birth in beauty forever and to partake of immortality.³⁰ Though everyone is in love with immortality, he explains that those teeming in body give birth with a woman and are therefore amorous, but those who are teeming in soul want to give birth in prudence and virtue in general, and these begetters are the poets and craftsmen called inventors or discoverers. The offspring of these more noble begetters are works of art.

Pater would have been familiar with Montaigne’s idea of a literary child, expressed in ‘The Affection of Fathers’: ‘I know not whether I had not much rather have begot a very beautiful [child], through society with the Muses, than by lying with my wife’.³¹ In Montaigne’s own case the muses help generate his essays, but without Etienne de la Boétie they could never have been fully born. And it was a role nobody else could have fulfilled in quite the same way: ‘in the friendship I speak of,’ writes Montaigne, ‘[our souls] mix and work themselves into one piece, with so universal a mixture, that there is no more sign of the seam by which they were first conjoined. If a man should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I find it could no otherwise be expressed, than by making answer’³² – and

Pater quotes this last part – “Because it was He! Because it was I!”³³ Despite the engendering that changes their constitution, however, there remains what Pater calls a ‘doctrinal egotism,’ ‘the pattern of the true intellectual life’, to explain the attraction.³⁴ Montaigne platonically believes in the essence of a person: ‘I do not write my own acts, but myself and my essence.’³⁵ Pater shares a similar view when he observes, in his Wordsworth essay (1874), it is not *doing* which is important, but *being*.³⁶ Behind these statements is the Platonic supposition that one’s soul is the distinguishing factor of one’s identity.

Pater will speak methodically about the true psychology of art in *Plato*, stating that ‘as the special function of all speech as a fine art is the control of minds (ψυχαγωγία) it is in general with knowledge of the soul of man – with a veritable psychology, with as much as possible as we can get of that – that the writer, the speaker, must be chiefly concerned’,³⁷ referring to the use of the term in the *Phaedrus* (271c–d). Metaphorically, ψυχαγωγία (psychagogia) means to lead souls by persuasion, but more commonly it means to evoke souls from the netherworld.³⁸ The word suggests a kind of necromancy, as practiced more patently in works by Homer, Virgil, and Dante, *-mancy* being related to the Greek *manteia*, the divine power of prophecy, cognate to ‘mania,’ in the Platonic sense. In *Plato* Pater praises Montaigne’s essays for reflecting conversations ‘with the dead through their writings’.³⁹ By witnessing Montaigne’s power of communing with past souls, Pater not only acknowledges the power of dead authors on living readers, but also the related pursuit of critics to discover past authors’ minds.

Gaston de Latour may be seen in part as an intellectual engendering with Montaigne. In the pattern of de la Boétie or de Montaigne, de Latour, or ‘*de la tour*,’ may be understood as ‘of the tower,’ Montaigne’s tower specifically, where he did all his reading and writing, and where Gaston spent much time with him. ‘*Tour*’ also means turn, and may allude to one’s temperament and the choices that determine character. Gaston the character is partially the offspring of this union, whose name roots him ever to a shared place, as the novel seeks to explore even the physical influence of landscape upon one. Although said to be from the more northern region of La Beauce, ‘Gaston’ means a man from Gascony, the region of Montaigne’s home, Bordeaux. He is a stranger in his own land, then, for the name Gaston de Latour makes him more properly the son of Montaigne. The other father is Pater. And Pater will return again to Montaigne to discuss a shared

influence in *Plato and Platonism*. The sympathetic understanding of Platonism makes this literary engendering possible, for it is the model beneath their work, upon which one can imagine the union.

Bruno

Gaston next comes into contact with Giordano Bruno, then a university lecturer in Paris.⁴⁰ Bruno is another figure, like Pico della Mirandola, from *The Renaissance*, who combines Platonism with various other philosophies, such as found in the Bible.⁴¹ *Gaston's* narrator discusses Bruno's conflation of Plato with Plotinus, found particularly in Bruno's *De Umbris Idearum* (*On the Shadow of Ideas*), which professes that the things of the world are shadows of the Divine Mind. The philosophy of Plotinus⁴² has the goal of attaining mystical union with the One, God, through Beauty. Therefore, Love is necessary for philosophy, '*À filosofia è necessario amore*',⁴³ for it helps draw one up to his creator, the source of one's seeking, encouraging the recognition, first of sensuous, then of intellectual beauty, as steps towards ascension. Pater also discusses Bruno's *The Heroic Frenzies* (*De gli eroici furori*), which alternates from poetry to prose, so that an intellectual gloss following amorous poetry might direct one up the 'long ladder' so 'the mind attains actual "union"'.⁴⁴ 'For, as with the purely religious mystics,' Pater explains, "'union," the mystic union of souls with one another and their Lord, nothing less than the union between the contemplator and the contemplated – the reality, or the sense, or at least the name of such union – was always at hand.'⁴⁵ The contemplated is God and the contemplator is the seeking lover; but Pater, on the same model, allows fellow souls to have union 'with one another'. As his title '*furori*', or 'frenzies', suggests, the narrator claims that Bruno's prose is also borne up by 'fire and wings'.⁴⁶

The term 'hero' as Bruno understands it is said to derive not only from Homer's ἥρωος (heros), the great warriors of which he sang, but also from ἔρωος (eros), as described by Plato in the *Phaedrus*: a sort of love-sickness that rages within one causing pain.⁴⁷ Plato himself relates ἥρωος with ἔρωος in the *Cratylus*, where Socrates claims hero comes from Love (Eros) (ἔρωτος).⁴⁸ Similarly, Gaston may be seen as a hero, who, although having close intellectual relations (with Montaigne and Bruno, for example), continues to be love-sick and searching for something more. He is abject with guilt at the loss of his wife and child, whom he

left behind on the Eve of St Bartholomew, 1572, and seems to let life pass by in search for meaning. He is love-sick because he cannot attain what he desires, and, worse, he seems not to know what he desires.

In *Gaston* Pater weaves two Neoplatonic idioms into a narrative of longing, thereby aligning himself in their tradition. As the goal of the Platonism of Plotinus is for the soul to find 'union' in God, or the Divine Mind (*nous*), because it is conceived as our origin, an analogy can be made with the *Odyssey*. The hero is akin to a warrior, who, for the sake of love, must find his way back home. Thomas Taylor's very influential 'An Essay on the Beautiful' (1792), the first English translation of Plotinus's *Ennead* 1.6, is a good example of this heroic Platonism. Of what he calls in his introduction, 'the ancient Heroes of Philosophy', the soul, analogously Odysseus, must avoid 'the magic power of Circe, and the detaining charms of Calypso' and return home to its fatherland.⁴⁹ The analogy is shared by Porphyry's *De Antro Nymph*: Calypso, as noted by Taylor, is the enchantress from whom the soul flees in search of 'the arms of Penelope, or Philosophy, the long lost proper object of his love'.⁵⁰ Bruno several times refers to Circe in this regard in *The Heroic Frenzies*, offering a model for Gaston's journey homewards, in the Platonic sense of returning to a native purity of soul. Gaston's impediments are referred to as Circe, such as Queen Margaret, who keeps him from becoming his better self.

Another tradition Pater shares with Bruno is the absorption of the books of Wisdom into the quest narrative of his hero, especially the *Song of Songs*. There is an old belief perhaps begun by the Alexandrian Fathers that Platonism may be found especially in those works of the Bible ascribed to Solomon.⁵¹ The narrator of *Gaston* makes several references to the *Song of Solomon*, also known as the *Song of Songs* or *Canticles*:

At times it was as if a legion of spirits besieged his door: 'Open unto me! Open unto me! My sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled!' And one result, certainly, of this constant prepossession was that it kept him on the alert concerning theories of the divine assistance to man, and the world, – theories of inspiration.⁵²

The religious book depicts a difficult narrative of chasing one's desire, at once visceral and metaphorical. In Christian hermeneutics it is often supposed to tell of the relationship between God and the Church. The call of 'My sister, my love, my

dove, which seems to recall Gaston's wife who died (as Columbe means literally 'dove') also alludes to her as a sororial figure as well as a lover. But there seems to be a promise that Gaston's carnal spouse will be replaced by a greater 'spouse'. Discussing the goal of Bruno's heroes, Pater explains: 'To unite one's self to the infinite by largeness and lucidity of intellect, to enter, by that admirable faculty, into eternal life – this was the true vocation of "the spouse", of the rightly amorous soul.'⁵³ The spouse unmistakably is an inclusion of the *Song of Solomon* into the search for union in something greater than oneself.

The Psalms are also invoked to signal a narrative of heroic desire: 'Whence that instinctive tendency towards union,' inquires Gaston's narrator, 'if not from the Creator of things himself, who has doubtless prompted it in the physical universe, as in man? How familiar the thought that the whole creation, not less than the soul of man, longs for God "as the hart for the water-brooks"!'⁵⁴ Although this quotation is from Psalm 42, the hart recalls the hunted beloved again in the *Song of Solomon*, 'My beloved is like a roe or a young hart.'⁵⁵

Wilde

Chapter 8 of *Gaston*, 'An Empty House', unpublished until Monsman's edition (1995), offers an intimate discourse on the role of art in our lives, and the consequences of the Aesthetic Movement's mode of living. Bruno had undergone similar scrutiny by the narrator, and was condemned on principles of taste: namely, that his style exhibited moral indifference.⁵⁶ Gaston would now turn his critical microscope onto his old friend Jasmin de Villebon to make a similar discovery. Partly because in manuscript the chapter's epigraph was 'Live up to your blue china', critics such as Monsman have suggested that the chapter addresses Oscar Wilde. It is a very important chapter in Pater's work, as Germain d'Hangest explains, for Pater rarely discusses the value of the ideas with which he has been so often associated.⁵⁷ Monsman believes that after the publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) Pater returned to work on *Gaston*, having left it for two years, and that the novel would now be a 'caveat' for Wilde.⁵⁸

Wilde's allegiance to Pater has been well-documented by critics, even the extent to which Wilde adopted his Platonism.⁵⁹ When Wilde observes in *Dorian* that 'one had ancestors in literature, as well as in one's own race, nearer perhaps in type and temperament, many of them, and certainly with an influence of which one was more absolutely conscious',⁶⁰ he indicates an awareness of a trans-

historical Platonic engendering, of which the novel itself can be seen, especially with Pater. Although the two writers share Platonism to communicate similar ideas, as Stefano Evangelista has shown, the love in Pater's Platonism may be seen to be directed differently from Wilde's.

Pater may have derived the idea of waiting in someone's house from Wilde's *Dorian*; in Chapter 4 of the extended version the hero sits alone at Lord Henry's, awaiting the older, negative influence to return. Not only does Dorian describe Lord Henry's influence over him with a vocabulary redolent of Pater's 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance*, but on the table sits a copy of 'Les Cent Nouvelles' bound for Margaret of Valois (206), the *femme fatale* whose *Memoirs* Gaston helps organize. Was Wilde implying in a subtle way that he shared a house with Pater?

Similarly, Gaston sits in an empty house, looking at the decor of Jasmin de Villebon, awaiting his return. The 'relaxation of the *moral* fibre' Gaston finds there emphasizes the importance of ethics in this aesthetic discourse.⁶¹ The decoration was conscientiously 'à la mode,' and it 'was a world in which all there was had been emphasised in forms of sensation and told as ornament, as visible luxury or refinement besetting one everywhere: plain, white light was no more'.⁶² So that the reader does not miss the allusion to the Platonic *nous*, the narrator mentions Bruno in the next sentence. In *Plato and Platonism* Pater refers to the *nous*, or Logos, as the 'blank white light of the One'.⁶³ The real soul of art is absent.

Gaston finds another significantly shared book in Jasmine's home when he picks up a copy of the *Thoughts*, or 'sentences' as he also calls it, of Marcus Aurelius, so prominent in *Marius the Epicurean*. Yet Pater implies there was something lost in translation, in his metaphorical pathway from soul to style. It would seem Pater is asking how far the wisdom of *Marius*, which he had hoped would explain his aesthetic ideas in the 'Conclusion,' has penetrated this house. 'In all the disguises of the Euphuism of the day,' the narrator describes that the book,

had come with all sorts of conscious and unconscious transmutation by the way, through the Spanish from a Latin forgery, and was but a faded product of an age of translations, adaptations, mistranslations. But from its faint pages did emerge for the first time to Gaston's consciousness, the image of the antique, strenuous emperor in his life-long contention towards the old Greek 'sapience', disinterested, brave, cold.⁶⁴

Here was evidence that amid this environment, and ornamental prose, there was access to Greek wisdom, if one were a discerning critic, no matter how removed and corrupted along the way interpretations had become. 'Well!' the narrator exclaims, 'the atmosphere of that lofty conscience seemed absolutely unassimilable by the alembicated air Gaston was here breathing. To conceive of that at all, to keep the outline of it before him, all that was actually around him must be shut out even from the mental eye.'⁶⁵ The important vision is mental rather than of the things around one; but then the things around one were so distracting. The soul of the classical author was nearly buried. One would think the book was not being read at all, not truly.

The 'emptiness' of the room leads the reader to think of a literal vanity, as the narrator makes analogous reflections of the consequence of form without requisite matter. The narrator asks, 'how, in a word, shadow matched substance',⁶⁶ recalling Bruno, of whose doctrine Jasmin's house seemed 'a slightly ironic form'.⁶⁷ It was the triumph of art certainly, 'though with this consequence, at least in this instance, that the sheath become too visibly more than the sword, or, say, the house than the master, than Jasmin himself' – he was 'surely of no consequence to any one at all'.⁶⁸ If the form is more than the matter, the narrator states, and style is the man, then surely the man will also lack substance. Was this the consequence of living up to one's blue china? It is certainly a damning condemnation of the Wildean type, that is, what Wilde and other aesthetes purported to aspire to. After pondering his style, Gaston no longer wants to meet the man, leaving the house before the master returns. Gaston is repulsed by Jasmin. The tone, for Pater, who characteristically eschewed negative criticism, is rather cynical, which perhaps explains why he never saw it published. Such acerbity might have spoiled his commitment to the novel. Jasmin's style serves to distract Gaston from the real matter of his soul, which was presently too difficult to face, and from the voice of his lost son calling out to his conscience, while the following manuscript chapters trail further into explorations of negative influence.

Wilde, of course, drawn up through the beauty of Pater's prose, continued to reveal his desire to commune with him in his writing. 'The Portrait of Mr W. H.' (1889) borrows much from Pater, beginning with the title.⁶⁹ When Wilde significantly extended the work, purportedly around 1893,⁷⁰ though not published until 1921, he added several passages that bound his work to Pater's. The mention

of 'Pater', 'Plato', 'Oxford' even, 'Montaigne', or 'Bruno', does not appear until the later version of the portrait.

It is after establishing his theory of a boy actor as Shakespeare's muse for the sonnets that Wilde recalls the influence of Ficino's translation of Plato during the Renaissance,⁷¹ a cause which Pater believes motivated artistic genius in fifteenth-century Florence.⁷² Wilde, speaking often of Platonic reminiscence and enthusiasm in the extended 'Mr W. H.', focuses on Diotima's theory of Love from the *Symposium*:

when he tells us of the 'marriage of true minds', and exhorts his friend to beget children that time cannot destroy, he is but repeating the words in which the prophetess tells us that 'friends are married by a far nearer tie than those who beget mortal children, for fairer and more immortal are the children who are their common offspring.'⁷³

Along with *The Renaissance*, Wilde must have had *Gaston* in mind while writing or revising 'Mr W. H.', because his fictional criticism moves from the Platonic Montaigne to the Platonic Bruno. Wilde, however, is more concerned with how these figures view male friendship. In *The Renaissance*, for example, Pater is primarily interested in how Platonism affects Mirandola's writing and personal narrative towards spirituality. Although Pater is concerned with Montaigne's idea of friendship, especially with Etienne de La Boétie, it may be noted that he is interested in the essayist's reflections on the subject when alone; and the sympathy Gaston finds with Montaigne is mostly established in hindsight, whereas in person their connection is quite strained.

Wilde takes hold of a phrase of Bruno that interests Pater in *Gaston*, '*A filosofia è necessario amore*', adding in 'Mr W. H.' that these 'were the words ever upon his lips, and there was something in his strange ardent personality that made men feel that he had discovered the new secret life'.⁷⁴ When Pater cites the words in 'The Lower Pantheism' and in his article on Bruno, he speaks of him in isolation, as one struggling towards intellectual union with God, though suffering relapse from time to time – Bruno is a 'lover and a monk'.⁷⁵ Apart from Bruno's interactions with the university, Pater keeps him cloistered, like most of his Renaissance artists.

Wilde could not fail to see the connection between '*A filosofia è necessario amore*' and Pater's 'lover and philosopher at once' from 'Winckelmann', in the narrative of his speaker's soul:

(φιλοσοφειν μετ' ερωτος!) How that phrase had stirred me in my Oxford days! I did not understand then why it was so. But I knew now. There had been a presence beside me always. Its silver feet had trod night's shadowy meadows, and the white hands had moved aside the trembling curtains to the dawn. It had walked with me through the grey cloisters, and when I sat reading in my room, it was there also. What though I had been unconscious of it? The soul had a life of its own, and the brain its own sphere of action. There was something within us that knew nothing of sequence or extension, and yet, like the philosopher of the Ideal City, was the spectator of all time and of all existence. It had senses that quickened, passions that came to birth, spiritual ecstasies of contemplation, ardours of fiery-coloured love. It was we who were unreal, and our conscious life was the least important part of our development. The soul, the secret soul, was the only reality.⁷⁶

The philosopher of the Ideal City is a reference to Plato and *The Republic*; Wilde tellingly connects Plato, as the philosopher of the soul who seems to contemplate all history, to some of the memorable words of Pater's 'Conclusion': 'It had senses that quickened, and passions that came to birth, spiritual ecstasies of contemplation, ardours of fiery-coloured love', and ultimately to the emphasis on the secret reality of things. Wilde's interpretation of the phrase φιλοσοφειν μετ' ερωτος (philosopherein met' erotos) is rather protean, for it stirs him, but he knows not why until years later. He blends the quickened senses of Pater's 'Conclusion', with the biblical mythology of the hero hunting his hart, as though in the 'shadowy meadows' of Magdalen's deer park. But the beloved, the spouse of the Songs, comes to him rather, at dawn. His soul, duplicitous, is submerged into secrecy; while Pater's struggles for the transparency of 'Diaphaneité' (1864), where he first used the phrase 'lover and philosopher at once'.⁷⁷

The phrase after all is slightly different from Pater's φιλοσοφήσας πότε μέτ ἔρωτος (philosophesas pote met erotos). Evangelista believes Pater translated it idiomatically from the *Phaedrus* (249a), 'where Socrates talks about the privileges that are granted to the souls of those who combine the love of boys with the pursuit of wisdom (παιδεραστησαντος μετα φιλοσοφίας)'.⁷⁸ But it might have come from a point earlier in the passage, where Plato observes that the best souls, who with wings rise consistently with the gods, will enter into a man who is 'a philosopher or a lover of beauty, or one of a musical or loving nature',⁷⁹ (φιλοσόφου ἢφιλοκάλου ἢ μουσικοῦ τινός καὶ ἐρωτικοῦ) (philosophou e philokalou e mousikou tinos kai erotikou). Another strong possibility is a passage further on, when Socrates sums up his speech with the imperative to direct 'life with all singleness of purpose toward love and philosophical discourses',⁸⁰ or 'love and philosophical reason' (ἔρωτα μετὰ φιλοσόφων λόγον) (erota meta philosophon logon), where the Greek is closer to Pater's phrase. The words 'lover' and 'philosopher' are used very frequently in the *Phaedrus*, as Socrates argues that being a 'lover' is preferable to being a 'non-lover', even though the lover is insane, for 'the greatest of blessings come to us through madness (mania), when it is sent as a gift from the gods'.⁸¹ There are explicit references in Plato's dialogue to touching and kissing boys,⁸² without the condemnation one would find in the nineteenth century, but the greater message of the dialogue is to encourage the pursuit of intellectual beauty above physical beauty. Where Pater uses the phrase in 'Winckelmann', for example, he is discussing the eternal cycle of a certain type of soul, a sort of Platonic scholarly hero. 'Enthusiasm', Pater notes in 'Winckelmann', '- that, in the broad Platonic sense of the *Phaedrus*, was the secret of his divinatorial power over the Hellenic world'.⁸³ A 'divinatorial power' indicates his attention towards the beyond, accessible by 'the power of the wing'.⁸⁴

Pater writes φιλοσοφήσας (philosophesas), a participle in the aorist tense; as a participle it adjectivally refers to a noun (as aorist), similar to the definite or simple past; thus, consciously literary, it describes an action conceptually complete or emphasizes the moment when the subject enters a state of *being*, although perhaps indefinite. But Wilde uses the infinitive of the verb, 'φιλοσοφειν μετ' ἐρωτος!' meaning literally 'to philosophize as a lover.' One may even suggest that substantially his soul is not a philosopher, but a lover that will practise philosophy. Then there is the exclamation mark, so different from Pater's tone of the phrase. Wilde's soul is noisier, and enters the world of action. His phrase has even broken

loose from his own Oxford commonplace book, where it originally appeared, without the exclamation mark, with the tempering phrase beneath, ‘φιλοκαλειν μετ’ ευτελειας’, meaning, ‘to love beauty with economy,’ or with thriftiness.⁸⁵

As Pater would advise, far be it from criticism to discredit authors on account of their interpretation, for temperament will determine mostly how someone absorbs another’s ideas; but it is worthwhile to take account of authors’ differences, especially two as important to twentieth-century literature and the current age. There is a change of perspective between Wilde’s fictional criticism and Pater’s. In the dialogue of ‘Mr W. H.’, Wilde’s speaker denies that Shakespeare’s sonnets are addressed to, among other things, his ‘Ideal Self’, ‘Reason’, or ‘Divine Logos’.⁸⁶ Rather than pursuing the soul of the author, Wilde concerns himself with discovering the ‘beloved’ or the muse of the artwork, as the title suggests. Would Pater not have included Shakespeare in Wilde’s title? Like Pater, Wilde borrows Platonic language in his criticism: ‘There was something beyond. There was the soul, as well as the language, of neo-Platonism’; but he seems not to look for a ‘beyond’ in other than a human ‘beloved’.⁸⁷

Perhaps Pater was gesturing towards Wilde’s aim of love when he wrote Chapter 10 in *Gaston*, ‘Anteros’, meaning, ‘return-love’. The manuscript chapter struggles to explain the ugly entanglement of corporal love, its cruelties and responsibilities to a beloved. Jasmin becomes involved in a very unequal love with a young man named Raoul, indeed the latter’s slavish-love costs him his life. Pater had not previously had to use Platonic terms to explain disastrous romance, nor had he applied Platonic love to non-artists,⁸⁸ for his Platonic love narratives had characteristically focussed on a single hero.

