

# **THE PATER NEWSLETTER**

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WALTER PATER SOCIETY

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



As suggested in my previous Editor's Note, more unpublished letters by Pater are floating around in the world's archives, and I am delighted to be able to publish two new letters, from Pater to the French writer and critic Paul Bourget, well contextualized by Bénédicte Coste in a long essay about Pater's friendship with Bourget. If we could make hitherto unpublished letters by Pater a regular feature of the newsletter, much would be gained, so let me immediately express an invitation to all Pater scholars (and others) to be aware of such letters: we are, indeed, very keen to publish them, and what more obvious forum than the newsletter?

We are likewise very fortunate to have a substantial piece of new research on an aspect of Pater hitherto completely ignored, namely Pater and the sense of smell. Last issue featured Elicia Clements's fine piece on Pater and music, and I was very pleased that Catherine Maxwell took up my invitation to contribute a significant part of her fascinating new research project on aestheticism and fragrance. The past decades have seen publications on Pater and vision, Pater and sound, Pater and touch and most recently, on Pater and taste, but most Paterians will, I suspect, feel as guilty as I do of having ignored an important aspect of Pater, when they read Catherine's convincing analysis of Paterian "flair." A further bonus may well be an addition to our language: the term *flaireur* has now gained a permanent place in my vocabulary, and I shall do my best to spread the word.

Ken Daley, our regular bibliographer, recently developed an interest in full-text versions of Pater's writings available online. When invited to write something on the subject, he complied, and the result is a thought-provoking piece on Pater and book design, the attractions and pitfalls of the digital archive, and the gradual loss of printed nineteenth-century books which must make any reader and teacher of Pater stop and think for a while.

Ken's piece also serves as a wonderfully stimulating overture to the contribution which follows immediately after, namely Lesley Higgins and David Latham's presentation of the Pater Prospectus, the new Collected Works, due to appear from Oxford University Press over the next decade or so. It occurs to me that, like any good Victorian periodical, we have now introduced a serial, a cliff hanger, which continues from issue to issue: some six months ago, we published the preliminary proposal for a new collected works. We are now able to reveal both a publisher and two General Editors. The spring issue 2013 may well reveal volume editors, and who knows what the autumn issue 2013 will reveal ... I think all Paterians are thrilled and delighted at the good news and at the thought that there will now – finally – be an alternative to the 1910 Library Edition, infinitely superior with respect to both critical and textual apparatus. And then there will be both a database and an online version as well. Read more in this issue.

Not all readers of *Marius the Epicurean* may have thought of Pater's only finished novel as a potential subject for dramatization, but for David Overly a number of the issues raised by Pater invited an airing on the stage. He has spent years turning Pater's prose into dialogue for the stage, a task, as he himself puts it, similar to dramatizing a dissertation. He has written a piece about the process and about his choice of form, opening up new ways of reading and teaching Pater's *Marius*.

Pater is still a popular focus for conferences and workshops, and I am very happy to be able to publish a call for papers for a major international Pater conference at the Sorbonne in Paris in the summer of 2014. The most recent IWPS conference took place at Rutgers University in the summer of 2006, and while Pater panels have featured at NAVSA conferences, and at aestheticism conferences in Montpellier and in Exeter, it is unquestionably time for another IWPS conference. I think we are all very grateful that Bénédicte Coste, Anne-Florence Gillard-Estrada, Martine Lambert-Charbonnier, and Charlotte Ribeyrol have taken on the challenging task of organizing such a conference in such an attractive location. Let us hope for a vibrant and stimulating range of papers.

Charlotte Ribeyrol also, very altruistically, took on the role of producing a conference report from the highly successful encounter between Paterians and classicists, organized at the University of Bristol by Charles Martindale, Elizabeth Prettejohn, and Stefano Evangelista in the summer. A much-needed dialogue about Pater's use of the classics was begun during two densely packed days;

hopefully, more such encounters will follow. For those not able to participate, there is a full report of the events, stressing the need that Paterians draw on the expertise of classical scholars in order to maximize our understanding of Pater's works.

And finally, the book review section has grown: now six lengthy book reviews reflect recent events in scholarship, both in terms of monographs, critical editions, and books with substantial chapters on Pater. The book review section is a clear testimony to the central place of Pater in current research, and it is encouraging to see that so many different publishers now have Pater on their lists.

The *Pater Newsletter* has undergone a change in design, you may have noticed. As we have moved production from Las Vegas to Toronto, a new black-and-white austerity has set in, thanks to Sylvia Vance, who will be our new designer of the journal. A very warm welcome to her; we much look forward to working with Sylvia on strengthening both the form and the contents of the newsletter. We have decided to reclaim Pater's British spelling by changing the reference style of the journal, so please note that in the future, submissions should follow the British MHRA style sheet, downloadable for free at [www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml](http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml).

One final, but not unimportant thing: we aim at publishing the journal twice a year, and with increased costs for typesetting, printing and postage it is absolutely essential that you continue your financial support of the journal. Could I, in fact, kindly ask you to renew your subscription on the website [www.paternewsletter.org](http://www.paternewsletter.org) within the not too distant future, unless you have paid your subscription within the past six months? Your contribution would be much appreciated.

## ESSAYS

Bénédicte Coste

## Two Unpublished Letters from Walter Pater to Paul Bourget



ALTHOUGH WALTER PATER'S LONGSTANDING interest in French literature is well known, his relationships with French writers have been less documented. His association with critic and novelist Paul Bourget (1852–1935), for example, has remained largely unexplored due to lack of material. In the Bourget archive at the Bibliothèque Fels in Paris are two letters from Pater to Bourget that are transcribed here. Before discussing them, some presentation of Bourget may be useful.

Born to a middle-class family and educated in Paris, Bourget became a journalist and a man of letters. A noted traveller and cosmopolitan,<sup>1</sup> he was elected to the *Académie française* in 1894, and settled with his wife Minnie in a *hôtel particulier* in Paris.<sup>2</sup> From January 1896 to the 1930s, the Bourgets divided their time between Paris and Costebelle on the French Riviera, where they purchased La Villa des Palmiers.<sup>3</sup> In Hyères and in Paris, they lavishly entertained the cosmopolitan intelligentsia, including Henry James and Edith Wharton.<sup>4</sup>

In the early 1880s, when Pater knew him, Bourget was famous for his *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (1883) and *Cruelle énigme* (1885).<sup>5</sup> Originally, he had poetic inclinations and published his first volume of verse, *La vie inquiète*, in 1875.<sup>6</sup> In 1879, he started to contribute on a regular basis to newspapers and journals, most of them republican and liberal.<sup>7</sup> Journalism allowed him to publish literary critical essays in Juliette Adam's influential *Nouvelle Revue*, which he afterwards collected as *Essais de psychologie contemporaine*. The first series of the collection on nineteenth-century novelists gained critical acclaim, and was completed in 1885

with *Nouveaux essais de psychologie contemporaine*.<sup>8</sup> Bourget's approach to literature was founded on a careful analysis of the literary works and a portrait of their authors as a preliminary to conveying his opinions to his readers – a method not unlike that of Pater.

Bourget's method also relied on the nascent discipline of modern psychology employed in his analysis of the writings of Baudelaire, Renan, Flaubert, Taine, Barrès, and Stendhal. All testified to the progressive social decomposition within Bourget's relativistic and pessimistic vision of society. The first of his essays, devoted to Baudelaire, attempted to trace the cause of Western decadence, which Bourget saw as stemming from the attrition of people apt to engage in social life. This social theory was linked to Roman decadence and gave rise to his influential theory of the literary Decadence, exemplified by Baudelaire. *Essais* had a lasting influence on all *fin-de-siècle* European writers and philosophers, including Nietzsche.

Decadence was not a new topic, nor was it a novelty for Bourget. In his 1876 *Notes sur quelques poètes contemporains*,<sup>9</sup> he had discussed it, taking part in a debate that went back to political discussions of the 1860s about the nation. In *Edel*, his second volume of poetry (1878), Bourget had searched the hearts of young men and confessed after Verlaine: “Je suis un homme né sur le tard d'une race, / Et mon âme, à la fois exaspérée et lasse, / Sur qui tous les aïeux pèsent étrangement, / Mêlé le scepticisme à l'attendrissement.”<sup>10</sup> Along with his *Essais*, such verses show Bourget's gift for seizing trends and giving them a palatable form, along with his ability for disseminating such words as “dandysme,” “dilettantisme,” “cosmopolitisme,” “pessimisme,” and “nihilisme.”

As for *Cruelle énigme*, credited with Bourget's overnight fame, it was the story of an affair between the young Catholic, Hubert de Liauran, and the married Madame de Sauve. Hubert, who cannot part with his mistress, forgives her quick, inexplicable affair with La Croix-Firmin, a young nobleman; his indefectible attachment to her constitutes the “cruel enigma” as the novel closes on his mother's endless questions. Like all Bourget's fiction of the time, it stages upper-class people enjoying the comforts of modern luxury marred by their predilection for self-examination. Up to *The Disciple* (1889), Bourget staged recurring characters after Balzac's *Comédie humaine*, in an attempt to map the different psychological states of a limited segment of individuals. Most of his novels or novellas have a marked autobiographical dimension, as they include transcriptions of his own diary or notebooks, and explicitly engage in issues Bourget was most familiar with, such as un/faithful relationships, economics, and gender.

Describing his novels as “simple anatomy drawings,” Bourget saw himself as a moralist keen on dissecting the heart’s foibles and what he terms “our multiple selves.” A reader of Taine’s *De l’Intelligence* (1870), and of Claude Bernard’s *Introduction à l’étude de la médecine expérimentale* (1865), he aimed at integrating in his fiction the result of nineteenth-century science, including psychology as exemplified by the writings of T. Ribot on an individual’s various selves.<sup>11</sup>

At the time, Bourget was an agnostic, although he had been baptized a Catholic. In 1889, he went back to Catholicism and published *Le Disciple*, another turning-point in the French literature of the 1880s. Its 200 pages engage with the responsibility of philosophers as regards their writings.<sup>12</sup> Robert Greslou is a young student and a private teacher to the Marquis de Jussat. Born into the working classes, incapable of mastering the theoretical knowledge imparted by his master, the austere Adrien Sixte, Greslou deliberately seduces Charlotte, the daughter of his employers, but is unable to prevent her suicide (which is mistaken for murder). Greslou’s innocence is established by young Jussat, who eventually kills the man he thinks responsible for dishonoring his sister. Sixte, who had appeared in previous texts, was explicitly modeled on H. Taine, who sent an aggrieved letter to Bourget and discontinued his relationship with him.

As most critics contend, the novel signaled the return to the issue of moral responsibility.<sup>13</sup> According to Victor Giraud, “Few books had such an action and exerted such disruption on souls and on consciousnesses.”<sup>14</sup> In *Mensonges* (1887), Bourget had already underlined the responsibility of guides and questioned modern culture’s ambiguous relation to religion.<sup>15</sup> *The Disciple* allowed him to expose the failings of philosophical positivism through the figure of Sixte, and to reject any prophet-like figure in the name of personal moral responsibility. From then on, he espoused increasingly conservative and traditionalistic views on society, marriage and moral issues.<sup>16</sup> After his marriage in 1890, he was careful to sever his links to most of his liberal friends of the 1880s.

From the beginning of his career, Bourget was much concerned with the state of mind of French youth;<sup>17</sup> his *Essais* and most of his writings were explicitly intended for young men. The emphasis on the responsibility of teachers and guides towards their pupils and followers was also an issue that Pater deemed important. As an educator he had been vilified for the supposedly bad influence of *The Renaissance* on “young men,” an attack that still resonates in *Gaston de Latour*.<sup>18</sup> If there is scant record of his acquaintance with Bourget, Pater was somehow

attentive to the issues that the Frenchman raised as far as they met with his own preoccupations. Echoes of Bourget appear in Pater's later fiction; however, Pater was less interested in contemporary mores than in their overall cultural context.

The two letters published here bear only the day of the week: it is, in fact, hard to know which one is the first and which one is the second. One is dated 2 January, the other 2 August. Both were written at Bradmore Road where Pater lived until August 1885. The 2 January letter measures 10.1 by 12.7 cm and is penned on light gray paper; the August letter, 11.2 by 17.9 cm, on white paper that corresponds to Lawrence Evans's description of Pater's stationery at the time.<sup>19</sup> Neither has an envelope, but there are good reasons for reading them in chronological order, and dating them 1884.

2 Bradmore Road<sup>20</sup>

Oxford

Jan 2

My dear Mr Bourget,

I ought to have thanked you earlier for so kindly sending me your most interesting volume of Essays. But it reached me at a moment when I had much work on hand and I was forced to put it aside to enjoy at leisure. I have just finished a careful reading of it with great delight at the acuteness of its analysis, the variety of its appreciations, its mastery of great masters in literature, and the finished hand and power of its style, so rare, alas! in contemporary English prose.

It is certainly more stimulation of thought than any book I have read for some time past, and I feel that I shall go back to its pages, again and again when I need intellectual stimulus, with full confidence of finding it there. Your essay on Stendhal, especially, brought me many new lights upon him, and has ~~taken~~ already taken me all through Le "Rouge et Noir," with even greater interest than of old.

I hope you will visit Oxford again before long, or at any rate

to have the pleasure of meeting you in Paris, some time this year.  
 With best wishes for you on its reception [?], I am

Very truly yours

Walter Pater

Since Pater is especially convinced by Bourget's piece on Stendhal, which made him reread *Le Rouge et le noir*, one can assume that he had received the first edition of the *Essais* published in mid-October 1883. In his invaluable study of Bourget's life and writings, Mansuy points out that the last version of the "foreword" to *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* was penned in Oxford,<sup>21</sup> and that the choice of putting the piece on Stendhal at the end of the volume was also made in Oxford, where Bourget stayed from mid-May to 30 June 1883, at the Randolph Hotel, trying to give shape to his *Essais* and to write a novella, *L'irréparable* (Mansuy 372). Did he discuss his future book with Pater, and did Pater suggest some changes as regards the order of chapters? Pater appears especially convinced by the book version, and also bemoans the lack of good English prose – something he would address in both "Style" (1888) and the 1889 "Postscript" to *Appreciations*. He expresses his intention to see Bourget in Paris later in the year, or in Oxford, although there is no evidence of a meeting between the writers.

Notwithstanding Edmond de Goncourt's unreliable information,<sup>22</sup> Bourget knew Great Britain and some of its inhabitants. A regular contributor to *The Academy* from January 1880, he chronicled the intellectual life of France in his "*Lettre de Paris*," and often traveled there, as to Oxford in 1883, to complete his works and to find new material for studies on Britain. In the substantial chapter "*Sensations d'Oxford*,"<sup>23</sup> first published in the *Nouvelle Revue* on October 1, 1883, Bourget gives a detailed portrait of Oxford and tries to introduce his French readers to local mores. He devotes some sixty pages to describing the Gothic architecture, the daily routine of the students, fellows and dons, and he is attentive to gender and class relations between students and locals. He carefully describes social events such as Commemoration Day, which he attended, or the Oxford Union, to which he had obtained temporary membership and the decoration of which impressed him (because it highlights the sense and presence of the past). Reporting the ongoing scholarly conversations in which he took part, he mentions

three Oxonians: “One of us is a Berkeleyan, who does not believe in the existence of matter. Another is a positivist to whom metaphysical questions seem nonsense, which opinion however does not prevent his never talking of anything else. A third is an aesthetic [sic] of remarkable discernment who expounds international works of art by a profound philosophy.”<sup>24</sup> The last don so much resembles Pater that there can be no doubt that Bourget met him in Oxford, possibly through Ingram Bywater and Mark Pattison, both of whom he befriended.<sup>25</sup> According to Michael Levey, Pater was depressed but remained in Oxford until the end of July;<sup>26</sup> he may have made the acquaintance of Bourget at the time.

Pater’s letter must therefore be dated 1884, if one considers that the reference to his labors refers to the writing of *Marius the Epicurean*, still unfinished at the time.

2 Bradmore Road<sup>27</sup>  
Oxford

Aug 2nd

My dear Mr Bourget,

I hoped to have thanked you before for so kindly sending me your new volume. It interested me much to see your hand in a new kind of work, and I must congratulate you on what seems to me your great success in it. I put it with the best things I know in French fiction – itself so perfect after its kind, and mean to take it away, for second reading, among my summer-holiday books. I had some hopes of seeing you in London[.] Miss Paget has since furnished me with this address to which I send this. I leave Oxford, for some places in Sussex, on Thursday, and hope to return home somewhere about September 15th. Should you be in England, and inclined to ~~be in~~ spend a few days in Oxford, after that date, it would be a great pleasure to me to see you here, if you will occupy my spare bed-room. In that case, please send a line addressed to me here.

Very sincerely yours  
Walter Pater.

In this letter Pater thanks Bourget for sending his “new volume,” probably a novel, since Pater ranks it with “the best things I know in French fiction,” which may be *L’irréparable*, published in May 1884. *L’irréparable* is the story of Noémie Hurtrel, a young girl of advanced views, more or less neglected by her parents and educated in the cosmopolitan atmosphere that so fascinated Bourget. Ignorant of men’s dissembling ways, she is raped by Hughes Taravan while her mother is conducting an affair with the young Marquis de Haën. Noémie will not tell her mother what happened. She becomes ill; both women go to Cannes, where they meet Sir Richard Wadham, a young nobleman educated in Oxford who has become a Rossetti devotee.<sup>28</sup> Noémie falls in love with the young, reclusive painter, but decides against marrying him and instead accepts Alayrac, a young French nobleman she does not love. She confides the extent of her misery to Madame de Tillières before killing herself on her wedding day. What she cannot face is the memory of her “irreparable” rape. That Pater enjoyed the novel remains to be seen, considering his response to Moore’s *Confessions of a Young Man*.<sup>29</sup> But if he read them, he may have been sensitive to Bourget portraying the young Oxonians as “Greek athletes” in his “Sensations.”<sup>30</sup>

In his letter, Pater also mentions Violet Paget. A close friend from 1881, Vernon Lee was also a contributor to the *Nouvelle Revue* at the same time as Bourget.<sup>31</sup> They may have met in Paris, before Bourget, delighting in his newly-acquired fame, visited her in Florence in 1885. It seems that in 1884 the three of them saw one another: Pater mentions having gone to London, probably visiting Lee (who provided him with Bourget’s address). If he mentions going on vacation to Sussex from the next Thursday (i.e., from 7 August) to 15 September as a relief after completing *Marius*, Pater also invites Bourget to spend some time in Oxford in his spare bedroom. It remains unknown whether Bourget accepted that invitation, suggestive of a certain degree of intimacy.<sup>32</sup> If they did not meet in Oxford, they possibly met in London where Bourget was from 15 July to September 1884, partly to acquaint himself with Rossetti’s paintings,<sup>33</sup> partly to study British mores, publishing the results of his investigations as “*Notes sur l’Angleterre*” in the *Journal des Débats* in autumn 1884.<sup>34</sup> His excursions out of the capital included trips to Canterbury and Oxford at the beginning of August.

The 2 August letter was discovered in Bourget’s 1877 edition of *The Renaissance* – certainly a present from Pater<sup>35</sup> – which also contained a description by Bourget of a “*Note sur les Rossettis vus chez M. Graham. 25 Grosvenor Place.*”<sup>36</sup> During his

ten-week stay in London, Bourget became more acquainted with the aristocratic and artistic circles, and met writers and artists including Oscar Wilde, John Singer Sargent, and Henry James.<sup>37</sup> His "*Préraphaélisme*" contains descriptions of the visits he paid to artists and collectors' houses, including the Rothschilds, and also mentions the work of "the most delicate of contemporary prose-writers, M. Walter Pater, whose book on the Renaissance contains the twenty best pages ever devoted to Leonardo da Vinci."<sup>38</sup> His Oxford impressions displayed a respectful appraisal of Rossetti, of whose poetry Bourget seems to have been especially fond, but his visit to London allowed him fully to assess his paintings along with British political life.<sup>39</sup>

The rest of Bourget's acquaintance with Pater remains obscure. Between 1879 and 1883, Bourget wrote a sketchy diary, now at the Fels Library,<sup>40</sup> which mentions some of his ideas or projects, the books he read, the writers he met, the social events he attended, as well as personal feelings.<sup>41</sup> The diary stops abruptly and resumes in October 1883, when Bourget returned from his first trip to Bayreuth.<sup>42</sup> On an uncertain date in December 1885, he penned one final poem and ended his diary. Unfortunately, the diary gives no information about his Oxford stay in 1883, since Bourget had left it in Paris, nor does it provide any clue as to the visit he may have paid to Pater at the beginning of August 1884. After that date, both writers do not seem to have met, which tallies with what one knows of them. From April to June 1887, an increasingly famous and wealthy Bourget lived in Venice, where he rented the Palazzo Dario;<sup>43</sup> from December 1891 to April 1892, he lived in Rome. Between 1885 and July 1893, Pater commuted between London and Oxford until June 1893, trying to face increasing writing commitments. Their busy respective lives may account for the end of their personal acquaintance.

Their literary relationship, however, continued: both writers devoted a review to Feuillet's novel *La Mort*.<sup>44</sup> But whereas Pater was careful to note one possible outcome of the modern loss of faith, Bourget had already embarked on a path that would lead him back to the Catholic fold. Indeed, one of the first steps towards his new faith may have been the publication of *Essais* in 1883. The book captures the cultural anxieties of the time and gives them a striking expression. In 1884, it also ignited a debate about pessimism, a word Bourget had made famous in connection with the recently deceased Flaubert. Reviewers argued about the state of the nation, and more especially about the literary pessimism of which Bourget seemed to be a strong proponent. The influential critic F. Sarcey was

not the only one to condemn such a kind of pessimism, and Bourget retorted with “*Le pessimisme d’une génération*,”<sup>45</sup> a *pro domo* plea which contended that he had but described the progress of pessimism. Yet, the debate led him to support moral values against a too materialistic philosophy, and to state his belief in the existence of a soul and in the practice of charity and compassion. He began to think that his task lay in curing the illnesses he had put to the fore. In the summer of 1885, while holidaying at Duras (Ireland) with Count Basterot, he underwent a moral crisis and hurried back to France. In November 1885, the *Nouveaux essais de psychologie contemporaine* were published. Bourget wanted to define the impact of literature upon the young: his main ideas were still the exhaustion of the race, the nervousness of the times, the excess of analysis, the crumbling of the will, the nefarious action of democracy and science, cosmopolitanism, pessimism, and *ennui*. The new essays were notable for the analysis of moral issues, and the book received positive responses (Mansuy 462). Still in 1885, Bourget continued his self-examination and return to bourgeois morality by publishing *Crime d’amour*,<sup>46</sup> a semi-autobiographical novel that offered some cure to modern exhausted hearts by asking readers to practice abnegation. It was received with great acclaim.

The publication in 1888 of *Physiologie de l’amour* in the fashionable and gossipy *La Vie parisienne* was seemingly a stumbling block on the path to Catholicism.<sup>47</sup> Bourget had ended a ten-year liaison with Marie Kahn, and he wanted to write a genuine literary study probing the cerebral phenomena that constitute the sexual instinct. *Physiologie* purports to be the twenty-three “meditations” of the late Claude Larcher (modeled on Octave Mirbeau and on Bourget himself) published by his friend and literary executor Bourget,<sup>48</sup> after the young man has died from his excesses. In dialogue with Balzac’s *Physiologie du mariage*, Bourget’s *Physiologie* stages the usual characters of the lover and his mistress, and offers a scathing history of love (including the usual steps of meeting, flirtation, budding love, jealousy, anger, termination, and revenge) before concluding with the examination of potential cures. If Larcher’s meditations profess to have a moralistic intent,<sup>49</sup> Bourget adopts a light and cocky tone, which may account for the ensuing scandal, for his subsequent toning down of several parts, and for the pugnacious “Preface” to the book edition in 1891.

In this preface, a playful and tongue-in-cheek Bourget contends that readers will not find in his book a mere repetition of Stendhal and Michelet,<sup>50</sup> or an update of their serious theses. Larcher-Bourget has indeed read both Stendhal

and Michelet, but as a man of the late nineteenth century, he cannot be but “disenchanted”; his text is not a treatise, but “a mosaic of daily random notes” (iii). Staging a dialogue between Larcher and himself, Bourget responds to attacks of his frankness, and he praises openness and literary sincerity, something Pater may have welcomed,<sup>51</sup> since this openness goes hand in hand with the writer’s consciousness of his duties.<sup>52</sup> Bourget approves of sincerity and benevolence towards the reader:<sup>53</sup> assessing his role, he concludes by a warning against mistaking art and propaganda and confusing an artist, a single work of art, and the entirety of literature.<sup>54</sup> But Bourget was no longer the weary would-be decadent writer of the early 1880s: his frame of mind concerning morality and religion had changed, something which is reflected in Larcher’s exclamation against the disappearance of God from parental consciousnesses.<sup>55</sup> Bourget’s return to Catholicism can be dated to 1887, the year his father died, although he officially embraced Catholicism only in 1901.<sup>56</sup>

*The Disciple*, the continuation of such a mindset, heralded Bourget’s return to moral and political conservatism. He had conceived the second half of his novel in September 1888 and completed it in May 1889, almost in parallel with *Physiologie*.<sup>57</sup> In spite of the seeming differences in genre, tone, and narrative, both texts have a common purpose and emphasize the moral responsibility of all educators. *The Disciple* was acclaimed, but unsurprisingly sparked a debate on the writer’s responsibilities (Mansuy 506-13), to which Bourget once again responded with a preface.<sup>58</sup>

It remains unclear whether Pater attentively read *The Disciple* or *Physiology*, and whether Bourget was still in touch with him in the late 1880s. *Physiology*, however, finds citational and structural echoes in Pater’s unfinished *Gaston de Latour*. As d’Hangest contends, Bourget’s title must be taken into account as a source for Pater’s meditations on love, while Gerald Monsman rightly notes that Chapter X, devoted to Marguerite de Valois, cites physiology as a domain which “from the days of Plato to our own – the days of Stendhal and Michelet – has had its students analysing, more or less ingeniously the phenomena of its diseased or healthy action” (*GDL* 100), a clear reference to Bourget’s own predecessors.<sup>59</sup> Pater may have browsed Bourget’s book and found some expressions and references suited to his own purpose, including the study of “[c]et Amour cruel et si mêlé de haine” (Bourget 23), that will be fully explored in *Gaston*.

It might be argued that Pater apparently follows Bourget’s delineation of modern personalities on the verge of disintegration when he quotes Montaigne’s

*Essays*: “What are we but sedition? like this poor France faction against faction, every piece playing every moment its own game, with as much difference between us and ourselves as between ourselves and others. Whoever will look narrowly into his bosom will hardly find himself twice in the same condition” (*GDL* 54-5). One needs to note, however, that his judgement on Montaigne’s skepticism does not rely on any associationist theory like Bourget’s, but stems from a philosophical reading of Montaigne’s *Essays*.

