

The Pater Newsletter

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Edited alternately by Billie A. Inman (University of Arizona)
and Laurel Brake (University College of Wales, Aberystwyth)

Editor's Notes

MLA, December, 1983: New York. "Pater's Prose Genres: Invention of Mixed Forms" is the title of the MLA Special Session on Pater. Panelists are William E. Buckler on the poetics of Pater's Prose, Billie Inman on the sense in which Marius is an historical novel, Clyde de L. Ryals on the literary criticism of Pater and Carlyle; and Carolyn S. Williams on Plato and philosophical reverie. The session will take place on Dec. 28, 3:30-4:45 in the N.Y. Hilton Rotunda room.

Richard Dellamora's "Erotic Transformations in Criticism: Pater, Arnold, and Winchermann" is also on the MLA programme in New York. The session will take place Dec. 28 12-1:15, Rm. 524-26 in the Hilton.

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In Memoriam: Professor R.G. Freat. Professor Roland Freat, Professor and Chair person of English at Massey University in New Zealand, and editor of the Marius volume of the forthcoming Collected Pater, died at Interlaken of a heart attack on May 23, at the commencement of a sabbatical term that he had planned to spend at Oxford working on Marius. He was 50. Catherine Runcie writes "He was always generous with his knowledge and ideas, and always enthusiastic about Pater studies". His death is a sad loss for Paterians.

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Grant: The National Endowment for the Humanities offers a "Travel to Collections Grant" which may be of interest to American Paterians. It is "designed for scholars whose research could not progress satisfactorily without consultation of materials at a specific (distant) location" and whose costs (travel, subsistence, lodging, photoduplication costs, etc) are at least \$500 which is the value of the grant. Deadlines for applications are September 15 and January 15. For further information and application materials, write to NEH, Division of Research Programs, Room 319, Old Post Office Building, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506.

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The Editors invite Notes and Queries concerning Pater and reprints of books and articles for review.

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Pater is quoted in a catalogue of Nieman-Marcus, the department store in Dallas. Adding 'class' to a page advertising elegant, candle lamps is "Art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments".

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News

Special Pater numbers of ELT: Robert Langenfeld, Editor of English Language in Transition reports that two special numbers of the journal in 1984 will be devoted to papers on Marius the Epicurean collected by Gerald Monsman and Ira Nadel.

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The Complete Pater: Donald Hill, The General Editor and editor of Vol. I, Studies in the History of the Renaissance, retired early, in July, from his Chair at the University of Michigan and plans to spend the coming year in the library working on Vol. I.

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Works in Progress

Jane Spirit: Queen Mary College, University of London, Supervisor: Dr. A.R. Gard.

My research is biographical and critical. I would like to investigate further Pater's London years to gain a better understanding of the milieu in which he lived as well as of his financial position and his acquaintance to form a useful background to the examination of the literary output of the years 1885 to 1893. I concentrate upon Pater's fiction, the move to London taking place shortly after the publication of Marius the Epicurean in 1885.

Loss of faith is as much a theme in Marius as the acquisition of Christian belief. Marius is not able to reconcile his ideal world and reality, although the possibility of such a union and the consequent issue of religious faith is not denied. The overall tone is hesitant in comparison to the didactic resonance of the "conclusion" to the first edition of Studies in the History of the Renaissance (1873). Pater avoids controversy by suggesting that there may be a religious solution to Marius's sense of isolation amidst flux, but there is no retraction of the "conclusion"'s message that aesthetic experience constitutes an equally valid response to such difficulties.

In The Renaissance Pater had regarded the moral ambiguity of art as an argument for the vital role of the gifted individual, free from society's restrictive mores and thus enhancing the moral and aesthetic taste of his time. The relationship between such a special individual and his society is a theme developed in the imaginary portraits of the later '80s and early '90s. Here individuals with strong if misleading opinions become alienated from their societies and traditional values. The reader may attribute their early deaths to this creative isolation. A story such as "Denys l'Auxerrois" may be read as an indictment of an age which destroys the individual artist but demonstrates its own weakness and hypocrisy in the process. Pater encourages an ambiguous response by maintaining an elegiac mood which allows the portraits to be read either as a celebration of individualistic and aesthetic tendencies or as sombre comment on the futility of individual aspiration.