Remarkably, however, much of the contemporaneous work discussed here, such as Pater’s ‘An Empty House’ and Wilde’s ‘Mr W. H.’, as they were published long after their deaths, would not have been read by the other. Perhaps their minds, though similar in aspects, missed each other Platonically – and yet they still greatly influenced the other’s work. Like *Gaston*’s, their romance was left unfinished, though we possess plenty of evidence, enhanced by our understanding of their Platonism, to see their different trajectories. If Pater faced a stumbling block in *Gaston*, however, perhaps it was the very thing he needed to set himself the task of publishing his thoughts and teaching on Plato in a single book, *Plato and Platonism*.

Jesus College, Oxford

WORKS CITED

- Bruno, Giordano, *Giordano Bruno's 'The Heroic Frenzies'*, trans. Paul Eugene Memmo, Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964)
- d'Hangest, Germain, *Walter Pater: L'Homme et L'Œuvre* (Paris: Didier, 1961)
- Evangelista, Stefano, "Lovers and Philosophers at Once": Aesthetic Platonism in the Victorian "Fin de Siècle", *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 36.2 (2006) 230–44
- Lange, Stella, "The Wisdom of Solomon and Plato", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 55.4 (1936), 293–302
- Montaigne, Michel de, *Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Charles Cotton, ed. by William Hazlitt, 3 vols (London: Reeves and Turner, 1877)
- Pater, Walter, *Appreciations: with an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1910)
- , *Gaston de Latour: An Unfinished Romance* (London: Macmillan, 1896)
- , *Gaston de Latour: The Revised Text*, ed. Gerald Monsman (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1995)
- , *Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1910)
- , *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1910)
- , *Plato and Platonism* (London: Macmillan, 1910)
- Plato, *Cratylus*, trans. H. N. Fowler. (London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926)
- , *Ion*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939)
- , *Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler (London: Harvard University Press, 2005)
- , *Symposium*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991)
- Plotinus, 'An Essay on the Beautiful', trans. Thomas Taylor (1792) (Washington, DC: Woodstock Books, 1997)
- ‘ψυχολογία’, *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (1871) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)
- Wallen, Jeffrey, 'Alive in the Grave: Walter Pater's Renaissance', *ELH*, 66.4 (1999), 1033–51
- Wilde, Oscar, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, vol 4, *Criticism: Historical Criticism, Intentions, The Soul of Man*, ed. Josephine Guy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- , *Oscar Wilde's Oxford Notebooks: A Portrait of Mind in the Making*, ed. Philip E. Smith II and Michael S. Helfand (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)
- , *The Picture of Dorian Gray. The 1890 and 1891 Texts. The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 3 vols, ed. Joseph Bristow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
- , 'The Portrait of Mr W. H.', ed. Vyvyan Holland (London: Methuen, 1958)

NOTES

- ¹ Walter Pater, *Gaston de Latour: An Unfinished Romance* (London: Macmillan, 1896), p. vi.
- ² Shadwell's edition reads 'peculiarity' rather than 'irregularity'.
- ³ Walter Pater, *Gaston de Latour: The Revised Text*, ed. Gerald Monsman (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1995), p. 2.
- ⁴ Walter Pater, *Appreciations: with an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1910), p. 21.
- ⁵ *Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Charles Cotton, ed. William Hazlitt, 3 vols (London: Reeves and Turner, 1877), vol. I. ch. 3. p. 14; II.6.64; III.13.390.
- ⁶ Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism* (London: Macmillan, 1910), p. 94.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.
- ⁸ *Gaston De Latour: The Revised Text*, p. 7.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- ¹¹ *Essays of Montaigne* (III.8.191).
- ¹² *Ibid.* (I.27.185-86).
- ¹³ Plato, *Ion*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), (536a-b).
- ¹⁴ Jeffrey Wallen has discussed a similar allusion to Plato's *Ion* in *The Renaissance*, in a description of Leonardo's muses, in 'Alive in the Grave: Walter Pater's Renaissance', *ELH* 66.4 (1999), pp. 1033-51 (p. 1045).
- ¹⁵ *Gaston*, p. 51.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ¹⁷ Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler (London: Harvard University Press, 2005), (244c).
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.
- ¹⁹ *Plato*, p. 174.
- ²⁰ *Gaston*, p. 44.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- ²³ Plato, *Symposium*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), (190e).
- ²⁴ *Ibid.* (192b-c).
- ²⁵ *Ibid.* (193a-d).
- ²⁶ *Essays*, II.12.236.
- ²⁷ *Symposium* (204b).
- ²⁸ *Ibid.* (206a).
- ²⁹ *Ibid.* (206c-e).
- ³⁰ *Ibid.* (208b).
- ³¹ *Essays*, II.8.94.
- ³² *Ibid.*, I.27.190-91.
- ³³ *Gaston*, p. 51.
- ³⁴ *Gaston*, p. 54.
- ³⁵ *Essays*, II.6.63.
- ³⁶ *Appreciations*, p. 61.
- ³⁷ *Plato*, p. 121.
- ³⁸ 'ῥοχαγωγία', *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (1871) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- ³⁹ *Plato*, p. 194.
- ⁴⁰ Pater's criticism and fiction are as fluid as ever in *Gaston*; he published part of a manuscript chapter as a piece of stand-alone criticism in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1889.
- ⁴¹ Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1910), pp. 44-45.

⁴² *Gaston*, p. 72.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Phaedrus*, (251d); Giordano Bruno's *The Heroic Frenzies*, trans. Paul Eugene Memmo, Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 17.

⁴⁸ Plato, *Cratylus*, trans. H. N. Fowler (London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), (398d).

⁴⁹ Plotinus, 'An Essay on the Beautiful', trans. Thomas Taylor (1792) (Washington, DC: Woodstock Books, 1997), p. 34.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Stella Lange, 'The Wisdom of Solomon and Plato', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 55.4 (1936), pp. 293–302 (p. 302).

⁵² *Gaston*, pp. 69–70.

⁵³ *Gaston*, pp. 75–76.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵⁵ *Song of Solomon* 2: 9.

⁵⁶ Monsman declares that Wilde misconstrues Pater's article on Bruno in *Dorian* (*Gaston*, p. xli).

⁵⁷ Germain d'Hangest, *Walter Pater: L'Homme et L'Œuvre* (Paris: Didier, 1961), p. 116.

⁵⁸ *Gaston*, p. xl.

⁵⁹ Some of the key works that discuss Pater's Platonism and its influence on Wilde, especially with regard to male-male desire, are: Lesley Higgins, 'Jowett and Pater: Trafficking in Platonic Wares', *Victorian Studies*, 37.1 (1993), pp. 43–72; Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1994); Richard Dellamora, *Apocalyptic Overtures: Sexual Politics and the Sense of an Ending* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Gerald Monsman, 'The Platonic Eros of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde: "Love's Reflected Image" in the 1890s', *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920*, 45.1 (2002), pp. 26–45; William Shuter, 'Pater, Wilde, Douglas and the Impact of the "Greats"', *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920*, 46.3 (2003): 250–78; Stefano Evangelista, "Lovers and Philosophers at Once": Aesthetic Platonism in the Victorian "Fin de Siècle", *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 36.2 (2006), pp. 230–44; Patricia Cruzalegui Sotelo, *The Platonic Experience in Nineteenth Century England* (1998, Catalan), trans. Yannis Giannaris (Peru: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2006).

⁶⁰ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray. The 1890 and 1891 Texts. The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, vol 3, ed. Joseph Bristow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 289.

⁶¹ *Gaston*, p. 84.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁶³ *Plato*, p. 47.

⁶⁴ *Gaston*, p. 87.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Not the W. H. of 'Walter Horatio', but the use of 'Portrait' for practising criticism through fiction, such as *Imaginary Portraits*, as Wilde declares in 'The Critic as Artist' (1891), p. 189.

⁷⁰ Oscar Wilde, 'The Portrait of Mr W. H.', ed. Vyvyan Holland (London: Methuen, 1958), p. xi.

⁷¹ 'Mr W. H.', p. 42.

⁷² *Renaissance*, p. 36; p. 86.

⁷³ 'Mr W. H.', p. 43.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷⁵ *Gaston*, p.76.

⁷⁶ 'Mr W. H.', p. 79.

⁷⁷ Walter Pater, *Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1910), p. 250.

⁷⁸ Evangelista, p. 238.

⁷⁹ *Phaedrus*, trans. Fowler (248d).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (257b).

⁸¹ *Ibid.* (244a).

⁸² *Ibid.* (255e).

⁸³ *Renaissance*, pp. 190–91.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

⁸⁵ *Oscar Wilde's Oxford Notebooks: A Portrait of Mind in the Making*, ed. by Philip E. Smith II and Michael S. Helfand (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 115.

⁸⁶ 'Mr W. H.', p. 12.

⁸⁷ Quite significantly Pater did not use the term Neoplatonism until his final book, *Plato and Platonism*, thereby avoiding a derogatory distinction among Plato's followers.

⁸⁸ Pater handles the theme more successfully in 'Emerald Uthwart' (1892).

Joseph Bristow

Oscar Wilde and the Criminalization of Paterian Thought

In the spring of 1890, Oscar Wilde contributed a memorable review of Walter Pater's distinguished collection of essays, *Appreciations* (1889), to Wemyss Reid's recently founded *Speaker*, a progressive journal dedicated to liberal thought and Home Rule for Ireland. Wilde's respectful commentary, which counted as the second of his sustained assessments of Pater's works, remains significant because it acknowledges the lasting influence that *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) exerted on his career. 'Mr Pater's essays', Wilde states when recalling his time at Oxford in the mid 1870s, 'became to me "the golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty"' (XIII, 539).¹ Wilde presents this striking tribute through a carefully adapted quotation from Algernon Charles Swinburne's 'Sonnet (with a Copy of *Mademoiselle de Maupin*)' (1878). In this sonnet, Swinburne's speaker presents a glowing accolade to the artistic genius evident in Théophile Gautier's most famous novel: 'he that wrought / Made it with dreams and faultless words of thought' (*Poems and Ballads*, p. 97). Clearly, Wilde's paeon to Pater deliberately follows in the tradition of Swinburne's homage to Gautier. But the purpose behind Wilde's chosen phrasing is not simply a matter of copying the well-established English poet. Wilde's carefully chosen quotation suggests that Pater's *Renaissance* encouraged him to trace the roots of aestheticism from Pre-Raphaelite poetry back to Gautier's controversial 1835 work of fiction, in which Gautier's outspoken 'Preface' reads like a manifesto advocating *l'art pour l'art*. Not surprisingly, Pater felt honoured. He declared to Wilde that this 'pleasantly written, genial, sensible, criticism' had given him 'very great pleasure' (*Letters*, p. 109).² Moreover, Wilde's esteem confirms what is evident in many

of his writings: echoes of *The Renaissance*, as critics have documented at length, resonate plentifully plentifully in his oeuvre.³

Scholars, however, have paid less attention to Wilde's observations in the *Speaker* about both the authors and topics that Pater covers in *Appreciations*. Especially important to Wilde, in this regard, is Pater's attraction to the Romantic humourist, Charles Lamb, in whom Pater discovers a 'simple mother-pity for those who suffer by accident, or unkindness of nature, blindness for instance, or fateful disease of mind' ('Lamb', p. 113).⁴ 'The essay on Lamb', Wilde remarks of Pater's chapter, 'is curiously suggestive; suggestive, indeed, of a somewhat more tragic, more sombre figure, than men have been wont to think of in connection with the author of *Essays of Elia*' ('Mr. Pater's', XIII, 542). Best known through his pen name Elia, which he used from 1820 onwards to secure a high reputation in the celebrated *London Magazine*, Lamb's accounts of everyday life proved so popular that long after his death in 1834 he counted – as Frances E. Trollope put it in the middle-class *Temple Bar* – 'among the choicest household spirits with whom English readers love to commune' (p. 21). In every way, Lamb continued to live up to his close friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge's praise that he was indeed 'gentle-hearted Charles'.⁵ As Pater himself remarked, Lamb was a 'lover of household warmth', although he was also quick to observe that it proved impossible to 'forget the strong undercurrent' of the 'great misfortune and pity' that occurred when Lamb was in his twenties and manifested 'an almost insane fixedness of gloom' in the early writings, such as his novel of family loss, *Rosamund Grey* (1798) ('Lamb', p. 110). The 'fateful domestic horror' that occupied Lamb's otherwise sociable home life was the terrible fact that his older sister Mary, in a moment of mania, had murdered their mother ('Lamb', p. 109). For the rest of his life, Lamb forewent – as Pater suggests when quoting Elia's correspondence – the 'feverish, romantic tie of love' ('Lamb', p. 116) in order to care for his sibling, whom the courts deemed insane when she slayed her parent with a kitchen knife.⁶

Wilde's comment on the 'more sombre, more tragic' aspects of Lamb's finely judged prose is worth noting because he had recently made several observations about this much-loved writer in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study' (1889), which also appeared, as had many of Pater's own writings, in the *Fortnightly*. The title of Wilde's 1889 essay, like his homage to Pater in his 1890 review, pays similar respect to the aesthetic tradition by adapting another haunting phrase from one of Swinburne's writings, on this occasion the 1868 book-length study, *William Blake*.

In this provocative discussion, Wilde concentrates on Lamb's colleague at the *London Magazine*, Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, who for the past fifty years had earned notoriety for his scandalous activities as a forger and poisoner, as well as a one-time gifted critic and artist who moved in some of the finest literary circles during the reign of George IV. An ostentatious dandy, Wainewright's expert 'hand' – as Swinburne observes in his 1868 monograph on William Blake – 'was never a mere craftsman's', whether it held 'pen, palette or poison' (p. 68). As Wilde points out, Lamb, who died before the courts exposed Wainewright's heinous activities, spoke with characteristic good will 'of "kind, light-hearted Wainewright", whose prose [was] "capital"' ('Pen,' IV, 107).⁷

With these observations in mind, it might appear that 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' in some respects serves as a complement to Pater's 'Charles Lamb', since Wainewright embodied for Wilde those types of artistic elegance that Pater had already identified in Elia's contributions to the *London Magazine*. In his 1878 essay, Pater declares that '[i]n the making of prose' Lamb 'realises the principle of art for its own sake, as completely as Keats in the making of verse' (p. 112). In 'Pen, Pencil and Poison', Wilde intimates – through several allusions I discuss below – that the respect that Pater has for Lamb's polished style might be considered alongside the deference that Elia expresses in his letters toward the 'light-hearted' Wainewright's similarly 'capital' prose.

Why, then, did Wilde decide to turn his critical attention to a notorious forger and murderer whose writings on art had won Lamb's affections? And why should Wilde have been inclined to make similar points about the criminal Wainewright's excellent prose style in a manner that bears comparison with Pater's observations about Elia, whose essays contain the 'secret of fine, significant touches' of the great artists Lamb most admired: Shakespeare and Hogarth (p. 116)? In part, the answer rests on the troubling idea – one that De Quincey first broached in 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' (1827) – that the most accomplished crimes might involve as much artistic skill as a painting selected for the Royal Academy or an essay published in the *London Magazine*. As Wilde makes clear from the adapted title of his discussion, this remarkable prose writer was a 'forger of no mean or ordinary capabilities, and as a subtle and secret poisoner almost without rival in this or any age' (IV, 105). Ten years after he was sentenced, Wainewright – who continued, as John Forster recorded in his *Life of Dickens* (1872–74), to paint during his exile – died of apoplexy at

Hobart (II, 306–07). His extraordinary criminal history, which involved closely missing an execution, was so infamous that it inspired the plot of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's sensational novel *Lucretia, or, the Children of the Night* (1846), while in the following decade it prompted Charles Dickens – who had witnessed Wainwright in jail – to compose the murder story, 'Hunted Down' (1859). The record of dismay among those colleagues who knew the man (who wrote under the pseudonym 'Janus Weathercock') made Wainwright into a household byword for corruption. Bryan Waller Procter and Thomas Noon Talfourd, both of whom contributed to the *London Magazine*, had no hesitation in sharing their troubled memories of Wainwright's shocking fall from grace. Procter found Wainwright's end almost unbelievable: 'Who would have supposed from a man who was absolutely a fop, finikin in dress, with mincing steps, and tremulous words, with his hair curled and full of unguents ... would flame out ultimately the depravity of a poisoner and murderer?' (188). Talfourd, by comparison, was less surprised about Janus Weathercock's fate. He wrote that Wainwright's extravagant airs created unease in the 'sedate circle' of the *London Magazine*, not only by his 'braided surtouts, jewelled fingers, and various neck-handkerchiefs, but by ostentatious contempt for everything in the world but elegant enjoyment' (II, 8). Such remarks suggest that the lesson these literary men eventually learned from Wainwright's ruin was that he was an anti-social dandy whose irritating affectations proved his merciless indifference to everyone around him. Yet Wilde, eager to show that '[t]here is no essential incongruity between crime and culture', decided to represent this thought-provoking claim by surrounding it with well-known idioms from Pater's writings ('Pen, Pencil', IV, 121).

In the remainder of this discussion, I examine the reasons why Wilde took the initiative to put the murderous Regency dandy's startling career into implicit dialogue with Pater's interest in the 'more sombre, more tragic' aspects of Elia: a writer otherwise famed, as we read in 'Charles Lamb', for his stylistic attention to the 'delicacies of literature especially, its gradations of expression, its fine judgment, its pure sense of words, of vocabulary' (p. 116). Thereafter, my discussion focuses on Wilde's explicit presentation of this legendary criminal as an embodiment of the Paterian aesthetic critic, which the author of *The Renaissance* discovered in Elia. Finally, I consider in more detail the ways in which the pattern we find in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' that invokes Pater's finest phrases frequently links Wilde's 'golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty' with extraordinary crimes.

In this discussion of Wainewright, as in several of Wilde's other works from the late 1880s and early 1890s, there are highly audible traces of Pater's critical voice, if with tonal modifications. Where Pater in the 'Preface' to his 1873 volume distinguishes the aesthetic critic as one who possesses 'the power of being deeply moved by the presence of beautiful objects' (xxi), Wilde nonchalantly characterizes 'artists and men of letters' as individuals who are so 'pre-occupied with the beauty of form' that 'nothing else seems of much importance' to them ('Pen, Pencil', IV, 105). In casting Wainewright in the role of this type of Paterian aesthete, Wilde certainly went against the grain of many other nineteenth-century commentators. If one follows Wainewright's finest biographer, Jonathan Curling, one might be inclined to believe that 'Oscar Wilde brought no new facts to his study of Janus Weathercock ... but he was the first writer to regard Wainewright as a man, not monster' (10).

In some ways, Curling's judgment is correct. Walter Thornbury, to take a good example, stated flatly in 1867 that Wainewright was a 'monster egotist': 'one of the most cruel, subtle, and successful secret murderers since the time of the Borgias' (p. 39).⁸ Wainewright's legend as the first homicide to administer strychnine held such fascination for later generations that in 1880 Hazlitt's grandson, who conducted extensive research on Lamb and his circle, issued a collection of Wainewright's critical writings. W. Carew Hazlitt's edition, on which Wilde draws heavily in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison', prompted another round of articles about this felonious legend, whose exploits included fleeing the country to escape his debtors in the spring of 1831.⁹ To Carew Hazlitt, Wainewright's heinous actions made it patently clear that Janus Weathercock 'was a villain of the true melodramatic stamp, but a thousand times more devilish and dangerous than any hero of melodrama' (lxxvii). Hazlitt, however, runs into difficulty when he grapples with Talfourd's remark that 'Lamb took pleasure in finding sympathy with dissimilitude' (p. lxxvi).¹⁰ In his 1848 edition of Lamb's *Final Memorials*, Talfourd had observed that Elia 'fancied that he really liked [Wainewright]; took, as he ever did, the genial side of character; and, instead of disliking the rake in the critic, thought it pleasant to detect so much taste and good-nature in a fashionable *roué*; and regarded all his vapid gaiety, which to severer observers looked like impertinence, as the playful effusion of a remarkably guileless nature' (II, 8). Try as he might to condemn Wainewright entirely for his misdeeds, it proved difficult for Carew Hazlitt not to acknowledge the awkward truth that the murderer was

‘a person whose prose style Lamb repeatedly eulogises’, in a manner that suggests that Wainwright must have also been ‘the possessor of unusual ability and literary tact’ (Hazlitt, pp. lxxvi–lxxvii).

Wilde, however, was hardly alone in asserting that it proved mistaken to think that Wainwright’s ‘love of art and nature was a mere pretence and assumption’ (‘Pen, Pencil’, IV, 120). When we look at the other sources that Wilde drew upon in ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’, we can see that Wilde was affiliating his admiration for Janus Weathercock with several commentators of far greater stature than Carew Hazlitt and Thornbury. In 1848, Lamb’s friend De Quincey, even if he deemed Wainwright ‘a *parvenu*, not at home even amongst his second-rate splendour’, nonetheless found amid the ‘idle *étalage*’ a ‘tone of sincerity and of native sensibility, as in one who spoke for himself’ whenever Janus Weathercock discussed ‘the great Italian masters of painting’; on this view, Wainwright was ‘not merely a copier from books’ (De Quincey, p. 204). Twenty years later, Swinburne declared that Wainwright ‘did what he could for Blake in the way of journalism’ (p. 69). Swinburne’s knowledge of Janus Weathercock’s admiring comments on the author of *Jerusalem* (1804–1820) largely came from Alexander Gilchrist’s *Life of William Blake* (1863). Gilchrist remarks that Wainwright assisted Blake ‘by buying two or three of his expensive illustrated books’: ‘One among the best of the *Songs of Innocence and Experience* I have seen’, he comments, ‘formerly belonged to Wainwright [*sic*]’ (I, 277).¹¹ Moreover, Gilchrist expressed high praise for Wainwright’s art criticism, whose contributions to the *London Magazine* – contrary to what Talfourd had claimed – showed ‘real literary merit and originality; in a vein of partly feigned coxcombry and flippant impertinence, of wholly genuine sympathy with art (within orthodox limits), and recognition of the real excellencies of the moderns’ (II, 278). Swinburne intensified Gilchrist’s approbation by claiming that this criminal was so remarkable that he stood as the greatest art critic before John Ruskin: ‘Another worthy of notice here was, until our own day called forth a better, the best English critic on art; himself, as far as we know, admirable alike as a painter, a writer, and a murderer’ (p. 67). Clearly, this strikingly dispassionate appraisal of Wainwright’s skills in prose, on canvas, and in poisoning powerfully shaped the direction of Wilde’s essay.