It could be argued that Pater found interest in some portraits of narcissistic young men in Bourget’s *Physiology* with its classification of lovers according to psychological categories (the shy one, the one excluded from love, etc.).<sup>60</sup> Yet the mention of Plato along with Stendhal and Michelet in *Gaston* testifies to Pater’s broader philosophical vision. Bourget studies a peculiar historical time and a limited segment of the population with a view to charting the progress of nineteenth-century disenchantment and the conditions of modern love; Pater does not follow Bourget’s classification according to gender, social, and marital status and refuses to engage in a description of love’s psychological ups and downs. His careful analyses of Queen Margot’s sadistic love for La Mole, of Raoul’s masochistic love for Jasmin, and of Venus for her master in the new version of *Tannhäuser* are structured around different lines, and offer a marked departure from Bourget’s psychology of multiple selves. Pater envisions the question of “eros” and “anteros” within a broader cultural and philosophical frame. Defining “anteros” as “the recondite relationships of what we may call erotic humility to erotic pride” (*GDL* 101) along a spectrum ranging from sadism to masochism,<sup>61</sup> Pater offers a ground-breaking conception of sex relations predicated on the relation between agent and patient. If he found a model and some references in Bourget, he was also careful not to follow them. Those echoes are also evidence that Pater was still working on *Gaston* in the early 1890s.

After 1884, Pater’s acquaintance with Bourget seems to have dwindled, and the mention of Rapallo,<sup>62</sup> where Bourget wrote the preface to his *Physiology*, gives a possible reason for the change. Bourget was mainly living in Italy and France, while Pater was commuting between Oxford and London, vacationing in Italy only in 1889, and canceling a trip there in 1890 to work on *Gaston*. Both writers had different careers, Bourget being a fashionable novelist and journalist, Pater a distinguished academic. Bourget unwaveringly and aggressively praised heterosexuality while Pater was more tolerant of alternative choices and lifestyles.

The former openly returned to religion, the latter let his readership wonder about his final belief. In the absence of other letters between them, it is best to suspend our judgement.

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## NOTES

I thank Guillaume Boyer, curator of the Bourget Archive at the Fels Library, Paris, for his generous help.

<sup>1</sup> Bourget visited Britain several times, frequently went to Europe and the Mediterranean, and to the United States (where he stayed eight months, a sojourn which inspired *Outre-mer, Notes sur l'Amérique*) (Paris: Lemerre, 1895), 2 vols. Texts devoted to his travels can be found in *Études et portraits* (rpt. in *Études anglaises*, Paris: Plon, 1906) and *Sensations d'Italie* (Paris: Lemerre, 1891).

<sup>2</sup> On 20 August 1890, Bourget married Minnie David, the daughter of John David, a ship-owner from Antwerp.

<sup>3</sup> The Villa also has a Bourget Archive, but is temporarily closed for renovation.

<sup>4</sup> Bourget traveled to England most frequently with his intimate friend, Viscount, later Count Florimond de Basterot (1836–1904), of Franco-Irish descent. A devout Catholic and monarchist, he was the owner of Duras, in Kinvara (Co. Galway). Bourget first met him in 1875; they were intimate friends from the 1880's until the Count's death. See Michel Mansuy, *Un moderne. Paul Bourget de l'enfance au disciple* (Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1960), 209 n.2.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Bourget, *Cruelle énigme* (Paris: Lemerre, 1885). First published February 1885.

<sup>6</sup> *La vie inquiète* (1875); *Edel* (1878) and *Les Aveux* (1882). In 1885, Bourget's poems were collected in three volumes by Lemerre.

<sup>7</sup> Bourget's first periodical article was published in the 1872 December issue of Emile Blémont's *La renaissance littéraire et artistique*. Between 1873 and 1875, he contributed to *La Revue des Deux-Mondes*. In December 1878, he joined *La Revue moderne et naturaliste*. From 1880 to 1883, he contributed to the liberal and republican *Le Parlement*; from the end of 1881, to the *Nouvelle Revue* of Juliette Adam. Bourget also contributed to *Le Journal des débats*, *Le Siècle littéraire*, *La République des lettres*, *La Vie littéraire*, *Le Globe*, *La Revue alsacienne*, *Le Gaulois*, and *La vie Moderne*. As Mansuy contends, he contributed to those from loose ideological affinities, and like most French writers of the period, he relied on his journalism to write his reviews and his books in turn. On Bourget's contribution to the *Parlement* and the *Journal des Débats*, see I. D. McFarlane, "La collaboration de Paul Bourget au *Parlement* et au *Journal des Débats*," *Les Lettres romanes* 4 (1957): 415–6, and André Guyaux, "Bourget et au *Parlement*, 1880–1883," *Avez-vous lu Paul Bourget?* Eds. Daniel Sangsue et Marie-Ange Fougère (Dijon: éditions universitaires de Dijon, 2007): 91–95.

<sup>8</sup> Essays were devoted to Alexandre Dumas the younger, Leconte de Lisle, Edmond and Jules Goncourt, Turgenev, and Amiel, whose *Journal* had been published in 1883.

<sup>9</sup> Bourget, "Notes sur quelques poètes contemporains," *Le Siècle littéraire* (1 April 1876). Bourget contrasted the literature of seventeenth-century France with its modern counterpart marked by singularity, individuality, and an element of revolt.

<sup>10</sup> "I am a man born from a belated race / And my soul, both exasperated and weary, / On which all forebears weigh strangely / Mingles skepticism and emotion" (my translation). "Edel," *Poésies*, II (Paris: Lemerre, 1885): 12.

<sup>11</sup> "[Larcher] esquisse de Suzanne un portrait assez exact, à grand renfort d'expressions psychologiques, parlant de la multiplicité de sa personne, d'une condition première de son moi et d'une condition seconde." *Mensonges* (Paris: Lemerre, 1887): 488.

<sup>12</sup> Chambige, a young student, was tried for murdering his mistress in 1888; he cited modern French philosophers as his guides.

<sup>13</sup> See Pierre Citti, *Contre la Décadence, Histoire de l'imagination française dans le roman, 1890–1914* (Paris: PUF, 1987).

<sup>14</sup> Victor Giraud, "Paul Bourget," *Les Maîtres de l'heure* (Paris: Hachette, 1911).

<sup>15</sup> In *Mensonges* (1887), Abbé Taconet exclaims: "Ces grands écrivains que vous enviez, songez-vous quelquefois à la tragique responsabilité qu'ils ont prise en propageant leur misère intime. [...] mais le Werther de Goethe, mais le Rolla de Musset, je me les rappelle. Croyez-vous que dans le coup de pistolet que vient de se tirer René il n'y ait pas un peu des mensonges de l'influence de ces deux apologues du suicide?" (*Mensonges* 493). Commenting upon the hero, Bourget notes: "il avait cessé d'être pur; et il s'était laissé gagner par cette atmosphère de doute que tout artiste moderne traverse plus ou moins, avant d'en revenir au christianisme, comme à la seule source de vie spirituelle" (*Mensonges* 448).

<sup>16</sup> See his "Réponse à l'enquête sur la jeune littérature," *La revue hebdomadaire*, 30 juin 1923, 516–18, Paul Bourget Archive PB 4183. Bourget's response to the inquest conducted by Henri Rambaud and Pierre Varillon served as a preface for the publication. This short palinode

attacks the literature and culture of late nineteenth-century France marked by dilettantism, the pre-eminence of thought against action, and of scientism. Bourget blames his acknowledged masters of the time (Sainte-Beuve, Renan, Taine, Flaubert) for having been misled by what they thought was science: their reliance upon biology and experimental sciences led to the destruction of psychological, moral and religious facts. To that sorrowful state Bourget opposed twentieth-century science and the autonomy of religious fact. Such a new position accounts for the massive return of French youth to the Catholic Church. It is not a “*réaction*” but the “*liquidation de la pire erreur du dix-huitième siècle, prolongée et aggravée dans le dix-neuvième*” (517). The revision of the ideals of the Revolution was undertaken by some of the elders when they abandoned “the democratic utopia” (513) to embrace elitism, and was being pursued by Charles Maurras. Bourget declares himself wholly satisfied to having contributed to steering younger writers towards the right.

<sup>17</sup> See “*Le Pessimisme de la jeune génération*,” *Journal des Débats*, 16 juin 1885, 706-10. On Bourget’s views on youth, see Denis Pernot, “*Paul Bourget, observateur de la jeunesse*,” *Avez-vous lu Paul Bourget?* 97–108.

<sup>18</sup> In final version of “The Lower Pantheism,” Pater emphasizes the “spell, the power” of Bruno’s “indirect suggestions,” and points out their deleterious effects on some unprepared minds: “How would Henry, and Margaret of the *Memoirs*, and other susceptible persons then present read it [?]” (GDL 82).

<sup>19</sup> According to Lawrence Evans, Pater used white stationery measuring 11.2 by 17.9 cm and watermarked “Herculaneum / Note Paper”. See Evans, ed., *The Letters of Walter Pater* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970).

<sup>20</sup> Pater, “Letter to Paul Bourget,” Bourget Archive, Fels Library, us fr 664/40/(PB1123/2).

<sup>21</sup> Dated 13 June 1883. Basterot joined Bourget in Oxford in the last week of June; Bourget left Oxford 30 June to go to London for three days. Afterwards, he returned to France.

<sup>22</sup> Goncourt maliciously reports from Octave Uzanne that in 1882 Bourget knew no one in London and had clung to him: “*Octave Uzanne me parlait ce soir de Paul Bourget. Il me disait que ce dernier s’était accroché à lui dans un séjour à Londres où il ne connaissait personne*.” Vendredi 9 juin 1882, Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *Journal. Mémoires de la vie littéraire II. 1866–1886* (1956; Paris: Robert Laffont, 1989), 944. Bourget discusses the Goncourt brothers in 1886.

<sup>23</sup> His “*sensations d’Oxford*” were translated as *Some Impressions of Oxford*. English version by M. C. Warrilow (London: Howard Wilford Bell, 1901).

<sup>24</sup> *Some Impressions of Oxford* 36. The original quotation: “*Un de nous est un Berkeleyen; il ne croit pas à l’existence de la matière. Un autre est un positiviste, pour lequel les questions de métaphysique sont un non-sens, ce qui ne l’empêche pas de ne jamais parler d’un autre sujet. Un troisième est un esthéticien d’une subtilité infinie qui interprète avec une philosophie supérieure les œuvres d’art de tous les pays*.” (“*Sensations d’Oxford*,” *Études et portraits* 200).

<sup>25</sup> See W. W. Jackson, *Ingram Bywater. The Memoir of an Oxford Scholar 1840–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1917): 49–50. Bywater mentions the visit of Bourget to Oxford in 1883 (he had come with letters of introduction from Ernest Renan) and notes that Bourget already showed signs of difference from his master. According to the editor, Bourget’s Oxford sensations were “not sufficiently faithful” to be included in the memoir (50). See I. D. McFarlane, “*Paul Bourget et l’Angleterre*,” (Paris: thèse dactylographiée, 1950), 83, 91.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Levey, *The Case of Walter Pater* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978): 165. William Pater was ill; Clara and Hester went in turn to nurse him.

<sup>27</sup> Pater, “Letter to Paul Bourget,” Bourget Archive, Fels Library. ms fr 664/40/(P.B. 1123–3).

<sup>28</sup> Oxford also furnished Bourget with a Pre-Raphaelite spirit, part of the reason why he wanted to go there. According to Mansuy, Bourget also re-read Swinburne and asked Ruskin to explain the paintings of Millais and Burne-Jones to him.

<sup>29</sup> Pater, letter to George Moore, 4 March 1888 (*Letters* 124).

<sup>30</sup> “Is there not in this Oxford student something of the physical beauty of those young Greeks whose harmonious strength we admire, represented in the marble statues in the Louvre” (*Impressions* 27).

<sup>31</sup> “*L'esthétisme anglais*,” published in *Journal des débats* 6 May 1885 and reprinted in *Études anglaises*, 304–18, was supposed to be a review of Lee’s *Miss Brown*, but Bourget was so annoyed by the novel that he discussed Aestheticism instead.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur Symons also mentions that Bourget had sent Pater the first volume of his *Essays* and that Pater’s cat had “torn up the part containing the essay on Baudelaire.” See *The Renaissance by Walter Pater, introduction by Arthur Symons* (New York: The Modern Library, n.d.), xx.

<sup>33</sup> See “*Préraphaélitisme*” (August 1884), *Études anglaises* (290–303).

<sup>34</sup> The “Notes” appeared in August and September 1884. They were later collected in *Études anglaises*.

<sup>35</sup> Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*, Paul Bourget’s copy, PB 1123, Fels Library. Bourget left some pages uncut, probably less interested in Luca della Robbia and Winckelmann.

<sup>36</sup> MS fr 664/40 PB 1123-1, Fels Library.

<sup>37</sup> James, who became a friend (Mansuy 382), is the dedicatee of *Cruelle énigme*, completed in London and published in the *Nouvelle Revue* in 1884.

<sup>38</sup> “[C]elle du plus délicat des prosateurs actuels M. Walter Pater, dont le livre sur la Renaissance contient les vingt plus belles pages qui aient jamais été consacrées à Léonard de Vinci” (“*Préraphaélitisme*” 293).

<sup>39</sup> At the time, Britain was debating the extension of the franchise; Bourget thought that the country was on the verge of a revolution. He thought Gladstone a dangerous utopist, the Pre-Raphaelites as Socialists, and Swinburne’s genius on the wane.

<sup>40</sup> This paginated diary bears evidence of having been reread, with parts excised or torn.

<sup>41</sup> Barbey d’Aurevilly, Léon Bloy, F. Coppée, and Boutmy (founder of the École des Sciences politiques). “Journal” mss 664 et 665, Bourget Archive, Fels Library. Bourget mentions a “*Soirée de folie hier soir et de débauche*” on 22 May 1879. On 2 November 1885 he notes: “*Journées vides n’arriverai-je jamais à m’intégrer de nouveau à faire un avec le monde, à réaliser mes rêves, à faire de la littérature [sic] un moyen de guérison et d’harmonie?*”

<sup>42</sup> “Paris. Reprise de mon journal,” 127.

<sup>43</sup> Bourget’s stay in Venice was marked by a moral crisis. He went back to Paris and then to Dover on 27 July to complete *Mensonges*, which was published 15 August 1887 in *La Nouvelle revue*.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Bourget, “*La Morte, par O. Feuillet*,” *Journal des débats* 23 February 1886; Pater, “*Feuillet’s La Morte*,” *Appreciations* (London: Macmillan, 1931): 219–40.

<sup>45</sup> “*Le pessimisme d’une génération*,” *Le Journal des débats* (16 June 1885).

<sup>46</sup> Published 15 December 1885 to 1 February 1886.

<sup>47</sup> Bourget, *Méditations de philosophie parisienne sur les rapports des sexes entre civilisés dans les années de grâce 188...* Published 25 August to 14 September 1888.

<sup>48</sup> Twenty-three meditations appear in the definitive edition; Bourget had suppressed the second one in 1888.

<sup>49</sup> Bourget aimed at showing good and evil on par: “*le moraliste [...], c’est l’écrivain qui montre la vie telle qu’elle est.*” “*Préface*,” *Physiologie de l’amour moderne* (Paris: Lemerre, 1891): vi.

<sup>50</sup> “[U]n traité de l’amour à la Beyle ou à la Michelet, avec un plan raisonné, avec des généralisations savantes, avec une doctrine enfin, bonne ou mauvaise. Cette *Physiologie* – dénommée de ce gros nom par naïf snobisme littéraire et ressouvenir d’un vieux genre démodé – ne pouvait être, dans ces conditions, qu’une mosaïque de notes écrites au jour la journée par un humoriste désenchanté” (*Physiologie* iii).

<sup>51</sup> “*Interdire à l’artiste la franchise du pinceau sous le prétexte que des lecteurs dépravés ne voudront voir de son œuvre que les parties qui conviennent à leur fantaisie sensuelle, c’est lui interdire la sincérité, qui est, elle aussi, une vertu puissante d’un livre [...]*” (vi).

<sup>52</sup> “Imaginons-nous un lecteur de vingt-cinq ans et sincère, que pensera-t-il de notre livre en le fermant? S’il doit, après la dernière page, réfléchir aux questions de la vie morale avec plus de sérieux, le livre est moral. C’est aux pères, aux mères et aux maris d’en défendre la lecture aux jeunes garçons et aux jeunes femmes, pour qui un ouvrage de médecine pourrait être dangereux, lui aussi” (vi–vii).

<sup>53</sup> “Ce danger-là ne nous regarde plus. Nous n’avons, nous, qu’à penser juste si nous pouvons et dire ce que nous pensons. Pour ma part, je m’en tiens à ce mot que me disait un saint prêtre: – ‘Il ne faut pas faire de mal aux âmes, et je suis sûr que la vérité ne leur en fait jamais [...]’” (vii).

<sup>54</sup> “[L]a peinture de la passion offre toujours ce danger d’exercer une propagande. Rendre l’artiste responsable de cette propagande, c’est faire le procès non seulement à tel ou tel livre, mais à toute la littérature” (vii).

<sup>55</sup> “Est-il besoin de tant d’exemples pour démontrer que d’élever des enfants sans Dieu, sans milieu de famille, parmi les exemples et dans l’atmosphère du monde actuel, équivaut à préparer des prostituées implacables, des adultères déséquilibrées, des séparées dangereuses, enfin le formidable déchet de vertus féminines?” (108). Larcher also warns about the perils of homosexual acts between schoolboys.

<sup>56</sup> As early as 6 June 1887, Bourget confesses his faith in the Mystery; on 3 July, he avows his “foi profonde dans la bonté de Dieu” (Mansuy 444).

<sup>57</sup> To write *The Disciple*, Bourget set aside *Cosmopolis*, a novel dedicated to Count Joseph Primoli which was meant as “le roman de la vie internationale.” In his dedicatory preface, Bourget contrasts normal people subjected to customs to “errants de la haute vie” composed of exceptions and singular beings. Anyone could be a cosmopolitan (provided one had the means); a law still persisted, however, and was external to elegant rites, the law of “the permanence of the race” (iii), the strength of heredity. See Richard Hibbit, “Paul Bourget’s Critique of *fin-de-siècle* Cosmopolitanism,” *The Cause of cosmopolitanism* (eds. Patrick O’Donovan and Laura Rascaroli, Berne: Peter Lang, 2010), 173–87. *The Disciple* was published by Lemerre 17 June 1889 along with his publication in the *Nouvelle revue* begun in February 1889.

<sup>58</sup> Published in *Le Figaro* 17 June 1889 (rpt. in *Le Disciple*, édition définitive, Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1906, 5–14). The Preface is dedicated to a “young man.”

<sup>59</sup> In his editorial notes, Monsman cites Bourget’s *Physiologie*, Stendhal’s *De l’amour*, and Michelet’s *L’amour* (GDL 201), especially in connection with “Margaret’s supposed Physiology of Love” (GDL 103).

<sup>60</sup> “Nous en avons tous connu, de ces trop jolis garçons, astiqués, cirés, lustrés, qui se regardent dans toutes les glaces, se sourient sans cesse en pensée, prennent des attitudes comme ils respirent, sans le vouloir, contemplant inconsciemment leurs ongles, les pointes de leurs bottines, la coupe de leurs pantalons. Nos ancêtres, qui avaient le verbe libre et autant d’observation que de franchise, les appelaient ‘des miroirs à donzelles’” (*Physiologie de l’amour moderne* 33).

<sup>61</sup> “[T]hat cruel eagerness to consume the reluctant lover”; “that cruel weariness of a lover found too facile, which allowed, nay encourages him to consume, to destroy himself by sacrifice” (GDL 103).

<sup>62</sup> The “Preface” bears the inscription “Rapallo, 3 octobre 1890”; the book version is dedicated to Lemerre.

Catherine Maxwell

## Paterian Flair: Walter Pater and Scent

Flair, from the Old French, *flair*, odour, derived in turn from the Vulgar Latin *flagrare*, to emit an odour. Originally used to mean an odour, in the nineteenth century, influenced by the French *flairer*, to smell, to detect, it came to mean instinctive discernment.

Classen 65–6



FLAIR,” GLOSSED BY THE CULTURAL HISTORIAN Constance Classen as one of her “words of sense,” suggests a natural progression from olfactory acuity to the “instinctive discernment” of the aesthete, something also suggested by the anecdote about Walter Pater related by the Oxford Fellow and classical scholar Robert Raper. Asked by Raper “if he would care to come to see our Trinity Chapel,” Pater replied “‘No, but I should like to smell it if I might’ (remembering the aroma of the cedar wood).”<sup>1</sup> Gerald Monsman’s comment, “This droll rejoinder reflected more than a bit of that ‘preciosity’ which came to caricature his brand of aestheticism,” implicitly reads Pater’s smell sensitivity as a marker of a certain kind of aesthetic sensibility (*ME* vii). Monsman is understandably uneasy with the caricature, the popular “Victorian view of what Pater’s work was about: an ‘impressionism’ devoted to intensities and subtleties of sensuous colors, fragrances, and forms – and a dangerous enthusiasm for the separation of art and morality,” but that should not discourage a more considered examination of the sensuous element in his writing. In fact modern critics have explored in some detail nearly all of the senses as represented in Pater’s *œuvre*.

Vision unsurprisingly dominates because of his commitment to the visual arts, but more recently hearing (especially in relation to music), touch, and even taste have received attention.<sup>2</sup> Smell, historically the most maligned of the senses, is the one so far unexplored in Pater's work in spite of the fact that it was evidently important to him. What follows is an attempt to rectify that omission starting with an account of Pater's own smell preferences and leading into a discussion of the way it informs his writing and its significance for him. My focus is specifically on perfume, that is to say scent cultivated or relished for pleasure's sake.

As shown in Raper's anecdote, Pater presents himself as an *olfactif*, an individual with a refined sense of smell, a characteristic he shared with the French poet Charles Baudelaire, English contemporaries such as Algernon Swinburne and John Addington Symonds, and younger associates such as Oscar Wilde and Arthur Symons. Using Jim Drobnick's recent coinage, one might also call Pater a "*flaireur*," someone "for whom smell is a pre-eminent aspect of being in the world." As Drobnick observes, "For the *flaireur*, 'smelling well' connotes not only the acts of relishing fragrances and presenting oneself in a pleasingly scented manner, but, more significantly, serves as an olfactory model upon which one's core identity is constructed" (163, 164). Undoubtedly influenced by Baudelaire and Swinburne, Pater's flair or scent sensitivity is a badge of honour that signals his sensibility and aesthetic credentials; yet, more than a mark of mere affiliation, it is an integral part of his identity as a literary artist, his early awareness and responsiveness to scent part of that "brain building by which we are, each of us, what we are [...] inward and outward being woven through and through each other into one inextricable texture" (*MS* 173).

Pater's genuine interest and pleasure in scent can be gleaned from a number of sources. I have not been able to find any evidence that he used perfume himself, but such use would have been uncommon among the older generation of male aesthetes as opposed to younger decadent bohemians like Wilde and Symons, whose perfume-wearing is documented.<sup>3</sup> It generally being "considered effeminate and the worst of taste for a man to use perfume" (Ellis 195), most Victorian men, dandies and bohemians apart, did not wear it unless perhaps it was an element in a hair tonic. A possible exception, sometimes employed as an aftershave, might have been *eau de cologne*, a staple so widely used by the Victorians for its refreshing "tonic" quality as a therapeutic restorative that it was not really regarded as a perfume at all (Jellinek 112). Yet, while he may have abstained from perfume,

Pater evidently enjoyed scented atmospheres. William Sharp noted the seasonal flowers – wallflowers, lavender, chrysanthemums or winter aconites, all of which are fragrant – that Pater always kept in his College rooms (806), while F.W. Bussell remarked on the annually-renewed bowl of dried rose leaves, made to a “special receipt,” that served as *pot pourri* (Seiler 285). Thomas Wright records that Pater commented of a “favourite flower, the white pink [...], ‘Its fragrance is the breath of Euterpe’” (Wright 2: 62).<sup>4</sup> Sharp recalls walking with Pater in Oxford – “He was singularly observant of certain natural objects, aspects, and conditions, more especially of the movement of light in grass and among leaves, of all fragrances, of flowing water” – and records a particular conversation about flower scent:

How well I remember one evening in the meadows by the Cherwell [...] the air heavy with the almost poignant fragrance of the meadowsweet. I had made a remark about the way some people were haunted by dream-fragrances, and instanced queen-of-the-meadow, as we call it in Scotland, in my own case. Pater replied that certain flowers affected his own imagination so keenly that he could not smell them with pleasure; and that while the white jonquil, the gardenia, and the syringa actually gave him pain, the meadowsweet gave him a sudden fugitive sense of distant pastures, and twilight eves, and remote scattered hamlets. (807, 809)

The heavy flower-scents mentioned by Pater as giving him pain – the white jonquil (*narcissus jonquilla*), the gardenia, and the syringa – all contain indole, an odorant molecule common to many strongly perfumed white flowers that Paul Jellinek describes as “reminiscent of decay and feces,” adding that it “lends orange blossom, jasmine, tuberose, lilac and other blossoms that putrid-sweet, sultry-intoxicating nuance” (42). As remembered by Sharp, Pater reflects a more mid-Victorian preference for light floral fragrances as opposed to the heavier scented, indolic, “sultry-intoxicating” flowers associated with Victorian decadence and epitomized in the Wildean cult of the lily. Similar disquiet about a certain kind of floral fragrance is expressed in *Gaston de Latour* (1888, 1896) when he refers to “the sickliness of all spring flowers since the days of Proserpine” (*GdL* 26), or in “The Myth of Demeter and Persephone” (1876) to the “heavy and narcotic aroma

of spring flowers" (*GS* 116), doubtless recalling that "narcissus," from the Greek *narkē* or numbness, is so named for its "narcotic" fragrance.

