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Submissions are very welcome; they should be sent electronically to:

Dr. Lene Østermark-Johansen
lene.oestermark@gmail.com

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# Studies in Walter Pater and Aestheticism

## Issue 2 Autumn 2016

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This is a special issue devoted to the subject of Walter Pater and women. Pater spent the major part of his life oscillating between the homosocial world of Brasenose College, Oxford, and a world of petticoats in the household which, from 1869 and until his death in 1894, he set up with his two sisters, Hester (b. 1837) and Clara (b. 1841). Friendships with female art historians, writers, and poets like Emilia Pattison, Vernon Lee, ‘Michael Field’, and A. Mary F. Robinson can be traced in his letters and in some of the many reminiscences published after his death. In circles less close to him, other women with a profession, such as the nurse and educationalist Charlotte Green, the anthropologist Jessie Weston, and the archaeologist Jane Harrison made their presences felt. Inevitably, while Pater remains the centre of attention, this issue will also deal with such late-nineteenth-century preoccupations as women’s education, women’s professions, the social life of unmarried women, discipleship and rivalry, and then-emerging scholarly disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, and the aesthetics of perception.

This gendered approach is, not surprisingly perhaps, reflected in the list of contributors: Laurel Brake writes about the trio of siblings—Walter, Clara and Hester—while Hilary Fraser explores Pater’s lifelong friendship with Emilia Pattison (subsequently Lady Dilke). Carolyn Burdett discusses the complex master–pupil relationship between Pater and Vernon Lee, and Mimi Winnick positions Pater in the company of Lee, and the anthropologists and archaeologists Jessie Weston and Jane Harrison. By birth and marriage Charlotte Green was closely associated with two of Pater’s great interests: the Renaissance and Hegelianism. As the sister of J. A. Symonds and the wife of philosopher T. H. Green she bridged the two, while also being a prominent educationalist and nurse. Lesley Higgins explores her role in Oxford life in the last decades of the century. And finally, Ana Parejo Vadillo—who suggested the subject for this themed issue a few years ago when she uncovered the interrelationship between Pater and ‘Michael Field’—has painted an imaginary double portrait of Pater and A. Mary F. Robinson which bears strong reminiscences of Pater’s literary portraits of the
late 1870s. The materials and methodologies of the six essays in this issue span from archival research to the suggestive and intuitive, merging fact and fiction in a way which undoubtedly would have pleased the great man himself.

This will be my last issue as editor of the journal. After having edited first the *Pater Newsletter* and now *Studies in Walter Pater and Aestheticism* since 2011, I have decided to pass on the editorship to Dennis Denisoff of the University of Tulsa and Charlotte Ribeyrol of Paris Sorbonne. Joint editorship with occasional guest editors will be the new format of the journal, which will only appear as a digital publication in the future. As the first issue under this new regime, *Studies in Walter Pater and Aestheticism* 3 will be guest edited by Joseph Bristow of UCLA, with a selection of papers on Aestheticism from the May 2017 NAVSA conference in Florence. I am truly pleased and delighted that other scholars will be taking over after me and will bring the journal safely onto a digital platform, with all the visibility and expanded readership which go with such a change of medium and distribution. I feel confident that the transatlantic axis will strengthen the range and variety of contributions, and look forward to seeing *SWPA* take off in quite new directions.

