

Walter Pater's Poetics of Enactment

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The 'aesthetic' style of Walter Pater has always been as contentious as his aestheticism. It is either praised for its rhythms and its Corinthian decorativeness or parodied and dismissed. So sensitive an aesthete as Christian de Clavering (alias Cyril Connolly) claimed that the style of Alma Pater smelled like stale privet;¹ and so sympathetic a Pater scholar as Linda Dowling remarked recently on its 'peculiar savour of antiquarian mold or decay'.² We need not, however, so wholly eschew aesthetic style. Northrop Frye's suggestive remarks on *opsis* and *melos* in *The Anatomy of Criticism*³ have inspired Gerald C. Monsman to give aesthetic style a new and profound consideration, linking style and meaning as has never been done before.⁴ Monsman's valuable study has prompted my own exploration of this linking.

No view of Pater's thought can be whole without a consideration of aesthetic style; and no consideration of aesthetic style can be whole without recognising it as integral to Pater's thought. It is still relevant to our sense of his achievement. More than a decoration of thought, more even than an attempt to create an artefact that 'aspires to the condition of music', Pater's style has a profound purpose, simultaneously aesthetic, epistemological and moral.

The style one might expect from the writer of the 'Conclusion' to *Studies in the Renaissance*, who avers that all we have is a present moment while all melts under our feet, is perhaps a style akin to James Joyce's or Virginia Woolf's—a stream of consciousness, a style imploding with the chaos of the present moment, or rich in symbol and proleptic of transcendence. Instead what we have in Paterian style is a fully concrete, unsymbolic record, a chronicle of the experienced moment. The experiences are laid out on the page in sentences so long they demand concentrated thought and eventually memory to encompass them. Made up of rhythms and counter rhythms, they are so undulating they seem to be easing this effort of thought and memory and to lull the reader by an undertow into a state of pleasurable reverie, much as Debussy's *La Mer* or Sibelius's *Oceanides* might do. We have a style of a pleasing, sensuous texture, whether Pater writes of sense experience, emotion or thought, whether he writes fiction or expository prose. Whatever his subject, his style is nearly always what

we may only call 'aesthetic', beautiful, converting as it does all its contents into 'pleasurable sensation'—to use the term that Pater uses.

To illustrate what I mean when I say Pater's style converts all its contents into 'sensation', I will discuss passages from his later, less mannered, and so-called expository style in *Plato and Platonism*, written avowedly to help philosophy students.⁵ The first passage I quote is similar in theme to the more familiar, more emotional and suasive passages in the 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance* about knowledge and reality, over which presides a quotation from Heraclitus, Pater's mentor from the earliest phase of his thinking to his last.⁶ In the following passage from *Plato and Platonism*, Pater is expounding, not 'appreciating' as he is when he is speaking of works of art. Here is the passage:

Perpetual motion, alike in things and in men's thoughts about them,—the sad, self-conscious, philosophy of Heraclitus, like one, knowing beyond his years, in this barely adolescent world which he is so eager to instruct, makes no pretense to be able to restrain that. Was not the very essence of thought itself also such perpetual motion? a baffling transition from the dead past, alive one moment since, to a present, itself deceased in turn, ere we can say, It is here? A keen analyst of the facts of nature and mind, a master presumably of all the knowledge that then there was, a vigorous definer of thoughts, he does but refer the superficial movement of all persons and things around him to deeper and still more masterful currents of universal change, stealthily withdrawing the apparently solid earth itself from beneath one's feet. The principle of disintegration, the incoherency of fire or flood (for Heraclitus these are but the very lively instances of movements, subtler yet more wasteful still) are inherent in the primary elements alike of matter and of the soul. ... But the principle of lapse, of waste, was, in fact, in one's self. 'No one has ever passed twice over the same stream.' Nay, the passenger himself is without identity. Upon the same stream at the same moment we do, and do not, embark: for we are, and are not ... (*Plato and Platonism*, pp.14–15).