Instances of Pater's flair for delicate floral scents also emerge in his Dionysian essays (1876, 1889), where he notes "the scented air of the vineyards (for the vine-blossom has an exquisite perfume)" and "the little mezereon-plant of English gardens, with its pale-purple, wine-scented flowers upon the leafless twigs in February" (*GS* 62, 26). In the unfinished imaginary portrait "An English Poet," his protagonist takes pleasure in a honeysuckle, "an exotic from France, the colour of its flower ripening from a peerless white to brown gold, with a whole round of fragrant changes in the spirit of the tiny thing still fragrant in death" ("EP" 440). The poet's later declaration about the authenticity of fragrant writing reflects Pater's own carefully cultivated knowledge and intimate awareness of scent: "for if your words regarding it are to be fragrant, [...] you must have been for a time in slavish possession of the flower" ("EP" 446). In "Emerald Uthwart" (1892), Pater, describing Emerald's undergraduate years, records botanical scents that show his own "slavish possession of the flower," for example the snakes-head fritillaries indigenous to Oxford – "does the reader know them? That strange remnant just here of a richer extinct flora – dry flowers, though with a drop of dubious honey in each" (*MS* 228) – and he observes how, "On summer nights the scent of the hay, the wild-flowers, comes across the narrow fringe of the town to right and left; seems to come from beyond the Oxford meadows" (*MS* 227).<sup>5</sup>

Elsewhere, showing interest in a fellow *flaireur*, Pater reproduces remarks by the seventeenth-century antiquarian and "industrious local naturalist" Sir Thomas Browne on sweet-smelling insects; a beetle supposed to smell of nutmeg and cinnamon that to Browne "smelt like roses, santalum [sandalwood] and ambergris" and "a small bee-like fly of an excellent fragrant odour, which I have often found at the bottom of tulips." Curious, Pater asks, "Is this within the experience of modern entomologists?" (*Ap* 139, 140) His own preference may be for light, airy odors over the "sickly perfumes" such as those Phædra vainly employs to entice Hippolytus in "Hippolytus Veiled" (1889) (*GS* 180), but he is more catholic in his tastes than this may suggest, at other times relishing incense or imagining the "fragrant odour" of burnt herbs (juniper and lad's-love) offered to Aphrodite of Sicyon (*GS* 249). Unlike most of his contemporaries, he seems not to have shared the marked aversion to musk characteristic of a time when animalics

(animal-derived scents such as musk, civet, ambergris, and castoreum), popular in the eighteenth century and earlier, were generally out of favor.<sup>6</sup>

Animalic musk is a particularly penetrating and tenacious odor that in perfume produces a sweet, sometimes sweaty note. Aware of its use in earlier eras, Pater uses it to signify artificiality, as in his imaginary portrait “Duke Carl of Rosenmold” (1887) set in early eighteenth-century Germany. The young Duke Carl, hoping to bring about a German cultural and artistic enlightenment, looks to France and the court of the “Sun King,” Louis XIV (1643–1715), for inspiration. Louis was “known as the ‘sweetest smelling’ monarch in French history” and his passion for “strong scents (ambergris, musk, heavy floral odors)” for Pater becomes identified with his cultural legacy and what Richard Stamelman terms “the excessive artificiality of [his] reign” (58, 62): “its more portable flowers came to order in abundance. That the roses, so to put it, were but excellent artificial flowers, redolent only of musk, neither disproved for Carl the validity of his ideal nor for our minds the vocation of Carl himself in these matters. [...] It was but himself truly, after all, that he had found, so fresh and real, among those artificial roses” (*IP* 129–30). For Pater, though, artificiality is no crime and he is hardly censorious; the flowers of seventeenth-century French culture may seem less than authentic but the imaginative enthusiasm of Carl bestows on them a vitality they lack. Similarly, in the classical culture of *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), artificiality is no weakness when it characterizes the collection of Apuleius’ carefully wrought pronouncements – “*Florida* or *Flowers*” – “elaborate, carved *ivories* of speech, drawn at length, out of the rich treasury of his memory and as with a fine savour of musk about them” (*ME* 215).

Olfactory impressions taken from Pater’s own early memories occur in both “The Child in the House” (1878) and “Emerald Uthwart.” In the former, Florian Deleal recalls “the very scent upon the air” of his childhood home (*MS* 172), the “perfumed juice of [...] fallen fruit” (174), the “empty scent bottles still sweet” found in the attic (175), the fragrance of the lime-tree and the red hawthorn (177, 185–6), sunshine pervaded by “the perfume of the garden” (188), and the “languid scent” of ointment put on a burn (189). These vivid sense impressions contribute to what he calls “the gradual expansion of the soul” (173). This intimate alliance between sense and spirit at times approaches synaesthesia, something that tinges the description of the garden in Emerald’s childhood home:

How they shook their musk from them! – those gardens [...]. Brothers and sisters, all alike were gardeners, methodically intimate with their flowers. You need words compact rather of perfume than of colour to describe them, in nice annual order; terms for perfume, as immediate and definite as red, purple, and yellow. Flowers there were which seemed to yield their sweetest in the faint sea-salt, when the loosening wind was strong from the south-west; Others [...] seemed made for *pot-pourri* to sweeten the old black mahogany furniture. [...] the old-fashioned garden azalea was the making of a nosegay, with its honey which clung to one's finger. There were flowers all the sweeter for a battle with the rain; a flower like aromatic medicine; another like summer lingering into winter; it ripened as fruit does; and another was like August, his own birthday time, dropped into March. (*MS* 199–200)<sup>7</sup>

This amalgamation of smell with taste reminds us that taste is in fact ninety per cent smell (Burr 57) – pinch your nose while eating and you will be unable to taste much beyond the sensations of sweet, sour, salt, and bitter. Smell is vital to the relish of flavor we call “savouring”: “If we have a mouthful of something delicious which we want to savor and contemplate; we exhale, this drives the air in our mouths across our olfactory receptors, so we can smell it better” (Ackerman 13). Smell thus determines flavor and, as Classen remarks, the word “flavour,” now used almost exclusively for taste sensations, “Originally [...] meant a smell,” a meaning still found in the nineteenth century (66). Pater, ever attentive to the “historic sense,” to what he calls “the finer edge of words still in use” (“Style,” *Ap* 16), would have been aware of this and the way in which language used to describe the one sense often does duty for the other.

A case in point is the favorite Paterian term “savour,” claimed by Matthew Kaiser in his recent fine essay “Pater’s Mouth” as a word denoting “taste” (Kaiser 3, 4), but which can often mean “smell” – as it frequently does in Swinburne and as it almost exclusively does in the Authorized Version of the Bible, both powerful influences on Pater.<sup>8</sup> While he undoubtedly uses “savour” to refer to a pleasurable relish of the mouth, Pater also uses it to indicate fragrance, as in his

earliest essay “Diaphaneitè” (read aloud as a paper in 1864 but not published till 1895). Describing the diaphanous ideal nature, he observes, “the presence of this nature is felt like a sweet aroma in early manhood. Afterwards as the adulterated atmosphere of the world assimilates us to itself, the savour of it faints away” (*SHR* 139; *MS* 253–4). In this instance Pater is almost certainly recalling various New Testament formulations in which Christ, the godly, and their gifts are described as a sweet “savour,” but also, perhaps, “the odour of sanctity,” a mysterious aura of beautiful perfume, said to emanate from saints and mystics.<sup>9</sup> He may hint too at that “natural fragrance of the skin” that the Greek poet Strato of Sardis attributes only to boys (Epigram 7) in the *Mousa Paidikè* or *Musa Puerilis* (“Boyish Muse”), the collection of homoerotic lyrics and epigrams that forms the twelfth book of the Greek Anthology. Possibly literal in origin but quickly shading into figurative meaning, the “sweet aroma” of Pater’s “Diaphaneitè” suggests how his fondness for the scented atmospheres remembered in “The Child in the House” and “Emerald Uthwart” might inform the many other atmospheres found elsewhere in his critical prose.

Those “atmospheres” – Pater uses the word repeatedly – are the emotional, intellectual, or spiritual ambiances or influences created or emanated by specific periods of culture, schools, individuals, or works of art, and are often scented, the most obvious being the Renaissance itself, which is invariably “sweet.” Moreover many of the representative figures who feature in Pater’s *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) – Luca della Robbia, Michelangelo, Pico della Mirandola, Joachim du Bellay – are associated, however briefly, with “sweetness.” Kaiser notes that in Pater “the Renaissance tastes sweet. Pater’s frequent use of ‘sweetness,’ ‘sweet,’ ‘sweeten,’ and ‘sweetly’ is no stylistic quirk.” Yet, while it is undeniable that many of these usages refer to taste, it is also true that some of them indicate smell, something that Kaiser glosses over when he casually absorbs scent into his argument: “In all things sweet, in their *perfumes* and juices, [Pater] tastes the Renaissance” (Kaiser 8; my emphasis). Indeed the first and leading characterization of the pervasive sweetness of the Renaissance comes in the Preface to *Studies*, where the image is of sweet-smelling grass or flowers. Describing its long reach, its enduring influence, Pater writes of “the Renaissance thus putting forth in France an aftermath, a wonderful later growth, the products which have to the full the subtle and delicate sweetness which belong to a refined and comely decadence” (*SHR* 5).<sup>10</sup>

Flowers and blossoms with their implicit fragrance recur throughout *The Renaissance*; in Leonardo, for instance, who finds nothing “poisonous in the exotic flowers of sentiment that grew” in *Quattrocento* Florence, and later “Out of the secret places of a unique temperament [...] brought strange blossoms and fruit hitherto unknown” (*SHR* 66). Such passages recall the “strange flowers, and curious odours” as among the things to be sought out by the aspiring aesthetic critic, mentioned in “Poems by William Morris” (1868), and subsequently in the “Conclusion” to *Studies* (“PWM” 311; *SHR* 120). They are clearly influenced by Baudelaire’s exotically perfumed *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857), a source that Pater, perhaps anxious to play down the controversial aspects of *Studies*, was later at pains to disguise, changing “flowers” to “colours” after 1873, presumably to obscure the Baudelairean link. The opening of the Morris review, afterwards “Æsthetic Poetry” (1889), uses an image similar to that of the “aftermath,” remarking how verse such as Morris’s, evoking “the poetry of a past age,” is “Like some strange second flowering after date” (“PWM” 300; “AP” 213). Moreover, for Pater, Provençal poetry, imitated by Morris in his first verse collection, has something of a Baudelairean “extravagance”: “Here, under this strange complex of conditions, as in some medicated air, exotic flowers of sentiment expand, among people of remote and unaccustomed beauty” (“PWM” 302; “AP” 217).

But not all Paterian flowers are Baudelairean in origin. The sweetness of the Renaissance, Pater tells us, begins “when the rude strength of the middle age turns to sweetness; and the taste for sweetness becomes the seed of the classical revival in it” (*SHR* 9–10). Those regenerated classical blooms include Pater’s depictions of “flowerlike” young men (evoking texts such as Epigram 256 in the *Mousa Paidikē*) and metamorphic myths of fair boys transformed into flowers as touched on in his retelling of the Hyacinthus story in “Apollo in Picardy” (1893) and alluded to in “The Myth of Demeter and Persephone”: “the flowers in the grass, which were once blooming youths, having both their natural colour and the colour of their poetry in them” (*GS* 131). Pico della Mirandola, prematurely dead “like the field flowers [...] withered by the scorching sun” in “the time of the lilies” but famously still “alive in the grave” with his “qualities still active” (*SHR* 25, 28) might be considered the Renaissance cultivar of one such classical bloom. Classical sweetness is transfused not only through such revitalized stock but also through Pater’s perusal of texts and artefacts that suggest the purified atmosphere of Hellenic times, “That delicate air, nimbly and sweetly recommending itself to

the senses,” as Pater imagines it in “Winckelmann” (*SHR* 103), while in *Marius the Epicurean* he will attribute similar qualities to the “pure air” of the Italian countryside in the second century (*ME* 9, 24).

The beneficent sweetness of Pater’s Renaissance also owes something to Arnold’s description of culture as “sweetness and light” in *Culture and Anarchy* (1868), and to one of Swinburne’s favourite adjectives, “sweet,” sources briefly noted by Kaiser who interprets them as gustatory (Kaiser 8). Arnold’s chapter “Sweetness and Light” formed part of his concluding lecture as Oxford’s Professor of Poetry in May 1867, published two months later in the *Cornhill*. Arnold’s “sweetness” may have originally been associated with the taste of honey – it is an allusion to the story of the Bee and the Spider in Jonathan Swift’s *Battle of the Books* (Arnold 54) – but in his use it subtly volatilizes, becoming vaporous and odorous, as when he states that culture’s aim is “to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light,” or when he states that the great men of culture like Lessing and Herder are those who “worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light” (Arnold 70, 71). Kaiser declares Swinburne’s “sweet” a symptom of his “notoriously fetishistic orality” (Kaiser 8) but he might just as easily read it as a symptom of olfactory pleasure. Rebuked for his overuse of this word, Swinburne nonetheless often employs it strategically to challenge his culture’s perception of what is “sweet.”<sup>11</sup> His most conspicuous use of “sweet” in *Poems and Ballads* (1866) is in one of his most notorious poems, “The Leper,” where it is compulsively repeated, as the speaker’s insistence on the “sweetness” of his dead mistress, spoken over her decaying corpse, ironically engages and teases olfactory expectation as it does other assumptions about the nature of love.

It is fitting that these different kinds of sweetness, classical and contemporary, act on Pater as an influence because in his own work scent and sweetness act as figures for influence. They are effective figures precisely because for him at a physical level scent and sweetness are aromatherapeutic, altering or conditioning mood, or spiritual and intellectual states. Pater must have been taken by Michel de Montaigne’s remarks in his essay “On Smells,” for he reproduces them in *Gaston de Latour* when Montaigne, in conversation with Gaston, remarks, “Of scents, the simple and the natural seem to me the most pleasing, and I have often observed that they cause an alteration in me, and work upon my spirits according to their virtues” (*GdL* 57).<sup>12</sup> Gaston himself, accustomed to climb the tower of Jean de Beauce to seek out a view of “large, quiet, country spaces,” was “become well aware

of the power of those familiar influences in restoring equanimity as he might have used a medicine or wine," his cares dropping away as he ascends and "the flight of birds, the scent of the field swept by him" (*GdL* 21).

Pater frequently notes the tonic effects of pure, good, or rural air, which even in its purity seems to have an understated or implicit fragrance. Adjectives like "delicate," a word that has a long history of being applied to smell (see *OED* item 11a), or "fresh," a favorite word of his (and a word frequently used in perfumery), seem to carry more than a trace of the vivifying and cleansing exhalations of plants and trees, as in the park-like enclosure around the Temple of Aesculapius in *Marius* where, "All the objects of the country were there at their freshest. [...] and that freshness seemed to have something moral in its influence, as if it acted upon the body and the merely bodily powers of apprehension, through the intelligence" (*ME* 28). In "Hippolytus Veiled," the goddess Artemis, settled in Eleusis, has her aggression tamed "thanks to some kindly local influence (by grace, say, of its delicate air)" (*GS* 166). The young English poet, enjoying the "smooth winds from the sea, [...] seemed to appreciate the material elements of their balm and salt, coaxing him into a sort of renewed life" ("EP" 447). Some kinds of air, however, are perhaps not so unequivocally pure. Gaston, "yielding himself" to the "influence" of Ronsard's clerical study, finds an "exotic embalming air, escaped from some old Greek or Roman pleasure-place, had turned the poet's workroom into a strange kind of sanctuary" (*GdL* 35). In "Apollo in Picardy," as Prior St-Jean readies himself to recommence work on his manuscript, Apollyon's uncanny intellectual influence is presaged or partnered by the untimely fragrance of spring flowers blooming in midwinter: "the great glazed windows remain open; admit what seems like a stream of flowery odours, the entire moonlit scene, with the thorn bushes on the vale-side prematurely bursting into blossom" (*MS* 162).

Influence, literally "a flowing into," is a matter of atmosphere, something almost imperceptible "in the air"; taken for granted, it nonetheless surrounds one and supports one's very existence. Breathed in and savored, atmosphere may prove to be "inspiring," filling one with breath. Indeed "breath," a word often used by Pater, originally meant a smell or odor and often retains this sense for him, as in "the evening breath of the honeysuckle" (*GdL* 39) or "the breath of the sea and sand" ("EP" 440). On their arrival at the Grange in Picardy in winter, Prior St-Jean and Hyacinth find that, "From the very first, the atmosphere, the light, the influence of things seemed different from what they knew [...]. Was there a breath

of surviving summer blossom on the air?" (*MS* 148). Sebastian von Storck, who "loved to breathe, so nearly, the sea and its influences," seems ineluctably drawn to surrender his life to its waters in an act of heroism that helps him achieve his desired goal of "self-effacement" (*IP* 93, 110). Duke Carl of Rosenmold finds "After unclean towns streets the country air was a perfume by contrast, or actually scented with pinewoods. One seemed to breathe with it fancies of the woods, the hills, and water – of a sort of souls in the landscape, but cheerful and genial now, happy souls!" (*IP* 142). The Dionysian Denys L'Auxerrois, entering the second, more sophisticated phase of his being that will trigger "a kind of degeneration" in his community, returns to Auxerre after a trip to the south, bringing back among other things Eastern "incense" and – a Baudelairean touch – "the seeds of marvellous new flowers" (*IP* 66, 65).<sup>13</sup> If, towards the end of this phase, his influence seems malign, it works to better effect when in his more austere third phase he enters the monastery. Bereft of skills, "he could but compound incense for the sanctuary," yet, like that incense, alters the very atmosphere: "again by merely visible presence, he made himself felt" (*IP* 70). Defining "Unconsciously [...] a peculiar manner, alike of feeling and expression," his influence is breathed in, inspiring anew the arts and handicrafts around him (*IP* 70).

Sensitive to "those who experience most directly the influences of things which touch thought through the senses" (*GS* 57), and presumably counting himself among them, Pater provides in *Marius* a Platonically-derived theory that explains how atmospheric influences, whether derived from places or persons, might work. Early on the young Marius stays at the Temple of Aesculapius for the sake of his health, where he is "alive to the singular purity of the air" (*ME* 24). Ostensibly describing the boy's susceptibility to visual impressions, the narrator gives us a "theory of influence" that seems to privilege vision but on closer examination seems equally dependent on smell. Marius, we are told,

afterwards found in Plato's *Phaedrus*, the theory of the ἀπορροή τοῦ καλλοῦς [effluence of beauty], which supposes men's spirits to be susceptible to certain influences, diffused, like streams or current, by fair things or persons visibly present – green fields and children's faces, for instance – into the air around them; and which, with certain natures, are like potent material essences, conforming the seer to themselves as by some cunning physical necessity. (*ME* 25)

The “essence” of beauty “diffused [...] into the air” seems like the kind of spiritual scent or perfume aura we find in “Diaphaneitè.” This “effluence of beauty,” which for the impressionable aesthetic perceiver constitutes “influence,” is here experienced as an immediate physical encounter but elsewhere Pater indicates that there is a form of influential encounter that still has something of physical immediacy, which can be accessed through reading.

Reading opens one to other forms of influence; inspired by the texts of the past, one “breathes in” and savors the words of others. Throwing himself into reading, Pater’s young English poet finds that a “good book would be like an actual place visited,” governed by “a special recognised influence, a certain controlling atmosphere, always to be experienced there, when one had a will to turn the key” (“EP” 443). That atmosphere is scented, for we learn that the young man, raised in an uncongenial climate and possessed by a “sensuous longing for that warmer soil out of which exotic flowers [...] would naturally grow [, ...] found the exotic full-blown at last in books of prose and poetry” (“EP” 442). In his essay on “Style” (1888) Pater discusses those influential authors who have a “soul perfume.” He contrasts what he calls “mind” and “soul” in style, the latter experienced as a kind of intimate personal contact or spiritual presence informing the text which is intuited and cannot be isolated in or attributed to individual textual characteristics. Both “mind” and “soul” have distinct imperatives – soul seeking “unity of *atmosphere*” and mind “unity of design”; “soul securing colour (or *perfume*, might we say?) as mind secures form, the latter being essentially finite, the former vague or infinite, as the *influence* of a person is practically infinite” (*Ap* 26–7; my emphasis). And in conclusion Pater identifies the mind as “reasonable structure,” and “soul” as “colour and mystic *perfume*” (*Ap* 38; my emphasis). The influence of “soul” is infinite because it cannot be contained by any specific form and moves beyond it, like perfume that expands and diffuses in the air; “soul,” the mysterious spiritual essence of a person, is experienced as a perfume aura diffused through style with an afterlife or presence outside the text.

Textual or aesthetic influence-as-perfume is hinted at elsewhere in Pater in his constant reference to the “essence” of writers and artists. As I have shown elsewhere (*Second Sight* 82–90), this derives from his use of an alchemical imagery to describe the creative process or the means by which the critic distils and extracts the essence or “virtue” of the artist or writer he analyses (*SHR* 4).<sup>14</sup> The goal of the alchemical process, the elixir or philosopher’s stone that confers immortality,

is brought about through the *coniunctio* or *coincidentia oppositorum*, the alchemical marriage or bringing together and combining of opposite elements. In Pater we also see this obsession with the reconciliation or union of opposites, when he defines the essence of subjects such as Michelangelo and Leonardo through combinations such as “sweetness and strength,” “beauty and terror,” or “curiosity and the desire for beauty” (*SHR* 40, 59, 62), or when he characterizes Romanticism as “the union of strangeness and beauty” (*Ap* 247).

Alchemy is not only the forerunner of modern chemistry but it shares its techniques and processes, such as distillation, and its equipment with perfumery – with words like “alembic” used in perfume manufacture to refer to the vessel for distillation; indeed early alchemists were also often perfumers, while perfume, another kind of precious essence, is itself an “alchemical marriage” of opposites. A liquid that contains within it the traces of once-material things, it also volatilizes as a vapour; it hovers on the borders between the physical and non-physical; it is a presence and an absence, a plenitude and a loss. More prosaically it combines animal and vegetable extracts, and – in modern perfumery – natural extracts and synthetic molecules. Beautiful fragrances contain not only pleasant-smelling substances but unpleasant ones too, such as some animalic extracts (musk, civet, castoreum), or indole, that smell of decay found in certain flowers, which nonetheless helps give both these blooms (and manufactured perfume) character – a rich and complex bouquet. Perfume is a physical substance worn on the body, which can speak to the body of physical desire and pleasure, but it transforms the odor of corporeality into something elevated and refined. It can lift the mind to higher things and cross into the realm of the spirit, and once volatilized, it is an aura that influences mood and emotion and can indicate personality, intelligence, and soul.

For Pater, the Renaissance, itself a combination of different impulses and influences, has a “unity of [...] spirit which gives unity to all [its various] products” (*SHR* 6) and, as we have seen, its own perfume, perceptible in the “early sweetness, a languid excess of sweetness” he finds in the thirteenth-century French story of Aucassin and Nicolette (*TR* 12), where the evocation of natural fragrances blends into a period or genre fragrance. Charmed by the “faint Eastern delicacy” of details that include “the full-blown roses” and “the odour of plucked grass and flowers,” he notes that “all through [the story] one feels the influence of that faint air of overwrought delicacy, almost of wantonness, which was so strong a characteristic of the poetry of the Troubadours” (*SHR* 14). Indeed when Pater specifies the

essence of writers, texts, genres, and periods of artistic and literary endeavour, there is often the sense that this essence is also a perfume. Sometimes this is explicit as when he refers to St Jerome, “author of the fragrant Vulgate version of the Scriptures” (*MS* 105–6), or says that Whetstone’s retelling of Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* has “the fragrance of that admirable age of literature about it” (*Ap* 172); or that Charles Lamb’s collection of Tudor dramatic verse has “the choicest savour and perfume of Elizabethan poetry” with Lamb’s own notes “the very quintessence of criticism” (*Ap* 111). Lamb himself is so faithful to older literature that “in what he says casually there comes an aroma of old English” (*Ap* 113). Sometimes the perfume is less immediately obvious as when Pater writes that the works of Greek sculptors “came to be like some subtle extract or essence,” although “extract” is suggestive of fragrance or aroma (*SHR* 37), an impression intensified by immediate reference to the diffusion of the sculptures’ abstract purity and universality “which has carried their influence far beyond the age which produced them” (*SHR* 38).

Figures of alchemical extraction underlie the opening of “Poems by William Morris” and “Æsthetic Poetry.” Jonathan Freedman notes how “‘aesthetic poetry’ is described in the language of alchemy, ‘sublimat[ing]’ and ‘extract[ing]’ elements from the real and artificial alike” (5). Both essays subsequently use images of exotic flowers and scented atmospheres to describe Provençal poetry and Morris’s imitation of it, making this a perfumer’s alchemy. Similar effects permeate “The School of Giorgione” (1877), included in the third edition of *The Renaissance* (1888), and one of Pater’s essays most evidently infiltrated with alchemical imagery with recurrent references to “gold” and “essence.” It is also rich in images of air, a conductor, as Andrew Eastham has recently pointed out, of sound (206), but also, I would suggest, of perfume. Giorgione’s paintings are experienced as perfume; the artist having made his works portable “so that people may move them readily,” the paintings “coming like an animated presence, into one’s cabinet, to enrich the air as with some choice aroma” (*SHR* 128). Giorgione’s formal capture of the dramatic instant in his genre paintings is a kind of alchemical “condensation,” the paintings being like “some consummate extract or quintessence of life”; they are thus an alchemical distillate that could also be a perfume.<sup>15</sup> The distillate/perfume analogy is even stronger in Pater’s original version of this passage in which the “ideal instants” of the paintings are “phases of subject in themselves *already volatilised almost to the vanishing point*, exquisite pauses [...] which are

like an extract, *or elixir*, or consummate fifth part of life” (“Giorgione” 536; my emphasis). A subsequent paragraph, also omitted from *The Renaissance*, concludes: “Well! in the school of Giorgione you drink water, *perfume*, music, lie in receptive humour thus for ever, and the satisfying moment is assured” (“Giorgione” 536; my emphasis).<sup>16</sup> Like writers and artists, readers and critics of literature and artworks are perfumers-cum-chemists who distil and extract the scent, the essence of style, as does Pater’s English poet, who in reading requires

the genius of refinement; and this not as the new subject of writing, of its more obvious and immediate presentations, but by a subtler operation from the style, the *ether-like* manner of the thing. So written language came to be form and colour as well as sound to him, *exotic perfume* almost. Having nothing else to live on, he *extracted* all they could yield from words, and his sense of them came to be curiously cultivated at points. (“EP” 445; my emphasis)

### Aftermath: Critical Olfaction

The immediate effects of Paterian influence-as-perfume can be seen in the work of Wilde, one of Pater’s most devoted readers. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890, 1891), the actual perfumes of the garden and studio that form the heady atmosphere in which Dorian will fall under Lord Henry’s seductive influence presage more figurative uses. Lord Henry wonders if one might “convey one’s temperament into another as though it were a subtle fluid or a strange perfume,” while the malefic pseudo-*A Rebours* with which he corrupts Dorian is “a poisonous book. The heavy odour of incense seemed to cling about its pages and to trouble the brain” (DG 33, 107). But that book “bound in yellow paper,” indeed referred to as “the yellow book” (DG 105, 106), its color signalling its dubious French provenance, recalls Pater’s two influential scented yellow books: the “golden book” of Apuleius enjoyed by Marius and Flavian, “perfumed with oil of sandalwood” with its “handsome yellow wrapper” (ME 39) and Ronsard’s *Odes* beloved by Gaston with its “yellow edges” that carries “the perfume of the place where it had lain – sweet but with something of the sickliness of all spring flowers since the days of Proserpine” (GdL 26).<sup>17</sup> Moreover the Roman belief that “all the maladies of the

soul might be reached through the subtle gateways of the body" (*ME* 22) finds a more epigrammatic expression in Lord Henry's axiom that "Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul." Admitting, as well he might, that Pater had his imitators, Wilde, reviewing *Appreciations* in 1890, observed, "in art so fine as his there is something that, in its essence, is inimitable" (Seiler 236). True though that may be, other of Pater's readers and reviewers were quick to savor that inimitable essence.