Yet Wilde did much more than repeat such even-handed homage to an art critic whose talents ensured he ranked highly among the distinguished company of the *London Magazine*. Certainly, right at the start of his 1889 essay Wilde agrees

with them by lending praise to Wainewright's 'extremely artistic temperament' ('Pen, Pencil', IV, 105). Additionally, as his discussion unfolds, Wilde reveals more details that strengthen his belief in his subject's 'subtle artistic temperament' ('Pen, Pencil', IV, 105), and he soon tells us that the man who was eventually unmasked as a calculating forger 'concerned himself primarily with the complex impressions of art' ('Pen, Pencil', IV, 109), in ways that demonstrate that 'the first step in aesthetic criticism is to realize one's own impressions' ('Pen, Pencil', IV, 109). But no sooner has he acclaimed Wainewright in such rapturous terms than it becomes clear that Wilde has begun to imagine Janus Weathercock in a style that owes far less to De Quincey, Gilchrist, and Swinburne than it does to Pater. As students of Pater's 'Romanticism' (1876) will instantly recognize, the phrase 'artistic temperament' is central to his formulations about the 'romantic spirit' as 'an ever-present, an enduring principle' that persists in the greatest creative imaginations ('Postscript', p. 245).¹² Furthermore, as readers of *The Renaissance* will immediately see, in the Preface Pater advances the belief that 'in æsthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly' (*The Renaissance*, p. xix). By the time we reach the concluding paragraphs of 'Pen, Pencil and Poison', Wilde makes a further bold Paterian declaration about Wainewright: 'His crimes seem to have had a curious effect on his art. They gave a strong personality to his style, a quality that his early work certainly lacked' (IV, 120). Wilde's frequent recurrence in his oeuvre to the concept of personality also has its roots in Pater's Preface to *The Renaissance*, where the word appears on several occasions, especially in reference to *cinquecento* Italy: an era famed for 'its special and prominent personalities, with their profound æsthetic charm' (p. xxiii). Elsewhere, Wilde comments that Wainewright 'cared nothing for abstract discussions on the nature of the Beautiful' ('Pen, Pencil', IV, 109), which undoubtedly echoes another sentence from Pater's 'Preface': 'What is important, then, is not that the critic should possess a correct abstract definition of beauty for the intellect, but a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved by the presence of beautiful objects' (*The Renaissance*, p. xxi). Without question, such blatant paraphrases of Pater's writings suggest that 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' is not exactly, as Richard Ellmann chooses to style this essay, the work whose discussion of forgery 'is closest to Wilde's social presentation of himself' (p. 299). In Ellmann's view, Wilde emerges from this discussion of criminality as a deceptive figure whose attraction to Wainewright's forgeries testifies to his

‘inveterate artificiality’ and his connection with an ‘underworld of people who pretended to be what they were not’ (p. 299). Instead, the evidence suggests that Wilde’s appeal to phrasing such as the ‘artistic temperament’ and the need to ‘know one’s impression as it really is’ puts the lawless critic Wainewright, who once enjoyed distinction alongside Elia, into the mould of a Paterian ideal.

There are several further touches in ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’ that quickly confirm that it sounds as if Wainewright’s critical writings in some respects prefigured Pater’s. Wilde promptly comments on Janus Weathercock’s essays on ‘La Gioconda, and early French poets, and the Italian Renaissance’ (IV, 108): three topics that appear prominently in *The Renaissance*. Furthermore, the fact that Wilde points to Wainewright’s love of ‘Elizabethan translations of *Cupid and Psyche*, and the *Hypnerotomachia*, and book-bindings, and early editions, and wide-margined proofs’ (IV, 108) not only echoes chapters of Pater’s novel, *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), but also – from Josephine M. Guy’s perspective – gestures toward ‘Pater’s love of fine books and early editions’, which was well known to those who had visited his rooms at Brasenose College (*Criticism*, IV, 419). Certain smaller details have suggested to Guy that Wilde’s depiction of Wainewright refers indirectly to Pater’s personal life. She infers that the essay contains discreet allusions to Pater’s literary preferences, choices in décor, and love of animals. When Wilde comments, for example, on the idea that Wainewright’s physical features ‘gave him the dangerous and delightful distinction of being different from others’, he mentions that Janus Weathercock ‘at times reminds us of Julien Sorel’ (IV, p. 107). As Guy comments, in ‘Style’ (1888) Pater stresses that Stendhal’s *Le rouge et le noir* (1830) – in which Sorel is the entrancing protagonist – presents one of the finest models of European prose; for Pater, since Stendhal’s great novel remains independent ‘of all removable decoration’, it ranks as a perfect ‘composition utterly unadorned’ (*Appreciations*, pp. 15–16). Similar parallels follow, two of which have also attracted Ian Small’s attention (p. 64). ‘He had’, Wilde writes, ‘that curious love of green, which in individuals is always the sign of a subtle artistic temperament’ (IV, 108). Very possibly, Guy infers, this ‘curious love’ conjures the ‘pale green tint’ that Edward Manson recalls on the panelling of Pater’s college rooms (*Criticism*, IV, 420).¹³ (One might, too, be tempted to find male homoeroticism encoded in what was also a fashionable colour in interior decoration.¹⁴) Moreover, it may appear that Wilde seeks to implicate Pater in Wainewright’s passion for feline companions. ‘Like Baudelaire’, as Wilde proceeds to observe, Wainewright ‘was

extremely fond of cats' (IV, p. 108): a small feature that perhaps evokes the fact that in his prose, as well as in his home life, Pater valued animals. As Pater reminds us, when Elia speaks 'on behalf of ill-used animals he is early in composing a *Pity's Gift*' (p. 113): a reference to the influential 1798 work that Samuel Jackson Pratt wrote for children on animal welfare.

One consequence of looking with precision at Wilde's studied phrasing is that in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' the iniquitous Wainewright begins to bear the closest resemblance not only to Pater's model of the aesthetic critic but also to Pater himself. Small has gone so far as to suggest that Wilde's hardly concealed allusions to *The Renaissance* and *Marius* 'present ... the work of Pater ... at a wholly caricatured level' (p. 64). Yet, as Horst Schroeder has proposed, there is something amiss in the idea that 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' implies – as Guy insists – a sardonic 'double portrait' (*Criticism*, IV, xxii), one that to some degree mockingly positions Pater's critical identity within the framework of a comparatively brief study of Wainewright's notoriety. Especially questionable to Schroeder is the suggestion that Manson's memoir confirms Pater's penchant for green, since the evidence (which includes a memory of Pater sporting an apple-green tie at a private view at the Royal Academy) is 'a bit thin'.¹⁵ More pressing for Schroeder, however, is Guy's proposition that Wilde's essay indulges in a 'witty attack' on Pater (*Criticism*, IV, xxxii). Schroeder determines that it is unlikely that 'this most sensitive of sensitive men would have remained on speaking terms with Wilde, if he had felt himself caricatured in Wilde's essay'.¹⁶ Why, then, did Wilde attribute such evident, if not somewhat intimate, Paterian qualities to Wainewright? The answer for Schroeder rests on his basic premise that Wilde sought to demonstrate that 'Wainewright's literary and artistic outlook was quite modern'.¹⁷

Schroeder's attempt to settle this matter, however, leaves open the question of the reason why this 'quite modern' perspective might relate to the potential criminality of Paterian thought. While I agree that it is unreasonable to suggest that Wilde sought to insult Pater by linking him with a dastardly forger and homicide, 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' nonetheless marks a turn in Wilde's critical attitude toward a careful consideration of the felonious potentialities of a work even as seemingly innocuous as 'Charles Lamb'. In Wilde's later writings, *The Renaissance*, as its phrases begin to echo ever more loudly in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890, revised 1891), becomes increasingly entwined in plots where the pursuit of beauty turns so lethal that 'all men' – in a culminating line from *The*

Ballad of Reading Gaol (1898) – ‘kill the thing they love’ (*Ballad*, I, 216). In his essay on Wainewright, Wilde, whose earliest plays such as *Vera* (1880) and the unfinished *Cardinal of Avignon* (c.1882) had long shown an interest in criminality, evinces a remarkable shift in his understanding of aestheticism: the belief, as he had learned from the ‘Preface’ to *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, that it is absurd to think that ‘a man is virtuous because he has written a moral book’.¹⁸ By the late 1880s, Wilde’s attention had gravitated toward the idea that if we take Pater at his word, we can see that the modern aesthetic critic might assess Wainewright’s violations of the law with a judgment equal to that exercised upon this writer’s ‘capital’ prose. In Megan Becker-Leckrone’s view, ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’ shrewdly suggests ‘not only that we evaluate Wainewright’s crimes from the same critically disinterested stance from which we would otherwise consider his artistic creations, but also, paradoxically, that we might perhaps view the aestheticist endeavour itself as a kind of “crime” – one Wilde portrays as being provocative, daring, but also dangerous, even “deadly”’ (105).

According to Becker-Leckrone’s fine analysis, the most significant link between Wainewright and Pater is neither the chapters from *The Renaissance* nor the ‘Romanticism’ essay but these critics’ references to William Wordsworth. She reminds us that Pater’s ‘Wordsworth’ struck Wilde as the ‘finest’ essay in *Appreciations*, since it possessed ‘a spiritual beauty of its own’ (‘Mr. Pater’s’, XIII, 542, 543). And it is worth adding that Pater elsewhere took pains to observe that ‘one cannot forget also that Lamb was early an enthusiastic admirer of Wordsworth: of Wordsworth, the first characteristic power of the nineteenth century’ (‘English Literature’, p. 15). In ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’, Wilde certainly recalls Pater’s remark in *Appreciations* that ‘in Wordsworth, such power of seeing life, such perception of a soul, in inanimate things, came of an exceptional susceptibility to the impressions of eye and ear, and was, in its essence, a kind of sensuousness’: exactly that ‘sort of thought in sense’, Pater insists, which inspired Percy Bysshe Shelley in *Peter Bell the Third* (1819) (*Appreciations*, p. 46).¹⁹ By comparison, when we discover in ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’ a passage from Janus Weathercock’s ‘Sentimentalities of the Fine Arts’ (1820), we see that it draws attention to Wainewright’s predisposition to view his springtime experience through an artist’s lens: ‘the polyanthus glowed in its cold bed of earth, like a solitary picture of Giorgione’ (‘Sentimentalities’, p. 35). Particularly captivating is Wainewright’s summation of the ‘glorious day’ in the countryside, where he saw

‘on the horizon’s edge’ a ‘light, warm, film of misty vapour, against which the near village, with its ancient stone church, shewed sharply out with blinding whiteness’ (‘Sentimentalities’, pp. 37, 36). ‘I thought’, Wainewright remarks, ‘of Wordsworth’s “*Lines Written in March*”’ (‘Sentimentalities’, p. 36). Once Wilde has quoted this passage and proceeded to observe that Wainewright, to use Pater’s epithet, was ‘susceptible to Wordsworthian influences’, he straightaway reiterates that this adept critic ‘was also ... one of the most subtle and secret poisoners of the age’ (IV, 115). Wilde’s point is very sharp: the murderous Wainewright was not only highly responsive to Wordsworth but also, in Pater’s precise description, Wordsworthian.

Since such a suggestion might appear a little strenuous, if not absurdly funny, Wilde peppers his comments on Janus Weathercock’s refined sensibilities to accentuate the irony that the great Romantic poet’s works gave intense pleasure to such a felon. As Wilde unravels Wainewright’s life story, he observes that there was one thing that relieved his subject of the tedium of military service: “‘The writings of Wordsworth”, he goes on to say, “did much towards calming the confusing whirl necessarily incident to sudden mutations. I wept over them tears of happiness and gratitude”” (IV, 106). Indubitably, Janus Weathercock’s ‘exceptional susceptibility to the impressions of eye and ear’ was such that ‘[h]is delicately strung organization’, as Wilde portrays it, ‘however indifferent it might have been to inflicting pain on others, was itself most keenly sensitive to pain’ (IV, 106). No matter how much consoling beauty Wainewright found in Wordsworth, he remained an exclusively aesthetic not sympathetic subject. In many ways, ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’ takes to a logical extreme Pater’s assertion that Wordsworth, like the other major poets before and after him, is a figure of ‘impassioned contemplation’ whose work ‘is ... not to teach lessons or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends; but to withdraw the thoughts for a little from the mere machinery of life’ (pp. 59, 62). Utterly immoral, Janus Weathercock realized his aesthetic ‘impressions’ of Wordsworth to the Paterian letter, without learning any instructive wisdom whatsoever.

All of these details may force one to look twice at the unreserved esteem that concludes Wilde’s review of *Appreciations* in the *Speaker*. Pater, Wilde declares, ‘has no rival in his own sphere, and he has escaped disciples’ (‘Mr. Pater’s’, XIII, 545). How, then, should we interpret such hallowed praise when it might appear that ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’ treats Paterian thought in an insubordinate manner by applying the wisdom of *The Renaissance* to an infamous murderer’s career? Is

Wilde, as Laurel Brake has suggested, presenting himself here ‘as the irreverent and youthful upstart who takes on and displaces ... ageing gurus’ such as Pater (p. 47)? Or is Wilde’s decision to make the creator of Janus Weathercock look as Paterian as possible in some respects faithful to the cited phrases from *The Renaissance*, ‘Romanticism’, ‘Charles Lamb’, and ‘Wordsworth’? The wording that follows Wilde’s ultimate plaudit in his enthusiastic comments on *Appreciations* features a double negative, which reveals that all of these questions arise from his contradictory relationship with this master’s oeuvre. Pater, Wilde adds, has avoided a cult of followers ‘not because he has not been imitated, but because in art so fine as his there is something that, in its essence, is inimitable’ (‘Mr. Pater’s’, XIII, 545). Unquestionably, in ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’ the quotations from Pater not only point to Wilde’s veneration for the ‘inimitable’ quality of such finely honed phrases; they also indicate that his essay on Wainwright is very far from an exercise in discipleship. In any case, although Wilde found much to admire in ‘Wordsworth’, he himself had little to say in praise of this leading Romantic. In his critical dialogue ‘The Decay of Lying’, which appeared the same year as ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison’, once Wilde’s mouthpiece Vivian has asserted that ‘[t]he proper school to learn art in is not Life but Art’, he promptly observes that ‘the poets, except for the unfortunate example of Mr Wordsworth, have been really faithful to their high mission, and are universally recognized as being absolutely unreliable’ (*Criticism* IV, 86–87). Even more damning are Vivian’s earlier observations that when Wordsworth ‘went to the lakes’ he spent his time ‘moralizing about the district’, in an implicitly unfortunate manner that resulted in such dull works as “Martha Ray” and “Peter Bell”, and the address to Mr Wilkinson’s spade’ (IV, 83). Far better, Vivian believes, are Wordsworth’s works that came from ‘Poetry’ not ‘Nature’: “Laodamia”, and the fine sonnets, and the great Ode’ (IV, 83). Assuredly, Pater had already admitted that ‘nowhere is there so perplexed a mixture as in Wordsworth’s own poetry, of work touched with intense and individual power, with work of almost no character at all’ (p. 38). Moreover, in making this criticism Pater stressed the ‘faultless expression’ he discovered in Wordsworth’s ‘little treasury’ of finest poems, in which the perfect fusion of ‘matter and form’ creates the ‘highest poetical expression’ (*Appreciations*, pp. 56, 41, 57), one that – as Lene Østermark-Johansen has observed – belongs to Pater’s larger appreciation of the ‘formal, almost sculptural, unity between thought and expression’ that he discovered in the Greeks, in Winckelmann, in Wordsworth, and in nineteenth-century literary

exponents of style, such as Stendhal and Flaubert (p. 282). Wilde, however, radically undermines the careful balance of Pater's discriminating antithesis between the inspirational poetry and the disappointing verse in Wordsworth's oeuvre by emphasizing the blatant artistic shortcomings of this influential poet, whose large canon, as Wilde took pains to note elsewhere at this time, featured not so much a frequency of 'work of almost no character at all' as a dominant proportion of unquestionably 'inferior work' ('Some Literary Notes', p. 463).

As the final sentences of his review of *Appreciations* imply, Wilde's decision to interweave the criminal Wainewright into Pater's aesthetic historicism expresses both homage and dissent. The result of 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' is not simply to poke fun at Pater's inestimably significant project of producing a richly informed cultural history that takes the Renaissance and Romanticism as its touchstones. To the contrary, 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' engages in producing a parallel – but qualitatively different – account of the literary past and the history of art, one that stresses that there need not be any claim on intrinsic virtue or ethical worth in an artwork or an artist. This is precisely the idea that Pater pursues when he thoughtfully observes that in the *Essays of Elia* Lamb 'realizes the principle of art for its own sake as completely as Keats in the making of verse'. Wilde agrees entirely when he turns to the beloved Elia's infamous colleague. To Wilde, it is aesthetic value, and nothing else, that matters in Wainewright's staggering biography. Certainly, as Wilde acknowledges at the end of his essay, it remains 'impossible not to feel to feel a strong prejudice against a man who might have poisoned Lord Tennyson, or Mr Gladstone, or the Master of Balliol', since Wainewright's wrongdoings touch on those generations who still exist in living memory (IV, 121).²⁰ Then again, Wilde contends that had Janus Weathercock lived earlier – in classical Rome, the Italian Renaissance, or seventeenth-century Spain – no one with a 'true historical sense' would bother to distribute 'praise and blame with the solemn complacency of a successful schoolmaster' (IV, 121). Plainly, Wilde believes that the accurate understanding of history has little connection with any 'moral judgments' commentators may have about the actions of individuals (IV, 121). As a consequence, Wilde states that Wainewright deserves to be treated 'in that fine spirit of disinterested curiosity to which we owe so many charming studies of the great criminals of the Italian Renaissance' (IV, 121). From this perspective, it is in a philosophical realm beyond 'moral approval and disapproval' that the modern critic should consider 'Charles Lamb's friend' (IV, 105): a phrase that clearly

identifies Wainwright's adjacent position to the canonized Elia, whom Pater was among the few to observe conveyed 'the sorrow of humanity, the *Welt-schmerz*, the constant aching of its wounds' in the essay on Lamb (p. 112).

'Pen, Pencil and Poison' emerged at the point at which Wilde had begun to think more concertedly than ever before about the central role that the 'sorrow of humanity' played in the creation of great art. By focusing on a criminal such as Wainwright, Wilde was pursuing a line of inquiry that he had started in the lengthy notebook he kept on the eighteenth-century poet, Thomas Chatterton, who – according to most accounts at the time – had taken his life at the age of seventeen because the towering figure of Horace Walpole refused to believe that this teenager's literary forgeries were anything other than the young man's handiwork. After his death, Chatterton's career as a forger generated an exceptional amount of debate about the degree to which immoral motives encouraged the elaborate poems he crafted in the guise of an imaginary fifteenth-century author, Thomas Rowley. As Wilde concluded from the large body of material that developed around Chatterton's polemical legacy, this precocious poet was 'the father of the / Romantic movement in literature, the / precursor of Blake, Coleridge and / Keats, the greatest poet of his time'.²¹ Even though several commentators had reviled Chatterton for trying to pass off as genuine his astonishing Rowley forgeries, by the time Keats penned his appreciative sonnet on this 'child of Sorrow' other Romantics – especially Coleridge and Shelley – had affirmed that this prodigy was a 'Genius'.²² In particular, Chatterton's antiquarianism captivated Keats, whose poetry remained an undying source of inspiration for Wilde. 'Chatterton', Keats commented, 'is the purest writer in the English language. He has no French idiom, or particles like Chaucer; 'tis genuine English Idiom in English words'.²³ As Keats understood it, Chatterton, who had learned much from James Macpherson's *Works of Ossian* (1760) and Thomas Percy's *Reliques of English Poetry* (1765), redirected the course of English poetry by drawing on previously unappreciated national traditions. Consequently, Keats dedicated *Endymion* (1818) to Chatterton; and it was *Endymion*, as Wilde's speaker Gilbert pointedly mentions in 'The Critic as Artist' (1890), that Wordsworth briskly dismissed as a 'pretty piece of Paganism' (*Criticism*, IV, 198).²⁴ Wordsworth's comment came of a piece with contemporaneous attacks on Keats's vulgar urban origins as a 'Cockney' poet: one who lacked, like Chatterton, a classical education. In other words, the alternative history of Romanticism that Wilde pieced together put controversial figures, such

as Wainewright, Keats, and Chatterton, in implicit dialogue with Pater's attraction to Lamb and Wordsworth.²⁵

In his notebook, which shows the great extent to which Wilde had consulted sources on Chatterton's life, he recognized that the crime of literary forgery remained fundamental to this teenage poet's literary genius:

Chatterton
 may not have had the moral
 conscience which is Truth to Fact –
 but he had the artistic conscience
 which is truth to Beauty. He
 had the artists yearning to
 represent and if perfect representation
 seemed to him to demand forgery[.]²⁶

Such phrasing plainly bears out the wisdom that Keats espouses at the end of 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (1820): "Beauty is truth, truth beauty",—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know' (*Poems*, p. 283). To Wilde, for anyone to judge Chatterton – or, for that matter, Wainewright – on the standards of moral approval or disapproval about his forgeries would be necessarily mistaken.

Shortly after 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' appeared, Wilde entered into the busiest phase of his writing career. Not long afterwards, he published his critical volume *Intentions* (1891), *A House of Pomegranates* (1891), *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Tales* (1891), and the two versions of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In the last of these works, Wilde makes a point of ensuring that some of the finest phrases his character Lord Henry Wotton expresses sound recognizably Paterian: 'To realize one's nature perfectly', this aristocratic aesthete declares, 'is what each of us is here for' (*Dorian Gray*, III, 183, 184). 'Be always searching for new sensations', Lord Henry insists to the impressionable Dorian Gray (III, 187), in words that obviously resound with Pater's Preface and 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance*.²⁷ But, at the same time, Lord Henry differs markedly from Pater by speaking a language that links 'sin' and 'shame' to a vision of a 'New Hedonism', one that involves the risk of yielding to temptations (*Dorian Gray*, III, 187). Moreover, Lord Henry informs Dorian Gray that there is 'no such thing as a good influence', since 'to influence a person is to give him one's soul' (*Dorian Gray*, III, 183). Possessed by Lord Henry's

teaching, Dorian Gray embarks on a perilous journey where his desire (in the words of Pater's Preface) to 'realize one's own impressions' results in a narrative of suicide and murder. By the time he reads the 'poisoned' book that unravels the sins of human history before him (parts of it gleaned from John Addington Symonds's *Renaissance in Italy: The Age of Despots* (1887)), this susceptible young man learns that this era of great art 'knew of strange manners of poisoning' (*Dorian Gray*, p. 290). These ingenious Renaissance methods of killing sound similar to those of Wainewright in the late Romantic era: 'In one of the beautiful rings of which he was so proud', Wilde comments in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison', 'he used to carry crystals of the Indian *nux vomica*' (IV, 115–16). Ultimately, the crimes that Dorian commits are the result of 'look[ing] on evil simply as a mode through which he could realize his conception of the beautiful' (*Dorian Gray*, p. 290). Such remarks have prompted Lawrence Danson to observe that the 'affinities are noticeable' between Thomas Griffiths Wainewright and Dorian Gray (p. 100).