Pater's life from the middle '80s onwards is increasingly tinged with ambiguity. There seems to be a sincere desire both for religious belief and to uphold the value of the idea of art for its own sake. Both elements can be seen in Gaston de Latour. Pater intended that Gaston should form part of a trilogy along with Marius and probably planned a religious climax to his account of Gaston's life. But this end was never reached and in any case was only to be approached by means of Gaston's realisation that art must be appreciated on its own terms and not according to the interpretation and subsequent debasement of a later society. So Pater uses Gaston to voice a defence of aestheticism within the apparent framework of a religious fiction.

Pater's use of fiction as veiled instruction may explain the schematic characters and constant qualification of ideas which seem to rob the longer fictions of their wholeness. It is a method much more successfully used in the shorter sketches with their economy and subtlety.

Jane Spirit
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Reviews (edited by Hayden Ward)

Moments of Vision by Kenneth Clark. John Murray, 1981. pp. 191. £9.50

By comparison with works like The Gothic Revival, The Nude, and the still popular Civilisation, Moments of Vision will, to some, seem slight: it is, as we are warned in the preface, made up of pieces d'occasion, a collection of lectures given over a period of virtually twenty years. They range in scope from a discussion of the idea of artistic inspiration, which gives the work its title, to observations on the concept of "universal man" from the Italian Renaissance to figures like Franklin and Jefferson. Any such summary makes the work sound irredeemably eclectic; but it is not, for what gives it its unity is that rare combination of a trenchant but urbane scholarship and an almost magical ability for popularising without vulgarising. The merits of works like Civilisation shine through Moments of Vision: so does Kenneth Clark's deep commitment to the values of humanism and to the view that art facilitates the expression of those values. The book embodies, however, a quality, more elusive and less tangible, to which the whole collection stands, as it were, in silent testimony. That quality comes from the tradition of Renaissance scholarship which began in the late nineteenth century and whose true heir Kenneth Clark was. In the lecture on Berenson, he writes "May I add that I was with Mr and Mrs Berenson when they revisited Hampton Court after many years. We stood in front of this picture (wrongly attributed to Giorgione by Berenson) for a long time in silence. At last Mrs Berenson said 'Bernard, we must have been in love'. Mr Berenson remained silent, but nodded gravely, and we walked on." (p.116). Those famous names, the Berensons, the English colony at Florence, Vernon Lee, Pater too, suddenly become real persons in the context of such a tradition.

The recent death of Kenneth Clark and this last work cannot help reminding us that that tradition is over. It depended, for its very success, on a measure of critical and theoretical naivety. It knew what it meant by certain crucial concepts like "artistic", "creative" and "literary", insofar as it refused to ask, fundamentally or systematically, questions about them. Practically, this had the real merit of facilitating historical scholarship, connoisseurship, and an immense amount of detailed investigation into specific works of visual art. Yet it had the drawback, in intellectual, institutional, and academic terms, of isolating literary and art history from, say, the study of politics or semiotics. It is not that, to take the case of politics, Kenneth Clark is unaware of the political elements that underlie the constitution of any notion of art. Indeed the point is made often in the book. But it is not made systematically. So when Clark discusses the topic "Art-History and Criticism as Literature", the concept of literature goes unquestioned. After quoting a paragraph of Ruskin, Clark can assert "No-one, I think, will question that this is both 'literature' and 'criticism'" (p.85). But, of course, that is what everyone is doing nowadays. Yet I, for one, am perfectly willing to exchange this slightly "old-fashioned" flavour for the immensely potent suggestions in which the work abounds. In the lecture on "Iconophobia" the connexion between early Judaic, Christian, and Moslem non-iconic art and the modernist "pure" abstraction of Kandinsky and Mondrian is enormously suggestive: helpful, for example, in explaining the fascination that Byzantium and Byzantine art had for Yeats. The same is true of the essay on Pater. Although delivered as the Brasenose Lecture in Oxford in 1977, it repeats in substance the introductory essay to Kenneth Clark's Fontana edition of The Renaissance of 1961. Yet that repetition serves to remind us of the influence of that edition. To the best of my knowledge, it was Clark who first pointed out how different Pater's aestheticism was from that of Baudelaire and Gautier, how influential the Conclusion was for men like Berenson or Clive Bell. Pater is one of Clark's most cited sources. Pater the historian, Pater the stylist, Pater the philosopher all appear. (So too, incidentally, in another throwaway suggestion made in 1970, does the idea that Pater "had at least one beautiful descendant, the wayward grand-daughter of Gaston de la Tour, Virginia Woolf" [p.155].) It is perhaps fitting that Clark should dwell, in his last work, on writers who formed that tradition of scholarship of which he himself was a true disciple, and to which we are all indebted.