One could dwell a long time on this complex passage. The characteristics that I need here emphasize are its rhythms, length of sentence, syntax, and accompanying feeling or 'affect'. We are not far into the passage when the enunciated subject 'perpetual motion' is associated with grief and the divisiveness of self-consciousness. The elegiac tone is to remain throughout the passage. There is an irregular rise and fall to the lines, a flow, then an ebb, a giving, then a taking away, as in: 'Was not the very essence of thought itself also such perpetual motion? a baffling transition from the dead past, alive one moment since, to a present, itself deceased in turn, ere we can say, It is here?' Or as in: 'Upon the same stream at the same moment we do,

and do not, embark: for we are, and are not ...'

The rhythmic flow, then ebb, are a syntactic enactment of this giving and taking away: the enunciated subject 'perpetual motion' is equated grammatically with the semantic diminishments, 'sad, selfconscious philosophy'; and then the 'very essence of thought' is destabilised, becoming the grammatical and semantic equivalent of perpetual motion in the passage's first rhetorical question. And what is described as 'deeper' and 'still more masterful' becomes not consolation, but seeming proof of 'universal change' that by the sentence's end is withdrawing the very 'solid earth from beneath one's feet'—leaving the reader the only image in this passage, the flowing stream. Gain, then loss in this passage: '... we are, and are not,' as Pater says, keeping always to his murmurous, elegiac but calm tone.

This elegiac tone, this carefully modulated calm sadness is consistently unified with both the rhythmic and syntactic enactment of the pattern of flow and ebb, or gain and loss, which in turn sets up a persistence that is containing and from which there is no relief, except in the calming assurance of the narrating voice. The narrating voice—that, after all, knows the implications of the flux and is literally narrating the 'story' or history of the philosophic concept of flux—is far from despairing. It is merely sad but its sadness is balanced by calm. Here the 'narrator' is always 'guarantor' to use Gerard Genette's term;⁷ the calming voice reassures; the narrating presence wins the reader to repose, if I may rephrase Lionel Johnson's tribute to Pater.⁸

And so this passage yields not only the thinking about philosophic concept, such as that of the Heraclitean flux, it yields us the emotional equivalent of the flux as Pater conceived it: containment within the persisting rhythm of gain and loss.⁹ But it yields us simultaneously the calming, reassuring voice that lets us not just know but *feel* all is well in spite of the knowledge we are presently acquiring as we listen or read. What might be a mere discussion or exposition of Heraclitean flux comes close to being a prose poem, thinking, feeling, remembering, bestirring together, unified by Paterian style as concept turns to percept. The language, the feelings, the thinking and the rhythms are all unified, consubstantial, as it were, or 'conterminous' to use Pater's own word (*Plato and Platonism*, p.162).

Pater achieves this unitiveness again and again. The philosophic or suasive or expository is simultaneously the 'aesthetic'.

Here is another passage about the flux:

Mobility! We do not think that a necessarily undesirable condition of life, of mind, of the physical world about us. 'Tis the dead things, we may

The Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics

remind ourselves, that after all are most entirely at rest, and might reasonably hold that motion (vicious, fallacious, infectious motion, as Plato inclines to think) covers all that is best worth being. And as for philosophy—mobility, versatility, the habit of thought that can most adequately follow the subtle movement of things, that, surely, were the secret of wisdom, of the true knowledge of them. It means susceptibility, sympathetic intelligence, capacity, in short. It was the spirit of God that moved, moves still, in every form of real power, everywhere (*Plato and Platonism*, p.22).