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde amplifies to grotesque proportions what he had already begun to explore in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison': the potential criminalization of Paterian thought in a style that nonetheless expresses a measure of fidelity to Pater's works. In the end, if there was a lesson that Wilde learned from Pater's 'golden book of spirit and sense' he first encountered at Oxford, it was that the 'first step in life' was 'to realize one's own impressions' in a manner that both acknowledged and defied the Preface to *The Renaissance*. Such a stance followed a lead that Pater himself had already taken. Critics have long recognized Pater both acknowledged and departed from Matthew Arnold's imperative 'to see the object as in itself it really is' ('The Function', III, 258) by stating that the question that really mattered was a subjective one: 'What effect does it [i.e. the object] really produce in me?' (*The Renaissance*, p. xx). In turn, as several commentators have remarked, Wilde audaciously asserted that in aesthetic criticism the purpose was 'to see the object as in itself it really is not': a statement in 'The Critic as Artist' that takes Pater's revision of Arnold to its next logical stage (*Criticism*, IV, 159).²⁸ Yet, as the example of 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' shows, the objects that mattered to Wilde were frequently ones that belonged to those movements and periods that also fascinated Pater: the Italian Renaissance and English Romanticism. And yet on the many occasions when Wilde turned to these epochs and traditions, it was the criminal element haunting these eras that captured his imagination.

By the time he composed *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde's urgent interest in allowing formulations that echo parts of *The Renaissance* to stem from an aesthete as undisciplined as Lord Henry Wotton resulted in a compelling paradox: it drove his enthralling fictional narrative about the evil preservation of beauty toward exactly the judgemental moralizing in which the Paterian aesthetic critic, who sought (as we discover in 'Style') 'that finest and most intimate form of truth, the *vraie vérité*', had no wish to indulge (Pater, 'Style', p. 32).²⁹ As readers of Wilde's novel know well, it is through a magical manoeuvre that Dorian enters what becomes a decidedly un-Paterian, highly moralistic narrative. Once he has absorbed Lord Henry's fine-sounding mimicry of Paterian phrases (ones that hardly present the model of 'artistic success and felicity' that Pater finds in Flaubert ('Style', p. 31)), Dorian changes place with the exquisite portrait that the artist Basil Hallward has painted of him. In other words, this beautiful boy transmutes into a deceptive masquerade of fine art. Immediately, the ageless Dorian successfully maintains his beautiful looks, while the portrait – stored away in the schoolroom of his home – degenerates in a manner that betrays his moral degradation. In the final chapter, when Dorian confronts his conscience, he stabs the painting. Instantly, the portrait returns to its immaculate state, while Dorian's body transmogrifies into the ruined shell he has become.

Pater, it is significant to note, was the first to elaborate the morally instructive nature of this ending. In the most considered review the novel received in its time, especially after the controversies that attended its earliest publication in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, Pater concluded that Wilde's story 'pushed home' what was 'a very plain moral': 'vice and crime make people coarse and ugly' ('A Novel', p. 85).³⁰ 'To lose the moral sense', Pater comments in *The Bookman*, 'the sense of sin and righteousness, as Mr Wilde's heroes are bent on doing so speedily ... is to lose, or lower, organization, to become less complex' – to become, in a word, almost inhuman ('A Novel', p. 84). For certain, by late 1891 when he penned these judicious observations, Pater's thinking about the ways that the finest poetry such as Wordsworth's need not 'teach lessons or enforce rules' took on a somewhat different cast when he contemplated the main characters' relationships with beauty in Wilde's novel. In Basil Hallward, whose obsessive desire for Dorian Gray preoccupies the opening chapters, Pater detects 'a somewhat unsocial devotion to art' ('A Novel', p. 84). Similarly, Pater discovers in Lord Henry not

only a possible 'satiric sketch' but also a figure that 'loses so much in the way of impressions, of pleasant memories, and subsequent hopes', mostly because of his 'cynic amity of mind and temper' ('A Novel', p. 84). Yet no matter how firmly Pater witnesses Hallward's and Lord Henry's evident shortcomings, along with the 'very plain moral' in Dorian Gray's murderous career, he can still noticeably 'like the hero', who turns 'into something magnificent and strange' ('A Novel', p. 84). More to the point, despite the 'very plain moral' of the ending, in Pater's view Wilde has nevertheless achieved 'an excellent story' – one that, even if following 'the manner of Poe', attains 'a grace' that the American writer of supernatural tales 'never reached' ('A Novel', p. 84).

This was high praise indeed, comparable in its way to the reverence that Wilde expressed towards *Appreciations* in the *Speaker*. Yet critics have at times been inclined to believe that in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison', as in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, we find Wilde indulging in satire at Pater's expense. Simultaneously, Pater's detection of a 'satiric sketch' in Lord Henry Wotton has suggested to some readers that the author of *The Renaissance* went out of his way in *The Bookman* to condemn Wilde. Denis Donoghue, for instance, has inferred that Pater maintained a strong objection to the barely disguised homoeroticism that inflects Basil Hallward's passion for Dorian Gray. For this reason, Pater, 'with unusual boldness, arranged to review' Wilde's novel 'and took the occasion to repudiate not only Lord Henry but his creator' (Donoghue, pp. 84–85) because the story – in Pater's words – failed to present a 'true Epicureanism' in any of its characters ('A Novel', p. 84).³¹ The evidence, I think, suggests the opposite. At one and the same time, Pater recognizes Wilde's deep understanding of the moral consequences of criminalizing aesthetic thought, while acknowledging that the resulting narrative that depicts that process is artistically far greater than anything than Poe had ever written. Pater's discerning conclusion about Lord Henry sounds somewhat similar to Wilde's closing assessment of Janus Weathercock. Assuredly, Wilde says, 'there is much in his published works that is too familiar, too common, too journalistic, in the bad sense of that bad word' (IV, 121). Yet, as Wilde also points out, such imperfections can scarcely deny the fact that that 'art has not forgotten' Wainwright, particularly because it remains 'gratifying' to see that the gifted criminal's infamy inspired both Bulwer Lytton's and Dickens's cherished works of fiction. As Wilde cleverly appreciated, it was not just that murder should be considered, in De Quincey's phrase, as one of the fine arts. Such criminality – even it formed part of a narrative

that resulted in downright ruin – could also alert us to aspects of art that were ‘more tragic’, ‘more sombre’, if not ‘curiously suggestive’: precisely those qualities that Wilde admired greatly in Pater’s discussion of Charles Lamb.

University of California, Los Angeles

Acknowledgements

In preparing this essay, several people have provided invaluable support. My thanks go to Justine Pizzo and Amy Gordanier for research assistance. Jane Aaron and Gregory Dart kindly advised me on matters relating to Charles Lamb. Rebecca N. Mitchell has generously shared an abundance of materials that relate to Wilde’s interest in both Thomas Chatterton and Thomas Griffiths Wainewright. Merlin Holland granted permission to quote from Wilde’s ‘Chatterton’ notebook, which is held at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

WORKS CITED

- Arnold, Matthew, ‘The Function of Criticism at the Present Time’ (1864), in *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, ed. by R. H. Super, *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, Vol. III (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962)
- Becker-Leckrone, Megan, ‘Wilde and Pater’s Strange Appreciations’, *Victoriographies*, 1 (2011), 96–123
- Brake, Laurel, ‘The Discourses of Journalism: “Arnold” and “Pater” Again – and Wilde’, in *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1991), 43–61
- Curling, Jonathan, *Janus Weathercock: The Life and Times of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, 1794–1847* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1938)
- Danson, Lawrence, *Wilde’s Intentions: The Artist in His Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)
- [De Quincey, Thomas], ‘Charles Lamb and His Friends’, *North British Review*, 10 (1848), 179–210
- Donoghue, Denis, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995)
- Ellmann, Richard, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988)
- Forster, John, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 3 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872–74)

- Gilchrist, Alexander, *William Blake, 'Pictor Ignotus': With Selections from His Poems and Other Writings*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1863)
- Hazlitt, W. Carew, 'Introduction', in *Thomas Wainewright, Essays and Criticisms* (London: Reeves & Turner, 1880), ix–lxxxii
- Keats, John, *Poems*, ed. by Jack Stillinger (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978)
- Østermark-Johansen, Lene, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011)
- Pater, Walter, 'A Novel by Mr Oscar Wilde', *Bookman* (November 1891), 59–60, rpt. in Karl Beckson, ed., *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 83–86.
- , *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1889)
- , 'Charles Lamb', in *Appreciations* (London: Macmillan 1889), 106–26
- , 'English Literature', *Guardian*, 17 February 1885, rpt. in *Essays from the 'Guardian'* (London: Privately Printed, 1896)
- , *Letters*, ed. by Lawrence Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970)
- , 'Postscript', *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1889)
- , 'Style', *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1889)
- , *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, The 1893 Text*, ed. by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980)
- Procter, Bryan Waller ['Barry Cornwall'], *An Autobiographical Fragment and Biographical Notes, with Personal Sketches of Contemporaries, Unpublished Lyrics, and Letters of Literary Friends* (London: George Bell, 1877)
- Small, Ian, 'Intertextuality in Pater and Wilde', in 'Essays & Poems: In Memory of Ian Fletcher, 1920–1988', *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*, Special Series, 4 (1990), 57–66
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles, *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878)
- , *William Blake: A Critical Essay* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868)
- Talfourd, Thomas Noon, *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb Consisting Chiefly of His Letters Not before Published, with Sketches of Some of His Companions*, 2 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1848)
- [Thornbury, Walter], 'Old Stories Re-told: Thomas Griffiths Wainewright (Janus Weathercock), The Poisoner', *All the Year Round* (5 January 1867), 34–41
- [Trollope, Frances E.], 'About Charles Lamb', *Temple Bar*, 35 (1872), 21–36
- [Wainewright, Thomas], Janus Weathercock, 'Sentimentalities of the Finer Arts: No. III', *London Magazine*, 1 (1820), 401–08; *Essays and Criticisms* (London: Reeves & Turner, 1880), 34–54
- Wilde, Oscar, 'Mr Pater's Last Volume', *Speaker*, 22 March 1890; in *The Collected Works of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Robert Ross, 13 vols. (London: Methuen, 1908), XIII, 538–45
- , 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green', in *Criticism: Historical Criticism, Intentions, The Soul of Man*, ed. by Josephine M. Guy, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, Vol. IV (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

- , 'Some Literary Notes', *Woman's World*, 4 (1889), 333–36, *The Collected Works of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Robert Ross, 13 vols. (London: Methuen, 1908), XIII, 463–76
- , *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, in *Poems and Poems in Prose*, ed. by Karl Beckson and Bobby Fong, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- , *The Picture of Dorian Gray, The 1890 and 1891 Texts*, ed. by Joseph Bristow, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, Vol. III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

NOTES

- ¹ Wilde is quoting Swinburne, 'Sonnet: With a Copy of Mademoiselle de Maupin', in *Poems and Ballads*, p. 97.
- ² Wilde praised Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* (1887) in a review in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 June 1887, pp. 2–3, rpt. *Collected Works*, XIII, pp. 172–75.
- ³ The earliest scholarly work that examines Pater's evident presence in Wilde's writings is Ernst Paulus Bendz, 'Notes on the Literary Relationship between Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 9 (1912), pp. 91–127.
- ⁴ Pater's essay first appeared as 'The Character of the Humourist: Charles Lamb', *Fortnightly Review*, 24 (1878), 466–74.
- ⁵ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'This Lime-Tree Bower, My Prison' (1797), in *Poetical Works, I, Poems (Reading Texts): Part I*, ed. by J. C. C. Mays, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols, Bollingen Series LXXV (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969–2002), XVI, p. 353.
- ⁶ Lamb's remark comes from 'To Samuel Taylor Coleridge', 10 December 1797, in *The Letters of Charles Lamb: With a Sketch of His Life*, ed. by Thomas Noon Talfourd, 2 vols (London: Edward Moxon, 1837), I, 84. Lamb's phrase appears to be taken from his friend Charles Lloyd. Both Lamb's and Lloyd's poetry appeared in *Coleridge, Poems*, 2nd ed., *To Which Are Now Added Poems by Charles Lamb, and Charles Lloyd* (Bristol: J. Cottle; London: Robinsons, 1797).
- ⁷ Wilde's essay first appeared as 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study', *Fortnightly Review*, 45 (1889), pp. 41–54. Wilde is quoting from Lamb's correspondence in W. Carew Hazlitt's 'Introduction' to *Wainwright, Essays and Criticisms*, p. xxx. A slightly different version of Lamb's letter appears in 'To Bernard Barton', 2 September 1823, *Letters*, II, 394.
- ⁸ Dickens's 'Hunted Down' was reprinted in *All the Year Round* in 1860. Both Dickens and Thornbury witnessed Wainwright at Newgate.
- ⁹ See, for example, Dutton Cook, 'Two Criminals', *Time*, 9 (1883), 184–95; and A. G. Allen, 'Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, Poisoner', in *Twelve Bad Men: Original Studies of Eminent Scoundrels*, ed. by Thomas Secombe (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894), pp. 292–321.
- ¹⁰ Carew Hazlitt is quoting Talfourd's words in *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb*, II, 8.
- ¹¹ Swinburne follows Gilchrist in misspelling Wainwright's last name.
- ¹² Pater's 'Postscript' first appeared as 'Romanticism', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 35 (1876), pp. 64–70.
- ¹³ Edward Manson, 'Recollections of Walter Pater', *Oxford Magazine*, 25 (1906), p. 61.
- ¹⁴ Sally-Anne Huxtable observes that the 'Green Dining Room' (or 'Morris Room'), which Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. designed for the South Kensington Museum, 'was the first "Aesthetic interior", the room that launched a thousand (or so) green walls of the 1870s and 1880s ... [I]t was this room which started the craze for muted "Art" colours, the "Greenery-Yallery" tints, later satirized so famously in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* (1881): 'Re-reading the Green Dining Room', in *Rethinking the Interior, c. 1867–1896*, ed. by Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 25–40 (p. 37). In the late

nineteenth century, the idea that green carnations signalled male homosexuality is best known from Robert Hichens's satire on the intimacy between Oscar Wilde and Alfred Douglas, *The Green Carnation* (London: W. Heinemann, 1894).

¹⁵ Horst Schroeder, 'Volume IV of the OET Edition of *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*: III. "Pen, Pencil and Poison"', pp. 28–60 (p. 30).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸ Théophile Gautier, 'Preface', *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, ed. and trans. by Helen Constantine (1834; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005), p. 18.

¹⁹ Pater's revised chapter on Wordsworth originally appeared as 'On Wordsworth', *Fortnightly Review*, 15 (1874), pp. 455–65. For Shelley's phrase from *Peter Bell the Third*, see Shelley's *Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2nd edn (New York: Norton, 2002), p. 351.

²⁰ Wilde's original wording in the *Fortnightly* text is 'might have poisoned one's grandmother' (*Criticism*, IV, 121).

²¹ Wilde, 'Chatterton', fol. 5^r, Clark Library, Wilde W6721M3 E78 Bound. This notebook probably dates from early to mid 1886. Quotations from Wilde's 'Chatterton' notebook are reproduced by kind permission of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles, and the executor of Wilde's literary estate, Merlin Holland.

²² John Keats, 'Oh! Chatterton, how very sad thy fate' (*Poems*, p. 32). Keats's sonnet dates from 1815, and it first appeared in *Milnes, Life, Letters, and Literary Remains*, I, 12. Keats also referred to the pleasure of being able to 'sit, and rhyme and think on Chatterton' in his early poetic epistle, 'To George Felton Matthew', written in November 1815 (*Poems*, p. 15). H. F. Cary, in an 1824 essay reveals the significance of Chatterton to Lamb's circle ('The Life of Chatterton', *London Magazine*, 9 (1824), pp. 631–38).

²³ Keats, 'To J. H. Reynolds', 21 September 1819, *Selected Letters of John Keats*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 345.

²⁴ Wordsworth's comment is recorded in Richard Monckton Milnes, *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats*, 2 vols (London: Edward Moxon, 1848), I, 86.

²⁵ Pater clearly had interest in Keats and Chatterton. In 'Shakespeare's English Kings', Pater makes a passing observation when he compares the 'finest "vermeil and ivory" work' of Chatterton or Keats in a discussion of the 'extraordinary refinement of intelligence and variety of piteous appeal', as well as 'felicity of poetic invention', that he detects in Shakespeare's Richard II (*Appreciations*, p. 206).

²⁶ Wilde, 'Chatterton', fol. 75^r.

²⁷ Cf. Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. xx, 189.

²⁸ Pater's revision of Arnold's well-known statement about criticism and Wilde's subsequent revision of Pater's statement in the 'Preface' are a staple of scholarship on the intellectual connections between all three writers; see, for instance, Philip E. Smith II, 'Oscar Wilde and the 1890s: A Single-Figure Course', in Smith, ed., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008), pp. 42–51 (pp. 43–44).

²⁹ 'Style' first appeared in *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. 44 (1888), 728–43.

³⁰ On the controversies that the 1890 publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* caused in the British press, see Stuart Mason [Christopher Sclater Millard], *Oscar Wilde: Art and Morality*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Palmer, 1912).

³¹ Donoghue asserts: 'Pater never really liked Wilde; he thought his charm somewhat vulgar'; and he also comments: 'Wilde thought Pater timid for not living up to the daring of his prose' (p. 81). Both Wilde's and Pater's reviews of each other's work do not suggest any such tension.

Anthony Kearney

Settling Scores: Edmund Gosse on Mallock and Pater

There is a disparaging reference to W. H. Mallock, though he is not named, in Edmund Gosse's essay 'Making a Name in Literature' that has gone unnoted by his commentators. This is odd because it has a significance for his relations not only with Mallock but also with Walter Pater. The essay, which first appeared in the American magazine *The Forum* in 1889 and later in *Questions at Issue* in 1893,¹ takes up issues of particular concern to Gosse since, more than anyone, he spent an entire career contriving his own survival and success in the literary world, concerning himself with the careers of his friends and enemies and doing what he could for the former and against the latter.² The essay ranges over a host of issues including the influence of reviewing, clubland conversation, and public opinion in the success or failure of books; the reasons why bad writers often sell well while good ones do not; the comforting thought that, in the long run, merit wins out and the rubbish sinks into oblivion; and so on. There is also a moment when Gosse, thinking of his own setbacks at the hands of unfriendly reviewers, offers the consolatory thought that while it is depressing to be attacked in the press 'not to be spoken about at all is even worse than being maligned' (p. 129). Worst of all for Gosse, even worse than being ignored as a writer, is the fate of being first applauded then forgotten; of being a premature dazzling success with one book and never being able to repeat the performance. This is the point where Mallock comes anonymously but recognisably into the picture. As Gosse describes it:

One of the most insidious perils that waylay the modern literary life is an exaggerated success at the outset of a career.

A very remarkable instance of this has been seen in our time. Thirteen years ago a satire was published, which although essentially destructive, and therefore not truly promising, was set forth with so much novelty of execution, brightness of wit, and variety of knowledge that the world was taken by storm. The author of that work was received with plaudits of the most exaggerated kind, and his second book was looked forward to with unbounded anticipation. It came, and though fresh and witty, it had less distinction, less vitality than the first. Book after book has marked ever a further step in steady decline, and now that once flattered and belauded writer's name is one no more to conjure with. This surely is a pathetic fate. I can imagine no form of failure so desperately depressing as that which comes disguised in excessive juvenile success. (pp. 129–30)

Readers of the time would certainly have recognised this reference to Mallock's *The New Republic* (1876³), with its brilliantly successful send-up of the ideas and foibles of leading Victorian personalities (including Pater) and also to the less successful *The New Paul and Virginia* (1878) and later works. They would have also surely picked up the note of *schadenfreude* barely concealed under the fake sympathy in Gosse's account. Mallock, once a literary celebrity storming the heights of success, is now a pathetic figure (deservedly so, it is implied, since the plaudits were always 'exaggerated'), someone who can be both pitied and patronised by writers who have had more durable success. What the young writer of 'wholesome ambition' should pray for, warns Gosse, is 'not to flash like a meteor on the astonished world of fashion, but by solid and admirable writing slowly to win a place which has a firm and wide basis' (p. 130). Cleverness is one thing but 'a great deal more than mere cleverness in writing is needful to make a reputation' (p. 133). Character, sagacity, tact, suppleness, adroitness, and staying power, suggests Gosse with a certain smugness, are also necessary for success. In the harsh literary world, where survival is concerned, it is better to be an adaptable Gosse than a one-off Mallock.⁴

Gosse's obvious dislike of Mallock, if it had some basis in envy at his instant celebrity, can also be related to his resentment of Mallock's dealings with Pater. Gosse's friendship with Pater if less than intimate was certainly valued by both men and their correspondence and frequent social contacts from the late 1870s

till Pater's death in 1894 showed unwavering mutual regard and concern for each other's literary fortunes. For example when Gosse received his famous mauling by Churton Collins in his review of Gosse's *From Shakespeare to Pope* (1885), Pater congratulated him on his reply to Collins's critique and wished him every success 'for the continued prosperity of your admirable book and your work generally.'⁵ Gosse, for his part, developed a sort of proprietorial interest in Pater's career and work and in both his obituary and *DNB* entry on him ensured that his writings were suitably eulogised, his reputation secured and his detractors put in their place.⁶ This loyal support can also be seen in 'Making a Name in Literature' where Gosse highlights the failure of one of Pater's chief detractors, the once 'belauelled' Mallock who, intentionally or not, had done a good deal to damage Pater's reputation first at Oxford and later in the wider literary world, something which Gosse was fully aware of and hardly likely to forget.