I owe a special and very warm round of thanks to the team behind first the *Pater Newsletter* and now *Studies in Walter Pater and Aestheticism*: to production editor Sylvia Vance for having designed such a beautiful printed journal for us, and for having worked so efficiently, constructively, and professionally to give style and clarity to the many contributions over the years. Catherine Maxwell has done a wonderful job as book review editor for the past six years and has kindly agreed to remain on the post, and Ken Daley, editor of the annotations, will likewise ensure continuity by staying in his job. My deepest gratitude is, however, undoubtedly to my Deputy Editor, Lesley Higgins, who has been a tower of strength and constant encouragement ever since I took over the editorship. As copy-editor, proof-reader, colleague, and friend she has helped me expand the scope and vision of the journal, and without her support *SWPA* would not be where it is today. Like me, she also withdraws from her job in full confidence that the work we began together six years ago will be continued in the best possible manner.
The archives of Somerville College, Oxford hold two roughly contemporary portraits of Walter Pater’s younger sister Clara: a small carte de visite in which she poses with a young kitten, and a pastel-and-pencil portrait by Theodore Blake Wirgman, signed and dated ‘TBW 1870’. They coincide with the establishment of the Pater household on 2 Bradmore Road in north Oxford (1869), a neighbourhood in which the three Pater siblings (Walter, Clara, and Hester) would live in close proximity to a range of leading Oxford couples, such as Mary and Humphry Ward, Emilia and Mark Pattison, and Max Müller and his wife, until the Paters moved to London in 1885. Clara was in her late twenties when she was photographed and portrayed in pencil—in other words at an age when she could be expected to be married. In the photograph, the legs and paws of the young kitten cover the left hand where a wedding ring might have been, and the animal is held just above her heart, its fluffy fur touching Clara’s hand and chin. The slender, corseted body, clad in a dress with puff sleeves, elaborate embroideries down the front and a frilly collar, reveals an elegant young woman, with a long nose, a high brow, and an oval head, staring patiently into the camera with a composed gaze. By comparison the cat, with a slightly bewildered look in its eyes, is partly out of focus, fuzzy and blurred at the edges, as it twists during the slow exposure, presumably impatient to be let loose with full freedom.
to move. A new cat for a new household, presented to the world in a relatively new medium. One inevitably wonders who the intended audience was for this carte de visite, how many copies were printed, which private photograph albums it ended up in, and for whose portraits it was exchanged. Clara’s features resemble those of her brother, immobile, not quite the ‘mask without the face’ recalled by Henry James after Pater’s death, but still a relatively expressionless façade which makes the spectator wonder about the inner life hidden behind it. Who was this

Clara Pater, carte de visite, late 1860s. Principal and Fellows of Somerville College, Oxford.
woman, how did she spend her time, what preoccupied her, and how did she define herself in relation to her brother, who at this time was laying the foundation to his fame with signed essays in some of the leading periodicals? The face of Clara Pater which gazes back at us across some 150 years is, in a sense, a missing link to her famous brother. Did he have a hand in this photograph, in her choice of clothes, in the decision to bring the cat along? Was he present in the studio, did he pay for the photograph, did he carry the cat in this extraordinary transferral of a creature from the domestic sphere into the professional photographer’s studio? And where was Hester, the older sister? Were similar photographs taken of her? To my knowledge, no images of Hester Pater have surfaced as of yet, but that does not mean that none existed. The interrelationship between the three siblings remains enigmatic, at best.

The Belgian-born artist Theodore Blake Wirgman (1848–1925), of Swedish extraction, educated in Paris and London, moved in the circles of Edward Burne-Jones and Simeon Solomon in the 1860s. How his portrait of Clara Pater came about we do not know, nor do we know whether it was intended for the domestic sphere, for the marriage market, or as a way into England’s aesthetic circles, as a work of art reflecting some of the very latest aesthetic trends. Idealized, yet not to the point of unrecognizability, Clara is given a coating of Japonisme. Eyes slightly aslant, her hair in the style of an Oriental woman, she is depicted against a background of bamboo leaves in a dress with a delicately laced neckline which continues in the high collar at the back. An elaborate trio of necklaces directs our attention to her long and slender throat, rising out of beads and ornaments which remind us of a delicate spider’s web. In three-quarter profile, she does not face the viewer, but seems rapt in her own thoughts, a young woman of refined tastes, caught in a subtle and delicate pencil line suggestive of her own sophistication. Line, style, and graphic design draw our attention to surface patterning, whether that of the lace, the necklaces, or the artist’s signature in the upper right-hand corner, a sign not unrelated to Simeon Solomon’s monogram, which only two years later would decorate his equally delicate pencil portrait of Clara’s brother. By the early 1870s Walter and Clara, siblings of Aestheticism, were keen to have themselves represented by avant-garde artists in an artistic style reflecting the internationalism of the movement. Blake Wirgman’s elegant portrait of Clara bears testimony to the ambitions of the Pater household around 1870 as a family in touch with the very latest developments in fashion and the arts. Pater among
The petticoats is a narrative which intersects with the narrative of the birth of the modern woman, and a new academic focus on this subject is not a moment too soon.