Ian Small
University of Birmingham

The Victorian Experience: The Prose Writers, edited by Richard A. Levine.
Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1982. 239 pp. \$20.95 cloth; \$10.95 paper.

In his biography of Dickens, Edgar Johnson observed that it would be difficult to name a contemporary novelist who, like Dickens, "has so commanded the respect of serious criticism and at the same time reached so widespread an audience." Johnson's observation underscores the distressing fact that in our time the tendency is to assume that "serious criticism" and the widespread audience are incompatible. The difficulty I have with Johnson's observation is with the indistinctness of the easily abused phrase, "serious criticism." What is "serious criticism?" If writing readable, informative, and entertaining criticism for a wider audience prevents one from being taken seriously as an academic critic then we have, ironically, Johnson's own eminently readable, thoroughly researched, and widely received biography of Dickens as proof to the contrary.

The critics who have contributed essays to Richard Levine's most recent edition of The Victorian Experience, this one on the prose writers, the third volume in a series including works on the novelists and the poets, are fortunate indeed to have given a forum that provides them with the opportunity to write about authors each has spent years studying and to write in such a way as to reach that wider audience.

Each essay is a confessional tribute, a self-conscious utterance, an academic event. Each critic was charged by Levine with providing an "impression" of the author, of the "experience" of the author. And because each critic is a recognized authority on his respective subject, the hoped for objective of the book was far more than just an impressionistic cakewalk. What results is an informative exercise in the variability of reader response, essays that excite because of what they tell us about the essayists as well as the subjects of the essays. Levine reminds us in his introduction of Pater's contention in the "Preface" to The Renaissance that one must first engage oneself personally with the work at hand before one can intellectualize it. But it is a lesson lost on those who are unable to admit or to recognize the value and necessity of a direct, personal engagement with the artistic work and its creator and try instead to interpose the intellectualizing process solely, insisting that little of serious value can come from criticism that admits personality into its analysis. Opponents of pluralistic attempts to close the gap between academic literary criticism and the wider audience are fond of attacking the reductive nature of this kind of self-reflexive criticism, troubled by the distressing absence of familiar institutional and ideological interpretive signifiers. Troubled they must be by most of the essays in this book, some of which are even devoid of footnotes. But if reducing a writer to an experience is wrong and if to attempt to communicate that experience is to be judged valueless or, worse, illogical or intellectually naive, then we must ask where is the point at which criticism finally finds the way into the general world of the classroom in a search for the level of discourse at which literature truly joins with life.

There is a virtue in these essays that exists outside traditional, canonically fixed formations of critical discourse, a virtue that some readers, accustomed to criticism more heavily weighted with scholarship and erudition may have difficulty finding. The great danger, as Levine points out, is that applauding the erudite and highly specialized to the exclusion of other methods of criticism is to limit the audience severely and to narrow the literary experience for everyone. The essays in this volume will be of significant value to those interested in expanding the literary experience, in understanding how one highly receptive critical mind reads another highly receptive critical mind, for these essays are as much about the essayists as critical readers as they are about the subjects of the essays.

What the reader never loses sight of in this book is that she is in the company not only of highly respected scholar-writers but also scholar-teachers who day by day must communicate to a wide and varied audience of students their interest and enthusiasm for the subjects they have chosen as focal points of their academic careers. And so we have revealed to us in this volume an uneasy G.B. Tennyson, distressed because the distinguishing feature of Carlyle studies from the 1930's onward continues to be the approach to Carlyle as an influence, when, for Tennyson, the primary "experience" of Carlyle that he wishes to convey to the wider audience is found in Carlyle's verbal brilliance. Bernard Semmel writes a predictably indignant defense of Macaulay against critics, including Mill and other of Macaulay's Victorian contemporaries, who read Macaulay superficially most of the time. Martin Svaglic, ensconced in the confident center of orthodox belief, writes of the