As various investigations have shown,⁷ Mallock's first offence against Pater occurred in 1874 when Mallock was at Balliol. A friend of Mallock, a fellow-undergraduate named W. M. Hardinge, was one of Pater's pupils; a close relationship appears to have developed between them. After much college gossip about the intimacy of their friendship, a major scandal erupted at Balliol. Pater's homoerotic relations with Hardinge were made plain in some letters which Mallock – according to Gosse⁸ – showed to Jowett, the Master of Balliol. Jowett and others concerned with the moral welfare of Oxford youth had already been alarmed by Pater's general unconventionality and more particularly by the hedonistic tone of the notorious 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance* (1873), and these new revelations appeared to confirm their misgivings about Pater the Oxford tutor. In consequence, Jowett had some harsh words with Pater, warnings were given, and Pater was passed over for a university proctorship and later for the post of Professor of Poetry. If it was plainly unfair to blame Mallock entirely for this – after all he might have been more concerned with protecting Hardinge than attacking Pater – he did much more damage to Pater's reputation with his mocking portrayal of him as Mr. Rose the Pre-Raphaelite in *The New Republic*. Mr. Rose, a 'pale creature, with large moustache, looking out of the window at the sunset', talks languidly and monotonously of 'self-indulgence and art' in the dreamy style of *The Renaissance*, quotes erotic verses written by one his pupils, takes an interest in a 'pretty boy with light curling hair' and makes a bid for a pornographic book.⁹ It was this witty mimicry of Pater's ideas, language, mannerisms, and tendencies

which, more than anything else, helped establish Pater as the stereotypical aesthete in the popular imagination, and reinforced the general disquiet about his views on art and morality. The upshot was both embarrassing and harmful for Pater and diverted attention from his serious literary work.¹⁰

In his obituary of Pater, Gosse in his role as manager of Pater's reputation tries to play down the impact of the Mr. Rose portrayal on Pater's feelings. Yes, the skit was clever; however Pater, contrary to general belief, was not unduly depressed or thrown off course by it; in fact 'it did not cause him to alter his mode of life or thought in the smallest degree.' He was even flattered to appear alongside the likes of Arnold, Jowett, Ruskin, and Carlyle in Mallock's satire on the intellectual celebrities of Victorian society. Yet, Gosse acknowledges, changing tack, Pater did think the portrait 'a little unscrupulous' and he was 'discomposed by the freedom of some of its details' (presumably the hints of sexual deviancy). While he was pleased to be noticed by Mallock, there was a price to be paid in terms of public notoriety and he was upset by 'the persistence with which the newspapers at this time began to attribute to him all sorts of "aesthetic" follies and extravagances.'¹¹ Clearly, then, while Gosse tries to pass off Mallock's satire as a harmless squib, it fed into the general view of Pater as a decadent personality, put him on the defensive, and must have played its part in his relative silence between the appearance of *The Renaissance* in 1873 and that of *Marius the Epicurean* in 1885.

Thus, in 'Making a Name in Literature', Gosse pauses from his more general reflections on the nature of literary success in order to advertise Mallock's failure, doing a favour to his friend Pater in the process. Pater's reputation may have been damaged by Mallock, but in the end – in the Gossian scenario – Mallock's clever skit led nowhere while Pater, brushing off the Mr. Rose travesty, came back with the lasting success of *Marius*, thereby proving Gosse's point that resilience in an author is more important than mere cleverness. Gosse himself of course carries it off with his usual panache. To make a show of fairness, Mallock is not mentioned by name but enough details are provided to make identification inevitable; the fate of meteoric success followed by failure is presented as a pitiful one, but at the same time the reader is left in no doubt that Gosse finds Mallock's failure to repeat his success extremely cheering. Pater was duly grateful to receive a copy of *Questions at Issue*, in which the essay appeared, and wrote to Gosse in June 1893: 'I have read a great part of your excellent book so kindly sent me. I find it full of your acute judgments, of the urbanity also, of the lightness of touch, one looks

for from you. It has greatly interested me. Sincere thanks for it.¹² He no doubt especially enjoyed the Mallock put-down in the ‘Making a Name in Literature’ chapter, while Gosse no doubt enjoyed the flattering response from someone he was always anxious to please and speak up for.

NOTES

¹ *The Forum*, 8 (October 1889), pp. 189–98. Edmund Gosse, *Questions at Issue* (London: William Heinemann, 1893), pp. 115–33. References in the text to the essay are to the latter.

² Evan Charteris observes of Gosse, ‘He had set himself to know everyone of note: and he was insatiably anxious to be in the thick of things literary, to be recognised and applauded, and rank high among authors.’ *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse* (London: William Heinemann, 1931), p. 134.

³ *The New Republic* first appeared in the *Belgravia* magazine between June and December 1876. It was published in book form in 1877.

⁴ Gosse of course skews the facts in his review of Mallock’s literary career. If Mallock was mainly famous for *The New Republic* he remained an important conservative thinker and polemicist up to his death in 1923, and produced more than thirty books on philosophy, politics and religion.

⁵ *Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. Lawrence Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 67. Collins’ review of *From Shakespeare to Pope* appeared in *The Quarterly Review*, 163 (October 1886), pp. 289–329.

⁶ See Laurel Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 169–215 for an illuminating account of Gosse’s dealings with Pater in relation to contemporary writings about him.

⁷ See particularly Billie Andrew Inman, ‘Estrangement and Connection: Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett and William M. Hardinge’, in *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1991), pp. 1–20.

⁸ Gosse revealed this information to A. C. Benson, one of Pater’s biographers. See Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, p. 205.

⁹ *The New Republic*, ed. John Lucas (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1975), pp. 15, 272, 232, 339.

¹⁰ Mallock’s parody of Pater was also a likely factor in his suppression of the ‘Conclusion’ in the second edition of *The Renaissance* (1877). See Geoffrey Tillotson, ‘Pater, Mr. Rose and the “Conclusion” to *The Renaissance*’, *Essays and Studies*, 32 (English Association: 1946), pp. 44–60.

¹¹ Edmund Gosse, ‘Walter Pater’, *Critical Kit-Kats* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1903), pp. 257–58. The obituary first appeared in *The Contemporary Review*, 66 (December 1894), pp. 795–810.

¹² Letter dated 10 June 1893. *Letters of Walter Pater*, p. 139.

Gerald Monsman

Two Pater Letters to George Bainton



Paul Jordan-Smith, who wrote a book column for the *Los Angeles Times* as its literary editor from 1933-1957, tells us in his *For the Love of Books: The Adventures of an Impecunious Collector* (1934) that he turned up

a note of Walter Pater's, found between the leaves of a rather ordinary English textbook in an unpromising second-hand store. The author of a stodgy work on 'literary style' had presented a copy of his book to the gentle critic in the pathetic hope of receiving an encouraging word. Pater, with characteristic courtesy responded at once: 'I have read your ingenious "Art of Authorship" with great interest. I feel that it will interest and be useful to a large number of readers.' That was all! (pp. 274-75)¹

Jordan-Smith draws the conclusion that unlike some who may 'be swept away by a momentary burst of feeling, ... Pater never betrayed his critical conscience' with false praise or flattery (pp. 274-75). But considering that an earlier letter from Pater to Bainton, intended for publication, was included in Bainton's *Art of Authorship: Literary Reminiscences* (New York: Appleton; London: J. Clarke, 1890), Pater's 'thank you' seems more like an Asperger's syndrome reply than genuine gratitude.

Melville B. Anderson, when reviewing this volume,² suggests that the Reverend Mr. George Bainton (1847-1925) – a Congregational minister and father of Edgar Leslie Bainton (1880-1956), a noted composer of church music and operatic works – has

hit upon an ingenious method of producing an original and interesting book without mental toil. Appealing by letter to a great number of authors for their experience and advice as to the best methods of learning how to write effectively, and receiving some nine-score of answers, Mr. Bainton has strung these answers together under proper headings. To the remarks of every author is prefixed a brief eulogy upon that author; and these eulogies, with few exceptions, would apply almost as well if they were shuffled.

He adds, a bit conflictedly, 'Perhaps no more important addition to what the rhetorics offer on the subject of literary style has ever been given to the world at any one time; yet the collector has not deemed it worth [cross-referencing]! That the man who calls himself compiler and editor of the book did not save me this labor, almost makes me forget the gratitude due him for what he has done' (p. 85). Certainly this volume is significant, cited especially in connection with a well-known observation by Mark Twain.

Bainton gives the following about – and from – Walter Pater:

Perhaps no prose writer of to-day has a more sensitive imagination or a more chaste and musical style than WALTER PATER. Any statement upon our subject by an author of such scholarly attainment, as well as of such impressive beauty of expression, will be doubly welcome. 'I wish I could send you anything helpful', says Mr. Pater, 'towards the matter on which you have asked my opinion. It would take me a long time to formulate the rules, conscious or unconscious, which I have followed in my humble way. I think they would, one and all, be reducible to *Truthfulness* – truthfulness, I mean, to one's own inward view or impression. It seems to me that all the excellencies of composition, clearness, subtlety, beauty, freedom, severity, and any others there may be, depend upon the exact propriety with which language follows or shapes itself to the consciousness within. True and good elaboration of style would, in this way, come to be the elaboration, the articulation to

oneself of one's own meaning, one's real condition of mind. I suppose this is the true significance of that often quoted saying, that style is the man. Of course models count for much. As beginners, at least, we are all learners. I think Tennyson and Browning, in quite opposite ways, have influenced me more than prose writers. And I have come to think that, on the whole, Newman is our greatest master of prose, partly on account of the variety of his excellence' (pp. 292–94).

University of Arizona

WORKS CITED

Bainton, George, *Art of Authorship: Literary Reminiscences* (New York: Appleton; London: J. Clarke, 1890)

Jordan-Smith, Paul, *For the Love of Books: The Adventures of an Impecunious Collector* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1934)

NOTES

¹ UCLA, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, 'Finding Aid for the Paul Jordan-Smith Papers, 1909–1971.'

² *Dial*, 124. 11 (August 1890), pp. 85–87.

Catherine Maxwell

Pater and the Pre-Raphaelites



Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde, Tate Britain 12 September 2012 to 13 January 2013; National Gallery of Art, Washington, 17 February to 19 May 2013; State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, 10 June to 30 September 2013.

'What Pre-Raphaelite paintings did Pater know?' is a question that presented itself when I visited the recent Tate show, *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*, with this review for the *Newsletter* in mind. Recent scholarship has concentrated on Pater's possible interest in Whistler and this intriguing, though necessarily speculative enquiry has perhaps overshadowed more obvious evidence about his interest in Pre-Raphaelite art and artists. While Whistler may well be a covert influence on 'The School of Giorgione' (1877), it is Rossetti who is directly signalled as an analogue for the Renaissance painter and his 'School', Pater alluding not just to Rossetti's sonnet on the *Fête Champêtre*, 'For a Venetian Pastoral, by Giorgione (in the Louvre)' (1850, 1870), but to 'a poet' – named as 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti' in an appended footnote – 'whose own painted work often comes to mind as one ponders over these precious things' (1980: *TR* 114). 'The School of Giorgione' pays particular attention not only to 'the law or condition of music' to which 'all art is really aspiring' but also to paintings in which 'the perfect moments of music itself, the making or hearing of music, song or its accompaniment, are themselves prominent as subjects' (1980: *TR* 118). Certainly paintings such as *The Blue Closet* (1856–57) and *The Blue Bower* (1865), included in the Tate exhibition (Barringer 2012: nos. 48, 126), testify to Rossetti's longstanding habit of producing works that feature music as well as 'colour harmonies', making them close in spirit to the

Giorgionesque ideal celebrated by Pater. Whistler, a frequent guest at Rossetti's Cheyne Walk home in the early 1860s, was himself very likely inspired by the English painter's 'melodious colouring', to use a phrase taken from F. G. Stephens's 1865 review of *The Blue Bower* cited in the catalogue (Barringer 2012: 168).¹

Pater would also have encountered that emphasis on music in painting in Simeon Solomon, another artist closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelites and a friend of his and Swinburne's. He would certainly have read Swinburne's essay on Solomon published in the Oxford magazine *The Dark Blue* (July 1871) that singles out a group of his paintings in which 'the living principle and moving spirit is music made visible' and observes that even 'In pictures where no one figures as making music, the same fine inevitable sense of song makes melodies of vocal colour and symphonies of painted cadence' (Swinburne 1871: 574–75). Swinburne's essay, with its emphasis on 'the several conterminous arts' and 'the subtle interfusion of art with art' (Swinburne 1871: 568), is itself a strong influence on Pater's *Giorgione* essay. Thus, in addition to Rossetti, Solomon is arguably just as much an implicit presence in 'The School of Giorgione' as Whistler.

And Solomon himself is, of course, another 'Pre-Raphaelite' painter mentioned (albeit obliquely) by Pater. In 'A Study of Dionysus' (1876) he mentions 'a *Bacchus* by a young Hebrew painter, in the exhibition of the Royal Academy of 1868' (1910: *GS* 42). We are not sure which of Solomon's two *Bacchus* paintings Pater was referring to, as neither was displayed at the Royal Academy in 1868. Lene Østermark-Johansen (2011: 229) points out that the 'bust-like' oil was actually shown at the Royal Academy in 1867 and the watercolour 'statuesque frontal' figure at the Dudley Gallery in 1868. Visitors to the current show can see the bust-like *Bacchus* (1867) in the section entitled 'Beauty' (Barringer 2012: no. 133), with Tim Barringer's curatorial gloss in the catalogue suggesting that Solomon 'offered a powerful, homoerotic contribution to British Aesthetic painting to contest the assertive heterosexuality of Rossetti's Aestheticism and the heteronormative assumptions underpinning most Pre-Raphaelite painting' (2012: 176). In addition to having sat for his portrait by Solomon in 1872, Pater appears to have owned Solomon's *Chanting the Gospels*, an untraced work purchased from the Winter Exhibition of the Dudley Gallery in 1867, and a drawing, *The Bride, the Bridegroom and a Friend of the Bridegroom*, which Solomon inscribed to him the following year (Prettejohn 1999: 39). His abiding admiration for Solomon, which continued unabated after the latter's disgrace in 1873, is visible in his pleasure at

a 'choice gift' from Herbert Horne of a 'beautiful and characteristic drawing by S. Solomon' in August 1883 (Evans 1970: 100–01).

As an Oxford student and don Pater must have been familiar with the originally vibrant yet already fading Arthurian frescoes by Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Morris, and others, painted on the walls of the Oxford Union in 1857–58. Later he would have seen the tapestry *The Star of Bethlehem* (presented in 1890) designed by Burne-Jones and made by Morris & Co. for the chapel at Exeter College.² He may well have seen works by Millais, Collins, and Holman Hunt in the extensive private collection belonging to Thomas Combe (1796–1872), a printer at Clarendon Press, Oxford, of High Church sympathies who had made his fortune by selling Bibles to the mass market. This collection was bequeathed by Combe's widow, Martha, to the University Galleries, now the Ashmolean, in 1893, the year before Pater's death. He is likely to have seen Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World* (1851–52), which features in the Tate show (Barringer 2012: no. 92), as it was donated by Martha Combe to Keble College in 1873, although, as Alison Smith comments, it 'was poorly maintained and not easily accessible to visitors' (Barringer 2012: 125). John Miller Gray, later Curator of the National Gallery of Scotland, reports seeing this painting 'in Keble College Library' on a trip to Oxford in the late May of 1878 during which he met Pater twice, and may possibly have seen the painting in Pater's company (Paul 1895: 1.16).

Østermark-Johansen (2011: 184) reminds us of Pater's admiration for Burne-Jones, as testified by Edmund Gosse (1896: 253–54) and Ingram Bywater. There are a number of fine stained-glass windows at Oxford designed by Burne-Jones, nearly all of them manufactured by Morris & Co. The East window in St Edmund Hall Chapel (1864–65) depicts scenes from the life of Christ including his *Nativity* and *Crucifixion*. Burne-Jones's stained-glass window in Christ Church Cathedral celebrating the life of St Frideswide dates from 1858, but he contributed others during the 1870s that Pater clearly knew and liked.³ Referring to John Miller Gray's trip to Oxford in 1878, Østermark-Johansen notes that Pater took him to see 'the Burne-Jones stained-glass windows at Christ Church Cathedral, recently installed there' (2011: 184). The last window by Burne-Jones installed at Christ Church was the *St Catherine* window (1878), commemorating Edith Liddell (1854–76), daughter of the Dean of Christ Church, Henry Liddell, and sister of Alice Liddell of *Alice in Wonderland* fame. Edith's features are used for the face of St Catherine of Alexandria, patron saint of philosophers and librarians. I have

not been able to find out what month this window was installed, so we cannot be sure that Pater and Miller saw it on their expedition – although, of course, Pater would have seen it subsequently.⁴ Because of its date, *St Catherine* cannot have been one of the windows that Østermark-Johansen says is alluded to by Pater in his essay ‘The Myth of Demeter and Persephone’ (1876), collected in *Greek Studies* (1895).

Pater’s allusion is very oblique, with no evident mention of either Burne-Jones or windows, although it comes directly after a reference to the *Apocalypse* window at Bourges Cathedral and precedes comments on a painting by an unnamed artist who is definitely Burne-Jones. Discussing symbolic art, Pater explains that, ‘Such symbolism cares a great deal for the hair of *Temperance*, discreetly bound, for some subtler likeness to the colour of the sky in the girdle of *Hope*, for the inwoven flames in the red garment of *Charity*’ (1910: *GS* 99). Throughout his life Burne-Jones was very fond of drawing and painting the seven Virtues in female form and the images mentioned do seem to evoke details from his *Faith, Hope, and Charity* window (1870–71) at Christ Church, although at first sight it looks as if Pater might have mistaken *Faith* (one of the three theological Virtues) for *Temperance* (one of the four cardinal Virtues). Burne-Jones, however, executed watercolours of *Faith, Hope, and Charity* (with *Faith* and *Hope* apparently based on the Christ Church designs) for the publisher Frederick Startridge Ellis during 1868–71, adding *Temperance* in 1872, so it is likely Pater is referring to the paintings rather than the windows.⁵ This raises the tantalising possibility that Pater visited Burne-Jones’s studio between 1872 and 1875, most likely through an introduction by Solomon or Swinburne, who were both close friends of the painter.⁶ Interestingly *Faith, Hope, and Temperance* (aka *Fides, Spes, and Temperantia*) were among the eight paintings shown by Burne-Jones at the Grosvenor Gallery exhibition in May 1877, which took place the year after the publication of ‘The Myth of Demeter and Persephone’ (Wildman 1998: 192).

Following the reference to the designs of the Virtues, the link with Burne-Jones is immediately strengthened when Pater alludes to ‘some artist of our own time [who] has conceived the image of *The Day* so intensely, that we hardly think of distinguishing between the image with its girdle of dissolving morning mist, and the meaning of the image’ (1910: *GS* 99). Although the artist is unnamed, this allusion, as Østermark-Johansen demonstrates, is to Burne-Jones’s allegorical painting of *The Day* (1870), a slender, radiant, nude youth. Reproduced in colour

in her monograph as Plate 13, *The Day*, which she calls 'a queer, dear figural form of a metaphor' (2011: 192), might also serve 'to contest the [...] heteronormative assumptions underpinning most Pre-Raphaelite painting'. Østermark-Johansen does not say where or when Pater might have seen this painting but it was displayed at the Sixty-Sixth Exhibition of the Old Water-Colour Society at the Dudley Gallery in 1870.⁷ This detail, along with others provided earlier, suggest that Pater regularly saw shows at the Dudley Gallery, the leading venue for Aesthetic art at this time, with Simeon Solomon a member of the Founders' Committee and a regular contributor.

Pater's remarks on Solomon's *Bacchus* also suggest that he regularly attended the Royal Academy exhibitions. As we have seen, he was most likely there in 1867 to see Solomon's bust-like *Bacchus*, and then also in 1868 when he and Solomon probably accompanied Gerard Manley Hopkins to the Exhibition after Hopkins had lunched with Pater and visited Solomon's studio.⁸ Pater was, however, definitely present in May 1869 when, according to Gosse, 'he flashed forth at the Private View [...] in a new top hat and silk tie of brilliant apple-green' (Gosse 1896: 253). Elizabeth Prettejohn tells us that works for that year included paintings by Pre-Raphaelite associates such as Frederick Sandys, Simeon Solomon, Frederic Leighton, and Albert Moore (Prettejohn 2007: 256). Pater met Gosse for the first time in 1872 (Gosse 1896: 254) at Bellevue House, 19 Cheyne Walk, at the studio of William Bell Scott, another Pre-Raphaelite, though one sadly not included in the current Tate show. As Gosse confided elsewhere in his 'Confidential Paper', it was on this occasion that he saw the dandyishly attired Pater emerge from a hansom-cab followed by a drunken Swinburne who 'dived forward on to the pavement, descending upon his two hands' (Gosse 1962: 242).

Swinburne had introduced Pater to Rossetti the previous year (Gosse 1896: 254), taking him to the painter's studio at Tudor House, 16 Cheyne Walk. Rossetti, according to Theodore Watts-Dunton, did not take to Pater himself although he liked his work (Rothenstein 1931: 232). We can speculate as to what Pater might have seen during this visit. He almost certainly viewed *Dante's Dream*, Rossetti's largest painting, now in the Walker Gallery, Liverpool, started in 1870 and virtually complete in May 1871, although in the studio until June 1872 when, along with other works, it was temporarily removed to the nearby studio of Bell Scott (Marsh 2005: 428, 441; Scott 1892: 2. 174).⁹ A depiction of Dante gazing on the dying Beatrice, the painting is, according to Jan Marsh (2005: 412),

of Rossetti's works 'the least discussed today [...] its overblown manner out of fashion', but Pater would probably have enjoyed its Renaissance style and mystic symbolism as well as the subject matter, Dante being to him, as to Rossetti, a poet of special significance.

Apart from the reference to him in 'The School of Giorgione' – a rare direct name-check by Pater to a modern British painter – there is good evidence to suggest that Rossetti was Pater's favourite contemporary artist. At a dinner-party in 1880 he abandoned his usual reserve to buttonhole William Sharp, then one of the reclusive Rossetti's few visitors, in order to pump him for information about 'the greatest man we have among us, in point of influence upon poetry, and perhaps painting', and he named Rossetti 'the most significant as well as the most fascinating' of the six men then living whom he thought 'certain to be famous in days to come' (Sharp 1894: 803). After Rossetti's death in April 1882, there were three exhibitions in London featuring his works that same year (the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, a big show at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, and a smaller one at Bond Street premises) giving Pater ample opportunity to see more of his work.

William Sharp's *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and Study* gives an overview of both Rossetti's poetry and artworks. It came out at the end of 1882 and contained several respectful references to Pater. In November 1882 Pater had told Sharp that he was happy to have him cite a passage on the *Mona Lisa* from the essay on Leonardo (see Sharp 1882: 275) as an example of 'poetic prose' akin to that employed by Rossetti in his story *Hand and Soul*, remarking that, 'It will be a singular pleasure to me to be connected [...] with one I admired so greatly' (Evans 1970: 44). By the time Sharp's presentation copy arrived in mid-January 1883, Pater, just back from a trip to Italy, had already bought the volume from a bookseller in Rome, though he thanked Sharp for the gracious allusions, 'all the pleasanter for being said in connection with the subject of Rossetti, whose genius and work I esteemed so greatly' (Evans 1970: 48). In February 1886, he would also compliment Sharp on his recently published anthology *Sonnets of this Century* (1886), noting that the 'beautiful dedication to D. G. R. seems to me *perfect* and brought back, with great freshness, all I have felt, and so sincerely about him and his work' (Evans 1970: 66). Pater's own essay 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti' (1883), later included in *Appreciations*, although an examination of the verse, nonetheless shows a marked interest in the emphatically visual character of Rossetti's poetic

representations, noting his use of ‘minute and definite imagery’, ‘definition of outline’, ‘particularisation’, ‘imaginative vividness’, and details that delight ‘the eye of a painter’ (1910: *A* 207, 208, 210).