Pater's ratiocinative strategies are obvious: to identify immobility with death and mobility with life, being; then to identify mobility as epistemological concept in an ascending scale with philosophy, wisdom and the motion of the spirit of God. All this is then swiftly identified with 'real power'. But although ratiocinative and suasive, his strategies are also sensuous, aesthetic, even though the content is abstract. The narrator exclaims the word 'Mobility' literally following it with an exclamation mark only to deaden the energy in this by the negative. 'We do not think ...' This is followed by the patent truth about the immobile as dead that our intimate narrator just happens to know we all know and is merely reminding us of. Our intimate, reasoning, reasonable narrator is calm;—the words 'vicious', 'fallacious' and 'infectious' that so erupt through his reasonableness are imputed to Plato, who is to be defeated later in the passage by nothing less than the narrator's reassuring knowledge of the motion of the spirit of God.

The narrator, whether of Pater's fiction, his history of philosophy or his appreciative criticism, seldom is angry and only occasionally ironic. What influences the narrator to lose his usual repose are dualistic metaphysics and certain metaphysicians like Spinoza (or his fictional counterpart Sebastian Van Storck) or Coleridge, as well as the notion that the earthly flux may end. Pater saves some very cool irony for the notion of entropy: after praising one school of modern science as verifying Heraclitean flux, he scorns the 'modern physical philosopher' presumably John Tyndall, for propounding 'perpetual lethargy' in the motion of the death of earth (*Plato and Platonism*, p.42).

These ironies are rare. The Paterian narrator is usually calm, intimate, reassuring, engaged and engaging. In the passage I have cited the calm, intimate narrator knows time past and present, and, if the spirit of God does not cease, can calmly presume on the future. We trust this narrator who unfolds more and more of his knowledge to us in rhythmic triplets: 'mobility, versatility, the habit of thought that can

most adequately follow the subtle movement of things' or: 'susceptibility, sympathetic intelligence, capacity'. Certainly the sympathetic intelligence of the narrator never fails and lures us on to a moving assertion of the knowledge, as it were, of God's spirit as flux and flux as God's spirit through time and through creation—the real.

The rhythmic cadences mount, then come to rest: they mount particularly with the first set of triplets, then rest to mount again with the next set of triplets, which again comes to rest. These flights and rests are followed by an accumulating sentence, beginning with the portentous delaying tactic 'It was ...' This is followed by no less than 'the spirit of God' which is testified to, while the sentence accumulates its process verbs and clauses and progresses after the triplets slowly and quietly ('that moves, moves still'), until it ends as God's very spirit may—spatially—with 'everywhere', a word that releases the incremental action of the moving of the middle part of the sentence into an almost soundless placidity.

Pater's strategies in this passage, the few I need mention here, are simultaneously comforting, suasive, intimate, reasonable and, of course, entirely verbal. We trust the narrating voice; we turn to its steady calm while we are in the act of reading and we are moved in our varying degrees by the reassuring identification of God with motion. Everything depends on the unity of the passage's narrating sensibility and everything makes for it: the ratiocinative accompanied by feeling; syntactic and rhythmic enactment; cadence; imagery—all working with the intimate, calming narrator/knower, knower of time past, present and future and God.¹⁰ At any one point in reading, the reader experiences the typical Paterian unity of language, the ratiocinative and the sensational or sensuous, and throughout the duration of reading, this unity is maintained and passes into memory. Never just an appeal to the intellect, aesthetic style—even in its restrained philosophic mode—achieves sensuous ratiocination, appealing to the one thing Pater agreed with Matthew Arnold on, the faculty of the 'imaginative reason', which Pater equates with no less than Plato's 'one supreme faculty of theoretic vision' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.140).¹¹

Pater's amazing achievement is not that the famous sensuous passages like the Mona Lisa description or the Hawthorne tree episode in 'The Child in the House' are exemplars of his aesthetic style, but that the philosophic passages are as well. His achievement of 'consubstantiality' is as stunning as Hopkins's achievement of inscape, and unlike Hopkins, Pater achieves this almost without imagery.

Why? What function does aesthetic style have in Pater's thought?