philosophical fascination that he believes Newman has for some modern writers. He focuses his remarks on Newman's sermons and other less frequently read works in a testament to the enduring effect of Newman's works on his own metaphysical grounding. Edward Alexander has a score to settle with the intellectual desperadoes of the 'sixties. His essay on Mill, informative and eneterntaining, gives him an opportunity to demonstrate how far he believes modern liberalism has departed from Mill. It also provides him, in a demonstration of how the critical reader and the text she criticizes are often one in the same, with a text with which to attack "anti-democratic enemies of tolerance and of Mill like Noam Chomsky (and)...Herbert Marcuse" and an unnamed professor at Boston University who epitomized the narrowness of most of the academic activism that Alexander remembers from the 'sixties. "Adventuring with Darwin" is Philip Appleman's explanation of how the appreciation of Darwin that he first developed as a young merchant seaman who "read too much" has grown and of the continuing invocation of Darwin's work, especially among professional biologists fired by continuing controversies between scientists and moralists that double back upon themselves in an unbroken sequence of events extending from the Victorian era. R.H. Super argues for a reevaluation of the entire Arnold canon, with a preference on his part for the superior position in the Arnold hierarchy of the writings of his last twelve years (1876-1888). Francis Townsend confesses how he was recreated with eyes that finally could see after his early reading of Ruskin and of the fascination that Ruskin as a perpetual autobiographer continues to have for him. Townsend's contagious enthusiasm for his subject compounds the essay's informational value.

Of particular interest to students of Pater's work is Gerald Monsman's discussion of "Pater Redivivus," a reworking of many of the ideas in his recent book on Pater's art of autobiography. There is an allaying consciseness and convincing clarity in this essay, as Monsman argues again for a structuralist interpretation of the ambivalent immediateness and multiplicity of meaning of a Pater who consistently deconstructs and reconstructs himself in his essays and portraits. Monsman's own deconstructive reading of Pater becomes itself the major subject of this essay, as he demonstrates how the texts of Pater's works turn back upon the many figures described in the essays and portraits, which then, turn back upon Pater himself, turning back, yet again, in the pages of this essay, upon Monsman the sympathetic critic reading Pater in yet another time frame. "A Prince of Court Painters," "Diaphaneite," and Marius are deconstructed and reconstructed by Monsman as separate portraits of Pater whose authorial presence Monsman finds at the center of each work's multidimensional core of meaning. In an admirably frank and self-assured demonstration of critical honesty, Monsman admits to carrying on his own education in public in this and other writings on Pater, leaving us to ponder whether he has, in fact, recreated Pater's texts anew or whether his own critical identity has been recast instead by his extensive study of Pater's work. Monsman's account of his academic involvement with Pater's works exemplifies the general purpose of this collection of essays: to convince a widespread audience of the worth of a close personal engagement with the great Victorian prose writers.

Franklin E. Court
Northern Illinois University

Recent Publications

(compiled and annotated by Laurel Brake and Bernard Richards)

Sir Harold Acton, "Milestones", THES, (June 1983), p. 12.

Sir Harold Acton, a famous aesthete of the 1920s, and one of the principal figures in Martin Green's Children of the Sun: A Narrative of "Decadence" in England after 1918 (New York, 1976), looks back at the influence exercised by The Renaissance when he was a schoolboy of ten. Adults now, who might find Pater impossible at three times that age, will gasp in astonishment and disbelief, but one should remember that Harold's brother William said, when a mere fifteen, "I think the velvets of the Cinquecento are to be preferred to those of any other period." Since the Actons and their circle lived in Florence, and could have stood in as models for James's aesthetic Anglo-American expatriates, the young Harold had a head start over the young black of ten who might want to burn with a hard gemlike flame in the Bronx. Even so Acton admits that at 10 it was "too soon to speak

of a 'variegated dramatic life.'" What he got from Pater, in addition to a way of looking at art, was the "underlying message" that we should never acquiesce "in a facile orthodoxy." There is something refreshing about Acton's piece; one feels that the 10 year old who reads Pater instead of Henry and Captain Marryat although he might be an insufferable little brat is more in tune with literature than the scholar in the air-conditioned nightmare.
(BR)

Paul Barolsky. "Pater's Noble Vision", Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies, 3 (May, 1983), 9-18.

Goethe's notion of unified culture is viewed as the foundation of the notion of harmony in The Renaissance, with Pater seeking to maintain this sense of cultural unity while "expressing the 'perpetual change' of modernity". Stressing that The Renaissance is a book "written to be read from multiple shifting points of view", Barolsky implicitly compares Pater's prose of "abstract fantasia" with that of a passage from Hugo's Notre Dame de Paris (Book 3) and with Baudelaire's variation of it in his Salon of 1846; he concludes by commenting on the "sound art criticism" in Pater's description of Mona Lisa.