Imaginative vividness also is a feature of Pater’s ‘Æsthetic Poetry’ (1889), originally the review ‘Poems by William Morris’ (1868). The descriptions of Morris’s early verse with its rich medieval character and colouring evoke the Arthurian designs of the Oxford Union. That Pater’s descriptions also evoke similar ‘medieval’ watercolour designs by Rossetti executed in 1856–57 (Barringer 2012: nos. 46, 47, 48), inspired by illuminated medieval manuscripts and Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), is perhaps not surprising. Morris bought five of these watercolours and wrote his poems ‘The Blue Closet’, ‘The Tune of Seven Towers’, and ‘King Arthur’s Tomb’, published in *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858), in response to Rossetti’s designs, so although Pater may never have seen these particular paintings, the ‘intricate and delirious colouring’, ‘brilliance and relief’ that he finds in Morris’s poems (1868: 303; 1889: 218) are partly derived from them.

In the Tate show the one painting that we can be sure Pater would have been familiar with is Holman Hunt’s *Claudio and Isabella* (1850–53), which he mentions in ‘Winckelmann’ (1867). In another rare direct allusion to a contemporary British artist, an allusion omitted (Prettejohn 1999: 38) when ‘Winckelmann’ was collected in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), Pater mentions ‘Mr. Hunt’s *Claudio and Isabella*’ as an example of how poetry and painting can convey certain effects not possible in sculpture (Pater 1867: 100). The painting (Barringer 2012: no. 36) illustrates a scene from Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*, one of Pater’s favourite plays and the topic of an 1874 essay, later collected in *Appreciations* (1889). Isabella, a nun, told that she can save her condemned brother by sacrificing her virtue, refuses, and ‘tries to ease Claudio’s acceptance of his fate’ (Barringer 2012: 60). Pater may possibly have seen the engraving, advertised by Hunt in a pamphlet of 1863, or he may have seen it exhibited at the German Gallery, New Bond Street in April–May 1861 or at the New Gallery, Hanover Street, London, in 1865 (Bronkhurst 2006: 1. 141). If he saw the painting, he would have relished what Jason Rosenfeld calls ‘its ‘glistening, resonant colour’ and the ‘contre-jour’ faces of the siblings, ‘exquisitely shaded and modelled and expressive’ (Barringer 2012: 60). In his essay Pater states that ‘the main interest of the play [...] is in the relation of Claudio and Isabella’ (1910: *A* 177), and it is hard to believe that he does

not have Hunt's picture in mind when he goes on to describe the psychological complexity of this scene in some detail.¹⁰

With his fondness for *Measure for Measure*, we can imagine that Pater would have enjoyed Millais's *Mariana* (1850–51), whose eponymous subject, deserted by her lover Angelo, is reinterpreted as seen through the eyes of Tennyson in his two poems 'Mariana' (1830) and 'Mariana in the South' (1832). In his essay on *Measure for Measure*, Pater called these 'two of the most perfect compositions among the poetry of our own generation' (1910: *A* 176). He might also have recognised the design in the stained-glass window facing Mariana as taken from a window in Merton College chapel. Millais's painting (Barringer 2012: no. 35), which draws on details from both poems, is remarkable for its use of glowing colours and the unconscious eroticism of Mariana's arched back as she stretches on rising from her embroidery, her sinuous form enveloped in a striking cobalt-blue velvet gown. This painting was shown at a large exhibition devoted to Millais at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1886 (Rosenfeld 2007: 249), as was another Millais that might have appealed to Pater for its link with *Gaston de Latour* (serialised in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1888): *A Huguenot, on St Bartholemew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge* (1851–52). Alluding to the massacre of August 1572 in which three thousand French Protestants were slaughtered, the painting shows a tender scene between a couple, the man refusing to take from his Catholic lover the white armband that would protect him by identifying him as Catholic (Barringer 2012: no. 37). Rosenfeld comments that for Millais the painting 'spawned an entire genre in his work', and adds that 'in its intensity of gaze, interplay of linked bodies, exquisite natural detail and historical setting Millais produced a work that challenged conventional representations and effectively embraced an intense, quiet emotionalism' (Barringer 2012: 61).

These three emotionally intense paintings, all hung close together, are among the 175 separate items that feature in the recent Tate show, the largest major Pre-Raphaelite exhibition since 1984. This show attempts to challenge both our over-familiarity through modern colour reproduction with many of the most famous images and also a residual snobbery and disdain about Victorian painting, still, alas, observable in journalistic reviews. It presents 'the art of the Pre-Raphaelites as an avant-garde movement whose achievements across many media [...] constitute a major contribution to the history of modern art' (Barringer 2012: 9). While this claim works with respect to some specific moments and innovations in Pre-

Raphaelitism, it is a tall order to expect a movement, here represented as spanning a period of sixty years, to be consistently 'avant-garde', although one suspects most viewers will not care very much about the title, regarding it merely as a hook for a large assembly of Pre-Raphaelite artefacts conveniently gathered in one place.

The show concentrates on the work of the major Pre-Raphaelites – Hunt, Millais, Rossetti, Morris, and Burne-Jones – with occasional additions from associated figures such as Elizabeth Siddall, Charles Alston Collins, and Ford Madox Brown. Visitors can see a substantial number of works from other galleries including Millais's *Isabella* (1848–49) and *Autumn Leaves* (1855–56); Brown's *Last of England* (1852–55) and *Work* (1852–63); Hunt's *The Scapegoat* (1854–56) and *The Hiring Shepherd* (1851–52); Rossetti's *Bocca Baciata* (1859) and *Lady Lilith* (1866–68, 1872–73); and Burne-Jones's *Laus Veneris* (1873–78). Added to these are works normally on display at Tate Britain such as Rossetti's *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (1848–49), *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (1849–50), and *Monna Vanna* (1866); Millais's *Christ in the House of his Parents* (1849–50) and *Mariana* (1850–51); Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1853–54); and Burne-Jones's *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid* (1880–84) and *The Golden Stairs* (1876–80). Drawing, photography, and sculpture are also represented as well as the decorative arts: samples of furniture, tapestry, tiles, wallpaper, carpets, book illustration, many produced by the firm of Morris & Co. (A number of visitors noted the aesthetic interior of Pater's house in Bradmore Road, Oxford – Vernon Lee, for example, commenting on its 'delicate Morris papers and chintzes' (Pantazzi 1961: 115)).

The curators, Tim Barringer, Jason Rosenfeld, and Alison Smith, have organised the exhibition around eight themed sections: Origins, Manifesto, History, Nature, Salvation, Beauty, Paradise, and Mythologies. As they explain, 'Each generation has reinvented the Pre-Raphaelites in its own image', and they usefully summarise how new perspectives on Pre-Raphaelitism were stimulated by the 1984 exhibition leading to fresh insights and analyses, 'a dramatic expansion of critically engaged Pre-Raphaelite scholarship', and many subsequent Pre-Raphaelite themed or associated exhibitions (Barringer 2012: 16, 17).

The curators have made some good decisions. Brown's *Work* is displayed without its glass, obviating the distraction of reflection, and allowing the viewer a better study of its 'endless elaboration and fanatically detailed finish' (Barringer 2012: 131, no. 95). Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*, with its image of the kept mistress caught in a moment of sudden enlightenment, is positioned near *The*

Light of the World, reminding us that Hunt conceived the former 'as a fulfilment of the promise of divine grace' offered by the latter (Barringer 2012: 134, no. 98). Millais's superbly melancholic *Autumn Leaves*, which Ruskin thought 'among the world's best masterpieces', is partnered by an intimate jewel-like portrait (1857), the pensive model being Sophie Gray, his wife's sister, and recognisably the focal figure in the larger canvas (Barringer 2012: 160, no. 118). There is a rare chance to see 'the last great Pre-Raphaelite painting' (Barringer 2012: 226, no. 171), not exhibited publicly in Britain since 1951. Holman Hunt's *The Lady of Shalott* is based on his drawing in Edward Moxon's famous illustrated edition of Tennyson (1857), a volume that Pater in common with all his generation must have known well. Started in 1888 and finished with the assistance of Edward Robert Hughes in 1905, Hunt's painting, recently stabilised by the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, in Hartford, Connecticut, is a glorious extravaganza of colour and energy, the Lady breaking free of her restraining 'web', her auburn hair whirling about her like a flock of birds.

This piece is situated in the last room of the show, which contains some particularly fine late works, including some monumental Burne-Jones paintings. Among these are three out of the four magnificent canvases (1885–88) completed for the *Perseus* series, from the Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart – curiously hypnotic as ivory flesh tones and arrested action turn bodies into statues posed aesthetically against darker backdrops of highly-wrought decoration (Barringer 2012: nos. 172–4). They are a wonderful contrast to the flaming colours of Burne-Jones's *Laus Veneris* (1873–78), his listless Venus resplendent in a rich orange gown (Barringer 2012: no. 165). Burne-Jones had completed a watercolour on this theme as early as 1861, but his treatment of the Tannhäuser story, as Tim Barringer points out (2012: 214), bears comparison with Swinburne's sensuous 'Laus Veneris' from *Poems and Ballads* (1866). We can imagine Pater, ever fascinated by the theme of the gods in exile, entranced by this piece, as may he have been by Burne-Jones's *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*, a painting first exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1884 (Barringer 2012: no. 170). Anna Budziak has suggested that Pater recalls this painting at the end of his story 'Duke Carl of Rosenmold' (1910: 148), first published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1887 and collected in *Imaginary Portraits* that same year (Budziak 2008: 137). Duke Carl's tender feelings for a 'gipsy' woman (1910: 140) evoke the story of a king's love for a low-born woman as told in Richard Johnson's ballad of 1612 from Percy's *Reliques* and Tennyson's

later poem 'The Beggar Maid' (1842). Pater certainly refers to 'the beggar-maid' and 'King Cophetua' in his 'portrait' (1901: 148), although it is not clear to me that he is directly recalling the painting rather than the story connected with the poems. Yet the proximity of the dates of 'Duke Carl' and Burne-Jones's painting is certainly suggestive.

We can also assume that Pater would have admired another painting in this final room, Rossetti's wistfully meditative *La Pia* (1868–81), a sombre Jane Morris in the guise of a cruelly mistreated wife from Dante's *Purgatorio* (Barringer 2012: no. 161). Rossetti's painting is described by Swinburne in 'Notes on Some Pictures of 1868', an essay that had a determinable influence on Pater's impressionistic prose style. As Rossetti worked on this picture for thirteen years, Pater probably saw it during his studio visit of 1871 or he may have seen it when it was first shown publicly in the memorial exhibition for Rossetti at the Royal Academy in 1883. Another highlight in this room is *Chill October* (1870), one of Millais's atmospheric late Scottish landscapes, painted on the shores of the River Tay (Barringer 2012: no. 162).

On the less positive side, in the room devoted to Origins, there is only one work, Johann Friedrich Overbeck's *The Painter Franz Pforr* (c. 1810), to suggest the important influence of the German Nazarenes (Barringer 2012: no. 1), a topic overdue some serious attention, and Pre-Raphaelite drawing seems under-represented throughout the exhibition. This may be because it was the focus of Colin Cruise's excellent Birmingham show (2011), but it seems a pity when we see the brilliant draughtsmanship of the two works (Barringer 2012: nos. 28, 29) displayed side by side in Section 2, Manifesto: Rossetti's *Dante Drawing an Angel* (1848–49) and Millais's *The Disentombment of Queen Matilda* (1849). Moreover, although the catalogue, authored by the three highly regarded curators, is good value, being colour illustrated throughout with thoughtful, detailed, lucid entries on each item, the captions in the exhibition tend to follow a more traditional format. Admittedly it is difficult when so much Pre-Raphaelite art refers to literary or legendary themes not to spend time explaining the allusions, but this can have the effect of making paintings seem secondary and merely illustrative rather than carefully composed studies in tone, colour, and form. Captions that concentrated more on technique and the formal properties of the works in question would do a better job in emphasising the innovative, even avant-garde aspects of Pre-Raphaelitism. Nonetheless this is a show that cannot fail to please anyone

interested in the Pre-Raphaelites. Those unlucky enough to miss the experience can still enjoy the catalogue which, in addition to its many informative entries, has the additional extra of an insightful scholarly essay by the leading art historian Elizabeth Prettejohn on ‘The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy’.

Queen Mary College, University of London

WORKS CITED

- Arts Council, *Burne-Jones: The Paintings, Graphic and Decorative Work of Sir Edward Burne-Jones 1833–98*. Exhibition Catalogue (London: Arts Council of Britain, 1975)
- Barringer, Tim, Jason Rosenfeld, and Alison Smith, *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde* (London: Tate Publishing, 2012)
- Budziak, Anna, *Text, Body, and Indeterminacy: Doppelgänger Selves in Pater and Wilde* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008)
- Bronkhurst, Judith, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols., Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006)
- Evans, Lawrence, ed., *Letters of Walter Pater* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970)
- Gosse, Edmund, ‘Walter Pater’, *Critical Kit-Kats* (London: William Heinemann, 1896). 239–71
- , ‘Confidential Paper’, *The Swinburne Letters*, ed. by Cecil Y. Lang, 6 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1959–62), 6, 233–48
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley, *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. by Humphry House (London: Oxford University Press, 1959)
- Lowe, John, *Handbook to the Cathedral Church of Christ in Oxford* (Oxford: The Council of the Friends of Christ Church, 1949)
- Marsh, Jan, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet* (London: Phoenix, 2005)
- Østermark-Johansen, Lene, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2011)
- Pantazzi, Sybille, ‘Carlo Placci and Vernon Lee: Their Letters and their Friends’, *English Miscellany*, 12 (1961), 97–122
- Pater, Walter, ‘Poems by William Morris’, *Westminster Review* 34.2 (October 1868): 300–12
- , ‘Æsthetic Poetry’, *Appreciations with an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1889)
- , *Appreciations with an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1910)
- , *Greek Studies* (London: Macmillan, 1910)

- , *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry: The 1893 Text*, ed. Donald L. Hill (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1980)
- Paul, J. Balfour, ed., *John Miller Gray: Memoir and Remains*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1895)
- Prettejohn, Elizabeth, 'Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting', in Elizabeth Prettejohn (ed.), *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999): 36–58
- , *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)
- Rosenfeld, Jason, and Alison Smith, *Millais* (London: Tate Publishing, 2007)
- Rothenstein, William, *Men and Memories: Recollections of William Rothenstein 1872–1900* (London: Faber & Faber, 1931)
- Scott, William Bell, *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott*, ed. by W. Minto, 2 vols. (London: James R. Osgood McIlvaine, 1892)
- Sharp, William, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and Study* (London: Macmillan, 1882)
- , 'Some Personal Reminiscences of Walter Pater', *The Atlantic Monthly*, 74.446 (December 1894), 801–14
- Sewter, A. Charles, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and his Circle*, 2 vols., The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975)
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 'Simeon Solomon: Notes on his "Vision of Love" and Other Studies', *Dark Blue* 1.5 (July 1871), 568–77
- Wildman, Stephen, and John Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998)

NOTES

¹ Most of the artworks mentioned in this article can be seen online. Useful sites that include additional information are www.tate.org/art and www.rossettiarchive.org.

² Excellent visual guides to the Oxford Union frescoes, *The Star of Bethlehem* (aka *The Adoration of the Magi*), and two of the Christ Church windows can be found in the short videos in the series 'The Pre-Raphaelites in Oxford', produced by Oxford Brookes University and available on YouTube.

³ For all the Christ Church windows, see <http://flickrhivemind.net/Tags/burnejones,christchurch/> Interesting. The Vyner window (1872–73) features four of the outstanding young men of the Bible (*Samuel, David, St John, and St Timothy*), while the three others depict *Faith, Hope and Charity* (1870–71), *St Cecilia* (1875), and *St Catherine of Alexandria* (1878).

⁴ My thanks to Judith Curthoys, archivist at Christ Church, who looked in vain for the installation date.

⁵ Ellis's paintings were sold at Christie's in May 1885. The canvas of *Charity (Caritas)*, now privately owned, is dated 1868 but was worked on by Burne-Jones in 1870 and after 1885. *Faith (Fides)*, now in

the Dunedin Art Gallery, NZ, and *Hope (Spes)*, now in the Vancouver Art Gallery, are both dated 1871. *Temperance* (1872) is privately owned (Arts Council 1975, 46; Wildman 1998, 328). Burne-Jones used the design of *Temperance* for a window in Jesus College Chapel, Cambridge (1875).

⁶ 'The Myth of Demeter and Persephone' was published in January and February 1876 with the MS of the essay dating from the previous year and originally given as two lectures in November 1875. After his resignation from the Old Water-Colour Society in the summer of 1870, Burne-Jones did not exhibit much until the Grosvenor Gallery Exhibition of 1877, so a studio visit seems likely, though it is conceivable Pater might have seen the paintings through their owner, the Pre-Raphaelite publisher, F. S. Ellis, whose books include D. G. Rossetti's *Poems* (1870) and Simeon Solomon's *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (1871).

⁷ See the painting's exhibition history in the online entry at the Fogg Museum, Harvard.

⁸ Hopkins noted these details in his journal for 17 June 1868 (Hopkins 1959, 167).

⁹ This raises the possibility that Pater may also have seen Rossetti's works at Bell Scott's studio in 1872 if that visit occurred after June.

¹⁰ Pater may also have attended the retrospective of Hunt's work at the Fine Art Society in 1886.

International Walter Pater Conference
Paris, France
Sorbonne University, 4–5 July 2014
‘Walter Pater: Continuity and Discontinuity’

Keynote speakers

Laurel Brake

Lene Østermark-Johansen

Deadline for proposals extended to 15 August 2013.

As carefully elaborated in *The Renaissance*, history and art history are made up of continuities and discontinuities between epochs, artistic forms, artists, and thinkers. The apparent seamlessness of temporality masks ruptures and revivals or what Pater termed ‘renaissance(s)’. The Renaissance was indeed an unceasing return to the ‘standard of taste’ set in antiquity, an acknowledgment of its permanence in people’s minds and doings. It was also, however, a discovery of ‘[n]ew experiences, new subjects of poetry, new forms of art’ (‘Two Early French Stories’) that called into question the conditions of life and art. These ‘exquisite pauses in time’ were Pater’s most effective means to link the continuous and the discontinuous. In his other writings, whether published, fragmentary or theoretical, Pater continued to envisage and apply such patterns to study Europe’s intellectual and cultural traditions.

In keeping with this complex patterning, the 2014 Paris International Conference will explore Continuity and Discontinuity in Pater's writings from an interdisciplinary perspective, reflecting Pater's diverse engagements with literature, the arts, history, and philosophy. We invite proposals that examine Continuity/Discontinuity with reference to all aspects of Pater's work, including, but not limited to:

- Themes and images (representations of violence, cycles and myths of death and rebirth...)
- Generic, formal and stylistic features
- Different types of publication (book form, periodicals etc.)
- Pater's reading of other writers from the classics to his contemporaries (intertextuality, the text as a palimpsest, quotations and misquotations, interpretation and misinterpretation ...)
- Response to existing fields of research (anthropology, archaeology, art history, literary criticism ...)
- Pater's understanding of the visual arts
- The critical reception of Pater's writings; his biography. Are there different Paters?

Presentations and papers will be delivered in English. Proposals (300 words) for twenty-minute papers and a short bio-bibliography should be sent as a word attachment by 15 August 2013 to the four organizers:

Bénédicte COSTE, University of Bourgogne (TIL):

benedicte.coste@u-bourgogne.fr

Anne-Florence GILLARD-ESTRADA, Rouen University (ERAC):

af.gillardestrada@orange.fr

Martine LAMBERT-CHARBONNIER, Paris-Sorbonne University (VALE):

martine.charbonnier@paris-sorbonne.fr

Charlotte RIBEYROL, Paris-Sorbonne University (VALE):

Charlotte.Ribeyrol@paris-sorbonne.fr

Scientific committee:

Pascal Aquien, Paris-Sorbonne University, France
Laurel Brake, Birkbeck, University of London, UK
Barrie Bullen, Royal Holloway, London, UK
Bénédicte Coste, University of Bourgogne, France
Kenneth Daley, Columbia College Chicago, USA
Catherine Delyfer, University of Toulouse-Le Mirail, France
Stefano Evangelista, University of Oxford, UK
Isabelle Gadoin, University of Poitiers, France
Anne-Florence Gillard-Estrada, Rouen University, France
Lesley Higgins, York University, Toronto, Canada
Martine Lambert-Charbonnier, Paris-Sorbonne University, France
Claire Masurel-Murray, Paris-Sorbonne University, France
Lene Østermark-Johansen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Marc Porée, ENS Ulm, France
Charlotte Ribeyrol, Paris-Sorbonne University, France

COLLECTED WORKS NEWS

Lesley Higgins and David Latham

Update: *The Collected Works of Walter Pater*

Bringing the *Collected Works* to bookshelves everywhere is a multifaceted and multi-person endeavour, one that should take approximately a decade to complete. Last July, the delegates of Oxford University Press approved the project in principle, and the General Editors, Lesley Higgins and David Latham, have been busy since confirming details of the scope of the project, dividing the various texts into the ten volumes, and refining the choices of copy-text. It has been an enjoyable process that required close readings of texts we thought we already knew inside and out, but our readings from the fresh perspective of editors contemplating an edition that will serve Pater scholarship for another century have led us to an ever-deeper fascination for Pater's canon.

One of our most successful steps has been the selection of the members for our editorial team. In addition to the eight members of the Advisory Board announced in the 2012 issue of the *Pater Newsletter* (pp. 60–61), we are delighted now to announce that eight of the ten volumes have been staffed with the most respected scholars in our discipline, scholars whose editions will keep Pater at the forefront of Victorian studies:

Volume 1	<i>The Renaissance</i>	Barrie Bullen (University of Reading, Emeritus)
Volume 2	<i>Marius the Epicurean</i>	Dennis Denisoff (Ryerson University)
Volume 3	<i>Imaginary Portraits</i>	Lene Østermark-Johansen (University of Copenhagen)

Volume 4	<i>Gaston de Latour</i>	Gerald Monsman (University of Arizona, Emeritus)
Volume 5	<i>Essays</i>	Laurel Brake (Birkbeck College, University of London, Emerita)
Volume 6	<i>Appreciations</i>	Kenneth Daley (Columbia College)
Volume 7	<i>Classical Studies</i>	
Volume 8	<i>Plato and Platonism</i>	
Volume 9	<i>Correspondence</i>	Robert Seiler (University of Calgary, Emeritus)
Volume 10	<i>Manuscripts</i>	Joseph Bristow (University of California at Los Angeles)

The search for people to edit Pater's classical writings continues, and we hope to confirm our choices in the next edition of the *Newsletter*.