Some of the more obvious answers are, of course, in the essay 'Style' of 1888. Ostensibly about Flaubert, the essay is Pater's aesthetic manifesto. It is a defence of so-called 'imaginative' prose as the special art of the nineteenth century and a defence of a plurality of prose styles as aesthetic. It justifies discarding the distinction between poetry and prose and makes the distinction between mere literature of fact and literature as a 'fine art' a crucial category distinction. And 'fine art' is for Pater the discourse of a writer's 'sense of fact' or his 'peculiar intuition of a world'.¹² The fact of an artist's experience, the experienced *fact*, is important to fine art. Pater's aesthetic is a post Pre-Raphaelite, post Ruskin aesthetic. But it takes account of the science and positivism of his day, and is a realistic and anti-symbolic credo as much as it is an expressive one.

The beauty that constitutes fine art comes with 'fineness of truth' or utter accuracy of expressing—'the finer accommodation of speech to that vision within' (*Appreciations*, p.10). Or to put it another way, literature as a fine art is a separate discourse, a personal idiolect. The artist makes his own 'vocabulary, an entire system of composition, for himself, his own true manner' (*Appreciations*, p.14). The artist uses language accurately to delineate not the facts in a supposedly objective or referential discourse, but in a reflexive discourse, to delineate or more accurately remember his own acts of consciousness, his own *reminisced vision* of experienced actuality. 'Fine art', the 'intuitive' creation (*Appreciations*, p.33) of beauty, is the expression of a 'soul' or a 'specific personality, in its preferences, its volition and power' (*Appreciations*, p.10)—this knowledge of a person, being for Plato, so Pater thinks, even the way to comprehend universals (*Plato and Platonism*, p.166).

This intuitive expression of a soul that has experienced and can reminisce must be concrete so that the reader can *experience* the artist's sensibility or soul or spirit as a 'like intuition', as a sort of 'immediate sense' (*Appreciations*, p.33), a desideratum of art consistent throughout Pater's writings.

The artist—and in 'Style' Pater is more particularly dealing with the 'prose artist'—is not just a creature of intuition, but of scholarliness too. He will have both 'mind' or architectonic ability (*Appreciations*, p.21) and 'soul' or feeling (*Appreciations*, p.26). And he will know his medium so well—its 'abundant and recondite laws', its 'minute associations' (*Appreciations*, p.12), its native genius (*Appreciations*, p.15)—that he can convey his experienced world, his reminisced vision, in language identical, as it were, of 'absolute accordance'

(*Appreciations*, p.34) with his vision and capable of being received as intuition, as immediate sense. 'All the laws of good writing', says Pater, unexpectedly announcing laws as if he were Matthew Arnold, 'aim at a similar unity or identity of the mind in all processes by which the word is associated to its import. The term is right, and has its essential beauty, when it becomes, in a manner, what it signifies, as with the names of simple sensations' (*Appreciations*, p.22). He approves Flaubert's painstaking search for *le mot juste*, the word that is consubstantial with the thing: 'The one word for the one thing ...' (*Appreciations*, p.29).

But why does Pater think that concreteness can be guaranteed in a verbal medium? Why does he think that language which refers to experienced fact, to the artist's consciousness, that includes at least thinking, feeling, willing, remembering, can effect this miracle of the consubstantial? Pater goes so far as to suggest, ready to hand, a 'natural economy', a 'pre-existent adaptation' (*Appreciations*, p.30) between thought and language—a notion Max Muller strongly affirms in his *Lectures on the Science of Language* which Pater had read as early as 1867.¹³

But how can Pater feel sure that the verbal correlate will render conceptual or abstract thinking in such a way as to be received 'intuitively' or as 'immediate sensation' by the reader? For the answer to this we must go to *Plato and Platonism*, which is as much about Pater and Paterism as about Plato. In discussing the theory of ideas, pre-Saussurean Pater declares his own position on language as 'somewhere between the realist and the conceptualist' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.151): '... we might say, there is a general consciousness, a permanent common sense, independent indeed of each one of us, but with which we are, each one of us, in communication. It is in that, those common or general ideas really reside'. (This is a long way from the solipsism Pater is persistently accused of ever since the 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance*.) He continues:

And we might add just here (giving his due to the nominalist also) that those abstract or common notions come to the individual mind through language, through common or general names, *Animal, Justice, Equality*, into which one's individual experience, little by little, drop by drop, conveys their full meaning or content; and, by the instrumentality of such terms and notions, thus locating the particular in the general, mediating between general and particular, between our individual experience and the common experience of our kind, we come to understand each other, and to assist each other's thoughts, as in a common mental atmosphere, an 'intellectual world,' as Plato calls it. ... So much for the modern view; for

The Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics

what common sense might now suggest as to the nature of logical 'universals' (*Plato and Platonism*, pp.151-52).

Individual experience becomes 'common sense' with the pun on sense intended—sense as meaning, sense as sensation. Individual experience 'little by little', 'drop by drop', fills, as it were, the abstraction with accrued or incremental sensational meaning. 'Generalisation', Pater can therefore say, 'whatever Platonists or Plato himself at mistaken moments, may have to say about it, is a method, not of obliterating the concrete phenomenon, but of enriching it, with joint perspective, the significance, the expressiveness, of all other things beside' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.159). Far from obliterating the concrete, words that generalize or render abstractions, *literate* the concrete, making these terms a kind of 'short-hand' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.158) for accrued experience of things, the 'accumulative capital of the whole experience of humanity' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.159). This notion of abstraction is supported by Max Muller in his lecture on metaphor:

Thus the fact that all words expressive of immaterial conceptions are derived by metaphor from words expressive of sensible ideas was for the first time clearly and definitely put forward by Locke, and is now fully confirmed by the researches of comparative philologists. All roots, i.e. all the material elements of language, are expressive of sensuous impressions, and of sensuous impressions only; and as all words, even the most abstract and sublime, are derived from roots, comparative philology fully endorses the conclusions arrived at by Locke.¹⁴

Thus the 'absolute correspondence of the term to its import' that Pater advocates in 'Style' is able to render all activity of the artist's consciousness, and that includes abstract thinking, into the concrete and so the expression of experience can become beautiful like music, which to Pater was the highest art, fully sensuous, intuitively apprehensible. Certainly Pater's own writing, as I have tried to show, strives to effect this 'consubstantiality', offering for the duration of reading, the sensuous and therefore experiential unity of ratiocination and feeling with the word. No dialogue of the mind with itself, but a continuous sense of the unity of consciousness. This is one extraordinary achievement of aesthetic style.

But Pater's theorizing in 'Style' about fine art underplays the Paterian narrator/knower, who helps cause this unity, who writes so similarly whether in fiction, criticism or philosophy, and whose apprehending vision is no less than the text. (Critics often comment on the lack of direct speech or of dialogue in the fiction. Pater sacrificed

the immediacy of direct speech in order to keep the consistency of mental atmosphere of the narrator/knower who must always be showing a certain perception in chronicling the past.) Is there anything in Pater's own philosophizing that accounts for the narrator/knower, his elegaic but calm, reassuring and pleasing voice that becomes almost our own inner voice, experiencing it as we do so steadily and for so long?

The answers are to hand in the two passages from *Plato and Platonism* I have already cited at the beginning of my paper. Pater takes the philosophy of the flux to be the philosophy of the real and the 'secret of wisdom', 'susceptibility', 'sympathetic intelligence', the 'capacity to follow the subtle movement of things' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.22), to be the function of philosophy. It is, of course, the function of the aesthetic critic and aesthetic criticism—this cherishing, susceptible, sympathetic appreciation. Aesthetic criticism is, as Morris Dickstein¹⁵ says, the phenomenological reading of culture. And true philosophy for Pater is basically the phenomenological.