Olfactory images are not uncommon in Victorian literary criticism. Many, used as indicators of disapprobation, reference unpleasant, disgusting, or loathsome smells relating to dirt and disease and have associations either with older miasmatic theories of contamination or the newer Victorian ethos of moral hygiene. Images that relate specifically to fragrance can be either positive or negative, reflecting the predilections of the critic who may well approve some kinds of scent but not others. The English prejudice against strong-smelling exotic perfume and against men's use of fragrance of any kind permeates the language of critical evaluation from the mid to the end of the Victorian era. On the publication of *Poems and Ballads* in 1866, Swinburne was accused of having "drenched himself in the worst creations of Parisian literature" (Hyder 35), while Frederic Harrison satirically portrayed Matthew Arnold's version of culture as remote and rarefied, sitting "high aloft with a pouncet-box [perfume-box] to spare her senses aught unpleasant," and Arnold's sermonizing to a "*petit-maitre* [dandy] preacher passing his white hands through his perfumed curls, and simpering thus about the fringes of a stole" (Harrison 610, 611).

Attesting to the perfume of his prose, Pater's readers and critics respond to him in kind, starting with Swinburne, who asked by Rossetti if he could detect his own influence on Pater's writing, cheerfully acknowledged "a little spice of my style as you say" (28 November 1869; Swinburne, *Letters* 2: 58). Writing to Swinburne on the publication of *Studies* in 1873, John Addington Symonds gushes, "What a wonderfully finished piece of artistic work in criticism Pater has given us. The Style has an indefinable perfume & charm" (4 March 1873; Seiler 55). But to his close friend, Henry Dakyns, he confided his reaction to Pater's style in a less complimentary metaphor that mutates synaesthetically from music to fragrance: "There is a kind of Death clinging to the man, wh[ic]h makes his Music (but heavens! how sweet that is!) a little faint and sickly" (20 February 1873; Seiler 55). In his published and somewhat guarded review of *Studies* in *The Academy*,

Symonds prudently reined in such terminology, referring only to the “peculiar flavour” of the volume (Seiler 58). He told his sister, Charlotte Symonds Green: “I am pleased to hear Pater liked my review. I thought he might find it *aigre-doux* [bitter sweet]” (24 March 1873; Symonds, *Letters 2*: 279). As mentioned earlier, taste is governed by smell, and olfactory images often morph into taste metaphors. Symonds would later complain to Horatio Brown that a bout of influenza made it difficult to concentrate on a difficult book: “I tried Pater’s ‘Appreciations’ to-day, and found myself wandering about among the precious sentences, just as though I had lost myself in a sugar-cane plantation – the worse for being sweet” (19 January 1890; Seiler 228).

When Symonds complained about Pater’s style to Henry Sidgwick, however, he reached again for an olfactory metaphor, namely civet, revealing the Victorian aversion to animalics: “‘Marius’ I have not read. I suppose I must. But I shrink from approaching Pater’s style, which has a peculiarly disagreeable effect upon my nerves – like the presence of a civet cat” (5 April 1885; Seiler 124).<sup>18</sup> Symonds, a consumptive with severe respiratory problems, was obliged to live in the Swiss Alps, an atmosphere he associates with a bracing healthiness and one therefore unsuitable for reading a decadent perfumed style that requires an altogether different kind of ambience. Hence his comment to the poet Mary Robinson:

Mr Pater’s ‘Marius’ will of course be read by me – I hope in a gondola. My brain is so badly made that I cannot bear the sustained monotonous refinement in his style. To that exquisite instrument of expression, I daresay that I shall do justice in the languor & the largeness of the lagoons – better than I can in this larger air of the mountains, where everything is jagged & up & down & horribly *natural*. (30 March 1885; Seiler 124)

Others besides Symonds reach for smell (and occasionally taste) imagery when assessing Pater. Havelock Ellis was clearly alert to Pater’s alchemical and perfume imagery. As befitting someone who would make an extensive study of smell, he claims in a critical essay of 1885 that, for Pater,

there is nothing so good in the world as the soft, spiritual aroma – telling, as nothing else tells, of the very quintessence of the Renaissance itself – that exhales from Della Robbia ware, or

the long-lost impossible Platonism of Mirandola, or certain subtle and evanescent aspects of Botticelli's art. To find how the flavour of these things may be most exquisitely tasted, there is nothing so well worth seeking as that. (Seiler 110)

But, discussing Pater's treatment of his objects of criticism, he finds an inappropriate kind of self-indulgence:

they are, as it were, plants from each of which he wishes to abstract its own peculiar alkaloid or volatile oil [...]. This was an ingenious or almost scientific theory of criticism, and had not Mr Pater seemed to swoon by the way over the subtle perfumes he had evoked, he might, one thinks, have gone far. (Seiler 110)

For Ellis, it seems to be a matter of degree. Pater's feminine "swooning" is a step too far, the aesthetic critic overwhelmed by the very atmosphere he conjures and unable to remain objective. In contrast, Pater's decadent supporters embraced the language of fragrance more enthusiastically. Arthur Symons in the original version of his essay on "The Decadent Movement in Literature" (1893), an essay almost exclusively focused on contemporary French literature, called Pater's "the most beautiful English prose which is now being written," while nonetheless observing "how far away from classic ideals of style is this style in which words have their color, their music, their perfume" (Seiler 269). Symons, a future translator of *Les Fleurs du mal*, also imports a quasi-Baudelairean exoticism when in 1887 he declares of *The Renaissance* "an almost oppressive quiet, a quiet which seems to exhale an atmosphere heavy with the odour of tropical flowers, broods over these pages" (Seiler 177).<sup>19</sup>

Pater's supporters also find fragrance in other of his works. The Irish writer George Moore, who, while living in Paris, had immersed himself in French literature, instinctively made use of a scent analogy when he wrote in his *Confessions of a Young Man* (1886) of the impact *Marius* made on him:

this book was the first in English prose I had come across that procured for me any genuine pleasure in the language itself, in the combination of words for silver or gold chime,

and unconventional cadence, and for all those lurking half-meanings, and that evanescent suggestion, like the odour of dead roses, that words retain to the last of other times and elder usage. (Seiler 153)

Richard Le Gallienne, appraising *Marius* in his obituary for Pater (August 1894), feels compelled to defend the novel's and by implication, its author's, masculinity: "despite Mr Pater's detractors, it is, in the best sense of the word, a manly book. [...] and for sheer beauty, glamour, fragrance – that mysterious beauty as of incense which clings about every word Mr Pater wrote – where in English literature is there a book like it?" (Seiler 283). (For "Mr Pater's detractors," that attribution of manliness must have sat rather awkwardly with the incense.) Although unimpressed by their factual content, the archaeologist L.R. Farnell enjoyed the "faint fragrance" of Pater's lectures on Greek sculpture which he heard as an Oxford undergraduate and which seem to have acted as an influence as he "resolved to go further afield in this line" (Farnell cited in Østermark-Johansen 216). Similarly, whether expressing praise or reservations, Symonds, Ellis, Symons, and Le Gallienne, like Wilde, influenced by the "exotic perfume" of Pater's prose, would all go further afield in the line of *flairerie*.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Robert Raper, letter of July 1915 to Edmund Gosse, cited in Monsman's commentary to *Gaston de Latour* (*GdL* 145) and his Introduction to *Marius the Epicurean* (*ME* vii).

<sup>2</sup> Many critics discuss Pater's visuality but Paul Barolsky's *Walter Pater's Renaissance* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania UP, 1987) and Lene Østermark-Johansen's *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* are notable. My *Second Sight: The Visionary Imagination in Late Victorian Literature* discusses the more rarely mentioned topic of Pater's visionariness. See too Jerome Bump, "Seeing and Hearing in *Marius the Epicurean*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37 (1982): 188–206. For hearing, see Angela Leighton, "Pater's Music," *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 14 (2005): 67–79; Andrew Eastham, "Walter Pater's Acoustic Space: 'The School of Giorgione,' Dionysian *Anders-streben*, and the Politics of Soundscape"; and Elicia Clements, "Pater's Musical Imagination: The Aural Architecture of the 'The School of Giorgione' and *Marius the Epicurean*," in *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Walter Pater Across the Arts*, eds. Elicia Clements and Lesley J. Higgins (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 152–66. For touch, see also Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture*. For taste, see Matthew Kaiser's "Pater's Mouth."

<sup>3</sup> See my "Scents and Sensibility: The Fragrance of Decadence," forthcoming in *Decadent Poetics*, eds. Jason Hall and Alex Murray (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Euterpe is the muse of lyric poetry, whose name means "giver of delight." Many pinks are clove-scented.

<sup>5</sup> Roy Genders notes that *Fritillaria meleagris* "has a soft mossy fragrance which is more pronounced in the white forms" (209). Most kinds of fritillary have a foxy smell that many people find disagreeable, possibly provoking Pater's use of the phrase "dubious honey."

<sup>6</sup> Shunned by the Victorians because they can suggest bodily and sexual odors, animalic scents add sensuality, depth, and staying power to perfume. Although still used discreetly in Victorian perfume, they were not meant to announce their presence as they did in, say, the eighteenth century. Musk is a secretion from the penile sheath gland of the Tibetan musk deer, and civet, a secretion from the anal glands of the Ethiopian civet cat. Ambergris, a grey tarry substance, is an intestinal secretion produced by the sperm whale, usually collected from beaches, while castoreum comes from the abdominal gland of the beaver.

<sup>7</sup> The "musk" mentioned here is the floral variety, from flowers such as musk roses or musk mallows.

<sup>8</sup> See the *OED* entry for "savour" (noun), item 2c and Swinburne's "Laus Veneris" from *Poems and Ballads* (1866) for examples of olfactory "savour." Other Paterian words that have an odorous dimension are "racy," used of the aroma as well as the taste of wine (*OED* item 1a) and "relish," an alteration of Middle English *reles*, a scent or aftertaste.

<sup>9</sup> See 2 Cor 2:14; Phil 4:18, Eph 5: 2.

<sup>10</sup> An “aftermath” is the new growth after a field or meadow has been cut or mown.

<sup>11</sup> Reviewing *Poems and Ballads* and *Chastelard* (1865) for the *Examiner* (22 September 1886), Henry Morley notes, “Of ‘sweet’ – ‘sweet’ – ‘sweet’, he has the iteration of a canary bird. There are sweets enough in these two little volumes to set up a wholesale grocer for his life-time” (Hyder 44).

<sup>12</sup> See Monsman’s excellent notes (*GdL* 169). Cf. Pater’s reproduction of Browne’s belief “in the operation of ‘of the air and genius of gardens upon human spirits, towards virtue and sanctity” and his hatred of gardens that “smell more of paint than of flowers and verdure” (*Ap* 140, 141).

<sup>13</sup> In *Greek Studies* Pater writes of how “the flowers, the incense of the East, have attached themselves deeply to [Dionysus],” and of his “long vesture [...] fragrant with Eastern odours” (62, 49).

<sup>14</sup> See also my “Shelley’s Alchemy, Pater’s Transformations,” in *Legacies of Romanticism: Literature, Culture, Aesthetics*, Routledge Studies in Romanticism, eds. Carmen Casaliggi and Paul March Russell (London: Routledge, 2012), 85–100.

<sup>15</sup> Compare Gaudenzio Ferrari’s *Our Lady of the Fruit-garden* at Vercelli, a painting that for Pater evokes the garden scents of the north Italian town where it is located, and afterwards leaves its “savour” in the visitor’s memory (*MS* 95).

<sup>16</sup> See also Donald Hill’s “Textual Notes,” *TR* 241, 242. The phrase “fifth part of life” is a synonym for “quintessence,” itself a term widely used in alchemy for the arcane “fifth essence” which characterizes a thing or substance and which can supposedly be extracted by distillation or other procedures.

<sup>17</sup> French novels, frequently regarded as being *risqué* by Victorian readers, were often bound in yellow paper.

<sup>18</sup> Diluted, civet smells sweet and feline, a touch of cat’s urine with honey. In its raw state or in a paste, it smells more faecal with some commentators remarking on its resemblance to the odor of vomit.

<sup>19</sup> See Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, tr. Arthur Symons (London: The Casanova Society, 1925).

Kenneth Daley

## Pater's Books and the *Collected Works* Digital Archive

**U**ith the terrific news that Oxford University Press has agreed to publish the *Collected Works of Walter Pater*, in both a print and an online edition, more specific planning and work has begun in earnest. As the general editors, Lesley Higgins and David Latham, detail in the project proposal (revised and enlarged from the initial proposal printed in the last edition of the *PN*), the *Collected Works* will also include a digital archive, established through the server of York University, to supplement the print and online editions and “encourage Pater studies in several fields.” Certainly one of these fields is textual studies and the history of the book. The general editors identify a number of potential digital assets for the archive, including PDF copies of the 1910 “Library Edition,” Pater’s periodical publications, and a selection of manuscript pages. We should add to that list digitized copies of all editions of Pater’s books published in his lifetime, as well as digital photos of the book covers and bindings. There is much scholarly attention still to be paid to the “material” Pater, especially as it relates to his books and the many editions that he saw through the press. Pater was far more involved in the process of his books’ production than the great majority of his contemporaries. Most authors left book design wholly in the hands of their publishers, who in turn commissioned printers, binders, cover designers, illustrators, engraving firms. Pater’s correspondence with Macmillan reveals his intense and persistent interest in all material features of the book, including paper, layout, typography, use of white space, binding materials and design, cost, and so on. As Robert M. Seiler

suggests, Pater belongs among the small group of writers and artists in England – Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Morris, Whistler, Wilde – who, in the midst of the great rise of commercial bookmaking, “inaugurated a new era in book design,” and insisted on thinking of the book as “an aesthetic object” (ix).

The beautiful books of Whistler, Wilde, and the Kelmscott Press belong primarily to the 1890s. But in late 1872, when Pater began work with Alexander Macmillan to publish *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, his great example in “the art of the book” must have been Rossetti, who designed from cover to cover his first volume of original poetry, *Poems* (1870), and who designed and illustrated his sister’s earlier books, *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862) and *The Prince’s Progress and Other Poems* (1866). Rossetti’s friend, F. S. Ellis, was the publisher of *Poems*, but Macmillan and Co. published both of Christina’s books, and Alexander Macmillan worked closely with sister and brother in producing the volumes. Lorraine Janzen Kooistra argues that the “overall coherence” of the books that emerged from the Rossetti collaboration explicitly “inspired others in the Victorian publishing industry” (60), and, of course, the volumes would have recommended Macmillan to writers concerned with their book’s design and aesthetic integrity. Lewis Carroll, for instance, in preparing with Macmillan the publication of his 1869 *Phantasmagoria*, explicitly cited both of Christina’s books as models for typography and cover design (Kooistra 60–61). Dodgson’s close relationship with Macmillan began a few years earlier. Both he and his illustrator, John Tenniel, were unhappy with the print and picture quality of the presentation copies of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865); at the insistence of the then unknown author, Macmillan agreed to scrap the entire first edition and allowed them to prepare an entirely new version (Cohen and Gandolfo, 15–16, 38).

Surely it is no accident that Pater chose Macmillan as the publishing house to which to propose his first collection of essays. From the beginning of his relationship with Macmillan, as Seiler details, Pater played an active role in the planning of his books’ overall design and production. His control over the process was not equal to that of Rossetti, who, as both poet and visual artist, pursued in book design the creation of a synaesthetic artwork, “an imagination of a total work of art” that stressed “the relation between iconic and verbal expression” (McGann, “Rossetti’s Iconic Page” 127). Unlike Rossetti, Pater could not design his own cover and binding, but he advocated strongly for his preferences regarding the material and style of the binding, and its color and size. For the 1877 edition

of *The Renaissance*, he designed the title page himself, selected the image that served as illustrative vignette on the page, and chose the color of ink in which the engraving was printed. He selected and arranged the contents of each of his books, and their subsequent editions. Like other poets and painters in Pre-Raphaelite circles, he was interested in and understood the commercial aspects of bookselling, and regularly suggested to Macmillan the prices at which his editions should be sold. On more than one occasion, he prepared or oversaw advertisement copy for his books.

While Pater's idea of "*Anders-streben*" represents an important theoretical comparison with the work of Rossetti (Teukolsky 120-127) – as well as that of Whistler and Wagner and Baudelaire – we should not regard the books themselves as efforts to achieve some sort of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Yet, Pater clearly regarded the decorative and bibliographic elements of his books as contributing to their semantic and expressive potential. This is especially true, I think, of *The Renaissance* and its various editions, a series of books for which scholars have yet to adequately detail, in Jerome McGann's terms, the "ideas and conceptual content" embodied in their "decorative and apparitional forms" ("Rossetti's Iconic Page" 129).

The mock-ribbed paper of the 1873 first edition is a clear example of a decorative form, or piece of "bibliographic" code, that we can read in a conceptual way, and in relation to the "linguistic" code of the collected essays. In Macmillan's words, the paper "is made to imitate the old wire wove paper" (12 November 1872; Seiler 71). As the letters indicate, the decision to use it represents an important compromise between Pater and his publisher. What Pater really wanted and Macmillan refused to give him was, in Pater's words, "an old-fashioned binding, in paste-board with paper back and printed title, usual, I think, about thirty years ago." Pater makes the request in one of his very first letters to Macmillan. He stresses the tactile and visual qualities of the old style. "I have just had in my hands an old book so bound," he tells Macmillan, "the paste-board covers of a greyish-blue, and the paper back olive green." Such an object, "would, I am sure, be much approved of by many persons of taste, among whom the sale of my book would probably in the first instance be" (2 November 1872; Seiler 69).

Macmillan objects, both on practical grounds and in the matter of "taste." His primary objection is a strong and reasonable one – the binding Pater wants will "interfere with the sale of the book." "[B]ooksellers won't keep them" (12 November 1872; Seiler 71) because they are "apt to get soiled and spoiled" (7

November 1872; Seiler 70). “The use of inferior unuseful materials,” insists Macmillan in response to Pater’s persistent attempt to convince him otherwise, “cannot be needful to the realization of any art which is of much value, at least I cannot see how. Gold lettering on cloth was an immense advance on the old paper boards and was welcomed as such. I remember the period of change” (12 November 1872; Seiler 71).

So, of course, does Pater, and this is the point I want to make. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Pater conceived of the physical appearance of his book – the reappearance of the old bookmaking style in the midst of the modern technical innovations of the contemporary commercial book trade – in relation to the series of historical/cultural survivals and recoveries that are the recurrent subjects of his Renaissance essays. Furthermore, the gesture of the old-style binding would associate Pater’s new book – the inexpensive product of a commercial printer and publisher – with the actual recurrence in the Victorian bookmaking trade of fine printing, the return to old-face type, for instance, characteristic of many books printed by the Daniel or Chiswick Press (Seiler 17–28).

In their give-and-take on the issue, Pater manages to convey to Macmillan the motivations behind his appeal for the “old-fashioned binding in boards” (11 November 1872; Seiler 70). At first, the publisher seems merely baffled – not only will the old-style cover hurt sales, he writes, but

[b]esides, I don’t like it anyway. It is like a recurrence to the fig-leaf. The cloth in gilt is infinitely more useful and surely not less beautiful. Please don’t wish for it. (7 November 1872; Seiler 70)

The tone of the exhortation – please don’t wish for it – is amusing, as is the comic analogy to the biblical fig leaf. Pater does not smile – he is “disappointed at the contents” of Macmillan’s letter, and goes on to explain in more detail his strong preference for the old-style cover. It will give to his book, he argues,

the artistic appearance which I am sure is necessary for it.... Something not quite in the ordinary way is, I must repeat, very necessary in a volume the contents of which are so unpretending as in mine, and which is intended in the first instance for a

comparatively small section of readers. (November 11 1872; Seiler 70)

Pater is clearly thinking of the volume's material features in relation to both its subject and its reception. Perceptively, Macmillan seizes on Pater's use of the word "artistic," for he now understands that Pater regards the material features of his book as a means of asserting its status as an aestheticist work of art, of declaring its participation in the network of contemporary art and literature associated with Aestheticism. "I send you by this post," Macmillan writes to Pater,

a book in a style of binding which I devised for the author and which he liked. His tastes were "artistic." He is an intimate friend of Mr. Burne Jones and others who think in that line. Also, the paper of the book is made to imitate the old wire wove paper which can only now be got in this mock rib, which is really rather pleasant to my own eye.... Perhaps we can meditate on the binding a little further. (November 12 1872; Seiler 71)

As a decorative form, the mock-rib paper imparts an aesthetic physique to the words of the aesthetic critic. The paper functions as a kind of bibliographic correlative to the aestheticist material in Pater's text, the series of verbal references, for instance, to the story of Tannhäuser, the Parthenon frieze, the subject of Bacchus, and the other shared motifs that, as Elizabeth Prettejohn has convincingly demonstrated, characterize the aestheticist project and its "distinctive form of group identity" (47). Like Rossetti's cover designs, Pater's first book includes material features that distinguish the work from the typical style of the period, and work to establish British Aestheticism's particular bibliographic codes.

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As these few pages have demonstrated, Seiler's *The Book Beautiful: Walter Pater and the House of Macmillan* (1999) laid the foundation for continued study of Pater's interest in the physical form of his books, and his role in helping to shape the textual condition in England during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In the remainder of this piece, I want to suggest ways in which a digital archive

housing high-quality electronic reproductions of Pater's books can help further to facilitate and promote such study.

A number of digitized copies of books Pater published in his lifetime are already available online. The majority of these are accessible through the HathiTrust Digital Library ([www.hathitrust.org](http://www.hathitrust.org)), a partnership of major academic and research institutions maintaining a consolidated digital repository of more than three million public domain volumes. The HathiTrust includes full-text copies of at least one edition of each of Pater's five books: the first (1873) and second (1877) editions of *The Renaissance*; the first and second editions of *Marius the Epicurean* (both in two volumes and both published in 1885); the first edition (1887) of *Imaginary Portraits*; the second edition (1890) of *Appreciations*; and the first edition (1893) of *Plato and Platonism*. The HathiTrust also provides full-text copies of the complete eight-volume Edition de Luxe, published in 1900, and the ten-volume 1910 New Library Edition. Google Books, the other major online digital repository, provides full-text access to one edition of each of the five books: *The Renaissance* (1873), *Marius the Epicurean* (1885; 2nd edition, vols. 1 and 2), *Appreciations* (1889), *Imaginary Portraits* (1890), and *Plato and Platonism* (1893).

One can also access digitized copies of some of Pater's books at The Victorian Prose Archive: Rare Books and Editions of Scholarly Interest, edited and maintained by Alfred J. Drake ([www.victorianprose.org](http://www.victorianprose.org)). In addition to Pater, the archive includes works by Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, James Anthony Froude, Francis W. Newman, John Henry Newman, J.J. Thomas, and Oscar Wilde – but none of these authors are represented as fully as Pater. Of Pater's work, the archive includes copies of the complete 1910 Library Edition; the first (1873) and second (1877) editions of *The Renaissance*; the second edition of *Marius* (1885); and the 1889 essays, "Aesthetic Poetry," scanned from the first edition of *Appreciations*, and "Giordano Bruno," from the August 1889 *Fortnightly Review*, neither of which is included in the Library Edition (although, of course, "The Lower Pantheism," Chapter VII in Shadwell's edition of *Gaston de Latour*, is reprinted in the Library Edition).

Most of the remaining points I want to make are fairly obvious, but still I believe worth articulating. The first: it is an extraordinarily valuable experience for students and teachers and scholars to engage electronic copies of various editions of Pater's books. Let me turn again to *The Renaissance* and the 1873 and 1877 editions, a dramatic instance of Pater's revising from one edition to the next and

a subject that many of us are likely to address in our classes, and copies of both, as I have indicated, already available online. We all know that Pater omitted the “Conclusion” from the 1877 edition, and we can read about and discuss with our students the circumstances surrounding Pater’s decision: the numerous journalistic attacks, the denunciatory sermons, the antagonisms from his Oxford colleagues, the general homophobic climate of the 1870s. But to turn to the Contents page of the 1877 edition (even virtually) is to experience Pater’s act in a completely different way. The graphic image of the “Contents” without the “Conclusion” is a powerful artifact and teaching tool, and, I suggest, despite all that we know, it still manages to surprise, to look odd. To see, too, the placement of the “Contents” after the “Preface,” as it is in each of the four editions, is to experience the volume differently. This is especially true, I think, for those of us whose primary engagement with *The Renaissance* has been with Donald Hill’s edition.

Digitized copies of the various editions provide a convenient, accessible means of observing and interrogating many of the material differences that distinguish one edition from the next. Obviously, Pater revised the book’s title in 1877, and that edition’s title page is also marked by the addition of a provocative illustration – the drawing from the Louvre of a beautiful, androgynous-looking boy, attributed at the time to Leonardo, engraved by Charles Jeens, and printed in red ink (changed to black in 1888 and 1893). Laurel Brake, Denis Donoghue, and others have commented on the suggestive character of the vignette that, taken together with the new story of Amis and Amile, balances the loss of the “Conclusion” and arguably strengthens the volume’s homoerotic content (Brake 213; Donoghue 68; Dellamora 159).

But perhaps a less obvious feature of the 1877 title page, one that I have not seen addressed before in any scholarly discussion, is the change to Pater’s name. In 1877, Pater chose to drop his middle initial, from “Walter H. Pater” in 1873 to “Walter Pater.” In both editions, Pater is identified as “Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford,” as he will be in every one of his subsequent book publications. With the publication of *Marius* in 1885, however, Pater again rethinks authorial self-representation, adding after his name the initials “M.A.” – “Walter Pater M.A.” – calling attention to the degree conferred by Oxford in 1865, the same year his fellowship in classics was confirmed. Does the credential provide Pater a mark of respectability that he would not otherwise have? Perhaps the decision to emphasize the degree is related to the cultural and intellectual work that he wants

the novel to perform, his attempt to address in a more complete and nuanced manner the ideas and “thoughts suggested” by the “Conclusion” (Pater 186), his reconsideration of the “new Cyrenaicism,” and so on. Two years later he publishes *Imaginary Portraits*, another work of fiction, and maintains the “M.A.” But beginning with the 1889 *Appreciations*, a work of literary criticism, and extending through the rest of his career, including the collection of academic lectures on Greek philosophy, *Plato and Platonism*, he drops the credential and reverts to “Walter Pater.”