----- "Kenneth Clark and the Vision of Criticism", VQR (Summer 1983), 532-39. About half of this review article on Clark's Moments of Vision is devoted to Pater whose influence on Clark's and Berenson's pictorial vision is shown to lie behind their critical tradition - of "art history and criticism as literature".

----- "Renaissance Variations on Theme by Keats". University of Hartford Studies in Literature, 15:1 (1983), 1-11. Pater constitutes part of two traditions which Barolsky posits, from Keats on the Giorgionesque in the Grecian Urn ode through D.G. Rossetti on Giorgione's A Venetian Pastoral through Pater in "The School of Giorgione" to T. Sturge Moore's poem on Titian's Bacchanal; and from Keats' responses to Botticelli in the Urn ode through Rossetti's echo of Keats in 'For Spring by Sandro Botticelli' to Berenson (influenced by Pater) on Signorelli.

----- "Botticelli's Primavera and the Tradition of Dante". Konsthistorisk. Tidskrift, 52:1 (1983), 1-6. Acting on a suggestion of Pater's, that Botticelli's art is the true analogue to the visionary writings of Dante, Barolsky explores the relation of the Primavera to the Earthly Paradise and Botticelli's illustrations of the Dante.

Steven Connor. "Myth as Multiplicity in Walter Pater's Greek Studies and Denys L'Auxerrois", RES, 34 (Feb 1983), 28-42.

Steven Connor re-examines Pater's debt to the German mythographer Ludwig Preller and to Pater's contemporary, Max Müller, and shows the distinctive ways in which his myth-study influenced the writing of "Denys l'Auxerrois". He avails himself of manuscript, periodical, and revised versions of "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone" to chart Pater's changing conception of myth, and takes issue with William Shuter's view of Pater's debt to Preller and Gerald Monsman's interpretation of Denys' ambiguity. Pater attempts to mingle conscious and unconscious presentation of myth; he concentrates on periods of myths' transitions and uncertainty.

Franklin E. Court. "The Matter of Pater's 'Influence' on Bernard Berenson: Setting the Record Straight." ELT, 26 (1983).

A discussion of the influence of Pater on Berenson's short story "The Third Category" in the Harvard Monthly. Court then proceeds to look at the way in which Pater taught Berenson to regard the living of life as a kind of sacrament and the perception of the art-critic and the spectator of art as preferably non-pedantic. Pater was a critic much to be recommended, in Berenson's eyes, because he put the spectator "into a state of eager anticipation." Berenson felt, after re-reading Marius in 1942, that it was his own "spiritual autobiography."
(BR)

Richard Dellamora. "An Essay in Sexual Liberation, Victorian Style: Walter Pater's 'Two Early French Stories'" in The Literary Vision of Homosexuality, ed. by Stuart Kellog. New York: Haworth, 1983, pp. 139-149.

Richard Dellamora notes that while Pater withdrew the conclusion for the second edition of The Renaissance (1877) by November 1876, he also added to the first chapter passages centred on male friendship, in connection with The Friendship of Amis and Amile, the medieval French romance. In this interesting piece, Dellamora does nothing less than challenge the common view that Pater criticizes Victorian religious beliefs and social mores in his earliest work up to and including The Renaissance (1873), then spent the rest of his life backing down. Rather Pater is thought to have made "both more explicit and more nuanced" his view of the "value of the body in human relationships and of the importance of libidinal elements in Christianity and in Medieval culture".

Robert K. Martin. "Parody and Homage: The Presence of Pater in Dorian Gray," The Victorian Newsletter, no. 63 (Spring 1983), 15-18.

Ernst Bendz, John Pick and Christopher Nassaar have already indicated the importance of Pater's influence on Dorian Gray. Martin explores the possibility that it may be a parody, rather than a plagiarizing or a mis-reading of Pater. Martin has put his finger on an acute problem of tone in Dorian Gray and indeed other aesthetic and decadent writing. His instinctive responses are very like the ones I experienced on first reading A Rebours - that very large tracts of it were satirical, fantastic and closer to jen d'esprit than earnest and deeply committed aestheticism. (BR)

William F. Shuter. "Pater on Plato: 'Subjective' or 'sound'?" PSt, 5 (Sept. 1982) 215-228.