Also in development is a website for the project, which will provide updates on the various volumes and, eventually, share research materials. Again, details are forthcoming.

York University, Toronto

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

POTOLSKY, MATTHEW. *THE DECADENT REPUBLIC OF LETTERS: TASTE, POLITICS, AND COSMOPOLITAN COMMUNITY FROM BAUDELAIRE TO BEARDSLEY*. PHILADELPHIA: UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS, 2013. 256 PP. \$59.95 / £39.00.



In *The Decadent Republic of Letters*, Matthew Potolsky starts by proposing a new definition of decadence as ‘a characteristic mode of reception, a stance that writers take in relationship to their culture and to the cosmopolitan traditions that influence them’ (p. 1). For Potolsky decadence is first and foremost an international and internationalist movement that brings together authors and readers into imaginary communities constituted across the borders of national cultures. Crucial to his definition is the process of creative reception, by means of which decadent writers constantly draw on existing traditions, openly borrowing and recasting old material into new forms, thereby forging links with the past and reaching across time as well as space. Potolsky develops his thesis over five learned and engaging chapters that go from Baudelaire’s reception of Poe to the construction of a decadent ‘counterpublic’ in Beardsley’s *The Story of Venus and Tannhäuser* (1896), via suggestive readings of Swinburne, decadent neo-libertinism, and decadent pedagogy. This is a rich book written in a lucid style, sophisticated yet accessible, and extremely sensitive to the form and texture of the works under discussion. Potolsky moves effortlessly between French and English (and sometimes American) literature, as well as the classical tradition, often invoked in his readings.

The cosmopolitan perspective enables Potolsky to bring fresh insights into the study of decadence, complicating the categories that, ever since the nineteenth century, have been pervasively though not unproblematically associated with the movement: decline, morbidity, exoticism, mannerism. One of Potolsky’s most important revisions to standard accounts of decadence is the uncovering of a decadent interest in the notion of community, which overthrows the enduring

assumption that decadent writing foregrounds individualism and solipsism. Potolsky's idea of the cosmopolitan community of decadence harks back to the Enlightenment notion of the Republic of Letters which, he argues, was resurrected by Baudelaire and subsequently played a major role in the formation of cross-border communities of writers and readers who preferred to define themselves by virtue of literary taste rather than nationality. An imaginary place without borders or formal citizenship but not, for this reason, unreal, the decadent republic of letters is 'made up of knowing readers and the privileged texts they produce, admire, and circulate, its bonds fashioned through a shared taste for the perverse and a common sense of alienation from the political, artistic, and erotic world engendered by bourgeois liberalism and nationalism' (p. 172). According to Potolsky, therefore, readers and writers at the margins of nineteenth-century culture used decadence as a way of building virtual networks aimed at subverting the cultural institutions of the modern nation state, such as national canons, syllabii, state schools, etc., by means of dissident readings.

Potolsky is utterly persuasive when he argues that any study of decadence based entirely on one national tradition (including the French tradition) is necessarily partial and distorted; and his book makes a strong contribution to our understanding of the English *fin de siècle*, still too often studied from a parochial English perspective. It is worth pointing out, however, that Potolsky's study moves entirely along the Anglo-French axis: the words of the subtitle, 'from Baudelaire to Beardsley', describe not only a chronological span but also the geographical framework of the book. There are several mentions of important figures linked to decadence who do not fall within the Anglo-French remit, such as Nietzsche and D'Annunzio, but the book is mainly concerned with the evolution of decadence from Paris to London, as the movement is first conceptualized by Baudelaire, largely through his encounter with Poe, and then enters England via Swinburne. We are left to speculate whether it would be possible to imagine alternative histories of decadence that exist outside the Anglo-French axis; and to wonder what happens when we relate English decadent writing to more marginal or 'minor' traditions than the French one – which is something readers should feel entirely justified in doing, given the decadents' own fondness for marginality and their struggle to overthrow dominant cultural forms. Future scholars of the international *fin de siècle* will have to answer such questions, building on Potolsky's solid foundations.

Pater features prominently in the second half of *The Decadent Republic of Letters*, where he is read within a tradition of the decadent critique of nationalism. After a chapter on Baudelaire and one on responses to Baudelaire by Gautier and Swinburne, Potolsky puts Pater side by side with Huysmans in a chapter on decadent collecting and decadent canonization. According to Potolsky, Pater exemplifies the idea that 'decadent writing constructs a cosmopolitan counternationalist decadent canon that defines the movement's critique of nationalism' (p. 92). He therefore reads *The Renaissance* (1873) as a powerful exercise in canon-building that offers an alternative to national literary traditions. Drawing on 'Joachim du Bellay', one of the less frequently discussed essays in the volume, he focuses especially on Pater's portrait of Ronsard, through which, he argues, Pater stages a debate between the conflicting forces of decadence and nationalism in the process of canon formation. Like Pater's Ronsard, Potolsky's Pater is a staunch promoter of transnational traffic and cultural hybridity: 'The Renaissance, for Pater, is a transnational community of spirit and taste, populated by individuals who are always literally in motion, always crossing national borders, seeking out new patrons, forming new erotic and intellectual bonds, and selecting among political, religious, artistic, and philosophical traditions' (p. 80). In other words, in *The Renaissance* Pater replicates on the page the wanderlust of his own Renaissance subjects. Moved, like his French and Italian predecessors, by intellectual and erotic curiosity and, like them, believing that eclecticism is a fundamental principle for the advancement of culture, Pater becomes a decadent canonizer: just like Huysmans's descriptions of Des Esseintes' eccentricities in *À Rebours* (1884) became a *vade mecum* of decadent taste, Pater in *The Renaissance* sets a standard of taste and an actual canon of artists, writers, and works that later writers would use in their turn in order to signal their own allegiance to decadence. This process of building allegiances in print, through reference, homage, and deliberate imitation is how, according to Potolsky, the decadent republic of letters comes into being.

Pater is therefore, together with Swinburne, responsible for establishing a decadent tradition in English. But Potolsky identifies an important difference between the two writers: while Baudelaire, Gautier, and Swinburne fashioned their decadent cosmopolitanism on classical republican models, Pater (according to Potolsky) looked to early modern libertinism drawing in particular on the libertine tradition of associating 'perverse erudition and political subversion' (p. 104). Potolsky therefore takes his study of Pater into pedagogy, reading *Marius*

the Epicurean (1885) alongside an international cast of contemporary novels about perverse education, comprising Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* (1870), Rachilde's *Monsieur Vénus* (1884), Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown* (1884), and Wilde's *Dorian Gray* (1890, 1891). According to Potolsky, decadent teaching thrives on sadistic narratives of initiation and control that emphasise a dynamic of mastery and submission. The relationship between Marius and Flavian embodies this model of decadent pedagogy, albeit it lacks the psychosexual intensity we find in Sacher-Masoch or even in Lee. Potolsky argues that, in his attempt to defend the mother tongue, Flavian mirrors the nineteenth-century promoters of linguistic nationalism, who believed in the need to impose a centralized system of education founded on nationalist values. By showing the ultimate failure of Flavian's project Pater dismisses the alliance between education and nationalist politics in his own historical present, and implicitly signals his consensus with the decadent rejection of linguistic nationalism. This chapter includes suggestive insights that link Pater's critique of violence to the decadent rejection of nationalism.

Pater also features prominently in the last chapter of the book, where Potolsky brings together *Gaston de Latour* (1888), Lee's *Euphorion* (1884), and Beardsley's *The Story of Venus and Tannhäuser* as works that promote a model of kinship and community that springs out of the activity of production and reception of texts, rather than on national identity. Drawing on Michael Warner, Potolsky postulates the notion of a decadent 'counterpublic' – that is, a group that defines itself against the dominant public by means of creating a subculture (through print, in this case) and specific modes of sociability. The decadent 'counterpublic' then uses this carefully crafted marginal position in order to articulate a critique of mainstream culture. After an engaging reading of *Euphorion*, Potolsky turns to *Gaston*, where he finds Pater reconsidering the idea of decadent community he had put forward in *The Renaissance*. Potolsky discovers many references to contemporary decadent culture in the unpublished chapters of the novel – most of them sounding notes of scepticism and distance – and discusses what he calls Pater's politics of 'indifference', present in *Gaston* as well as Pater's earlier works. Here Potolsky's reading is broadly in line with William Shuter and those critics who have argued that, in the late writings, Pater is intent on modifying and revising the more radical features of his early works.

For Paterians, one of the most striking features of *The Decadent Republic of Letters* is Potolsky's characterization of Pater as an emphatically decadent, rather

than aesthetic, figure. Indeed one of Potolsky's founding claims in the book is that recent criticism has tended to focus too exclusively on aestheticism as a progressive cultural movement, thereby marginalising decadence and avoiding confrontation of the problems that arise when trying to unravel its more complicated political allegiances. Following this logic, to view Pater as a decadent is to glimpse a very political Pater – not a retiring aesthete but a critic of bourgeois liberalism who is deeply aware of the political dimensions of his work, and of literature's power to cement communities of dissident readers. In particular, according to Potolsky, Pater's promotion of alternative canons and his emphasis on hybridity constitute an attack on nineteenth-century nationalism. This strategic repositioning of Pater suggested by Potolsky generates new approaches to the critical debate on the relationship between aestheticism and decadence and, more broadly, to the relationship of these two movements to the international field. Viewing Pater within the decadent tradition allows Potolsky to show that taste is a fundamentally political concept. Potolsky's book also makes a strong contribution to the study of Pater's relationship with French culture – first and foremost with Baudelaire, who inspires Pater in seeing beauty as a means to create new ways of participating in public life and of forming bonds between individuals, but also with the culture of the French sixteenth century, to which Pater came back so often in his writings but which remains a sadly understudied aspect of his work.

Stefano Evangelista
Trinity College, University of Oxford

COSTE, BÉNÉDICTE. *WALTER PATER, ESTHÉTIQUE*. PARIS: MICHEL HOUDIARD EDITEUR, 2011. 292 PP. 30€.

Bénédictte Coste's new book on Pater, published just one year after the acclaimed critical edition of her French translation of *Greek Studies* (*Essais sur la mythologie et l'art grec*, 2010) and her monograph on his literary criticism (*Walter Pater critique littéraire: The excitement of the literary sense*, 2010), is the first major study of Pater's aesthetics in France (where his works are still frequently overlooked). This critical essay, written in French and illustrated mostly by Coste's own translations of Pater's texts, is a thorough and original

exploration of his philosophical thinking about art from the paintings of the Italian Renaissance to Greek sculpture and Gothic architecture. Leaving aside his imaginary portraits, Coste analyses Pater's understanding of the 'experience' of art in the light of *The Renaissance*, *Greek Studies*, and his essays on medieval architecture. In her introduction, she explains her complex critical approach to these texts by insisting upon the key Lacanian concept of 'coupure' (which may be translated as 'cut' or 'discontinuity') that she claims underlies Pater's aesthetics, although he never uses this term. The word 'coupure' – which should be related to Pater's obsession with 'transitions' – enables Coste to give a psychoanalytical bias to her study by drawing on both Lacan's comments on language and the signifier, and Freud's theories about Otherness. Her study reveals that Paterian otherness (*l'altérité paterienne*) is the best means by which to examine his theory of experience, even if she also acknowledges her debt to the phenomenology of Heidegger and Henri Maldiney.

The book is divided into six chapters, each devoted to different Paterian texts. The first chapter, which focuses on defining the 'aesthetic relation and the ontological foundations of the subject', explores Pater's best-known collection of essays, *The Renaissance*, in particular the 'Conclusion' and the study of Winckelmann. Coste sheds light on the Paterian 'aesthetic subject' by emphasizing the importance of impressions with special reference to Maldiney's theories of perception. Although these essays have been frequently discussed in recent years, a phenomenological and psychoanalytical approach to the Renaissance as a significant 'psychic experience' rather than a historical period certainly adds an interesting new focus.

The second and third chapters, respectively titled 'Art and its Subjects' and 'The Tear (*déchirure*) and the Golden Thread', offer a fascinating insight into Pater's essays on Renaissance painters: Raphael, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Leonardo, Giorgione, and the school of Moretto. According to Coste, Pater favoured the subject of art over the images themselves. Her pages on Botticelli's poetic paintings (and notably his *Venus*), the musicality of Giorgione's works, and the colours of the Northern Italian school (as discussed in the little-known essay 'Art Notes in Northern Italy') are particularly stimulating. The fourth chapter analyses Pater's relation to sculpture, 'the mystery of combined motion and rest', in *The Renaissance* and *Greek Studies*. Sculpture is central to his aesthetics as it is the art he wrote about most. In this section, Coste explores the relation of sculpture to mythology as expressed in his study of Dionysus, and discusses Pater's complex positioning

between science (archaeology) and aestheticism. This chapter resonates nicely with Lene Østermark-Johansen's recent book on *Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (2011), especially the paragraphs devoted to Greek sculptors such as Polykleitos and Myron. Chapter Five is a truly original discussion of Pater's little-known interest in architecture. Coste draws on two essays that appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* review in 1894: 'Notre Dame d'Amiens' and 'Vézelay'. This section of her monograph offers a thorough, contextual approach to Pater's understanding of the Gothic and suggests very interesting parallels with the writings of Prosper Mérimée, in particular his 'Essay on the religious architecture of the Middle Ages' (1837), and *The Paintings of Saint-Savin* (1845). In the last chapter, 'Indifference, Aesthetics and Ethics', Coste coins the expression 'the aesthetics of indifference' to describe the evolution of Pater's aesthetic theories in the late 1880s. The notion of 'indifference' is taken from the recent theories of the psychoanalyst Henri Rey-Flaud, who has studied 'perverse' attempts at subverting the discontinuity of language in order to retrieve original indifference. Such aesthetic indifference, the counterpart to the concept of discontinuity that Coste analyses as central to Pater's aesthetics, can be felt in *Gaston de Latour* as well as in *Marius the Epicurean*.

Coste's conclusion discusses Pater's 'transitional' aesthetics in relation to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art history. Pater wrote about art at a key moment when art history was on the verge of becoming a scientific discipline, favouring impersonality (as in the writings of Heinrich Wölfflin and Alois Riegl) rather the 'paradoxical personalism' found in Pater's essays on art, still much indebted to the earlier art criticism of Baudelaire and Ruskin. As an illustration of the growing rift in late nineteenth-century conceptions of art, Coste draws an interesting parallel between Pater's aesthetics and an article by Mary Whitall Costelloe (later Mary Berenson), published in the same issue of *Nineteenth Century* as Pater's 'Notre Dame d'Amiens' in 1894, criticizing Pater's outdated aesthetic phenomenology in favour of a Berensonian approach to the development of art. Pater, however, was not interested in artistic chronologies but in the complex relation and 'affect' of the subject to his work.

Bénédicte Coste's book offers stimulating insights into a wide selection of Paterian texts, including some rarely-discussed essays that she convincingly relates to his multifaceted understanding of art. The phenomenological and psychoanalytical grids, although at times a little invasive and cryptic, enable her to shed new light on Pater's work, thanks in particular to the references to Freud

and Maldiney, which are always very enlightening. The reader may, however, occasionally regret the absence of illustrations in Coste's volume – which is certainly due to her emphasis on Pater's wish to 'poeticize the subject' rather than yield to the 'seductions of the image'. There is no doubt, however, that this book will be of great use to any scholar interested in Pater as well as in nineteenth-century aesthetics.

Charlotte Ribeyrol
University of Sorbonne – Paris 4

EASTHAM, ANDREW. *AESTHETIC AFTERLIVES: IRONY, LITERARY MODERNITY, AND THE ENDS OF BEAUTY*. LONDON AND NEW YORK: CONTINUUM, 2011. X + 257 PP. £24.99.



Andrew Eastham's study, *Aesthetic Afterlives*, begins with a sustained, complex, and subtle discussion of Pater, tracing in his writing an engagement with Romantic aesthetics and Romantic irony, and exploring Pater's debt to a range of German Romantic writers, in particular Hegel and Schlegel. This builds the groundwork for a bravura revelation of Paterian threads throughout the twentieth century and into twenty-first century fiction: in Eastham's account of contemporary culture, we are still haunted by the ghost of Pater.

Contemporary culture, Eastham persuades us, continues to reanimate and translate the discourses of Victorian Aestheticism. And so novels like Alan Hollinghurst's *The Line of Beauty* (2004) and Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005) can be seen as 'children of Mr W. P.' (p. 206). Another recent novel, John McGregor's *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things* (2002), shows a 'Paterian embrace of transient impressions' (p. 211). This Paterian legacy, Eastham points out, is mediated by Woolf; like Woolf, McGregor attempts to capture what Pater calls the 'flickering, inconsistent' passage of impressions 'which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them'.

Eastham's brilliant discussion of *The Line of Beauty* explores the legacy of Victorian Aestheticism in 'ironic consciousness'; postmodernity 'might have been regarded as a new Aestheticism' (p. 8), if not for its collusion with consumerism and free-market economics. Nick Guest, Hollinghurst's middle-class hero, wants

to live *la vie esthétique*, but the cocaine he lines up on his library copy of *Henry James and the Question of Romance*, by a critic with the vaguely dubious moniker 'Mildred R. Pullman', compromises his ability to 'gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us', as Pater recommends. In 1980s Britain, Lord Kessler hangs his Kandinsky painting in the boardroom of his bank, housed in a building which has had a postmodern facelift, introducing a steel and glass atrium but preserving the old palazzo façade. Art might aspire to autonomy, but is always subsumed by the market. Eastham enables us to see how *The Line of Beauty's* consideration of aesthetics and economics knowingly reworks several of James's most important novels, including *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and *The Tragic Muse* (1890). His chapter on Henry James identifies Susan Stringham of *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) as a Paterian aesthete gathering and devouring her impressions of the ailing billionaire Mildred Theale, whose death in a Venetian palazzo is financed by a dazzling, perhaps even sublime New York fortune.

James's engagement with Aestheticism has of course already been discussed at length. More original than his chapter on James are Eastham's two chapters on Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence, which unravel complex networks of indebtedness and resistance. (There are also fascinating chapters on Samuel Beckett and Evelyn Waugh, showing the great variety of Aestheticism's influence in twentieth-century culture.) Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920) might seem to have abandoned the Aestheticism of his first two novels, *The White Peacock* (1911) and *The Trespasser* (1912) – the two later novels seem to see Aestheticism as compromising the self's ability to achieve a vital and sensuous 'living relatedness to its own circumambient universe', as Lawrence put it in his 1925 essay 'Morality and the Novel'. Yet Eastham's reading of Lawrence suggests that he remains 'far closer to Aestheticism than his sacrificial critique of modernity allows' (p. 151).

Mansfield's relations with Aestheticism are more transparent and easily charted than are Lawrence's. The journals she kept as a teenager are saturated with *fin-de-siècle* Aestheticism. In them she aims to record the moment; she aspires 'to keep a kind of *minute notebook*', containing 'nothing that is not simple, open'. Writing of the moment, in the moment, will help Mansfield develop her Paterian powers of observation, to sharpen her senses into what Pater would call 'a life of constant and eager observation'. But her observations take their terms of comparison from art and literature, so that the New Zealand landscape is viewed

through the lens of European Aestheticism: the waters of Wellington's Island Bay are not merely a 'peacock shade', their feathers are blue 'with the blueness of Rossetti', and green 'with the greenness of William Morris'. In 1908 Mansfield is preaching that young New Zealand brains 'want a purifying influence – a mad wave of pre-Raphaelitism, or super-aestheticism'; but in 1909, Mansfield starts to turn her back on the Aestheticism she has championed so passionately. Her reactions to Wilde vividly express this turn. Wilde's influence is discernible everywhere in her early journal writings, but in 1908 she claims that he no longer has 'so firm a stronghold in my soul'; one year later she writes disparagingly of his 'decadence' and 'his extraordinary weakness and failure'. Eastham connects Mansfield's turn against Wilde with her desire to escape an embarrassing anxiety of literary influence, but also with the disavowal of lesbian desire. Yet her mature work's fragmentation of narrative form and literary impressionism, its realisation of an open literary form which vividly re-creates momentary perceptions without the hierarchical structuring of novelistic realism, show a persistent engagement with the Aestheticism she first espoused and then disparaged. Eastham convincingly shows how her 'subtle reanimation of Paterism', always complex and dialectical, plays a central role in her overcoming of the 'divide between Aestheticism and Modernism' (p. 117).

The relationship between Aestheticism and Modernism is still being teased out by literary scholars, and the importance of Pater as a figure shaping modernist sensibility continues to emerge in a number of recent works. Consider for instance Brad Bucknell's *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce and Stein* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Rachel Teukolsky's *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics* (Oxford University Press, 2009), both of which give Pater a central place in the formation of literary Modernism. *Aesthetic Afterlives* makes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of Aestheticism's cultural legacy, with its powerful and eloquent account of Aestheticism's afterlives not only in literary modernism, but also in postmodernism and contemporary culture.

Hugh Stevens
University College, London

BOOK CHAPTERS

BERAN, ZDENEK. 'THE IDEA OF HOUSE AS A PLACE OF RETURN IN THE WORK OF WALTER PATER,' IN *THE HOUSE OF FICTION AS THE HOUSE OF LIFE: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HOUSE FROM RICHARDSON TO WOOLF*. EDS. FRANCESCA SAGGIN AND ANNA ENRICHETTA SOCCIO. NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE: CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS, 2012, PP. 156-63.

This essay offers a close reading of *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), with brief reference to Pater's autobiographical sketch 'The Child in the House', and evokes the scholarship of Mikhail Bakhtin and J. Hillis Miller. Beran considers how Marius's internal development is symbolized throughout the novel by the titular character's occupation of several homes that reflect the state of his psyche in their architecture. The two most significant homes are the maternal farmhouse of his childhood, White-nights, and the home of his destiny, Cecilia's Roman Villa, which place his journey in the historical context of a late Roman civilization that has moved from Hellenism to Christianity.

Marc DiPaolo

PARKES, ADAM. "A CHAIN OF SECRET INFLUENCES": PATER'S DISCIPLES', IN *A SENSE OF SHOCK: THE IMPACT OF IMPRESSIONISM ON MODERN BRITISH AND IRISH WRITING*. OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011, PP. 45-76.