Turning again to the “Contents” page, we know that Pater renamed (and enlarged) the opening essay of the volume, from the 1873 “Aucassin and Nicolette” to the 1877 “Two Early French Stories.” But he also altered the spelling of two other essay titles, modernizing the 1873, “Pico Della Mirandula” and “Lionardo Da Vinci” to “Pico Della Mirandola” and “Leonardo Da Vinci.” Seiler and Matthew Beaumont note the spelling changes, but neither speculates on Pater’s rationale (Seiler 41, Beaumont xxxi). Interestingly enough, when Pater first published his essays in the *Fortnightly Review*, the 1871 title, “Pico della Mirandula,” is spelled the same way that it is in 1873, but the 1869 “Leonardo Da Vinci” is spelled as it is in 1877. If, by 1877, Pater chose to give the proper names of the Italian Renaissance figures in the more current English form of the day, why did he choose the more archaic “Lionardo” in 1873? (Epistolary documentation and other contemporary records indicate that in his own day the artist was known by many names, and by both spellings, “Leonardo” and “Lionardo.”)

In both volumes, the dedication page reads simply, “To | C.L.S.,” (unlike the 1888 and 1893 editions that announce and date the “Dedication | To | C.L.S. | February, 1873”). Yet, in 1877, the dedication is printed in a large ornamental cursive type, replacing the plainer block font of 1873. In fact, as Hill and Seiler have discussed, the design and physical layout of the 1877 edition differ in a number of ways from 1873, including changes in the paper, paper size, page layout, binding, labeling, and the addition of the title page illustration. The sheet size of the paper used in 1877 is larger, and, according to Macmillan, an “unusual size” that the publisher had made “to order” (Seiler 77). In addition, the 1877 edition presents only twenty-five lines per page, as opposed to twenty-nine lines in 1873, creating larger margins at both the top and the bottom, and more space in-between each line. Presumably, this change originated with Pater’s suggestion in his January 30 1877 letter to Macmillan: “The page might, I think, be shortened by one line. This

would increase, instead of slightly diminishing, the number of pages in the first edition, besides improving the look of the page, which to my eye is the better for a broad space at the foot” (Seiler 75).

The discussion of paper size and other physical qualities of the book reminds us that the “flat, visual image” is not a substitute for the “three-dimensional, multisensory one” (Bornstein and Tinkle 3). The technology cannot give one the feel of the ribbed paper on one’s fingers. Yet, the flat image can certainly stimulate a serious interest in the object’s physicality, and this is the next point I want to make.

Andrew Stauffer, director of the digital scholarly organization NINES (Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-century Electronic Scholarship) at the University of Virginia, has recently called attention to the danger that wide-scale digitization poses to the future of the nineteenth-century printed book. Access to increasingly vast numbers of digitized full-text Victorian era books (growing vaster every day) has dramatically enhanced and transformed our scholarly and teaching activities. Yet, as Stauffer explains, “the status of the nineteenth-century book within this changing system is particularly conflicted” (335). Books printed before 1800 are often housed in library special collections, and books printed after 1923 are still in copyright and remain in circulation. Books from the long nineteenth century are already in the public domain so the creation of digital surrogates can proceed systematically and unimpeded. The volumes themselves pose significant space and funding problems for research libraries – there are enormous numbers of Victorian-era books housed in library collections around the world, and due to paper quality many of them are in poor condition. Not surprisingly, university and other research libraries are in the process of reconfiguring access to public-domain texts via digital repositories. Stauffer cites reports from library policy organizations that explicitly call for “the withdrawal of large portions of nineteenth-century print collections and the substitution of digital surrogates” (338). Nineteenth-century books, warns Stauffer, are “now in a kind of competition with their own surrogates” (336).

As Stauffer details, a book on the shelf loses much in the process of digitization, including its status as historical artifact. Each individual copy bears “traces of its many social interactions” (336), its particular journey through time. On a recent visit to the Newberry Library, for instance, I discovered that its 1893 first edition of *Plato and Platonism* is inscribed on the inside cover: “Given by the writer to me,

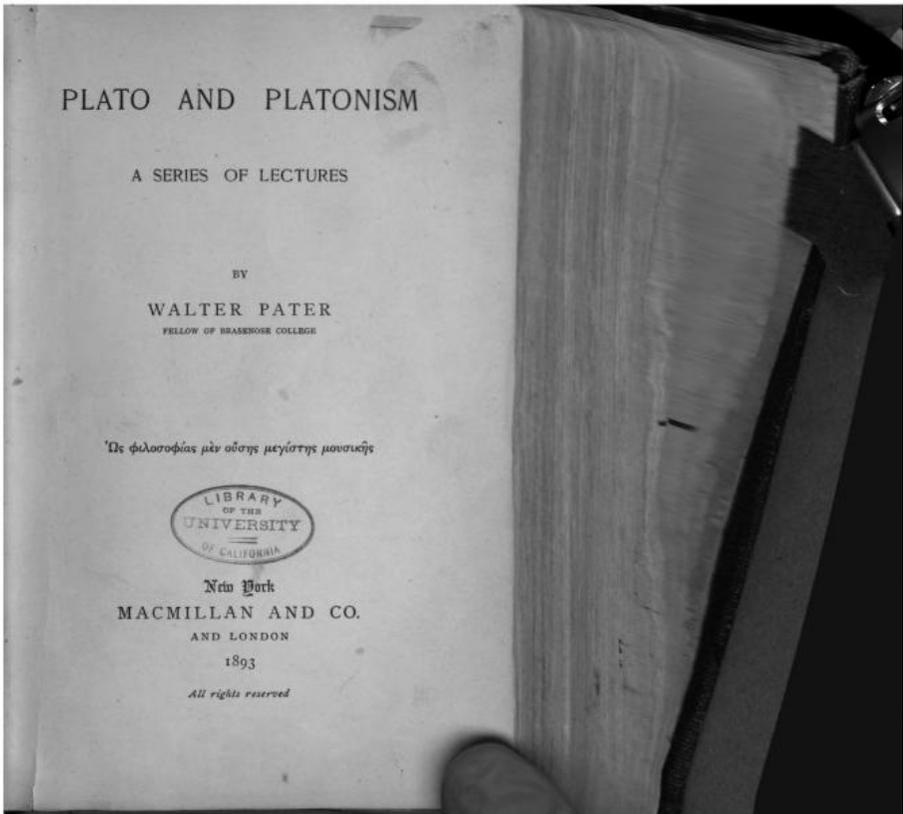
+ by me to my dear boy in remembrance of the Newcastle examination, March, 1893,” and signed, “Mary A. Ward.” The book then is a kind of twice-given presentation copy, given by Pater to Mary Ward (Mrs. Humphry Ward) and by her to her son. In her memoir, *A Writer's Recollections* (1918), Mary Ward provides some of the best and most intimate detail of Pater's personal life that we have, and her inscription on Pater's book complements what we know of their relationship and is itself a significant piece of biographical and historical evidence. Likely, if I had not, someone else with some familiarity with Pater and Mrs. Humphry Ward would sooner or later stumble upon the volume and its inscription, but not of course if the volume had already been de-accessioned, available only in digital format created from another collection's copy. On the other hand, it was work with the digital surrogates that drew me to the Library to see for myself (for the first time in many years) copies of Pater's books and editions published in his lifetime.

While the symbiotic relationship between the nineteenth-century book and its digital surrogate is, as Stauffer emphasizes, a dangerously competitive one, we should do what we can to cultivate the potential of the digital archive to help preserve the actual material record of the nineteenth century. We can now expose our students and each other like never before to the bibliographic elements of the Victorian-era book, and that exposure can inspire a desire for the book itself. I see this regularly with students in my Victorian Illustrated Poetry class – a class that I would not be able to teach without Google Books – who are genuinely excited and interested to see for themselves an actual copy of the Moxon Tennyson, or *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, or a Kelmscott Press book only because they are already familiar with their digital surrogates.

The *Collected Works* Digital Archive can do much to promote interest in the “material” Pater, fostering a healthy symbiotic relationship between the nineteenth-century book and its digital surrogate. The archive can provide notes detailing many of the bibliographical features of Pater's books, and contextualizing those features in relation to the larger Victorian reading and publishing practices; it can provide continuously updated bibliographies on nineteenth-century book design, typography, etc.; it can direct readers to specific library collections rich in aestheticist books and material from the British “renaissance of printing” movement. Above all, the archive can maintain high-quality, scholastically informed electronic representations of Pater's books, something that the large

digital repositories are unable to provide.

The HathiTrust articulates a mission and set of goals and functional objectives, including a commitment to building a reliable and comprehensive archive. Yet, the effort to preserve and make accessible the cultural record on such a grand scale – books published in more than 400 languages, from 1500 to the present, and on the range of subjects represented in any large North American research library – has resulted, at least to this point, in an emphasis on “quantity over quality” (Stauffer 340), a repository consisting largely of “hastily-executed single-copy scans” (Stauffer 340). Often, the gloved hand or finger of the scanner gets caught in the page shot of the book’s opening pages, as for example in this screen shot of the HathiTrust copy of *Plato and Platonism*.



At times, pages of the book are out of sequence. The HathiTrust 1873 *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, for example, gives us the “Contents” before the Dedication page and before the “Preface,” whereas in the actual volume the “Contents” are printed after the “Preface” immediately before “Aucassin and Nicolette.”

Drake’s Victorian Prose Archive provides more reliable and consistently high-quality digital copies of Pater’s texts. In its selection, organization, and annotation, Drake’s presentation of Pater’s work is careful and informed. Preliminary notes to each text address the reliability and the formatting of the electronic edition, and specify the text upon which the digital copy is based. Many of the copies include useful notes and translations. As Drake emphasizes, the PDF documents are not facsimiles, and in fact his online editions, while retaining much of the actual books’ original form, significantly alter the typeface and page size. As I pointed out earlier, there are a limited number of Pater’s texts included in the archive. The site does include a list of future projects, but this represents Drake’s earlier ambitions for the archive. In our e-mail correspondence, he indicated that he no longer plans to add any new material, in large part due to the rise of HathiTrust and Google Books. But the Victorian Prose Archive provides an excellent starting point from which to build a serious, useful digital archive of Pater’s work, one that will inspire future scholarship and help to preserve the actual books themselves.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Helsing, "Rossetti and the Art of the Book," 175–189. By 1871, Rossetti had also designed covers and bindings for five other books including his volume of translations, *The Early Italian Poets* (Smith, Elder and Co., 1861); two volumes of Swinburne's poetry, *Atalanta in Calydon* (E. Moxon, 1865), and *Songs Before Sunrise* (F.S. Ellis, 1871); his brother William's translation of Dante's *Inferno* (Macmillan, 1865); and his sister Maria's, *A Shadow of Dante* (Rivingtons, 1871).

<sup>2</sup> See Kooistra, "Pre-Raphaelite Bookmaking," 56–90.

<sup>3</sup> The distinction between a work's bibliographical and linguistic codes was first advanced by McGann. See *The Textual Condition*.

<sup>4</sup> Prior to the industrialization of paper-making, "laid paper," generally hand-made by dipping a mould into a porridge-like vat of pulped vegetable fibers, featured chainlines, wire-lines, and watermarks. In 1755, a Birmingham paper-maker, John Baskerville (or, as some argue, the Kent paper-maker, James Whatman), devised a mould in which the mesh was woven like cloth, the brass wires being spaced closely and evenly across each other. The new mould produced smoother and more uniform sheets of paper, without ridges.

But Macmillan specifies, "the old wire wove paper." As the American designer, printer, papermaker, and historian, Dard Hunter, explains in his authoritative book, *Papermaking* (1947), with

the earliest wove paper sheets “the ribs of the moulds appear distinct and pronounced when the paper is held to the light. This defect was caused by the woven wire mould covering having been sewed directly to the ribs, or supports of the mould” (128). These “imperfections” appeared until about 1800, when they were eliminated. Macmillan is likely referring, then, to this early wove paper. The term is now applied principally to machine-made paper.

I want to thank my colleague, Clifton Meador, Professor, Department of Interdisciplinary Arts and Faculty, Center for Book and Paper Arts, Columbia College Chicago, for introducing me to the work of Dard Hunter.

<sup>5</sup> Macmillan has fun with the analogy again in his next letter to Pater, from which I have already quoted, 12 November 1872: “I still possess books which are done up in smooth cloth with paper label and value them historically, just as I would value Adam’s fig-leaf, if I could find it” (Seiler 71). For his part, Pater never wholly lets go of the idea of a book bound in the old paper boards. In planning with Macmillan the second edition of *Marius*, Pater agrees to publish the novel again in two volumes, this time in the somewhat smaller size and type of the recent “Eversley Edition” of Charles Kingsley novels. But “[a]s to binding,” he writes, “I feel uncertain. I think it should be something quite distinct from that of the larger edition.” He proposes a couple of ideas – a cloth binding (of a color he encloses with the letter) with a “yellowish white vellum back,” or a binding in “oriental silk” – and then, surprisingly, as if making the suggestion for the first time: “What do you think of the old-fashioned binding in boards?” (16 June 1885; Seiler 96).

<sup>6</sup> Although beginning with *Appreciations* in 1889 and continuing through *Plato and Platonism*, Pater drops “Oxford” and is identified as simply, “Fellow of Brasenose College.”

<sup>7</sup> At Oxford and the older British universities, an M.A. was not an earned degree: students who had achieved a B.A. (hons.) could, after the twenty-first term following matriculation, apply for the award of a Master’s degree, for which they might be charged an administration fee by their college.

<sup>8</sup> Or, at least, it is likely her son to whom she inscribes the book. Her only son, Arnold Sandwith Ward (1876-1950), would have been 17 or 18 years old in 1893. Mary Ward was, of course, married to Humphry Ward, Pater’s long-time friend and Brasenose colleague.

## COLLECTED WORKS NEWS

Lesley Higgins and David Latham

**“Would it not be well to be thinking about a new edition?”: *Collected Works of Walter Pater***

**T**he question about “a new edition” was posed to Pater by Frederick Macmillan in May 1890; the publisher was hoping to capitalize on and increase the popularity of *Imaginary Portraits*. We posed a similar but more wide-scale question to the Delegates of Oxford University Press in July 2012, and their answer was a gratifying “yes.” As a result, a new *Collected Works of Walter Pater* in ten volumes is now underway.

Immediately after his death, friends cobbled together several volumes of Pater’s essays, but without considering crucial textual matters. No edition has appeared since the 1900–01 *Edition de Luxe* and 1910 Library Edition, which are physically impressive books but incomplete and editorially suspect. Since the 1980s, individual Pater texts have been capably produced, particularly *The Renaissance*, *Marius the Epicurean*, and *Gaston de Latour*. What students and scholars of Pater have always lacked, however, are the full resources of a scholarly edition of all his extant writings: texts that are carefully edited, historically situated, and fully indexed and illustrated. For the first time, the *Collected Works of Walter Pater* will bring together his correspondence, his previously unpublished manuscripts, his many contributions to the leading periodicals of the day, all of his prose fiction, and the record of classical scholarship. The edition will also provide accurate, textually nuanced accounts of how painstakingly and successively Pater

revised his texts. (The Oxford don once explained to a student that he never published anything until he had rewritten it seven times; one only has to compare subsequent editions of *The Renaissance* and *Marius the Epicurean* to realize how the “accretive” process of “composition” for Pater extended from manuscript page to proof to serial publication to volume and to reissued editions.)

The *Collected Works* is not meant to present a new Pater, but to prepare the way for new scholarship on Pater. Fundamentally, the edition will dispel the myths that Pater’s first iteration was usually his best, and that he shied away from controversy when and as he revised his works. Rather than transform Pater’s texts, the project will offer a belated respect for Pater’s entire *corpus*. In the past two decades, interdisciplinary studies have expanded the audience for his works, and thus created the urgent need for reliable texts – and access to the entire canon.

### Collected Works Overview

The *Collected Works of Walter Pater* will feature ten volumes arranged generically, thematically, and chronologically.

Volume 1	<i>The Renaissance</i>
Volume 2	<i>Marius the Epicurean</i>
Volume 3	<i>Imaginary Portraits</i>
Volume 4	<i>Gaston de Latour</i>
Volumes 5 and 6	<i>Essays and Appreciations</i>
Volume 7	<i>Classical Studies</i>
Volume 8	<i>Plato and Platonism</i>
Volume 9	<i>Correspondence</i>
Volume 10	<i>Manuscripts, Fragments, Poems</i>

Readers familiar with the 1910 “Library Edition” will easily find their bearings in this new arrangement, which foregrounds the five volumes he published in his lifetime but either augments each appreciably or enfolds the text within a volume of complementary material. The General Editors’ primary aim is to make all of Pater’s extant writings available in formats that respect the works’ publishing histories and provide comprehensive textual and explanatory notes and academic resources. Moreover, the *Collected Works* will consist of an enriched combination of text and paratexts: the copy-text carefully chosen and scrupulously prepared by

a scholarly editor; a record of all textual variants; textual and explanatory notes. The thorough Introduction to each volume will explain the history of the text, its interconnections with then-contemporary works by such authors as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Charles Swinburne, and the way in which it constitutes a dialogue with such critics as Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, and Benjamin Jowett.

Pater was not only committed to a philosophy of “flux” and mutability, he approached each publishing experience as an opportunity to revisit, reconsider, and even reconstruct his work. The core philosophy of our editorial policy and practices is to respect – and represent as fully as possible – the myriad and often subtle revisions that Pater undertook; to document the evolution of the volumes that he designed; and to make visible and intelligible the textual rethinking that went into each publishing project. (As Gerald Monsman observes, the “later Pater is in many ways the most interesting of all the successive Paters – certainly wearier, but also more candid, consummately polished artistically, self-consciously aware of a dawning modernism” (*Gaston de Latour* xx).) The *Collected Works* will thus acknowledge, and indeed honor, one of the key paradoxes of Pater’s writings: he taught careful readers to value the deliberate “incompleteness” or unfinished aspect of works such as Michelangelo’s sculpture, “which is surely not always undesigned, and which, as I think, no one regrets” (*The Renaissance*), yet at the same time he crafted prose that was “gem-like” in that it was highly refined and multifaceted. Various yet thoroughly the volumes will demonstrate that Pater was a most *deliberate* writer, both methodologically – how he mined the lexicon, experimented with rhythms, revised and burnished and balanced phrases until they were taut and expressive – and in the substance of his intellectual arguments.

The academic resources provided in each volume will include: an extensive scholarly Introduction to each text and its historical and editorial contexts; textual/editorial endnotes; critical and explanatory endnotes; a chronology and biographical register tailored to that particular volume; full index; and illustrations. Mindful that readers from very different disciplines will want to use these books, we will annotate amply but judiciously. Translations of all foreign phrases and quotations (from the Greek, Latin, French, German, and Italian) and full citations will be provided, another first in Pater studies.

The *Collected Works* is envisioned as a tripartite project: a print edition, an online edition, and a digital archive. Within all three domains, “discoverability and

accessibility” are crucial. The editorial work carried out for the print edition will be utilized in all three aspects of the *Collected Works*. The edition for the Oxford Scholarly Editions Online (OSEO) initiative will be fully searchable, and deploy appropriately developed software to enable users to explore Pater’s writings as fully as possible. Whereas costs will determine, in part, the number of illustrations to be featured in the print edition, the on-line edition can be more inclusive in this regard.

The digital archive will be realized in two phases. Phase 1 will be the development of the archive by the editors through the sharing of resources amassed during the research and editing process. This sharing will be accomplished using Orion 3. (As faculty members at York University, the General Editors have access to Orion 3, a web platform with private and public portals, which was expressly designed to facilitate collaborative scholarly projects among researchers located in different geographical locations. This platform has the capacity to display a public webpage to advertise the project while, in a private space behind the scenes, the editors and their research assistants can enjoy an electronic workspace through which they can exchange files or work on documents collaboratively.) Phase 2 will be a digital resource established through the server of York University – [yorku.ca/cwpater](http://yorku.ca/cwpater) – which will supplement the new *Collected Works* and encourage Pater studies in several fields. Those digital assets could include: PDF copies of the 1910 “Library Edition” for posterity; PDF facsimiles of Pater’s periodical writings (already assembled by the General Editors); digitized manuscript pages (to be negotiated with the Bodleian and the Houghton Libraries); and research materials and hyperlinks contributed by the various volume editors. It is our hope that the digital archive can be transferred to the electronic care of Oxford University Press once the editorial project is finished.

### Advisory Board

The range of Pater’s writings – from Heraclitus to Hegel and Victor Hugo; from the Belvedere Apollo to Edward Burne-Jones; from the Homeric “Hymn to Demeter” and Marcus Aurelius’s *Meditations* to Montaigne’s *Essais* and William Morris’s revolutionary paradigm for an aesthetic art – is one of the great pleasures of studying his works, and one of the great challenges. The General Editors have established an Advisory Board that reflects the cross-disciplinary scope of Pater’s writings and the digital expertise required for today’s scholarly enterprises. We

look forward to drawing upon the Board's expertise throughout the planning and publication stages. The Board members are Ross Arthur, York University; Laurel Brake, Emerita, Birkbeck, University of London; J. B. Bullen, Emeritus, University of Reading; Angela Leighton, University of Cambridge; Catherine Maxwell, Queen Mary, University of London; Jerome McGann, University of Virginia; Elizabeth Prettejohn, University of York; and Andrew Stauffer, University of Virginia.

### The Next Steps

We are in the process of assigning editors to the various volumes; when the editorial team is complete, we will announce it in the *Pater Newsletter* and on the website. A complete style guide for the project is being drafted, and funding opportunities are being pursued. When will the first volume in the *Collected Works* be ready? We are hoping for 2016; the entire project should take a decade to complete. We trust it will serve Pater scholarship well, lasting at least as long as the 1910 Library edition has for the past century.

*York University, Toronto*

David Overly

## Adapting *Marius the Epicurean* for the Stage

enis Donoghue has described *Marius the Epicurean* as “a classic few feel themselves stirred to read” (190). I believe, however, that Pater’s ideas, if more widely known, would speak to the modern world. Thus, I have attempted to repackage the text for a contemporary audience while remaining true to the characters, ideas, and spirit of the original. To dramatize the sprawling narrative covering twenty-five years, I have conceived of the adaptation as a memory play set in a holding cell, during which the protagonist recounts the highlights of his life to a Roman official seeking to determine if Marius is a subversive Christian enemy of the state. With the interrogator, the story is fully dramatized. *Saint Marius* offers something, in essence, *new* to the world, despite the fact that the original appeared more than one hundred twenty-five years ago.

Pater’s book, published in 1885, is “more of a spiritual romance than a novel” (Donoghue 188). As a work of fiction, *Marius* is not inherently dramatic. There is little dialogue, and my task was similar to dramatizing a dissertation. Yet, the value of adapting *Marius the Epicurean* is that Pater’s ideas are quite contemporary. In the words of Richard D. Altick, Pater was “the exponent of a *carpe diem* philosophy suited to an age when the old certainties were crumbling” (292). He saw life as “slipping away. . . [and one should] let the knowledge of this be a stimulus towards intenser activity. . . [towards] a full and perfect experience” (qtd. in Wright 236).

My interest in adapting *Marius the Epicurean* for the stage began more than thirty years ago while taking a course in Victorian literature. While reading the conclusion to Pater’s *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, I became enchanted

by the line, “To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life” (189). I was further intrigued by a footnote stating that these thoughts were “dealt [with] more fully in *Marius the Epicurean*” (152). My interest in Pater has continued, and his ideas have informed my teaching. Whether the topic is Tolstoy or D.H. Lawrence, my thoughts come back to Pater’s words in the “Conclusion” to *The Renaissance*: “[W]e are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve. ... [W]e have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. ... [O]ur one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time” (190).

*Saint Marius’s* focus on the clash between Christian and pagan ideology is relevant to modern society; the play’s sensitive portrayal of gender roles in the Roman world resonates with many. With its ancient Roman setting, the play will find an audience in classical and religious studies departments, as well as in theaters that focus on classical texts. Finally, the play lends itself to an independent video production for use in classrooms and libraries.

*Marius the Epicurean* begins when Marius is a boy and ends when Marius dies at age thirty-five, so I had to figure out a way to cover a span of several decades. I quickly came to the conclusion that I would write a memory play set in a holding cell, during which Marius would recount the highlights of his life as he lay dying of the plague. To grasp the viewer’s attention, I decided to open the play with the earthquake that, in Pater’s original, is presented at the end. Several villagers are killed by falling marble columns; the survivors, seeking scapegoats, blame a group of Christians for the earthquake, and Marius and Cornelius are arrested.

I looked at Margaret Edson’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Wit*, which presents the story of English professor Vivian Bearing, who is receiving experimental treatment for stage-four ovarian cancer. The protagonist speaks directly to the audience; the drama employs flashbacks to reveal her precancerous life. As a specialist in seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry, Vivian meditates, throughout the play, on the meaning of John Donne’s “Death be not proud,” as she comes to grips with her own mortality. Inspired by *Wit*, I decided my play would follow the development of Marius’s fatal illness, but employ direct address and flashbacks to reveal his past. Furthermore, throughout the drama, Marius would meditate on the meaning of Apuleius’s version of the story of Cupid and Psyche, a text that comments on the relationship between the erotic and the divine and reflects, indirectly, on the nature of Marius’s love for Flavian.

To fit these needs, I envisioned an abstract, minimalist set. A floor mat would suffice for the death scenes of Flavian and Marius. Two chairs facing one another would be used for the interrogation. A cot and funeral urn wreathed with flowers would be the setting for his mother's death. A small tree would be the centerpiece of the scenes featuring the young and vital Flavian. A stone altar would be used for the Christian service and the funeral of Lucius Verus. An imperial throne would be the domain of Marcus Aurelius. A couch would accommodate the decadent Commodus and Apuleius. Columns flanking the stage would fall during the earthquake.

Five actors are required for this drama. One actor would play Marius; another, the Interrogator. A young man would play Flavian, Cornelius, and Commodus. An older man would play Marcus Aurelius, the Tutor, the Bishop, Apuleius, the Priest of Jupiter, Marius's father, and the Old Gardener. A woman would play Marius's mother, Cecilia, and a Courtesan. The cast could be larger, however, as in the case of a school production.

For a better understanding of characters and situations within the original, I studied variously. *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* (171–180 CE) gave me insights into the mind of the emperor. *The Correspondence of Marcus Cornelius Fronto* (139–176 CE) added to my understanding of Fronto and his most famous pupil, Marcus Aurelius. Eusebius's *The Ecclesiastical History* (260–339 CE) provided supplemental information on the martyrs mentioned in *Marius the Epicurean*. Lucius Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* (2<sup>nd</sup> c.) provided a better understanding of Marius's intellectual pursuits. Geoffrey Chaucer's story of St. Cecilia in the *Second Nun's Tale* (1373) was helpful to my understanding of Pater's character Cecilia, who is based loosely on the saint. The *Pervigilium Veneris* or "Vigil of Venus," a third or fourth century CE poem celebrating the springtime rebirth of nature and the awakening of love, illuminated Flavian's poetic imagination.