Pater refers to Henry Longueville Mansel in 'Style' as an 'acute philosophical writer' (*Appreciations*, p.21) and likely refers to his *Prolegomena Logica* of 1851. Whether the controversial Mansel was a profound early influence on Pater or only a kindred spirit¹⁶ whom he comes to fairly late, Mansel's *Prolegomena Logica* is liberating in that it collapses metaphysics into phenomenology and ontology. It liberates the philosopher to deal with the phenomenal, to assume that 'the laws of thought as well as the phenomena of matter, in fact, all knowledge whatever, may be said to be derived from experience.'¹⁷ It liberates the phenomenological philosopher to assume that the 'conditions of possible thought correspond to conditions of possible being' and that what is to us inconceivable is in itself non-existent' (*Prolegomena Logica*, p.72). Equally it liberates him to believe in the inconceivable. 'But in believing thus', says Mansel, 'we desert the evidence of Reason to rest on that of Faith' (*Prolegomena Logica*, p.73). The phenomenological philosopher is liberated to be both sceptical of the certainties of metaphysical speculation and yet to accept on faith some unproved and unprovable metaphysical possibility such as God. This is Pater's position—increasingly evident in his work after *Marius The Epicurean* and most apparent in *Plato and Platonism*, his philosophic testament, his last statements on Plato, the dualistic philosopher that he must come to terms with.

His narrator/knower/philosopher does not deny to philosophy the quest for the 'colourless, formless, impalpable existence' (*Plato and*

Platonism, p.32) but he sees it as not quite sane, one of philosophy's 'unprofitable queries' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.31), a search for 'Pure Being' that is definable only as 'Pure Nothing' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.32). Instead of such a fruitless search, the Paterian narrator/knower, as thinker and artist, gives his reader *all there is to know*, all he can give and need give: his experience of only the phenomenal world; of nature and culture. And his experience or 'vision' is tantamount to 'secret wisdom' born of his intimate cherishing of the facts, of experience, of the great stream of phenomena—over which, he trusts and can only trust, moves and has always moved 'the spirit of God' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.22).

This 'secret wisdom' of the Paterian narrator explains its assurance of omnitemporality and its elegiac repose and calm in the face of mutability: saddened by the fleetingness of things, it nevertheless cherishes the beloved phenomenal—trusting God's presence in it. Pater wrote *Marius The Epicurean* as a clarification of his philosophy of life. In this novel, the narrator without judgement details the feelings and thoughts of Marius who experiences the deepest things that community, culture and nature can give and who on his death-bed feels time past has been something to treasure:

For, such vision, if received with due attitude on his part, was, in reality, the *being* something, and as such was surely a pleasant offering or sacrifice to whatever gods there might be, observant of him. And how goodly had the vision been!—one long unfolding of beauty and energy in things ... (*Marius The Epicurean* , II, p.218).

Marius's final vision is Pater's.

The ultimate moral and epistemological function of Paterian style, is that we read the chronicle of a loving narrator/knower, who is giving us, *enacting* as we read, his experienced sense of fact, and who, while all melts under his feet, can still cherish experience, apprehending it as beautiful, and then rendering it in reminiscence, as the beautiful, a sensuous and unitive moment of consciousness, so that all he has to say passes to us to be *experienced*, then, in turn, *remembered as beautiful*—while all melts under our feet. In 'Sur une philosophie de l'expression', Camus asks if language does not after all express 'la solitude definitive de l'homme dans un monde muet'¹⁸—the ultimate loneliness of man in a mute or silent world. In a world not much different from Camus's, Pater's narrator literally is the voice of experience and speaks not in horror nor despair, but in love and repose. 'Metaphysical security' (*Plato and Platonism*, p.195) Pater cannot give, but metaphysical comfort he does.

Stuart Hampshire says: 'Many of the high abstractions of philosophy, theories of reality and illusion and theories of the self, have their more concrete equivalents, an apt expression, or even a kind of translation, in a personal style of fiction; or of rhetoric, or of poetry'.¹⁹ The 'high abstractions' or 'theories of reality' of Pater's thought are given their 'apt expression' in his unique style. At its best and it is usually at its best, aesthetic style breaks through the limitations of aestheticism to achieve for prose something of what Keats achieved for poetry.