Bill Shuter's query is bound to arise in the wake of Richard Jenkyns' low opinion of the Victorian views of ancient Greece, but Shuter argues that Plato and Platonism constitutes a valid "introduction to the more methodical scholarship of his time" some of which he identifies and describes. This is a careful source study which reveals that most of what readers might judge Paterian has its origins in his sources.

Claus Uhlig. "Poetik der Reminiszenz. Pater und die literarische Methode einer Spätzeit" in Theorie de Literarhistorie. Prinzipien und Paradigem. G.Lit. Crit. 209. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1982. 230-256.

The March, 1983 number of Critical Inquiry (vol. 9) includes five articles on "The Function of Arnold at the Present Time". The debate raises a variety of questions and judgments which relate to Pater and Pater Studies (Dickstein briefly discusses Pater):

Eugene Goodheart. "Arnold at the Present Time." 451-68.

George Levine. "Matthew Arnold: The Artist in the Wilderness". 469-482

Morris Dickstein. "Arnold Then and Now: The Use and Misuse of Criticism". 483-507.

Stuart M. Tave. "Goodheart's Arnold". 509-15.

Eugene Goodheart. "Replies to Stuart Tave and George Levine". 515-16.

Reviews

Laurel Brake. 'Victorian Prose' in YWES, 1980, 61 (1982), 320+334. Includes reviews of the year's articles on Pater and of the following books.

The Victorians and Ancient Greece, by Richard Jenkyns. Blackwell £15.

"Jenkyns' scorn of Aestheticism and his vilification of Pater and Wilde are untrammelled, and his intolerance in this respect leads to intellectual crudity and lacunae which sit uneasily beside his erudition...Notwithstanding these persistent and irritating qualities, the range of this book, its magpie variety and quantity of material, assure its importance."

On the Edge of Paradise. A.C. Benson: The Diarist, by David Newsome. Murray. £17.50
"Newsome's fascinating and stylish biography" of Pater's biographer. "Although Benson never knew Pater, his diaries for the period of the writing of his Pater biography provide new information".

The Renaissance, ed. by Donald L. Hill. U.Cal. \$25.
"The considerable merit of this volume lies in the editor's identification of many of Pater's sources, his scholarly commentary on more general issues, and the collection of textual variants."

Walter Pater's Art of Autobiography, by Gerald Monsman, Yale. £7.80.
Monsman "isolates within Pater's work the same themes of artistic self-consciousness which are present in ... Borges, Beckett, and Robbe-Grillet. Alternating discussion of psychological and textual themes, Monsman moves from a suggestive first chapter on 'Criticism as Creation' to one on Pater's first three books, from 'Parent and Child' to a fourth chapter on Gaston...and to a last essay on 'Beauty and Evil' in 'Emerald Uthwart' and 'Apollo in Picardy' which are viewed as 'covert commentaries' on Pater's incapacity to finish Gaston."

Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage, ed. by R.M. Seiler. RKP. £14.25.
"Seiler's resolve to maintain a balance in his selection of admirers and detractors results in his omission of important reviews" but "he has unearthed much obscure material of interest;...The introduction and the index are full and painstaking, and the whole a rich, informative, and convenient one volume compendium."

Pater and his Early Critics, by Franklin E. Court. U. Vict.
"Court's attempt to 'place' contemporary criticism of Pater in the life and work of each critic is frustrated by limitations of space and the conception of the project".

Walter Pater, comp. and ed. by Franklin E. Court. NIU. \$25.
"Court is silently selective on a significant scale" but "Many of the full annotations will be useful to scholars".

Ellis R. Hall. Selected Writings of Walter Pater, ed. with introd. by Harold Bloom. N.Y.: Columbia U.P. 1981; Walter Pater's Reading, by Billie A. Inman. N.Y.: Garland. 1981; Walter Pater: An Imaginative Sense of Fact, ed. by Philip Dodd. London: Cass. 1981. The Arnoldian, X (Spring, 1983), 36-44.