The basic questions I had to consider were, "What does Marius want? How much does he want it? What will he do to get it?" I needed to find a dramatic core to propel the narrative forward. I wanted to be faithful to the original, but I had to be concerned about keeping people in their seats. There has to be a question that the audience members are trying to answer for them to want to go on the journey with the characters. (In the case of Hamlet, for example, his struggle is clear. Even though, on one level, *Hamlet* is a rumination on death, these ruminations are secondary to the basic question, Will he or will he not avenge the death of his

father?) In the case of my play, I had to consider, What will Marius do or not do? Even if a play revisits the past, there still has to be a core that makes viewers understand why they should care about the protagonist.

Converting a source with little or no dialogue into a play was a painstaking process that required many drafts. In the beginning, I took material from Pater's original and assigned passages to characters based on their personality and perspective. Over time (and through multiple revisions) the passages from the play became dialogue that actors could speak. This was the most difficult part of the process. Writer/director Charles Marowitz told me that, in adapting *Marius*, I was attempting to climb Mount Olympus, and there were times that I felt he was right. I persevered, however, and eventually the words took on the patterns of human speech.

Marius is a seeker: he needs to know who he is. He has been disappointed in every direction he has turned. For ten years before her death, his mother had been living in a state of mourning for her dead husband. His boyhood friend Flavian dies of the plague. The emperor turns out to be a disappointment. Conversations with the tutor are empty and sterile. Then he meets Cornelius and Cecilia, who seem to have a vitality that no one else around Marius has. But when he attends a party given for Apuleius and he sees Commodus tossing grapes into his mouth, he fears for the empire now that Lucius Verus is dead.

I had to consider why Marius is remembering these scenes. What is unique about *this* particular day on which the drama is set? Marius, who has been imprisoned, has sacrificed himself so his friend can escape. I had to think about the dilemma: either he is going to die of the plague, or he is going to go to Rome for trial, where he could be executed as a Christian (even though, in reading of the novel, he is not a Christian). Thus, I developed the idea of putting an interrogator in the cell, to whom Marius would have to defend himself. Following the earthquake at the beginning of the play, the stage lights would go out and then come up to reveal Marius sitting in the presence of a Roman officer:

*(The Interrogator, stylishly dressed in the garb of a Roman officer, silently eyes Marius for what seems like a long time.)*

INTERROGATOR. Marius, do you know why I wanted to talk to you?

MARIUS. Because I've been asked to be taken to Rome?

INTERROGATOR. That .... and we want to know why you arranged for

the release of a fellow prisoner. That's very unusual, you know.

MARIUS. I don't know what you're talking about.

INTERROGATOR. Come now, Marius, don't try to deny something we both know to be true. You bribed a guard to gain the release of the centurion Cornelius, and we want to know why. Why didn't you just save yourself?

MARIUS. I don't know what to say.

*(The Interrogator studies Marius.)*

INTERROGATOR. Let's start at the beginning. How do you feel about talking to me?

MARIUS. A little nervous. I don't know what's going to happen to me.

INTERROGATOR. Really? We both know what happens to Christians ...

MARIUS. But I'm not a Christian ...

INTERROGATOR. As I was saying, we both know what happens to Christians, and it would be best for both of us if you'd cooperate with me ...

With this approach, there is drama in the confrontation. Then, in the midst of the interrogation, there are flashbacks, but the play keeps coming back to the present and the basic question: What's going to happen to Marius? The audience sees someone defending himself by insisting, "I'm not a Christian," but then sees scenes in which he is, in fact, being drawn to Christianity. This way, the drama takes place in present tense. If Marius is defending himself and trying to get out of prison, he is on a journey of discovery. Instead of having him already know about the ambiguities of his life, he learns about them afresh during the course of the interrogation, and he learns things about himself that maybe he does not like. His struggle in some way becomes a metaphor for the Roman Empire itself; he has served the Empire, and he embodies its ambiguities. For example, he is reminded of Roman cruelty when he encounters the emperor Aurelius in the amphitheater, as depicted in the following scene.

MARCUS AURELIUS. *(Cynically.)* I've heard that, this morning, one of the handlers had his neck broken by a blow from an animal's paws.

*(Laughing.)* Perhaps that means they'll put on a good show for us today.

MARIUS. I've always been a friend to animals. Yet here I'm about to

watch the slaughter of wild beasts.

MARCUS AURELIUS. As my assistant, you could hardly say no. A man's dominion over others is the natural order.

MARIUS. But I feel great pity for the animals and their looks of terror.

MARCUS AURELIUS. Need I remind you that today's event celebrates the marriage of my daughter? (*Pause.*) If you listen closely, you can hear the sound of an advancing chorus, chanting the words of a hymn to Diana.

MARIUS. Surely the goddess of the hunt does not condone simple cruelty to animals.

MARCUS AURELIUS. A wise ruler always seeks ways to mollify his subjects.

MARIUS. But we sit safely behind nets while the animals are not so lucky.

MARCUS AURELIUS. I have little relish for this myself, but I must humor the people's taste for spectacle.

MARIUS. But it's wrong. What we need is a change of heart.

MARCUS AURELIUS. At no other time has the human race been so happy and prosperous. The world is governed by Rome. One must exercise restraint and control over oneself ... and others.

MARIUS. A society resting on superior force, on sheer cruelty, cannot endure.

MARCUS AURELIUS. With more than thirty legions guarding the frontiers?

MARIUS. Sitting here impassively, you seem ... indifferent.

MARCUS AURELIUS. You're mistaken. (*Pause.*) I'm reminded of a time when Hadrian was in Egypt and a priest at the temple of Osiris forbade him from feeding the sacred bull. The emperor replied, "If your god doesn't eat from my hand, I'll eat him myself, and you shall sit at my table and swallow the juiciest morsel, though it choke you." (*Pause.*) I'd advise you not to forget that lesson.

In the contrast between the pagan and Christian worldviews, as highlighted in the amphitheater scene, a wonderful struggle develops. In the play, there is an interrogator who represents the pagan beliefs: his goal is to make Marius admit that he is a Christian, so the interrogator can satisfy his opinion that the

Christians are responsible for the plague and the earthquake. The struggle is even more intriguing because the person accused of being a Christian is confused about his beliefs. Marius is in over his head, but he can start to make discoveries in the here and now. Theater is always about the present, even when dealing with the past; it depicts a present problem that a character is trying to overcome. With Marius, indecision may be his flaw, but because he has been thrust into situations in which he is supposed to be decisive, it is the trait against which he struggles. This internal conflict is on display in the climactic scene between Marius and the Interrogator:

INTERROGATOR. Don't you want this problem to go away? If so, confess your errors and make a sacrifice to the gods.

MARIUS. But I can't.

INTERROGATOR. You mean you won't! It's time for you to repent your spurning of the gods. I've heard you coughing. (*Pause.*) I can arrange for you to see a physician. But you have to give me the truth.

MARIUS. I've given it.

INTERROGATOR. You're an intelligent man. You work for the emperor. Don't give that up. Hold on to what you've worked so hard for. (*Pause.*) Loyalty and sacrifice are the greatest virtues. The individual must sacrifice his personal interests for the good of the group. By doing so, he benefits not only the community, but himself. People who do not serve the common good do not deserve to live. (*Pause.*) Admit your mistakes and move on.

MARIUS. I can't.

INTERROGATOR. I realize you didn't plan to become involved with the Christians ... but you did. You can't undo the past. You can only make amends. (*Speaking urgently as he moves closer.*) Let me help you. Give me what I want.

MARIUS. You want me to confess to something I'm not guilty of? I can't do it. (*Pause.*) You want me to say something other what I know to be true. You keep asking me what I think, but you don't want to hear what I have to say.

INTERROGATOR. You're pathetic. With your symptoms, you'll be dead in a week.

Because of his inability to articulate his changing beliefs, Marius is left behind to die. In *Saint Marius*, the audience needs to feel the protagonist is a human being; his relevance is based on the doctrine of the unchanging human heart. I want the audience to reflect on the issues that Marius raises about identity and how one apprehends the world. I realize the play will not be a blockbuster, but I believe that a specialized audience will find an interest in the production. With this play, I have tried to solve the problem that many professors of Victorian literature have faced: finding a way to make the work of Walter Pater come alive for a larger audience.

*Saint Marius* has been read in workshop productions, and a scene was included in a night of readings at the Fountain Theater in Hollywood, California. Anyone interested in reading the script is welcome to e-mail me at [dovery@citruscollege.edu](mailto:dovery@citruscollege.edu).

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Charlotte Ribeyrol

**Pater the Classicist: An  
Interdisciplinary Symposium  
University of Bristol, 30 June – 1 July 2012**



alter Pater is our greatest aesthetic critic. But he was also a professional classicist. This point, familiar as in one sense it is, is in practice often downplayed in discussions of his writings. Yet, from the Winckelmann essay onwards, Pater's aestheticism and his interests as a classicist went very closely together. Pater initially approached antiquity obliquely (for example, through the Italian Renaissance or the poetry of William Morris). Later in his career he wrote more, and more directly, particularly on Greece, in *Marius the Epicurean* (centrally concerned with Greek philosophy and culture as well as Latin Literature, Roman religion, and early Christianity) and *Plato and Platonism*, as well as the essays collected in *Greek Studies*. Some of these later writings on classical topics are comparatively neglected in the scholarly literature. One problem is that classicists rarely write about Pater, while few Paterians are sufficiently expert in matters classical."<sup>1</sup>

With the aim of shedding new light on Pater's classicism, Charles Martindale (Bristol), Elizabeth Prettejohn (Bristol), and Stefano Evangelista (Oxford) organized a Pater symposium at the University of Bristol. This seminar was attended by literature scholars, art historians, and classicists: Lee Behlman (Monclair State), Elisa Bizzotto (Venice), Bénédicte Coste (Dijon), Whitney

Davis (UC Berkeley), Jason Edwards (York), Robert Fowler (Bristol), Shelley Hales (Bristol), Katherine Harloe (Reading), David Hopkins (Bristol), Ian Jenkins (British Museum), Duncan Kennedy (Bristol), Kurt Lampe (Bristol), Adam Lee (Oxford), Miriam Leonard (UCL), Catherine Maxwell (Queen Mary, London), Ellen O’Gorman (Bristol), Daniel Orrells (Warwick), Robin Osborne (Cambridge), Lene Østermark-Johansen (Copenhagen), Charlotte Ribeyrol (Paris-Sorbonne), Richard Rutherford (Oxford), Caroline Vout (Cambridge), and Giles Whiteley.

In his introductory words, Charles Martindale explained why an informal round-table dialogue among literature scholars, art historians, and classicists seemed better suited to an analysis of the complexity of Pater’s classical writings than an academic conference. Asking classicists to read Pater (often for the first time) indeed was a means to achieve a new perspective on how Pater engaged with the classical tradition, in particular in *Plato and Platonism*, *Marius the Epicurean* or his *Greek Studies* (which have so far attracted less attention from Paterians than his non-classical criticism or fiction). Martindale also expressed the hope that the seminar would help overcome some of the frequent misconceptions concerning Pater, in particular the idea that he somehow misunderstood the works of certain classical authors (such as Plato), that his essays were not “scientific” enough, or that his use of classical material was a purely solipsistic means to conceal biographical concerns.

The first session was devoted to a general discussion of what classicism meant to Pater, with reference to his seminal essay on “Winckelmann.” As in the other sessions, classicists were asked to launch the debate with their own reading of Pater. The first discussants leading the debate were Whitney Davis, who addressed Pater’s debt to Winckelmann in his invention of a new form of “sensual” criticism, and then Katherine Harloe, who analyzed how Pater related to the German tradition of writing lives of Winckelmann. Among the key questions that were raised following these two presentations was Pater’s use of the essay form, strongly indebted to the French tradition, but also his need for mediation, in particular in his complex relation to Goethe’s and Hegel’s understanding of Winckelmann’s work.

The second, slightly shorter session focused on Pater’s use of myth in three of his “Greek studies”: “Demeter and Persephone,” “A Study of Dionysus,” and “The Bacchanals of Euripides.” Robert Fowler’s introductory remarks stressed

the influence of K.O. Müller's *Prolegomena to a Scientific Mythology* and of F.G. Welcker's work in Pater's understanding of the opposition between the primitive and the civilized. The question of Pater's reading of Nietzsche was also addressed, although some participants opined that if he had read the *Birth of Tragedy* he would certainly have made more of the Apollo/Dionysus dichotomy. Following questions from Bénédicte Coste and Charlotte Ribeyrol as to Pater's unusual choice of Euripides, Robert Fowler then suggested that Pater was certainly one of the first classicists to put so much emphasis on this Attic playwright (rather than on Sophocles or Aeschylus), thus partly anticipating the works of the Cambridge Ritualists, who, however, quoted Pater only rarely. This led to a discussion of Pater's striking fascination with the earlier ("primitive") and later antiquity – as if he were avoiding fifth-century BCE Athens in spite of its obvious centrality to Victorian Hellenism.

The third session dealt specifically with *Plato and Platonism*, one of Pater's favorite books, which received great critical acclaim in its time thanks to its successful popularizing of Plato's ideas. This text, however, has since failed to draw the attention of many Paterians, although more and more philosophy scholars today tend to confirm Pater's artistic reading of Plato. Lee Behlman, Miriam Leonard, and Kurt Lampe in turn gave short presentations. Lee Behlman suggested that in this book Pater was trying to cut Plato off from the Stoics in order to graft him onto a more Heraclitean chain. Miriam Leonard stressed Pater's debt to Hegel and Benjamin Jowett's reading of Hegel. Finally, Kurt Lampe offered a detailed analysis of Pater's understanding of the theory of Ideas or Forms in Plato. The ensuing discussion questioned the coherence of this text and the complex status of Chapter 10 in particular. Does *Plato and Platonism* lack closure? Is there continuity between *Plato and Platonism* and Pater's other classical endeavors? Lene Østermark-Johansen insisted on the fact that Pater was a slow composer and a constant revisionist and that his openness to change never prevented him from incorporating his earlier views into later texts. Many interrogations were raised as to Pater's dialogical relationship with his reader and the conversational form of his writings.

The fourth session, which took place 1 July, was dedicated to two of Pater's imaginary portraits, "Denys l'Auxerrois" and "Apollo in Picardy," as well as to "Hippolytus Veiled." In her presentation of these texts, Elisa Bizzotto convincingly argued that "Hippolytus Veiled" could also be considered as an

imaginary portrait; in suggesting a Jungian reading of this text, she stressed the importance of the metaphorical veil. Catherine Maxwell raised the question of the role of women (in particular, of the Amazons), whom Pater obliquely seems to celebrate in “Hippolytus Veiled” and offered an interesting analysis of the very Baudelairean scents and perfumes evoked in his *Imaginary Portraits*. Stefano Evangelista emphasized three key ideas in his reading of these portraits: first, the importance of form (in particular that of the “imaginary portrait,” a genre invented by Pater, and its relationship to the art historical essay); then Pater’s ambiguous treatment of the body and its dysfunctions; and finally the question of historicity and its striking spatial representations in these texts (both horizontal and vertical). Caroline Vout took up this excavatory model in her own analysis of “Apollo in Picardy,” in which she deciphered some of the complex layers of classical intertextuality, thus revealing the unsettling density of Pater’s writings on antiquity. The question of the historicity of places in Pater was further taken up in the general discussion that followed.

The fifth session analyzed the importance of sculpture for Pater. Charles Martindale opened the debate by insisting on Pater’s very novel approach to sculpture in the 1870s, which differed greatly from Benjamin Jowett’s total lack of interest in antique material culture. Daniel Orrells analyzed excerpts from Pater’s little-known fragmentary manuscript on the Elgin Marbles (now housed in the Houghton Library, Harvard). This led to a discussion on Pater’s taste for lacunae and his imitation, as it were, of the fragmentary form of Greek art in his own writings. Ian Jenkins then explained the history of the some of the British Museum collections in order to shed light on the background against which Pater was writing his essays on Greek art. Robin Osborne further reflected on the tension between art history and the philosophy of art in Pater’s essays and on how he seemed to have delighted in seeing sculpture through ancient texts, in particular through Pliny and Pausanias. Elizabeth Prettejohn claimed, however, that Pater was also very well informed and excited by contemporary archeological discoveries, which influenced him in his very modern shifting of emphasis towards earlier, archaic Greek art.

During the seminar, frequent references were made to *Marius the Epicurean*, which was also the focus of the final session. Duncan Kennedy began by discussing Pater’s complex, intertextual use of the works of the

Roman poet Tibullus, the first classical author mentioned in Chapter 1 of *Marius*. Pater chose to draw extensively on the elegies of Tibullus as well as Horace's epistle addressed to Tibullus. This discussion led Ellen O'Gorman to reflect more generally on what the literature of the 2nd Sophistic meant with regard to the classical tradition. For Flavian – and to a certain extent for Pater – antiquity was not a homogeneous experience. Richard Rutherford then explored the role played by Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* in *Marius*. Marcus Aurelius indeed appears as one of the prominent historical figures in the novel but Pater's portrayal of the ruler is not quite accurate: he deliberately overlooks and omits a certain number of key elements of the *Meditations*, in particular Marcus Aurelius's complex relationship to the Christian martyrs – as if he wished to distance the emperor from the new faith and reinforce his association with a declining pagan world. Finally, Shelley Hales's presentation on houses in *Marius* raised questions as to the way architecture is described in the novel, and the relation of these descriptions to the ekphrastic tradition of the 2nd century as well as to Victorian ideals of domesticity. Then followed a more general discussion about the very "essayistic" form of *Marius* and the correspondences between the novel and *The Renaissance* or *Greek Studies*. Pater's dialogic relation to the classics, his fascination with etymology, and his personal, "creative" and selective translations from Latin or Greek were also debated.

In their concluding words to this very rich and stimulating seminar, Charles Martindale and Elizabeth Prettejohn thanked the participants and suggested the future publication of an edited collection of short dialogic articles on the topic, combining perspectives from English literature, classical studies, and art history.

#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Introductory words to the abstract for the Symposium.

**International Walter Pater Conference**  
**Paris, France**  
**Sorbonne University, 4-5 July 2014**  
**“Walter Pater: Continuity and Discontinuity”**

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?

We are grateful for the support of the International Walter Pater Society. Presentations and papers will be delivered in English.

Proposals (300 words) for 20-minute papers and a short bio-bibliography should be sent as Word attachments by 1 June 2013 to:

Bénédicte Coste, University of Bourgogne, TIL (Textes, images, langues)  
 benedicte.coste@u-bourgogne.fr

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## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

## BOOKS

CLEMENTS, ELICIA, AND LESLEY J. HIGGINS, EDs. *VICTORIAN AESTHETIC CONDITIONS: PATER ACROSS THE ARTS*. BASINGSTOKE: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2010. 260 PP. £50. HARDBACK.



o my eye, one of the most telling aspects of Pater's definition of *Anders-streben* in "The School of Giorgione" is his use of the word *alienation*. A form of art may well be observed to pass into the condition of a different form through this process of "other-striving," as Pater says, but his definition of this as "a partial alienation from [that art's] own limitations" strikes something of an ambivalent note. *Anders-streben* should be hugely enabling, surely? The art form is freed from a limit, lent new forces, permitted to soar across the different arts whilst simultaneously remaining most absolutely itself. But Pater's use of "alienation" suggests also a division, a brokenness, a watchful detachment (in the sense of a breaking away) occurring somewhere within the "other-striving" art form. If it is a choice of words that stops just short of suggesting the possibility of an art divided against itself, at the very least it problematizes the happy indivisibility of form and matter that, according to Pater, is the first object of *Anders-streben*.

At first, I was slightly concerned by Lesley J. Higgins and Elicia Clements's use of the term "interartistic discourse" as their methodological key for unlocking Pater "across the arts." Broadly conceived and articulated, this concept appears to differ from multidisciplinary only in that it implies a critique of the different disciplines engaged with, but (a) this seems a rather fine distinction (given that much multidisciplinary work either performs this critique directly or at least leaves space for it), and (b) some of the claims for Pater in its name – an internationalist in a "highly imperialistic age," a lover of difference in a historical milieu "typically depend[ent] upon dominance and acquisition" (6) – seem to risk dissolving the ambivalences of Pater in a series of interdisciplinary platitudes. Yet this worry is ill-founded – for all the book's oddly generic title (more search-friendly, but the subtitle is the real subject here) – this is an extremely well-focussed and hugely

important collection, which brings to the issue as eminent a collection of scholars as one could possibly wish. And if we do not really get an insight into Victorian aesthetic conditions in their widest sense, the complexities of Pater “across the arts” are more than well-served.

Unsurprisingly, issues of narrative play a key role in many of the analyses offered here. Colin Cruise deftly casts Pater as in the vanguard of that side of the aesthetic movement which, unlike Whistler, did not attempt to evade narrative altogether by means of “harmonic” arrangements, but which instead took a myriad of “shuffled” sources out of which a newly formed narrative of personal experience is intended to escape. For Cruise, Simeon Solomon continues this Paterian tradition of “quotational strategy.” While Cruise’s analyses of Solomon’s pictures and his *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* are (as might be expected) superb, he is also excellent on the many different quotational forces at play in Pater’s writing: his analysis of the passage on the genius of Botticelli, stressing the oscillating tonal register of Pater’s assertion that Botticelli both “usurps” and “plays fast and loose” with the data before him, is especially good. In more theoretical vein, Carolyn Williams’s “Walter Pater, Film Theorist” has a title to make the heart sink but, for this reader anyway, turned out to be one of the standout pieces in the volume. A sophisticated and wide-ranging argument takes up Cruise’s theme of narrative reformed, utilizing Martin Meisel’s term “serial discontinuity” and applying it effectively to Pater, who for Williams is the “master-theorist” of a broader nineteenth-century preoccupation with capturing the ephemeral moment in a still image, and then trying to make it move again in a new narrative “whose presumed continuity is relegated to the background,” the result of which is strongly allied to theatrical tableaux and musical form. To mix interartistic metaphors, Williams paints across a broad canvas here, with extremely thought-provoking results: my only complaints are that she overplays her “master theorist” assertion in relation to Pater (it becomes something of a mantra by the end), and that she pays no attention to similar arguments on the Victorian “dream of cinema” in relation to other writers, not least Dickens, who rates a brief mention here in relation to Eisenstein’s famous essay on him. While she makes extremely well the point that “Walter Pater, Film Theorist” is only counter-intuitive if we refuse to privilege “aesthetic determination” over “technological determinism” (146), other applied work in this field might have bolstered her argument still further.

As a collection, form – entirely appropriately – harmonizes with matter: essays on apparently rather heterogeneous aspects of Pater across the arts are constantly inter-illuminating, and often seem to embody in themselves the editors' ideal of "interdisciplinary critique." Where Williams, for example, is a little hazy on Pater's exact relations with the theatre of his day, Andrew Eastham brings a thoughtful and informed approach to this subject, forging a memorable distinction between Pater's sense of "theatricality" in everyday life and his sense of theatre as a medium; the material on Pater's use of the masque as a touchstone in the late 1870s, and its relation with the tapestry (a theme also picked up by Kenneth Daley) work particularly well. And just when one is pondering the substantive absence of Schiller in Eastham's argument (beyond one brief and un-indexed mention) as a rather curious omission, Kate Hext devotes an always interesting, if sometimes a touch hypostatized, essay on Pater's philosophical heritage in this regard. Reading Laurel Brake's clear and convincing account of Pater and novelistic fiction while perhaps wishing nevertheless for a little more material from Pater's work, the reader can then turn to strong close-reading pieces like the work on "aural architecture" by Clements (although in my view this would have worked more effectively earlier in the volume, dealing as it does with the book's key-text, "The School of Giorgione" and containing a very useful interpretation of *Marius*). Historicists can turn to the essays on Pater's engagement with contemporary art by Lesley J. Higgins and J.B. Bullen, who bring a clear-sighted pragmatism to their work on the question of what Pater actually saw of nineteenth-century art (Higgins) and by what precisely he meant by what he said about what he saw (Bullen).

I would single out for especial praise Matthew Potolsky's essay on Pater's politics which, rather like Williams's piece, seems like a modish idea in the abstract but absolutely comes alive in argument, building into a sustained and rather brilliant analysis of Pater's focus on the potential of a Pentecostal model of community derived from those two Paterian favourites, flames and language. Also, Lene Østermark-Johansen's essay on touch in Pater is remarkable not only for its academic reach but also for the embodied, sensuous quality of its prose which together make it one of the most purely enjoyable reads in the collection.

Inevitably, in any collection like this there are some less successful entries. For me, Jonah Siegel's essay was both informed on nineteenth-century museum culture and convincing on the "museal quality" of Pater's writing without ever forging very satisfactory links between the two, and I found Norman Kelvin's

essay on Pater and Wilde bafflingly digressive. As a relative outsider to Pater studies, it is nevertheless difficult to sum up my thoughts on this volume in the *Pater Newsletter* without being accused of preaching to the converted, or indeed of simple flattery: all I will say is that overall *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions* confirmed me in my growing belief that Pater scholarship is at present one of the most intellectually challenging areas “across the arts” that currently comprise Victorian studies.

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JOHN COATES, *THE RHETORICAL USE OF PROVOCATION AS A MEANS OF PERSUASION IN THE WRITINGS OF WALTER PATER (1839–1894), ENGLISH ESSAYIST AND CULTURAL CRITIC: PATER AS CONTROVERSIALIST*. THE EDWIN MELLEEN PRESS, 2011. 484 PP.  
\$139.95 US, £84.95.



his book is the result of more than two decades of scholarship on Pater. It consists entirely of essays already published elsewhere, although readers of this journal will be grateful to have them gathered together in a single volume, particularly since several of them originally appeared in journals not yet accessible online. One might expect dissonances to emerge between essays published on a single author across a period of more than twenty years, but Coates’s vision of Pater has remained stable enough to impart a real cohesiveness to this volume, which largely reads like a continuously argued thesis rather than a miscellany. His key premise is one which few Pater scholars would dispute: Pater was an agile rhetorician whose work partly consists of fine-grained, although often sly or elliptical, critiques of the intellectual assumptions of his contemporaries. Reading Pater, one often detects a strong polemical current running beneath the apparently noncommittal surface of his prose, yet attempting to name and analyze such polemical investments without doing violence to his famously elusive style can be a tortuous enterprise. Coates’s somewhat overtaxed title bears witness to this: on the one hand, he defines Pater as a “controversialist,” driven to “provocation”; on the other, he suggests that Pater is engaged in a more stealthy and decorous art of “persuasion,” and that he may be more preoccupied

with local rhetorical effects than with pursuing an overarching argument. There is no strict contradiction here: a thesis is necessarily rhetorical, and can of course be at once persuasive and provocative. But Coates seems to use these terms to qualify each other, and they reflect the two aspirations of this book: he wishes to demonstrate the seriousness and cogency of Pater's interventions in contemporary intellectual debates, while also honoring the civility and delicacy of his prose style. Throughout the volume, these two ambitions can often seem at odds: no sooner has Coates revealed the trenchancy or subversive force of one of Pater's critical manoeuvres than he must backpedal in order to emphasize how tentative or oblique it is. Nonetheless, this self-cancelling dynamic is in a sense very true to the experience of reading Pater, and the value of this book lies in the patience with which it contextualizes Pater's intellectual positions and follows the involutions of his thought within given texts. A sincere appreciation for Pater as both a thinker and a stylist suffuses the writing, and Coates exemplifies the virtue he most admires in Pater: critical tact. The overall effect is to produce a rather more Arnoldian Pater than generally finds favor in contemporary scholarship: Pater emerges as a figure who consistently sought to elevate contemporary intellectual discussion by demonstrating the value of drawing fine distinctions and by enacting an ideal of disinterestedness as a critic. Coates is defensive – at times gratingly defensive, for reasons I will later indicate – about the possibility that his image of Pater is unfashionable, but it nevertheless produces many beautiful readings of his work.