Notes

- 1 Cyril Connolly in 'Where Engels Fears To Tread', *The Condemned Playground*, London, 1985, p.138.
- 2 Linda Dowling, 'Walter Pater and Archaeology', *Victorian Studies*, 21, No.2 (Winter 1988): 209-31, p.221.
- 3 Princeton, New Jersey, 1957, pp.264-68 *et passim*.
- 4 *Pater's Portraits*, Baltimore, 1967, pp.56 *et passim*. See also Monsman's *Walter Pater's Art of Autobiography*, New Haven and London, 1980, which is full of new insights into the reasons for Pater's mannered style. See especially the chapter, 'Visionary Texts', pp.37-78 *et passim*. Important too are William E. Buckler's two essays on *Marius the Epicurean* in *The Victorian Imagination*, Brighton, Sussex, 1980. See also *Walter Pater. The Critical Heritage*, ed. R. M. Seiler, London: 1980, *passim*. Previous work on Pater's style has not tended to link closely the style and thought. Cf. Zilpha E. Chandler, *An Analysis of the Stylistic Technique of Addison, Johnson, Hazlitt and Pater*, *University of Iowa Humanistic Studies*, 4, No.3 (1928); or Edmund Chandler, *Pater on Style*, *Anglistica*, 9 (1958).
- 5 See Pater's prefatory note to *Plato and Platonism*, London, 1910, repr. Oxford, 1967.
- 6 *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, ed. Donald L. Hill, Berkeley and London, 1980, p.186.
- 7 Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, Oxford, 1980, p.167.
- 8 The exact quotation from Lionel Johnson's poem, 'A Friend', is: 'His presence wins me to repose', in Seiler, p.321. To sharpen one's sense of Pater's narrative tone, one could compare it to the daring, troubled yet triumphant narrative voice in Gerard Manley Hopkins's 'That Nature Is A Heraclitean Fire and on the Comfort of the Resurrection'. The poem ends so differently from *Marius the Epicurean*—it ends on ecstatic affirmation, while *Marius* ends on the tentative evidence of a lifetime of pleasurable and cherished reminisced sense experience, assisted by grateful hope and need.
- 9 This pattern of containment and gain and loss is the pattern of the life of Pater's fictional characters. The escape from this pattern is rest—in death, a return to earth. See Dowling, p.221. In her interesting study Professor Dowling says: 'Pater's task ... is not simply to trace the moral life back to its source in the physical, but to reconcile himself and his readers emotionally to their new home in and of the earth.'
- 10 William E. Buckler discusses Pater's use of time and omnitemporality in his

The Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics

- chapter, 'Dèjà vu inverted: the Imminent Future in Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*', in *The Victorian Imagination*, pp.256-96. See also Carolyn Williams, *Transfigured World: Walter Pater's Aesthetic Historicism*, Ithaca and London, 1989, pp.203-12, for a discussion of the narrator's time stance in *Marius the Epicurian*.
- 11 For a rather interesting handling of imagination that explains more about Pater's style than 'imaginative reason', see H. L. Mansel's discussion of imagination in his *Metaphysics or the Philosophy of Consciousness Phenomenal and Real*, Edinburgh, 1860, p.141: 'Imagination, Memory, and Hope are psychologically one and the same faculty. In Imagination, the presence of the image is necessarily accompanied by a conviction of the possible existence of the corresponding object in an intuition. Memory is the presence of the same image, accompanied by a conviction of the fact, that the object represented has actually existed in a *past* intuition. Hope, in like manner, is the presence of the same image, together with an anticipation, more or less vivid, of the actual existence of the object in a *future* intuition'. This is almost a philosophical explication of the final vision of Marius as he lies dying and reminiscing. See *Marius the Epicurean*, London, 1910, repr. Oxford, 1967, II, pp.219-22. I deal further with Mansel's work and its interest for Pater below.
 - 12 *Appreciations*, London, 1910, repr. Oxford, 1967, p.8.
 - 13 Billie A. Inman, *Walter Pater's Reading. A Bibliography of His Library Borrowings and Literary References. 1858-1873*, New York, 1981, p.159. Max Muller in Lecture II, 'Language and Reason', *Lectures on the Science of Language*, Second Series, London, 1864, p.44 says: 'To treat of sound as independent of meaning, of thought as independent of words, seems to defy one of the best established principles of the science of language. Where do we ever meet in reality, I mean in the world such as it is, with articulate sounds—sounds like those that form the body of language, existing by themselves, and independent of language?' What Muller says about Heraclitus in Lecture IV, 'On the Power of Roots', is interesting: 'The oracle on language which is ascribed to Heraclitus was certainly his own. Commentators may have spoiled, but they could not have invented it. Heraclitus held that words exist naturally, but he did not confine himself to that technical phraseology. Words, he said, are like the shadows of things, like the picture of trees and mountains reflected in the river, like our own images, when we look into the mirror ... we know ... what he did *not* mean, namely, that man imposed what names he pleased on the objects around him' (Muller, p.301).
 - 14 Muller, Lecture VII, 'Metaphor', p.338. Cf. Stephen Ullmann, *Language and Style*, Oxford, 1964, p.231: 'The ease with which quality-nouns can be formed from adjectives (*whiteness* from *white*, *freedom* from *free*), and action-nouns from verbs (*movement* from *move*, *suffering* from *suffer*), may suggest that these alleged 'entities' have some kind of existence in their own right, whereas, strictly speaking, there is no 'whiteness' in the abstract, only white objects, there can be no such thing as 'movement' apart from moving bodies, etc.' Ullmann goes on to agree with J. S. Mill that abstractions are 'hypostatized'.
 - 15 Morris Dickstein in 'The Function of Matthew Arnold III: Arnold Then and Now: The Use and Misuse of Criticism', *Critical Inquiry*, 9, No. 3 (March 1983): 503.
 - 16 How long Pater could have known Mansel's work is hard to tell. Inman, *Reading*, does not list a Mansel work as having been read during the years 1858-1873, nor as having been an influence on the 'Conclusion'. See her article, 'The Intellectual

Context of Walter Pater's "Conclusion" ', *Walter Pater, An Imaginative Sense of Fact*, ed. Philip Dodd, London, 1981, pp.12-30. Mansel was, however, a well-known and controversial philosopher/theologian and the 1858 Bampton Lectures that became *The Limits of Religious Thought*, Oxford and London, 1858, were well known and controversial too for a long time and well beyond Oxford.

There are passages in the 'Conclusion' that resemble a passage in Mansel, *Metaphysics*, pp.358-59: 'Of the animal body is emphatically true what Heraclitus and the general voice of philosophy after him declared of the objects of sense in general:—it exists not, but is continually being produced; it no sooner comes into being than it ceases to be. At no two successive moments does it consist of exactly the same particles; and during the course of a long life, the entire system is many times destroyed and renewed again. Our whole physical existence is but a series of chemical changes; "the solid," to quote the words of a recent writer [Professor George Wilson], "melting into the liquid, the liquid congealing into the solid; whilst both stand so related to the air, which is the breath of life, that they are continually vaporising into gases" '.

In a personal communication, Billie A. Inman¹ has informed me that Pater was reading in June 1889 J. W. Burgon's *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, London, 1888. This includes a life of Mansel, pp.148-237.

17 H. L. Mansel, *Prolegomena Logica*, Oxford, 1851, p.84.

18 Albert Camus, 'Sur une philosophie de l'expression', *Poesie*, 44, No.17, quoted in Ullmann, p.206.

19 *Modern Writers and Other Essays*, London, 1969, p.ix.