In the book's second chapter, Parkes traces the influence of Pater's Impressionism, theorized most notably in the Preface to *The Renaissance*, upon four of Pater's

so-called 'disciples' – George Moore, Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symons, and Joseph Conrad – through whom he examines the contested legacy of that Impressionism. In particular he argues that Pater's Impressionism carries in it a homoeroticism that elicited a wide range of reactions from these disciples. While the chapter takes Pater's disciples as its primary object of study, the analysis of their work reflects light back onto Pater's work, from which the author quotes extensively, if desultorily. The argument concerning Pater and Moore is essentially that Pater's writings taught Moore certain critical practices and modes of inquiry, the erotic potentials of which Moore actually developed and expanded, unchecked by Pater's own practices of self-restraint. While Moore drew out from Pater a more erotic Impressionism, Wilde emphasized a more intellectual Impressionism, but not without retaining the erotic sense. Indeed, in *Dorian Gray*, Wilde pushes the envelope beyond Paterian restraint, for which he earned Pater's own mild criticism, and approximates to his 'morally "questionable" compatriot George Moore.' Pater responds to Wilde's excess with 'Apollo in Picardy', of which the author gives an extended reading, seeming to conclude that that imaginary portrait is not simply a morality tale re-recommending self-restraint but rather a reflection on the problem of being in history. The 'heterosexual' Arthur Symons is more restrained, 'reject[ing] both Moore's sensational reading of Pater and Wilde's intellectual view, urging instead a deliberately muted interpretation that keeps hedonism and homoeroticism equally at bay.' But if Wilde admitted into his intellectual view a good amount of erotic content, so did Symons admit into his restrained view some such content, though less to be sure. Indeed, Symons's relation to Pater's implied eroticism is ambivalent, a function of both internal and external conflicts, and, indeed, representative of other cultural responses to Pater's Impressionism. For Parkes, Conrad's Kurtz is the final link in the chain of secret influences, in whom, he says, the chain becomes 'a circle.' In addition to the well-established parallel between Pater's Impressionism and Conrad's, Parkes draws an additional parallel between Pater and Kurtz, each of whom engages in both aesthetic and decadent practices and each of whom has a number of devoted disciples who compete 'for control of his influence' – Marlowe, of course, being the chief disciple of Kurtz. Although this is the most attenuated and most tenuous study of the four, it is in some ways the most provocative in its suggestion that the problem of Pater's

influence on intellectual life was not a specific problem but a general one, and a modern one worthy of fictional treatment by one of the great modern novelists.

Michael Davis

PARKES, ADAM. "‘VIOLENT MOMENTS OF BEING’: WOOLF, PATER, AND FRY', IN *A SENSE OF SHOCK: THE IMPACT OF IMPRESSIONISM ON MODERN BRITISH AND IRISH WRITING*. OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011, PP. 146–77.

In this fifth chapter of the book, Parkes considers together the influence or the effects of Pater's Impressionism and Roger Fry's Post-Impressionism on Virginia Woolf. He thus goes from what is essentially a dialogical structure of analysis in Chapter Two (Pater and Moore, Pater and Symonds, etc.) to a triangularized one (Pater, Fry, Woolf), and even focuses on a triangle of Woolf's texts, *Moments of Being* (with particular attention to 'A Sketch of the Past'), Woolf's biography *Roger Fry*, and *Jacob's Room*, moving freely along the sides of these two overlapping triangles. Basically, the argument is that Woolf vacillates in her work between what sometimes looks like Pater's Impressionism and what sometimes looks like Fry's Post-Impressionism, occasionally deploying one representational practice or epistemological mode against the other, particularly as she tries to deal with each alternative's equally problematic implication in male egotism and patriarchy. Against Fry's desire for the solid form of a man in *Jacob's Room*, for example, Woolf, Parkes argues, draws on a Paterian idea of sculpture (which he calls 'an inherited mode of impressionist visualization') that emphasizes the fragility of exterior form and that even dissolves form in a play of light. While Woolf might deploy Pater in this way, however, she also develops a sustained critique of Pater's implication in various forms of masculinism and structures of patriarchy. She even satirizes his idealization of the Greek spirit. Parkes makes a number of interesting observations and the study will surely have value for scholars, less for Pater studies per se and more for the reception of Pater in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Michael Davis

ESSAYS

BRAKE, LAUREL. 'CENSORSHIP, PUFFING, "PIRACY," REPRINTING: BRITISH DECADENCE AND TRANSATLANTIC RE-MEDIATIONS OF WALTER PATER, 1893-1910'. *MODERNISM/MODERNITY*, 19.3 (2012), pp. 419-35.

The publication history of Walter Pater's reviews in *The Guardian* in the 1880s catalyzes Laurel Brake's investigation of 'the transatlantic scene of English language publishing at the turn of the twentieth century' (p. 420). Documenting the 'mediamorphosis' of these reviews from a series of anonymous newspaper 'puffs' into a collection of essays for which its private-press publishers on both sides of the Atlantic claimed inclusion in the Paterian literary corpus, Brake reveals how Pater's reputation was shaped in the years immediately preceding and following his death through the dissemination of his writing in a variety of publishing formats that aligned him with decadence and modernism. Moreover, that reviewers like Arthur Symons were so resistant to this remediation and repackaging of Pater's unsigned reviews as authorized works of criticism is read as constitutive of larger anxieties about the 'new journalism' and its exposure of 'what had been regarded hitherto as private life' (p. 421). Brake's article is especially valuable in its exploration of the role played by American periodicals like *Harper's* and American pirate-publishers like Thomas Mosher in providing venues for the publication of avant-garde British authors and in formalizing, as it were, a catalogue of decadent writers, a catalogue, it is suggested, that would come to include Pater in spite of his ceaseless efforts during his lifetime to avoid such affiliations. In tracing the 'transatlantic iterations' of Pater's journalism in the 1890s, Brake makes a compelling case for the necessity of recognizing how the conditions of the publishing marketplace – at that point

in the beginning stages of transitioning into ‘modernist global formats’– impacted and continues to impact the reception of Pater’s body of work (p. 419).

Meghan A. Freeman

HANSON, ELLIS. ‘THE LANGUOROUS CRITIC’. *NEW LITERARY HISTORY*, 45.3 (2012), pp. 547–64.

Hanson claims that Roland Barthes is ‘the critic who is the finest theorist of languor, and Walter Pater, the critic who is its finest practioner’ (p. 548). He briefly notes the development of the discourse of languor in the decadent poetry of Baudelaire, Swinburne, and Verlaine ‘where it evokes the immoral and voluptuous bittersweetness of erotic fatigue, often with a degree of ironic detachment’ (p. 548), but this article is less interested in establishing Pater and Barthes within this wider literary historical context than it is in developing the notion of a languorous mood through Barthes’s theory and Pater’s style. Hanson begins by adopting Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s distinction between a hermeneutics of suspicion, with its effort to master a work of art, on the one hand, and a ‘reparative mode of criticism,’ grounded in ‘a more creative act of love,’ on the other (p. 547). In the place of Sedgwick’s affect, however, Hanson offers mood, allowing for a more sustained and complex structure of response than affect, but one that does not merely congeal ‘into a pathology or a character trait’ (p. 549). As a theorist of this languorous mood, Barthes finds its exemplary form in amorous waiting ‘much too long for the beloved by the telephone or in a café’ (p. 550). Hanson points out that for Barthes, paradoxically, the dramatic art of waiting itself becomes a pleasure, even ‘more gratifying than the longed for arrival of the other’ (p. 551). In its most extreme form such a critic, or artist, or critic as lover, may go beyond the passive discovery of such pleasures, and actively elect to pursue them.

Hanson complements his exposition of Barthes’s theory of languor with close analyses of two passages illustrating Pater’s languorous style. He frames this analysis with an insightful history showing how the word languid anchors dismissals of Pater from Mallock’s *New Republic* through John Buchan’s critique of the 1910 *Library Edition*, comments by Paul Elmer More and Virginia Woolf, to, of course, T. S. Eliot’s attack in 1930. Hanson points out that this strand of Pater reception gives the cumulative impression ‘of moralistic resentment at

having been seduced and betrayed by a beautiful syntax' (p. 554). He follows this vein even deeper into the uses of languid and languor in descriptions of Pater and his works by critics whose defensiveness seems rooted in their similarities with Pater: John Addington Symonds, 'a discreetly homosexual Oxford aesthete,' and A. C. Benson, 'a homosexual aesthete of High Anglican tendencies' (pp. 555, 556). While accepting the characterization of Pater's style as languorous, Hanson effectively revalues it through his analyses of passages from 'The Poetry of Michelangelo' and the opening of *Gaston de Latour*. In contrast to the brief dismissals of Pater's defensive moralistic critics, Hanson closes the article with an intricate stylistic analysis showing the complex force of Pater's sentences at a deep syntactical level.

Kit Andrews

KAISER, MATTHEW. 'PATER'S MOUTH', *VICTORIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE*, 39 (2011), pp. 47–64.

With an eye toward unseating the dominance of the visual and auditory registers in studies of the Paterian sensorium, Matthew Kaiser bids us consider the mouth as the 'material locus of Pater's genius' (p. 47). Kaiser argues that the 'oral spell' cast by Pater's prose is part of an effort to return 'aesthetic judgment to the mouth', thus reversing the tendency in aesthetic philosophy to detach taste as a concept from its site of origin, owing to the problematic association of mouths with femininity, animality, and consumer culture (p. 48). Pater, though, 'refuses to be haunted or made squeamish by mouths', and Kaiser exhaustively inventories the abundance of rhetorical figures associated with orality in Pater's writings, from eating and drinking to biting and kissing (p. 48). For Pater, it is averred, 'the somatic provenance of historical consciousness' is the mouth (p. 48); it is not the *zeitgeist* of a specific cultural moment that Pater seeks to capture in language so much as the mouthfeel, 'an enchanting sensation' that extends from the ability 'to sense beneath the surface of perception subtle currents of time' (p. 49). Yet, far from giving into crude appetite and unstrained oral gratification, Pater's literalizing or materialist approach to representing taste is read as a strategy to 'masculiniz[e] the mouth' by 'displacing [appetite] with the more pleasurable sensation of oral retention' (p.

53). Kaiser explores one facet of this ‘intrinsically gastronomical’ perspective on art history in a discussion of the integral importance of ‘sweetness as a masculine ethic’ in Pater’s theory of cultural renaissance (p. 55). The article closes with a series of broader reflections on metaphoricity as it relates to Pater’s ability to cultivate in his readers aesthetic receptiveness and to ‘induce historical consciousness’ through the ‘Eucharistic’ experience of gustatory metaphors that half-transform language into something that savours of real life (p. 59).

Meghan A. Freeman

NATARAJAN, UTTARA. ‘THE SPIRIT OF HIS AGE: HAZLITT AND PATER ON LAMB’. *NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE*, 66.4 (2012), pp. 449–65.

Uttara Natarajan, editor of *The Hazlitt Review*, suggests that the early nineteenth-century essayist is ‘a hitherto unidentified source for Pater’ (p. 449). The strongest evidence of Pater’s ‘reading and absorption’ (p. 464) of Hazlitt are the similarities Natarajan identifies between Pater’s ‘Charles Lamb’ (1878) and Hazlitt’s treatment of Lamb, his sketch of ‘Elia’ in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825). Among a number of parallels, she emphasizes especially their shared focus on Lamb’s extraordinary preoccupation with the past. The essay aims not only to establish Hazlitt as a source for Pater, but also to describe each writer’s very different attitude toward Lamb’s antiquarian traits. For Hazlitt, the ‘proper realm of the imagination is the future’ (p. 455), and Lamb’s attachment to the past represents a ‘limitation’ and stands in opposition to the spirit of the age. In contrast, Pater regards Lamb’s antiquarianism as a ‘marker of [his] modernity’ (p. 460). His habit of endowing ‘the present itself with the quality of past-ness’ (p. 461) represents exactly that kind of visionary fusing of binaries that Pater celebrates in *The Renaissance* and identifies as the hallmark of modern subjectivity. The essay ends with a brief account of the connection Pater draws between the literary/critical value of ‘reserve’ and the qualities that he admires in Lamb.

Kenneth Daley

ESSAYS WITH NOTABLE REFERENCES TO PATER

DANIELS, ROBIN, 'WALTER PATER AND NEVILLE CARDUS', *CONTEMPORARY REVIEW*, 292.1697 (SUMMER 2010), PP. 204–10.

Daniels offers a loose and unreferenced comparison between the personalities of Pater and Neville Cardus. The generalisations are derived from Daniels's biography of Cardus, who wrote about music and sport for the *Guardian*. Daniels claims that Cardus was one of Pater's greatest admirers in the twentieth century, and appreciates his ability to hold together the different influences of Ruskin, Pater, and Wilde. He links this to a general encounter with paradox in Pater's work, which emerges from the evanescent condition of beauty in the world and the legacy of Romanticism. Daniels sees Pater's life as an exemplary case of Romantic isolation and he goes on to compare him with Cardus's more robust 'ego-strength' and longevity. These comparisons are vague and unreferenced; we are told that Pater's gait was a 'diffident limp', and this is clearly taken as a representation of his larger personal and literary character, but we are given no source for the image. Ultimately this article is only likely to be of interest as marginalia to a study of Cardus, but it has little relevance to Pater studies.

Andrew Eastham

FANTASIA, ANNETTE. 'THE PATERIAN *BILDUNGSROMAN* REENVISIONED: "BRAIN-BUILDING" IN ALISON BECHDEL'S *FUN HOME: A FAMILY TRAGICOMIC*'. *CRITICISM* 53.1 (WINTER 2011), PP. 83–97.

The father figure in Alison Bechdel's autobiographical graphic novel *Fun Home* is a married, closeted gay Baby Boomer who has dedicated much of his life to transforming his fixer-upper Victorian home in rural Pennsylvania into a work of art that would make the Decadents proud. He recruits his young daughter into his laborious, time-intensive project, and she finds herself not only resenting the stolen hours, but the uselessness of the artistic flourishes and decorations they were adding to 'improve' their home. In response, she finds herself inclined to embrace a more utilitarian, colourless aesthetic, but knows on some level that avoiding her

father's influence to such a stark degree is, in effect, capitulating to his influence. As Fantasia's essay explains, Bechdel's deft juxtaposition of words and the pictures in this graphic novel symbolizes the internal and external conflict of Bechdel's being caught between 'embracing and escaping her father's aesthetic influence' (p. 96). Overt British literature references abound in the comic itself, because the characters are bibliophiles, but Fantasia's essay demonstrates how Bechdel's representations of architecture – and collapsing of the physicality and psyche of the protagonists into the house they remodeled – are thematic and artistic moves reminiscent of Pater's 'The Child in the House.' While the essay focuses on Bechdel, it makes frequent use of Pater's writings to understand a contemporary, post-modern work and its strong Victorian influences.

Marc DiPaolo

CONTRIBUTORS

KIT ANDREWS, Professor of English at Western Oregon University, is currently researching the reception of German Idealism in nineteenth-century British literature and philosophy. He has recently published an article in *ELT* concerning the figure of Watteau in Pater's 'A Prince of Court Painters' and Michael Field's *Sight and Song*, and an essay on Pater as Oxford Hegelian for *The Journal of the History of Ideas*. His article on Carlyle and Fichte is forthcoming in *Literature Compass*.

JOSEPH BRISTOW is Professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the editor of the Oxford English Texts edition of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the author of numerous books on the *fin de siècle*. His most recent book is *Wilde Discoveries: Traditions, Histories, Archives* (University of Toronto Press, 2013).

ELICIA CLEMENTS is Associate Professor of English and Humanities at York University, Toronto. She has written articles and book chapters on Walter Pater, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and the composer Ethel Smyth. Additionally, she is co-editor of a collection of essays on Walter Pater, *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Pater Across the Arts* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). A book-length study on Woolf's treatment of language, music, and sound is currently under revision for a publisher.

KENNETH DALEY is the author of *The Rescue of Romanticism: Walter Pater and John Ruskin* (2001) and several essays on Ruskin, Pater, and Keats. Currently he serves as Chair of the English Department at Columbia College in Chicago. He is the Bibliographer for the *Pater Newsletter*.

MICHAEL DAVIS, an Associate Professor of English at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York, specializes in Victorian and Modern literature with particular interests in sexuality, aesthetics, psychoanalysis, and narrative theory. He is currently completing a study of Pater ('Walter Pater's "Latent Intelligence" and the Conception of Queer "Theory"') and a book on Virginia Woolf tentatively entitled 'Dating Mrs Dalloway: Self-Reflexion, Suicide, and the Ends of Modern Fiction.' He is also interested in contemporary critical and cultural theory.

MARC DIPAOLO currently teaches at Oklahoma City University. He is the author of *Emma Adapted: Jane Austen's Heroine from Book to Film* (2007) and principal editor of Pearson's literature anthology *The Conscious Reader*. His essays have appeared in *A Century of the Marx Brothers*, *The Amazing Transforming Superhero*, *Beyond Adaptation* and *Pimps, Wimps, Studs, Thugs, and Gentlemen: Essays on Media Images of Masculinity*. He has a Ph.D. in English from Drew University.

ANDREW EASTHAM is an independent scholar and writer who has published widely on Pater, Aestheticism, Modernism, and Contemporary Literature. His monograph *Aesthetic Afterlives: Irony, Literary Modernity, and the Ends of Beauty*, has recently been published by Continuum and is reviewed in this issue of the *Newsletter*. The book begins with an investigation of Pater's musical ideal, conducts an enquiry into Aestheticism's twentieth-century legacies, then concludes with an autobiographical account of his meeting with the undead Mr. W.P.

STEFANO EVANGELISTA is Fellow and Tutor in English at Trinity College and Lecturer in English at the University of Oxford. His research interests are in nineteenth-century English literature (especially Aestheticism and Decadence), comparative literature, cosmopolitanism, the reception of the classics, and in the relationship between literary and visual cultures. His monograph, *British Aestheticism and Ancient Greece: Hellenism, Reception, Gods in Exile*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2009. He is the editor of *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe* (Continuum, 2010) and the co-editor

of a double issue of the *Yearbook of English Studies* devoted to 'The Arts and Victorian Literature' (2010) and of *A. C. Swinburne: Unofficial Laureate* (2013).

MEGHAN A. FREEMAN received her Ph.D. in English literature from Cornell University, having completed a dissertation investigating the treatment of aesthetic theory and spectatorship in British and American novels of the nineteenth century. She is an Assistant Professor in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film at Oregon State University.

LESLEY HIGGINS is a Professor of English at York University, Toronto, where she specializes in Victorian and Modernist literature, poetry, and feminist studies. In 2002, she published *The Modernist Cult of Ugliness: Aesthetic and Gender Politics* (Palgrave) and co-edited *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desire*. More recently, with Elicia Clements, she co-edited *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Pater Across the Arts* (2010). She is the co-general editor of *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*; the first book in the eight-volume series, her edition of Hopkins's *Oxford Essays and Notes*, was published in 2006. Together with David Latham, she is the co-general editor of *The Collected Works of Walter Pater* for Oxford University Press.

ANTHONY KEARNEY is an independent researcher. Formerly, he taught English in the area of nineteenth-century studies at St Martin's College, Lancaster and La Trobe University, Australia. He has published articles on eighteenth-century fiction and children's literature and on Tennyson, Dickens, Gosse, Hardy, A. C. Bradley, and a biography of John Churton Collins (1986). His interests include the history of English studies and late nineteenth-century aesthetic and critical theory. Most recently he has published articles on Saintsbury and Matthew Arnold in *Victorian Poetry*, on William Mallock in *Notes and Queries*, and on Longinus and late nineteenth-century criticism in *English Studies*. He is currently researching ideas of the competent critic in Victorian debates.

DAVID LATHAM teaches English at York University and edits *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* (for nearly twenty years now). His books, chapters, and

articles are on Victorian and Canadian literature. He is currently completing an edition of William Morris's unpublished poetry. Together with Lesley Higgins, he is the co-general editor of *The Collected Works of Walter Pater* for Oxford University Press.

ADAM LEE has recently completed a D.Phil. in English at the University of Oxford, writing a thesis on 'The Platonism of Walter Pater'. His research interests in the nineteenth century include philology, the reception of classics and philosophy, and narrative ethics. He currently resides in Toronto, Canada.

SARA LYONS is a lecturer in Victorian Literature at the University of Kent. She received her Ph.D. from Queen Mary, University of London, in 2012. Focussing primarily on Swinburne and Pater, her thesis examines the relationship between the emergence of literary aestheticism and contests over the status and implications of religious doubt and the possibility of secularization in late Victorian Britain. She has also published essays on Mathilde Blind (in *Writing Women of the Fin de Siècle: Authors of Change*, ed. by Adrienne Gavin and Carolyn Oulton [2012]); and on Swinburne (in *Algernon Charles Swinburne: Unofficial Laureate*, ed. by Catherine Maxwell and Stefano Evangelista [2013]).

CATHERINE MAXWELL is Professor of Victorian Literature at Queen Mary, University of London. She has published the monographs *The Female Sublime from Milton to Swinburne: Bearing Blindness* (2001), *Swinburne* (2006), and, most recently, *Second Sight: The Visionary Imagination in Late Victorian Literature* (2008). She has co-edited, with Patricia Pulham, *Vernon Lee's Hauntings and Other Fantastic Tales* (2006) and *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics* (2006). She has guest edited the special issue 'Victorian Literature and Classical Myth', *Victorian Review*, 34 (Fall 2008), and, with Stefano Evangelista, the special issue 'The Arts in Victorian Literature' of the *Yearbook of English Studies*, 40.1 and 40.2 (2010). Her co-edited volume *Algernon Charles Swinburne: Unofficial Laureate* is just out and will be reviewed in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

GERALD MONSMAN is Professor of English at the University of Arizona, specializing in nineteenth-century British and Anglo-African literature. Since the 1960s he has published widely on Pater, primarily on his *Imaginary Portraits*. He has edited *Gaston de Latour* (1995) and more recently *Marius the Epicurean* (2008). Other editions and critical works comprise H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (2002) and a monograph on Oxford University's Old Mortality Society (1998).

LENE ØSTERMARK-JOHANSEN, Reader at the University of Copenhagen, is the author of *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (2011) and *Sweetness and Strength: The Reception of Michelangelo in Late Victorian England* (1998), the editor of *Nose Book: Representations of the Nose in Literature and the Arts* (2000) and, with John Law, has edited *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance* (2005). She has also published on Pater's Leonardo and Luca della Robbia essays, on Pater and Heraclitus, and on Pater and Euphuism. She has just completed the first critical edition of Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* to appear in the MHRA Critical Texts series in 2013.

CHARLOTTE RIBEYROL is Lecturer at the Sorbonne University in Paris, where she teaches nineteenth-century English literature and art history. Her main field of research is Hellenism in Victorian literature and painting, more specifically in the works of A. C. Swinburne, Pater, and J. A. Symonds.

HUGH STEVENS is a senior lecturer in the Department of English at University College, London, where he teaches nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. He is the author of *Henry James and Sexuality* (1998) and has recently edited *The Cambridge Companion to Gay and Lesbian Writing*. He is currently working on a book on D. H. Lawrence and planning a series of articles on queer culture from the late nineteenth century to the present; this will consider the development of homosexual identities in Berlin, New York, and London.

SYLVIA VANCE holds a D.Phil. from the University of Oxford, where she taught for a number of years. She now lives in Toronto and is a production editor for academic journals.