Despite the title's promises of provocation and controversy, Coates clearly prefers the mellow, apparently palinodic Pater of "The Child in the House" (1878) and *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) to the more obviously provocative Pater of "Coleridge's Writings" (1866), "Poems By William Morris" (1868), and *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873). Only two of the volume's twelve chapters focus primarily on essays from the *Renaissance*, although Coates's discussion of Pater's *ekphrasis* of *La Gioconda* in an engaging chapter entitled "The Hidden Laughter of Women: An Aspect of Pater's Sensibility," reflects his capacity to illuminate even overly familiar moments in Pater's *oeuvre* through meticulous close readings. When Coates does address the *Renaissance*, he at least partially assimilates it to the more conservative tendencies of Pater's later work. For example, he suggests that Pater's "Botticelli" essay gently corrects A. C. Swinburne's anti-religious and erotically overheated interpretations of Botticelli's paintings in "Notes on Designs

of the Old Masters at Florence" (1868). One might expect Coates to discern more kinship between the two writers; when reviewing the *Renaissance*, Margaret Oliphant certainly found Pater all too Swinburnean in his will to discover sensuality and irreligion in Botticelli's sacred art.<sup>1</sup>

If Coates can seem somewhat out of sympathy with the Pater of *The Renaissance*, then this book provides a richly detailed and thoughtful study of the "late" Pater of "merciful second thoughts."<sup>2</sup> It offers lucid and judicious explications of the intellectual stakes of "The Child in the House," "Charles Lamb" (1878), *Marius, Imaginary Portraits* (1887), "Style" (1888), and "Prosper Mérimée" (1890), as well as substantial discussions of *Gaston de Latour* (1896) and *Plato and Platonism* (1893). Most chapters follow a pattern: Coates suggests that Pater was engaged in an effort to controvert or refine the views of another writer who dealt with a similar theme, and he proceeds by revealing how Pater's text stands in quietly subversive relation to a prior work. Even if one is not always convinced that Pater in fact had a given writer in his sights when he was formulating his own ideas, the intellectual contexts provided by Coates are often interesting in themselves, and bring the distinctiveness of Pater's own sensibility into focus.

Given that the chapters were conceived as discrete essays, it is unsurprising that a reader occasionally experiences a certain frustration at the way continuities of theme wax and wane but are not explicitly theorized (as one would expect in an integrated monograph). In particular, one discerns a common thread running through most of the chapters. Coates argues that Pater is critiquing the work of an agnostic or secular thinker because he feels a renewed allegiance to Christianity, and I wished for a more rigorous clarification of how Coates conceptualizes Pater's later religious views. Coates remarks on Pater's "growing sympathy" for Christianity in his preface and later refers to his "rapprochement with Christianity" (187); elsewhere he describes him as a "reverent agnostic" (349); most often, and most vaguely, he gestures at Pater's "religious interests" (402). In some chapters, Coates implies that Pater is arguing from the position of an unorthodox Christian, while in others, he implies that Pater is a more secular or agnostic thinker who felt that some aspects of religion were worth preserving. This creates discrepancies between chapters: sometimes Pater appears as reverent agnostic critiquing more hard-nosed secular thinkers (for example, Swinburne and Edward Burnett Tylor); at others, he is cast as an apparently Christian thinker questioning the assumptions of agnostics (Arnold and Renan). It is plausible that these two positions are in fact

at play in Pater's later works, but I wished for more explicit acknowledgment of such distinctions, and some analysis of why Pater's critical persona can appear to oscillate between these poles. One might also object that Coates sometimes simplifies the positions of figures like Arnold or Renan in order to highlight the finesse of Pater's arguments: for example, Coates makes it sound as if Arnold championed Spinoza as an snobbish alternative to Christian belief, rather than as part of an effort to reinvigorate Christianity (274).

Although Coates provides a relatively measured overview of recent Pater scholarship in his preface, he elsewhere gives rather more disparaging accounts of it; in particular, he deplores the fact that recent work on Pater has been dominated by a problematic focus on questions of sexuality (151–54; 337–40). Coates suggests that such readings of Pater at once fall prey to the biographical fallacy and represent a naïve projection of contemporary critical fashions onto a figure whose real interests lay elsewhere. (Coates sometimes characterizes such readings as a kind of prurient hunt for “pathology.” Although he is referring to a tendency to construe Pater's writings as a testament to putative guilt or repressions rather than to homosexuality *per se*, it is still an unhappy choice of words [53].) Leaving aside the obvious irony here – Pater is notorious for, among other things, speculating freely about the underlying psychological motives of artists and writers – the implication that Pater scholarship in recent decades has been largely confined to gossip about his sexuality or to armchair psychologizing is patently unjust. The two most influential queer readings of Pater – Richard Dellamora's *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (1990) and Linda Dowling's *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (1994) – are not overly interested in Pater's psychology but rather seek to historicize the homoerotic discourses they perceive to be operative in his writing; like Coates himself, both Dowling and Dellamora are at pains to demonstrate the sophistication of Pater's engagements with the works of his contemporaries. While such work necessarily depends upon the relatively uncontroversial assumption that Pater was erotically interested in other men, this inference represents a point of departure rather than a critical hobbyhorse. Secondly, Coates's characterizations of contemporary Pater scholarship exaggerate the distance between that scholarship and his preferred way of reading Pater: that is, as a significant intellectual. For example, one might imagine that Coates's reading of “Prosper Mérimée” would include some acknowledgment of Billie Inman's 1984 article “The Emergence of Pater's *Marius*

Mentality: 1874–1875,” which also attends to the nuances of Pater’s demurrals from Mérimée’s decadent aesthetics. Yet Inman is cast (via a footnote) as one of a phalanx of critics who turn Pater’s work into grounds for idle speculation about his sexuality (338). Contemporary Pater scholarship is much more in sympathy with Coates’s endeavor to establish Pater’s seriousness and subtlety as a thinker than he imagines.

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Oliphant, unsigned review, “New Books,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 114 (November 1873): 606–607.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Pater, “Introduction,” *The Purgatory of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Charles Shadwell (London: Macmillan, 1892), xx.

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PATER, WALTER. *STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE*, ED. MATTHEW BEAUMONT. OXFORD AND NEW YORK: OXFORD UP, 2010. xxxviii + 193 pp. £8.99.

PATER, WALTER. *MARIUS THE EPICUREAN*, ED. GERALD MONSMAN. KANSAS CITY: VALANCOURT, 2008. xxiii + 338 pp. \$19.95.



ne of the difficulties facing editors of Pater is the fact that the Paterian text was the subject of a constant process of authorial revision, so much so that it is a matter of debate whether different revised versions of the same text should, in fact, be better understood to constitute different works.

The most notorious example of this is probably the essay on William Morris, published in periodical form in 1868, from which Pater extracted and modified the text of the “Conclusion” to *The Renaissance*. Can we talk of the “Conclusion” (where the name of William Morris is not even mentioned) as a revised version of “The Poetry of William Morris”? If not, how do we understand the relationship between the texts? And where does this relationship become such that we have to conceive of them as different works?

Matthew Beaumont is well aware of these problems in his recent World’s Classics edition of *The Renaissance*, or rather of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, as Beaumont makes the decision of reproducing the first edition of 1873. In doing so, he departs from the standard practice of using the 1893 text (the last that Pater revised) adopted by Donald Hill in his still excellent, authoritative edition (1980) and followed by Adam Phillips, editor of the previous World’s Classics paperback (1986). As Beaumont states in his introduction, he has chosen the first edition “because it is this work that had the most controversial impact on contemporary debates about aesthetics and ethics”: this early work, rather than any of the other three versions of the book that Pater edited and corrected during his lifetime, is the text that to him is “closest to being a manifesto for nineteenth-century English aestheticism” (xxxix).

These notions of “impact” and controversy are crucial to Beaumont and determine what he values in *The Renaissance* and what he wants readers to notice. He is, of course, right in drawing attention to the importance of the first edition and his decision is bound to pay off. Both academics and students of Pater will find it extremely useful to have ready access to the 1873 text, rather than resort to reconstructing it from the critical apparatus in Hill or chase one of the rare copies in university libraries. The most obvious downside of this choice is the exclusion of “The School of Giorgione” – an essay that Pater only added to *The Renaissance* in 1888, but that contains some of his most fundamental and widely-quoted ideas on aesthetics which, one could argue, belong to the historical “impact” of the collection highlighted by Beaumont.

In the present edition, “The School of Giorgione” and “Diaphanéité” (the early essay on the transparent character type, unpublished by Pater during his lifetime) are included as appendices. The rest of the critical apparatus comprises a chronology of Pater’s life, a short bibliography of criticism, a useful glossary of names, and explanatory notes. Beaumont’s notes are excellent: much more

detailed and precise than in previous World's Classics editions, they strike an elegant balance between comprehensiveness and readability and will leave academic readers satisfied, while not overwhelming the more general reader with information. Beaumont includes helpful material about the essays' transition from periodical to book form, for instance, and extended citation of some of Pater's sources. Beaumont also provides some of Pater's additions to later editions which he deems particularly important. The effect is that readers are made aware both of the remarkable eclecticism of Pater's knowledge and of the fact that his text, like the material on which he worked, is provisional and unfixed – forever in transition towards an unrealizable state of perfection.

Like the explanatory notes, the introduction displays Beaumont's scholarly command of his material. His approach is heavily historicist: he focuses on the book's contemporary reception and on Pater's intellectual context. He provides a biographical and intellectual sketch of the author and a fine explication of his critical method, in particular his impressionism. If, again, we compare it to Phillips's in the previous World's Classics edition, Beaumont's introduction comes across as being more academic. This is very precise, confident writing and the author is clearly at home with the literary texture of Pater's prose, as when he draws fascinating connections among Pater, Wilde, Swinburne, and Gautier, and he explicates lucidly and learnedly the echoes of Arnold and Ruskin.

The other side of this coin is that Beaumont's approach is very interpretative, possibly because he felt the need to make a strong argument for his choice of the 1873 text. Beaumont emphasizes the controversial status of Pater's book, explaining why it made dangerous reading ("talismanic" is an adjective that he uses more than once) and convincingly setting up the paradox whereby a book that operated in the margins of mainstream Victorian culture could also have such a deep power of affecting its overall development. But in his eagerness to show readers the historical importance of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* he perhaps does not place enough emphasis on the intrinsic importance of Pater's essays: their ability to fascinate readers by their strange and difficult style, their handling of aesthetics and, last but not least, their explication of Renaissance art itself. The risk of following the historicist approach so closely is that *The Renaissance* emerges as a text not only of, but about, the nineteenth century, while more general readers should also feel entitled to the pleasure of trusting Pater as a guide that takes them

beyond his own time, through history and space. So, for instance, the detailed information on the book's place in cultural history is counterbalanced by relatively little information about its contribution to art history.

One of the most important developments in Pater studies since the publication of Phillips's edition has been the recovery of the author's fundamental contribution to the history of sexuality. Beaumont is clearly familiar with this scholarship and in his introduction he is rightly attentive to the importance of the body and eroticism in Pater's aesthetics. He relies on the biographical evidence unearthed by Billie Andrew Inman and on the work of Linda Dowling to paint a subtle portrait of Pater as at the same time inside and outside Victorian institutional culture, reflecting on how his position as a homosexual man in homosocial and homophobic nineteenth-century Oxford "sapped the sense of authority with which [...] he intervened in contemporary cultural debates" (x). But again there is a danger of over-interpretation. Beaumont makes a lot of Pater's homosexuality, seeking in it the reason of his partial alienation from society but also calling it the root of his "exquisite sensitivity" (xii) and claiming that the essay on Winckelmann reads "like the transcript of an erotic dream" (xv). I share the editor's view that a correct understanding of homoeroticism in Pater's writing is fundamental for a full understanding of his works. But I believe it is important to emphasize just how much Pater's homoeroticism is whispered and suffused, precisely because Pater was so sensitive to the moral and social pressures that worked against it. Pater's representation of homosexuality is ultimately positive (this is why it was so enabling to later homosexual writers), but it is also difficult and conflicted and buried deep in the text. In making it appear readable, we risk replacing one orthodoxy (the denial of homoeroticism) with another (the plenitude of homosexual meaning), whereas Pater's text is "queer" precisely because it entertains slippage, irresolution, and doubt. Portraying Pater's complex sexual and affective identity as a homosexual man paradoxically ends up straightening him a bit too much. A corollary of this is Beaumont's emphasis on male coteries and male readership, which has been recently complicated by exciting work on aestheticism (for instance by Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades) that has broadened our understanding of the impact of Pater's work among women and beyond elite culture.

These criticisms are not meant to lessen the achievement of Beaumont's edition of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, which succeeds in presenting Pater as an important thinker on both the English and European stages. One of the issues

to which Beaumont returns several times in his introduction is the connection between *The Renaissance* and *Marius the Epicurean*, the novel that Pater used, as he claimed in a famous footnote appended to the second edition of the “Conclusion,” to elucidate the philosophical ideas expressed there. In his new paperback edition of *Marius*, Gerald Monsman, like Beaumont, goes back to the first edition, in contrast, for instance, to the most recent Penguin Classics edition by Michael Levey, which was based on Pater’s last revised version of 1892. Therefore, just as with Beaumont’s *Renaissance*, readers will find here a text that departs from the hitherto standard reprints of the 1910 edition: for, while Pater made only slight changes to the second edition of the novel that appeared a few months after the first, his revisions to the third and last edition were substantial. Monsman’s theory, as he explains in the introduction, is that this impulse to revise set in after the composition of “Style” (1888), an essay that induced Pater to carry over “a new preoccupation” into the novel, so that the last edition of *Marius* reflects “a hybrid sensibility – the Pater of 1885 modulating into the Pater of 1892” (xix). Going back to the first edition means, for Monsman, re-capturing the freshness of Pater’s discovery of new archaeological and textual studies that inspired him in the 1880s and, in so doing, stripping the text of the afterthoughts and complexities associated with the late style.

Monsman is, of course, an experienced editor of Pater, as evinced in his important edition of *Gaston de Latour* (1995). In the new *Marius* he complements the text with generous and informative notes printed at the bottom of each page, alerting new readers, even on the visual level, to what all readers familiar with *Marius* know as one its main characteristics, namely its density of allusion and eclectic combination of sources. As Monsman wittily remarks in the Introduction, it would be impossible to produce a fully-annotated *Marius* “without the notations exceeding the text in length three times over – though that, in itself of course, may indeed tell us something useful about Pater’s aesthetic strategy and vision” (xx–xxi). Therefore, like any editor who aims for a general, as well as an academic, readership, Monsman is forced to make choices about what is left unannotated. In his case, most of the notes are devoted to elucidating the historical context and providing sources for Pater’s citations, but some (much more rarely) draw connections between *Marius* and other writings by the author or point to significant emendations of the text by Pater in subsequent editions. The edition also contains a series of appendices that are bound to be particularly

useful in the classroom. These include a Victorian translation of the *Pervigilium Veneris*, the anonymous Latin poem that is fictitiously attributed to Flavian in the novel, and a section of Edmund Gosse's biographical sketch of Pater from *Critical Kit-Kats* (1903); to these Monsman adds a little-known and highly enjoyable contemporary review of *Marius* written in the form of a Platonic dialogue, as well as Mary Ward's important review of the novel for *Macmillan's Magazine* together with his own analysis of Pater's response to Ward, reprinted from *Pater's Portraits*.

In the relatively brief introduction Monsman points to the complexity of the novel as a multi-faceted work that will nowadays still be of appeal to literary scholars and classicists, as well as to readers interested in history, philosophy and religion. He introduces readers to the characteristic features of Pater's style and gives a pithy history of his critical reception. Monsman's Pater is first and foremost a sophisticated critic and stylist. But he is also, prominently, a biographical "problem": the slippery historical subject famously characterized by Henry James as the "mask without the face," who left so few traces of his private life and whose sobriety of manner seemed to be an impossible contrast to the extravagant exquisiteness of his writing.

Following on from this, Monsman's boldest suggestions are about the autobiographical dimension of the novel. According to Monsman "the outstanding accomplishment of *Marius the Epicurean* is autobiographical, the manner in which Pater uses the cultural context of the second century not *merely* as an historical parallel to the nineteenth century's literary preferences and crises of belief and authority, but as an authentic, though covert, portrait of his own identity" (xvi). This statement should come as no surprise from the author of *Walter Pater's Art of Autobiography* (1980). The character of Marius is read as an act of autobiographical projection into the past, in which Pater's desire to analyze and represent his own self is displaced through time and refracted in a complex play of historical and cultural removal from the present.

By means of theoretically-sophisticated yet lucid critical prose, Monsman alerts readers to the psycho-sexual interests that lie, sometimes hidden, in this difficult novel. Pater, as early as "Diaphaneité", had sought to convey "a new consciousness about the unconventional manifestations of masculinity" (xiv), a program that Monsman sees manifested in *Marius*. Monsman's handling of gender is very tactful throughout, to the point of assuming a euphemistic quality in places. The contrast with Beaumont could not be greater. So while one editor invites readers

to see the cultural transgressions of *The Renaissance* as somehow determined by Pater's identity as a gay man, the other avoids the concept of homosexuality altogether, preferring to speak of masculinity instead, so that we are alerted to Marius's challenges to respond to "sexually threatening" female figures such as Medusa and Cecilia, but we are not told to look out for the way in which Pater presents Marius's erotic desire for Flavian and Cornelius.

Keeping Pater's writings in print and making them accessible to a wide readership has long been identified as one of the most important challenges that Pater scholars face today. The new paperback editions of *The Renaissance* and *Marius* now make available two of Pater's most important works in previously unavailable forms. Both editions bear the individual marks of their editors, in the form of a historicist and biographical interest respectively. Where the two editions converge, however, is in the ambition to reconstruct an early Pater and re-issue his works stripped from the multiple layers of authorial revision they acquired through time.

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MAO, DOUGLAS. *FATEFUL BEAUTY: AESTHETIC ENVIRONMENTS, JUVENILE DEVELOPMENT, AND LITERATURE 1860–1960*. PRINCETON AND OXFORD: PRINCETON UP, 2008. 319 pp. \$28.95 / £19.95.



he claim that the aesthetic environment has a powerful regenerative force is part of a wider utopian current within Victorian Aestheticism that had a series of compelling afterlives in the twentieth century. Douglas Mao's *Fateful Beauty* begins with an influential nineteenth-century alliance between aesthetic and social ideals: the belief that beauty had a regenerative mission, that aesthetic environments had a positive role in shaping a human life, and that literature carried these beliefs from the inception of the *Bildungsroman*. From this basis it paints a broad historical and literary canvas that encompasses detailed readings of Pater and Wilde, Joyce, Dreiser, West, and Auden. Mao situates his readings in an extended contextual discussion of the ways that nineteenth-century writers promoted the "stealthy powers" of beauty for psychic and neurochemical

transformation. But it is refreshing to read Mao's assertion that "*Fateful Beauty* is not intended to constitute cultural history as opposed to literary criticism ... nor does it aim to use literary texts merely to illustrate historical phenomena more interesting than the texts themselves" (8). Indeed, from his reading of Pater onwards, Mao keeps his faith in the textual encounter.

The chapter on Pater resonates throughout the various textual readings in Mao's book. His argument begins with the evanescent impressions of Pater's "Conclusion," and the impressionable subject of "The Child in the House" is Mao's primary way of mediating between the legacies of Romanticism and Modernism. Pater's focus on childhood susceptibility and aesthetic impression has its roots in Romanticism, yet sends out branches into Joyce. For Mao, Pater followed Wordsworth in his suggestion that children are particularly susceptible to the formative effects of evanescent impression, yet it is crucial to Mao's reading that Pater did not pursue an educative or utopian mission for the regeneration of environment. Pater's primary focus was the cultivation of our capacity to receive impressions rather than the refashioning of an aesthetic environment. Having reminded us of this, Mao brings out a simple but compelling point about Pater's attitude to the position of art and the aesthetic dimension in individual fate: "If Pater thus sets out to dignify the evanescent by stressing its formative power over human beings, however, he seems in doing so to risk an inverse effect in which human beings lose their eminence precisely in being enslaved to the evanescent" (76). So in spite of Pater's focus on the capacity to seize and form impressions, his impressionable subject is frequently characterized by an absence of control, since "beauty's stealthy power" remains inchoate and ungraspable. The overriding impression of Mao's account of aesthetic subjectivity is Pater's passivity. This condition echoes throughout the book and allows Mao to keep an illuminating focus on the fate of aesthetic receptivity in modernity, in spite of the cultural and geographic distances between his contexts.

The traumas of Paterian passivity are dramatized most directly in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Dorian is the exemplary passive aesthete in that "he seems to have evaded the peril of being anything specific" (93), and this makes him particularly attractive to Henry Wotton and, Mao might have added, even more so to Basil Hallward. Mao's treatment of this passive condition tends to follow a conventional ethical psychology which regards Decadence as arrested development, but he articulates this in a sophisticated way which nicely focuses

the relationship between the pathology of Decadence and its critical possibilities: “One of the lessons of the novel thus seems to be that it is easy to mistake an impoverishing *failure* of becoming (a lack of growth) for a fruitful *resistance* to becoming (an evasion of narrowing and ossification)” (93). Mao’s point is pertinent to the particular case of Dorian, but a simplistic moral perspective on Aestheticism as a whole. One might say, conversely, that it is easy to stigmatize Aestheticism’s resistance to the ossification of conventional identities by assigning it the pathological category of arrested development. One of Pater’s problems was that although the promotion of a diaphanous and ethereal personality had strong claims to be the basis of an aesthetic renaissance, such an initiative was unable to offer the diaphanous soul the protective force of an autonomous artistic culture. Pater’s Wordsworthian devotion to aesthetic “being” was at odds with the Symbolist impulse to construct a hieratic and separate art-world. Yet as a result, Aestheticism’s receptive personalities were extraordinarily exposed to trauma, seduction, and exploitation, and it should be no surprise that they sought relief in opiates and immortality.

In spite of Mao’s tendency to rely on a conventional ethical psychology in his readings of Aestheticism, his first chapter convincingly frames his subsequent contrasting readings of Joyce and Dreiser. His chapter on *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* begins with the link between childhood affectivity and Aestheticism, tracing a line between Romanticism and Modernism through the mediation of Pater’s Florian Deleal. Yet there is a significant crossover in Mao’s approach from the aesthetics of environment to the physiological determination of aesthetic aspiration in sexual desire. These two threads are interwoven throughout the book. Mao brings out a duality of physiognomic determination and aesthetic transcendence that is implicitly Schopenhauerian, and this parallel focuses the cultural shift from Pater’s Aestheticism towards Naturalism and Modernism. In the reading of Joyce he attempts to rescue a radical possibility in this dualism, as beauty’s call becomes all the more “acute” for its brief and intense opening of freedom.

Whether Joyce’s model of aesthetic freedom will have any more active potential than the passivity of the Paterian aesthete is a compelling question that is not quite answered here, but Mao continues to focus his thoughts on the politics of beauty more clearly in his chapter on Dreiser, “Tropisms of Longing.” His first subject is *An American Tragedy*, in which an Evangelical family’s impractical zeal

suppresses their son Clyde's pagan longing for beauty. More broadly, Mao argues that Naturalism's negative determination of urban squalor carried an underlying belief in the regenerative power of beauty, a belief that Dreiser articulated in his journalism. The difficulty with this utopian aspiration was that Dreiser was "unwilling to make a sharp distinction between some pure aesthetic feeling and attraction to the affluence bespoken by splendid surroundings" (162). Mao develops his argument in reference to both environment and sexual longing. Several of Dreiser's characters are driven by the chemical compulsions that follow in beauty's wake, and the frequently disastrous consequences of these desires underscore the implicit suggestion of Mao's title, that fatal beauty to which Decadent culture paid homage.

Mao continues to put pressure on Dreiser's investigation of the lure of the commodity, inevitably turning to *Sister Carrie*, with its famous evocation of the lure of the department store. The agonistic condition of art's relation to the commodity was a key theme of late Marxist cultural theory, reaching its most complete formulation in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, where the necessity of art's implication in the commodity form was both critically revealed and tentatively redeemed by beauty's *promesse du bonheur*. Mao rarely takes flight into cultural theory, but some theoretical context at this point might have helped to mediate the distinction between Pater, who like Adorno retains beauty's power as a spectral promise, and Dreiser, who locates beauty firmly in the corporeal present, the moment of compulsion and desire. In Dreiser's work, beauty's promise is invariably associated with the lures of privilege – Long Island hotels, automobiles, and the spectacle of wealthy women – yet it is also "a call to swerve from the practical, and thus precisely the sort of reproof to a world dominated by commerce that it had been for many artists since the Romantics" (165). This may sound similar to the dualistic vision of aesthetic transcendence that Mao has located in Joyce, but he makes the distinction that Dreiser insisted on a continuity between the aesthetic and the sexual. Mao clearly wants to affirm this corporeal aesthetic, but by the end of his chapters on Joyce and Dreiser we have come to a compelling choice about the fate of art. Two versions of aesthetic radicalism are brought into acute focus: a vision of aesthetic freedom as the resistance to determination, and a vision of the sensuous realm as the only way of resolving the antimony of freedom and necessity. Beauty's promise is both radical detachment and bodily absorption, yet

both are in different senses “an incitement to struggle” (176).