The current spate of critical appraisal is lifting Pater from the ranks of the obscure to place him among the solid eminent Victorians. In his introductory essay Bloom invites us to find prophetic intimations in Pater; the Freudian approach is central to Bloom's understanding of Pater and colors the collection in which the Imaginary Portraits and the mature essays predominate. Billie Andrew Inman's book represents the first major systematic attempt to link the material which Pater was absorbing to his own intellectual output. The results are illuminating and raise many new and fascinating questions. 'WP&R' is not just an essential reference tool, but also an invitation to scholars to...explore still uncharted regions of research. In the introductory essay to the Dodd collection, Monsman cleverly manipulates Pater's theory of style to support his own assertion that the principal way forward in Pater studies lies along the lines set out by Bloom and J. Hillis Miller. Billie Inman cites over two dozen influences that could have acted on Pater during the composition of the 'conclusion', and most fascinating is the tracking down of its more evocative phrases to works of contemporary science. Ian Small's thought-provoking essay addresses the wider issue of how we should view Pater's critical statements; significantly it deals with Pater as a critic reacting to the immediacy of his own time as do contribution by Bassett, Bullen, and Brake. R.M. Seiler's bibliographical essay, "Walter Pater Studies: 1970-1980" "is selective, in that it has eschewed the more speculative contributions to the critical canon".

Jennifer Uglow. Walter Pater and the French Tradition. by John J. Conlon AUP. £12.95 in TLS, 3 June, 1983, 578.

"There are no startling revelations, but by the end one has a new sense of the way Pater's French scholarship penetrated his work". Conlon's particular interest in the "Romantic tradition" gives his comments on the fiction a refreshingly individual tone.

The book offers "useful, stimulating, closely textured criticism, but it contains a better study of the French influence on Pater which requires detailed reading of particular texts, than of Pater as a 'French influence' on his time, which requires broad charting of movements of taste".

Dissertations

"Dante's Victorians: The Use of Dante by Carlyle, Tennyson and Rossetti", by Thomas L. Cooksey. Order # DA 8308391. Univ. of Oregon, 1982. 380pp.

This study explores the new nineteenth-century consciousness of concern for spiritual and intellectual wholeness through examining the use of Dante in the period.

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"Victorian Word-Painting and Narrative: Toward the Blending of Genres," by R.L. Flaxman. Order # DA 8228252. Brown, 1982. Treats word-painting in Dickens and Tennyson, and "suggests that word painting contributes to the attrition of narrative and the blending of the genres of prose and poetry..and may amend Lessing's famous distinction between poetry and painting."

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"Decadence, The Ambivalent Aesthetic: Oscar Wilde & David Bowie," by Andrea Lee Hattersley. Order # DA 8312225. Univ. of California, 1983.

"Delineates some of the psychological and societal factors that constitute what is referred to as 'decadent art'....the first section lays the foundation by discussing ideology, 'meaning' and ambivalence, and the context of 1890's British aesthetic decadence....the second section focuses on Oscar Wilde & Beardsley's illustration of Salome...Insights into aesthetic decadence developed in the first two sections are... applied to our contemporary mass culture."

Stop Press

Our Japanese correspondent writes that the twenty-second annual meeting of the Japan Pater Society took place Oct. 29 at Daito Bunka University in Tokyo. Three papers were given:

- 1) Seigo Nakai. "Wandering Gods Whom Pater saw in the Middle Ages": "Pater's thought is sometimes dialectical. Apollo and Dionysus, however, have some similarity in their dark imagery of death, evil, and craziness. Pater's receptive mind is based on his characteristic conception of life. His broadness is able to develop the pagan images into an idea of mystic identification of martyrdom through the violence that human emotion conceals within. Pater's efforts to harmonize Christianity with the pagan tradition appear in the two imaginary portraits of Apollo and Dionysus, which show his genius".

- 2) Isamu Sawai. "Pater's Theory of Imagination: on Leonardo da Vinci".

- 3) Hiroko Hagiwara: "From Marius The Epicurean to 'Pascal'": "Pater's last years show four important things: he determined to stay as an Anglican...he wrote a great number of reviews and essays to enrich the journalism of the 1880s; he enjoyed London society; his last essay 'Pascal', suggests his identity as a kind of Christian humanist. Marius's religion of Numa and Pater's traditional Anglicanism may be considered the same via Roman Catholicism." These were followed by a special lecture entitled "Death and Literature" by Mr Yoshimi Kudo in which he drew on "The Child in the House" and "Emerald Uthwart". Mr Kudo is the translator of Marius the Epicurean (in 1925) and Imaginary Portraits (in 1930).

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Hiroko Hagiwara's piece "The Correspondence of Walter Pater and Marc-André Raffolovich" will appear in March, 1984 in the Daito Bunka Review 1983. It is a chapter from her book Walter Pater and his Circle which is in print now in Japanese.