The analysis up to this point would have been enough for a significant study of the ends of beauty in between Aestheticism and Modernism, and its conclusion would have framed a compelling ambivalence. The subsequent chapters on West and Auden are in some sense anti-climactic, since we witness a recession of the radical possibilities that Mao brought out in Naturalism and Modernism. This is perhaps indicative of Aestheticism’s fate in the twentieth century. In Mao’s readings of Rebecca West, it is mediated through the elite environment of the country house, a space in which West situated the post-war arrest of personal development or *Bildung*. With West’s country house the book returns to the effect of significant spaces on the cultivation of sensibility, and Mao subsequently moves to an extended reading of Auden’s later work. In this final movement Mao makes some significant returns to Victorian Aestheticism. He revives Auden’s view of Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* as an Arcadian idyll which in some ways surpassed the opposition between nature and freedom, since “though the laws of nature operate – people have the same nature that they have in the real world – their operations cause neither conflict nor suffering” (253). Yet Mao locates Auden and West precisely against this aesthetic arcadianism, since both of them conceive of art as “an evolutionary development arising out of the *agon* between human beings and their recalcitrant milieux.” In this sense post-war literary culture was also post-Aestheticism, since Pater’s positive conception of the way that the “stealthy influences” of environment cultivate aesthetic sensibility was supplanted by Auden’s sense of the necessity of friction and trauma for the development of “artisticness.” The use of such an awkward word suggests that more passive determinations of an aesthetic proclivity, such as “aesthetic personality,” sensibility, or Pater’s own *diaphaneité*, were no longer sufficient in an age in which the Hellenic condition abjured, as H.D. suggested, in a “wistful, ironical” mode that had “no part in new-world construction.”<sup>1</sup> Mao is less interested in the kind of symptomatic retreat of art that H.D. described in the 1940s, and more eager to embrace Auden’s sense of the artist’s enabling friction with the environment. In doing so he tends to rely on a reductive portrait of Aestheticism, using Wilde’s most languorous social comedy as his representative work, but this does not ultimately detract from a study in which Mao manages stealthfully to combine textual insight with breadth of vision. *Fateful Beauty* encompasses a century of literary reflections on aesthetics and environment with an ease of manner and subtlety of discrimination that

ultimately pays homage to Auden, but the presence of Pater haunts the book until its very last page. Transience and ephemerality, the unrest of beauty in modernity, an aesthetic state ever more spectral as the twentieth century progresses: it is the tremor of Pater's presence that animates some of the most compelling questions of Mao's book.

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#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup> H.D., *The Walls Do Not Fall* (London: Oxford UP, 1944), 21–2.

ØSTERMARK-JOHANSEN, LENE. *WALTER PATER AND THE LANGUAGE OF SCULPTURE. BRITISH ART: GLOBAL CONTEXTS*. FARNHAM AND BURLINGTON: ASHGATE, 2011, £70, 364 pp.



ene Østermark-Johansen's new monograph *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* is a landmark in Pater studies. This handsomely produced, lavishly illustrated book is the work of a leading scholar who has been publishing on Pater and aestheticism for many years, and her expertise is evident throughout in her command of both his published *œuvre* and the Houghton manuscripts – still the province of the specialist researcher only. The title of her study, while signalling an important, in-depth examination of Pater's longstanding interest in sculpture, does not fully represent the range and richness of her project, which has as much to say about his general fascination with the visual arts and literary style. Indeed, in addition to exploring theories generated by those German critics conventionally associated with sculpture such as Lessing and Winckelmann alongside the less familiar ideas of the late nineteenth-century sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand, Østermark-Johansen engages with Renaissance art theory, with key French writers such as Gautier, Baudelaire, and Flaubert, and major British influences such as Wordsworth and Ruskin. She writes with admirable clarity and sureness of touch, often enlivening her text with a piquant yet telling detail – a letter from Pater's hairdresser; Edmund Gosse finding “a curiously marked copy of *Mademoiselle de Maupin* belonging to Pater” in Sidney Colvin's rooms (113); Pater reading the dictionary in bed each morning.

“Touch” is a good word to conjure with because another strength of this stimulating monograph is the way that it draws our attention to the importance of this sense for Pater, particularly in relation to sculpture. One naturally expects optical perception to be to the fore in a book about the visual arts, but Østermark-Johansen does an excellent job in demonstrating Pater’s interest in tactility and showing how “haptic” images and metaphors pervade his writing. She illustrates how “Pater’s Winckelmann handles everything” (74) and reveals that, in relation to style, Pater’s “allusions to the sense of touch oscillate between the concrete and the abstract; thus he often substitutes ‘touch’ with ‘tact’, the right touch, the tactile equivalent to *le mot juste*, and employs it repeatedly in its figurative sense in the *OED*” (312). Pater’s tactile sensibility extends to the first edition of *The Renaissance* itself, printed on carefully selected ribbed paper. “I have the feel of it still in my fingers” wrote Arthur Symons, surely Pater’s ideal aesthetic (and synaesthetic) reader (179).

Related to tactile impression is the sculptural “relief,” derived from the Italian *relievo*, a term whose semantic evolution Østermark-Johansen explores in her erudite first chapter, which deals with Pater’s negotiations with Renaissance art theory and in particular the *Paragone*, the competition for supremacy among the arts, which he will address in “The School of Giorgione” (1877). Of particular note is Pater’s concern with “suggestiveness rather than with clearly defined finish” (37), the “frayed surface,” for instance, of the *Venus de Milo* (39), the Michelangelesque suggestive fragment or *non finito*, and Pater’s differences and similarities with Ruskin over Michelangelo and engraving. It is difficult to convey the compass of individual chapters in this monograph brimming as they do with so much rich material, especially as they seem to unfold organically rather than adhere to a tightly marshalled agenda. Østermark-Johansen is always wonderfully lucid but she demands strenuous readers who may occasionally find, as is the case in this opening chapter, the density of the sources and the continuous succession of ideas and insights a little overwhelming. This is a book that will repay careful, unhurried reading, with individual sections revisited over a period of time in order to digest their full merits.

The antiquarian Johann Winckelmann is central to Chapter 2 on German aesthetic thought, which shows Pater engaging with theoretical ideas stemming not only from the man himself but also from his “influence and legacy” (73) as seen in Lessing, Goethe, Herder, and the later Hildebrand. Picking up on ideas

explored in Chapter 1, the section on marble, contour, and frayed surfaces in which Østermark-Johansen sensitively reads Winckelmann's *Description of the Belvedere Torso* is especially interesting, as is the concluding imaginative comparison and contrast of Pater and Hildebrand with regard to issues of relief.

Chapter 3 on Pater and French aestheticism valuably excavates Pater's own considerable debt to Gautier and Baudelaire. Although he wrote no individual essays on these authors, their "ghostly presences" in his writings are "vibrant manifestations of his dialogue with French aestheticism and its English defendants over a period of 25 years" (115). Gautier's and Swinburne's explorations of sculptural hermaphroditism, contemporary discussion of "the death of sculpture," and Baudelairean notions of "romantic beauty" form part of a seminal discussion that anyone interested in the origins of British aestheticism would do well to read. Østermark-Johansen is particularly good at tracing the marks of Baudelaire's influence, often suppressed by Pater in later revisions of his work.

Although we tend to perceive Pater as responding to the art and literature of eras earlier than his own, one of the aims of this book is to show how he covertly interacts with his own contemporaries, particularly with regard to painting. Drawing on his known contacts with artists and his scattered references to contemporary artworks, Chapter 4 painstakingly builds up the evidence to suggest that he had far more interest and investment in contemporary painting than we might assume. Here, as elsewhere, the deft partnering of text and illustration is a real boon that maintains continuity, the reader always finding the appropriate image to hand. Østermark-Johansen's well-developed forensic skills show to real advantage as she convincingly makes her case, and she is illuminating on the Pater-Whistler connection that has tantalised a number of critics recently, seeing Whistler refracted through a number of texts including the imaginary portrait "A Prince of Court Painters." Whistler's technique of layering paint, his "weavism," is also fruitfully compared with Pater's "concern with the materiality of his first book" (178) and his "multiple drafts for his essays" (179).

Pater's treatment of Greek sculpture forms the topic of Chapter 5, a treatment infiltrated by "the Romantic elements of strangeness and pain" (213). Detailed scholarly reconstruction and discussion of the academic context in which Pater made his studies precedes probing, thoughtful considerations of "spiritual form," transformation, and the "gods in exile" theme, chryselephantine sculpture

and “chryselephantine language,” and Apollo and Doric influences. Østermark-Johansen’s concluding account of the “erotic infatuation” of Edmund Gosse with the young sculptor Hamo Thonycroft (260) forms an intriguing pendant that teases out the homoeroticism implicit in Pater’s appreciations of sculptures of Greek youths and athletes.

The final chapter deals with style and the language of sculpture, starting with an analysis of Wordsworth’s importance for Pater as glimpsed in the little-known, unfinished imaginary portrait “An English Poet” and more evident in various published essays. Østermark-Johansen reads Wordsworth’s emphasis on developing a “personalized vocabulary” (283) and “his interest in inscription” (284) as helping influence Pater’s “Style” with its architectural and sculptural metaphors and its urging of the writer to develop his own linguistic repertoire. She builds on this with exciting explorations of images of friezes and palimpsests in De Quincey and *Marius*, and wide-ranging discussions of Victorian philology, dictionaries, and Flaubert’s *le mot juste*, culminating in a provocative meditation on Pater’s own compositional technique (which includes the reproduction and analysis of a manuscript page in the Houghton Library). As elsewhere, it is impossible to do justice to the wealth of insight canvassed here and the author’s ability to cast new light on her topic through diverse points of connection and analogy.

In sum this is a book that will delight Paterians, surprising and instructing even those who know him well. Østermark-Johansen’s deep respect for her subject informs every line while her impressive breadth of knowledge and imaginative scholarship make this study the essential work of reference for anyone interested in Pater and his relation to style, sculpture, and aestheticism.

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COSTE, BÉNÉDICTE. *WALTER PATER CRITIQUE LITTÉRAIRE: THE EXCITEMENT OF THE LITERARY SENSE*. GRENOBLE: ELLUG, 2010. 292 pp. €26.



énédicte Coste’s fine book (in French) fills a gap in Pater studies by highlighting the importance of his critical essays’ reflection on the subject and the text at the *fin de siècle*. She examines Pater’s thought

from a perspective that is both theoretical and temporal, emphasizing the way the critic approaches literature, while also accentuating the novelty of his history of “literature” dominated by cycles of break-up and rebirth. Philosophical relativism in the post-Romantic age changed individual perceptions of language and the self, giving birth to a divided subject who no longer controlled language totally. In a convincing and novel manner, Coste introduces psychoanalytic ideas inherited from Freud and Lacan to focus on Pater’s intuitions as a critic of literature. This approach is complemented by a thorough study of philosophers such as Heidegger who explored the relation between the subject and otherness and, in particular, language. Coste not only refers to nineteenth-century authors but also draws parallels with twentieth-century critics such as Maurice Blanchot. The book reads easily and the footnotes give the reader access to her excellent translations.

The first part of the book examines the Romantic and Decadent movements in relation to Pater’s own conception of literary history. After defining “romance” as a structuring notion in his works that, in particular, allowed him to build his history of literature through cycles from antiquity to Romanticism, Coste shows how Pater found it almost impossible to write something totally new or original. She uses Vladimir Jankélévitch’s ideas on time and representation in order to define Decadence as a “post-maturity” stage. Pater’s use of parallels between different periods of time and culture allows him to define poetic creation as a text at once encapsulating the past and announcing future artistic forms.

The second part of the book, entitled, in Pater’s own words, *That inward sense of things*, first analyzes the Victorians’ conceptions of style as well as Pater’s own quest for formal perfection and morality culminating with his own distinction between good art and great art. Coste’s psychoanalytical approach is convincing as she associates Pater’s passionate ideal type – *klide* – with Lacan’s object “a” and Bernard Salignon’s “intimate self” to explain the connection between great art and pleasure. Moreover she throws new light on Pater’s reflection on aesthetics and morality by introducing the Freudian concept of *Versagung* – or refusal – to comment on the tensions among language, person, and the world. Pater’s conception of style as resulting from the tension between mind and soul testifies to his intuition of the divorce between words and matter at a time when the birth of psychoanalysis challenged the ideal of a transparent language. Yet, in contrast with Freud’s *Versagung*, which makes language the expression of refusal, Pater supports the ideal of transparency in style, even though in the Dante Gabriel

Rossetti essay he suggests that total transparency is impossible. In the same way Pater's impersonality is analyzed with references to Lacan, H. Rey-Flaud, and Freud. Coste chooses the essay on Mérimée to highlight Pater's praise of ironic *effacement*, together with the often-neglected essay on Charles Lamb to define humour as a form of impersonality. Not only is Mérimée's irony based on the same disillusion as Freud's concept of "the thing," but his style is also the expression of his own otherness to himself. Lamb conveys the complex Freudian notion of *Verneigung* and its denial of enunciation, since the "I" is only a mask hiding multiple authorial voices.

This chapter on impersonality as a mask also allows Coste to explain Pater's taste for the portrait as a literary *genre*, which is essential to understanding his work. The final chapter on Wordsworth and Coleridge shows how the subject relates to a spiritual condition; Coste thoroughly analyzes key notions such as animism, enthusiasm, cosmos, *genius loci* and the distinction between the fancy and the imagination. She presents Wordsworth in a new light by emphasizing his paganism rather than his Christian faith and shows how his poetics anticipated Paterian authorial withdrawal. The passage on ghosts in Coleridge's poetry is particularly interesting as it illustrates how the poet integrates Kantian philosophy when turning the real ghosts of Elizabethan literature into mental images of the self. By drawing a parallel with Freud's *andere Lokalität*, Coste is suggesting the continuity Coleridge embodies from Kantian subjective representation to the Freudian division of the subjective self. Coste concludes by considering the relation between Pater and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which has not received due critical attention. She draws an interesting parallel between the houses of Pater's "The Child in the House" and Rossetti's "The House of Life," which explores the importance of desire in their mental construction. Yet while Pater emphasizes a house that can only be grasped through recollection, thus establishing some distance between desire and the self, Rossetti remains immersed in his house and his dreams. Coste traces this to the poet's belief in mesmerism as well as to his celebration of oneiric pleasure. This concluding chapter allows her to situate Pater's own stance with aesthetics through a deeper analysis of the ideal of a transparent language. For him, Rossetti embodies the perfection of the Romantic quest for a transparent style while his love of formal perfection for its own sake heralds the Decadents.

Coste's analysis of key concepts in Pater's works as well as her method, which combines the approaches of psychoanalysis and philosophy, are very convincing. Her dual perspective, which emphasizes his relation to Victorian writers and later thinkers, helps restore Pater to his position as a major critic of literature in England's *fin de siècle* and testifies to his modernity. There is no doubt Paterian scholars will find Coste's book a crucial resource in their studies.

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### BOOK CHAPTERS

ARATA, STEPHEN. "THE IMPERSONAL INTIMACY OF *MARIUS THE EPICUREAN*." IN *THE FEELING OF READING: AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCE AND VICTORIAN LITERATURE*. ED. RACHEL ABLOW. ANN ARBOR: U OF MICHIGAN P, 2010. 131–156.

Beginning from the all-too-plausible starting point that no reader of *Marius the Epicurean* has likely ever wept over the fate of Marius, Arata argues that Pater's novel asks serious questions of fiction's ability to generate sympathetic feeling on the tradition of the eighteenth-century Adam Smith/David Hume model and at the back of much Victorian theorizing about the value of the novel. For Pater, Arata argues, the form of the art object in words "is a materialization of human subjectivity, not its equivalent" (132) – we do not think to sympathize with a statue. Arata finds in *Marius's* memorialization of the dead, and Pater's writing of it, a persistent figure for the relationship between fiction-reader and fictional character, and examines Flavian's death scene in particular ("is it a comfort that I shall come and weep over you?" is Marius's only line of dialogue). Marius presents a relationship with the dead that is best achieved (indeed, it can only be achieved) by incorporating them into oneself. Arata also points out that novel-reading is specifically paralleled in *Marius* with the grotesque spectacles of the Roman amphitheatre which provoke a "false sentiment of compassion" (139). He then moves his focus wider, pointing to Pater's habit of making individuals at the centre of *The Renaissance* the locus for particular historical forces and energies – both in their own time and by what becomes subsequently attached to them as their "spirit" (Giorgione is the principal example). He concludes by pointing to Pater's comments in *Plato and Platonism* on the philosopher's method of making sensuous and intimate the abstract world of ideas. Something similar, Arata concludes, is what goes on in *Marius* and in Pater's writing more generally: under Pater's ideas, there can

be no real engagement with Pater the human being, only with “the Paterian,” the experience of that materialized version of Pater that he left behind, an aesthetic object moulded and re-written in the public medium of language.

*Matthew Bradley*

JOHNSON, WARREN. “VILLIERS DE L’ISLE-ADAM, PATER, AND THE HARD GEMLIKE FLAME.” IN *SYMBOLISM, ITS ORIGINS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES*. ED. ROSINA NEGINSKY. NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE: CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS, 2010. 328–335.

This essay is based on a “juxtaposition” of texts by Villiers and Pater that is justified not by “influence” but by “confluence” since both have “distinct but related responses” (329) to their context. Johnson draws on Pater to explain Villiers’ “illusionism” – that is, the suspension between awareness of impermanence and the falsity of appearances, and the desire to believe in an unattainable ideal. One exemplification of Villiers’ “imperative of illusion” – the crime the protagonist of “Le désir d’être un homme” commits in order to feel an authentic emotion – is juxtaposed with Pater’s exhortation in the “Conclusion” to experience a heightened sensation, the words “as Pater says” providing the abrupt transition. Johnson then draws an analogy between Pater’s insistence on individual experience when contemplating the work of art and Villiers’s concern for motifs that point to a mediation “between the material world and the spiritual ideal” (331), and he states that Pater’s notion of inner expansion “parallels therefore [the] shift towards dualistic illusionism” (332). He then mentions some protagonists in their respective texts who, despite their power, can only vicariously grasp the ideal. In a brief conclusion he states that although both rejected materialism and positivism, Pater’s search for the ideal is aestheticized while it is spiritualized for Villiers.

*Anne-Florence Gillard-Estrada*

MAZZANTI, ANNA. "ANGELO CONTI AS THE RUSKIN AND PATER OF ITALY: PROMOTER AND ELUCIDATOR OF SYMBOLISM." IN *SYMBOLISM, ITS ORIGINS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES*. ED. ROSINA NEGINSKY. NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE: CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS, 2010. 481–530.

This well-documented essay includes a remarkable sequence of more than forty illustrations, ranging from paintings and photograph-portraits to microphotographies and periodical illustrations, most of them dating back to the end of the nineteenth century and associated with Italian, British, and French artists (Gaetano Previati, Giulio Aristide Sartorio, Giuseppe Primoli, John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Odilon Redon). Quite fittingly, for an essay included in a volume on Symbolism, the pictures are virtually made to speak not so much through their captions as by way of Mazzanti's careful scattering of clues, suggestions, and historical references. Of course, the "radiating centre" of such a composite canvas appears to be Angelo Conti (Rome, 1860-Naples, 1930), the aesthete and intellectual who adopted the intriguing *nom de plume* "Doctor Mysticus" and was to become one of the fostering spirits of Italian Symbolism (the creative mode which, in a coinage by Giovanni Segantini, came to be known as "Naturalismo simbolista").

Anyone interested in a systematic unraveling of the kinship among Conti, Ruskin, and Pater, however, will feel disappointed since, apart from a few observations regarding the inspired artist's transfiguration of nature, the mystique of music or the "Giorgionesque spirit" (Conti himself wrote a study on the great Venetian painter, entitled "Giorgione, 1898"), this essay mainly delves into Conti's role as a promoter and theorist of Symbolism, weaving his own web on the national soil. It is this web that Mazzanti focuses on and lucidly scrutinizes, first by throwing light on Doctor Mysticus's life and interests – "a medical student" who was "passionate about experimental music and fascinated by Schopenhauer" (481) as well as by an eminent group of scientists lecturing at "La Sapienza," University of Rome – and then by bringing to the fore his cultural connections and acquaintances. We thus learn about his friendship with Gabriele D'Annunzio, his participation in the salon of Count Primoli in Rome, and contributions to the journal *Tribuna*. The investigation also testifies to the spiritual brotherhood linking Conti to Mario De Maria (first in Rome, and later in Venice), the "Marius pictor" whom he

set out to praise as a sort of musical painter, an interpreter and translator of the very soul of things. Thanks to this energetic promoter of Symbolism, De Maria and other Roman painters provided a body of illustrations for *Isaotta Guttadauro* (1886), a collection of poems by D'Annunzio which was suitably printed in the Pre-Raphaelites' manner. The nine illustrators eventually united in a fraternity called *In Arte Libertas*, which established connections with Leighton, Burne-Jones, and Marie Spartali, among others. From the opening paragraphs to her closing remarks, the author appears to lift the veil of oblivion and illuminate some dark sides of the Italian *fin de siècle*, with its fascinating history and "family of Apostles."

*Laura Giovannelli*

## ESSAYS

ANDREWS, KIT. "WALTER PATER AS OXFORD HEGELIAN: *PLATO AND PLATONISM* AND T.H. GREEN'S *PROLEGOMENA TO ETHICS*." *JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY OF IDEAS* 72.3 (JULY 2011): 437-459.

Andrews begins with the assertion that although Pater has been frequently regarded in the broad context of Hegelianism in the nineteenth century, he has not been properly considered in the specific context of Oxford Hegelianism. Focusing on an implicit dialogue with T.H. Green in Pater's later work, Andrews argues that both *Plato and Platonism* and Green's *Prolegomena* are post-Kantian works that move "beyond Kant's autonomous subject toward a more Hegelian historical evolution of individual subject and state" (439). But Pater is distinguished from Green by the rigour of his dialectical vision, and Andrews' account is useful in suggesting how Pater read back from Hegel to Plato in order to rejuvenate and radicalize dialectics.

One of the surprising aspects of Pater's journey through the history of philosophy is that he ultimately sides with Plato against Socrates, affirming Plato's "hazardous flights of the soul" against Socratic empiricism. This is clearly an aestheticized version of Plato, which Pater narrates according to the

development of Plato's work. Andrews complements this with a developmental account of Pater, who dialectically achieved "imaginative reason" by surpassing his own youthful sensualism and Puritan abstraction (457). It is worth reiterating here that Andrews is promoting Pater as an imaginative dialectical thinker. While we commonly think of the nudge against Hegel in the "Conclusion" as a revolt against abstraction and dogmatism, Andrews argues that Pater's critique of the "grey on grey" of philosophical abstraction is thoroughly Hegelian. Yet crucially, Andrews suggests that Pater began to withdraw "apprehensively" from Plato's vision of the state in the later chapters on the politics of Platonism. A good deal more could be written on Pater's relationship to Hegel's politics, but Andrews has made an excellent start.

*Andrew Eastham*

EASTHAM, ANDREW. "WALTER PATER'S ACOUSTIC SPACE: 'THE SCHOOL OF GIORGIONE,' DIONYSIAN *ANDERS-STREBEN*, AND THE POLITICS OF SOUNDSCAPE." *THE YEARBOOK OF ENGLISH STUDIES* 40.1-2 (2010): 196-216.

The essay traces Pater's evolving attitude toward idealist metaphysics reflected in his repeated focus on music and his conception of a "musical ideal" (215), what Eastham describes as Pater's "utopian image of acoustic space – a mode of sensuous being in which formal autonomy appears to have been overcome and a new aesthetic life inaugurated" (213). Eastham argues that Pater becomes "increasingly troubled" by the aesthetic organicism of his own work, and its affinities with the "culture of Wagnerism" (212), a revival of Romantic organicism in the interests of nationalism and "excessive cultural and political visions" (213). Turning first to "The School of Giorgione" (1877), Eastham suggests that in the *ekphrases* of Titian's "Giorgionesque" paintings, Pater "projects an ideal acoustic space" (196) that stands in a dialectical relation to the "formalist affirmation of aesthetic autonomy" represented in Pater's description of the process of *Anders-streben*. Eastham locates the origins of Pater's "poetics of acoustic space" (210) in the slightly earlier essay, "A Study of Dionysus" (1876), in which he identifies "the striving of the arts towards music as an essentially Dionysian process" (207). In his account of the Dionysian

acoustic experience and Olympian soundscape, Pater expresses an “aspiration towards a total sensuous medium” (212) and evokes “an organic form of Greek religious culture” (211). In the late *Plato and Platonism* (1893), however, and in particular his account of “Pythagoreanism,” Pater interrogates the musical ideal and its utopian aspirations; his critique of the Platonic ideal of music is a protest against “the organic conception of the state” and in favor of “the individual subject” (213). Eastham suggests that Pater’s increasing “anxiety about the public and political implications of aesthetic organicism” moves him “towards the highly subjective mode of the ‘Imaginary Portrait,’” a “retreat from the pastoral vision that had come to fruition in ‘The School of Giorgione’ and ‘A Study of Dionysus’” (216).

*Kenneth Daley*

#### ESSAYS WITH NOTABLE REFERENCES TO PATER

NEWMAN, BETH. “ALICE MEYNELL, WALTER PATER, AND AESTHETICIST TEMPORALITY.” *VICTORIAN STUDIES* 53.3 (SPRING 2011): 495–505.

This essay undertakes to show that, despite her claim that she was the only one of her contemporaries who had not read Pater, turn-of-the-century poet, critic, and editor Alice Meynell appears nonetheless to have been reacting in much of her work to Pater’s “Conclusion” to *The Renaissance*, particularly to the temporality implied in Pater’s famous injunction to seize the “moment” and “burn always with a hard, gem-like flame.” It argues that Meynell eschews this temporality of the moment, privileging instead what Newman calls the “anti-momentous,” which is to say, more lasting kinds of temporality: periodic time, seasonal time, festival time, ritual time, etc. The argument reproduces a common understanding of Pater’s famous “Conclusion” and seems even to set Pater up as a straw man, permitting an already limited understanding of the temporality of the “Conclusion” to stand in generally for the “aestheticist temporality” of the title, as if Pater did not have more to say elsewhere about time (and history). This does not, however, vitiate the argument of the essay. Many of Pater’s contemporaries proceeded upon limited understandings

and even willful misreadings of Pater and so indeed might Alice Meynell. While the essay does not illuminate our understanding of Pater, it might be of value to those interested in the effects of Pater on *fin-de-siècle* writers and particularly Meynell. It offers a number of fairly persuasive close readings of Meynell's poetry that together do suggest that Meynell might well have been anti-Paterian. The essay might also be of interest to scholars studying Pater's effects on Woolf. Although the essay offers an equally reductive reading of Pater and temporality in Woolf (the whole of Woolf's work is about time), it nonetheless raises the possibility that Meynell might be an intermediate figure between Pater and Woolf, who combined in her work with no difficulty at all both ephemeral and lasting (repeating and cyclical) temporalities. It might similarly be useful for students of T.S. Eliot, particularly "Four Quartets," which are occupied precisely with these different kinds of time.

*Michael Davis*

TOWNLEY, SARAH. "VERNON LEE AND ELITISM: REDEFINING BRITISH AESTHETICISM." *ENGLISH LITERATURE IN TRANSITION* 54.4 (2011): 523-538.

Townley argues that the recent feminist-led recovery of Vernon Lee has underplayed her loyalties to Paterian aestheticism. According to her, Lee is a 'prestige writer' who believes in the paramount importance of aesthetic value. It follows that Lee should be understood as "closer to the authorial practices of those figures that shape our traditional accounts of aestheticism" such as Pater (525). Drawing mainly on "Style," Townley sees Pater as the main theorist of an "elitist" aestheticism (inherited by Lee) that theorises a separation between passive and active modes of attention, rather than worry about the accessibility of art and writing.

*Stefano Evangelista*

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