_University of Copenhagen_
Here are two compelling, if general, points about the configuration of siblings in the title that substantiate approaching them as a group. The three Paters were consistently close throughout their lives, having lived together for most of that time; after Walter’s death in 1894, the sisters functioned as guardians of his memory. None of the siblings married, and their circumstances are typical of an identifiable sector of family life in the period. From early childhood in 1842, they became a family of a widowed mother; in 1854 they were orphaned when their mother died. These events drew them together by straitened economic circumstances, and their grief, loss, and increasing financial insecurity. An older sibling, William, left home in 1852. When the family moved to Enfield in the mid 1840s, the household consisted of an extended family: their grandmother (deceased, 1848), and their aunt Bessie, who moved with the three siblings and their mother to Kent in 1853. Bessie provided stability after Maria Pater’s death and continued to look after the children, seeing Walter off to university and superintending and chaperoning Clara and Hester in Germany (1858–62).

The life trajectories of the three siblings are strongly marked by gender at every juncture. Let us look first at education. While it is likely that the siblings shared
private tutors at home in their early education, Walter alone attended school in public spaces, first grammar school in Enfield (1852) and subsequently the King’s School, Canterbury, where the family moved to enable his attendance as a day boy. This first of two removals determined by Walter’s education was a major move, from a village north of London to a thriving market and cathedral town in the southeast. His public schooling and subsequent attendance at university were the direct result of his decision not to be a surgeon like his brother, father, uncle, and grandfather. Walter would be the first of his family to attend university, a path that required preparation and sustained and high expenses. Nothing is known about the nature or duration of the sisters’ education at home through private tutors, but presumably instructors were found in Enfield and Canterbury after Walter peeled away to school.

It seems clear that while both of the male siblings were expected to work, with training allocated accordingly, it is likely that neither sister was. Their default vocation was marriage, although, given their orphaned state at the ages of seventeen and thirteen, they were at a cruel disadvantage: they lacked a mother to steer them through the marriage market, while their brothers were struggling to acquire their own educations. When Walter left for university in October 1858 the household was dismantled to reflect changes in his education; the rented house in Canterbury was relinquished, just as the Enfield house had been earlier. While Walter headed to Oxford, Clara and Hester (now seventeen and twenty-one) left Canterbury to pursue their education as young women, abroad, with their aunt as chaperone.

Their removal from society in Kent to Germany may have reduced the possibility of the effective functioning of established networks conducive to marriage. Neither Walter nor William was in a secure position to introduce them to potential suitors, a situation exacerbated by their residence abroad. Yet, the move to Germany may have stemmed from the belief that they should acquire skills that might fit them for marriage, or work, lest they not marry. Knowledge of modern languages was a commonly desirable and attainable skill for middle- and upper-class young women who normally were denied tuition in classical Latin and Greek. Many women of the upper classes had knowledge of French, German, and Spanish. Some used their skills in domestic settings to read contemporary fiction and to keep abreast of Europe; others were notable translators. Whether
Clara and Pater were to marry or work—as translators, book reviewers, tutors, or governesses—knowledge of German would be an asset.

By 1858 the nature of women’s education was a topic of frequent public discussion. Tennyson’s poem ‘The Princess’ (1847), set in a women’s college, imagined formal higher education for women, before collapsing into a romantic marriage plot. In 1854 Bessie Parkes’s Remarks on the Education of Girls, published by John Chapman, advocated the extension of women’s education; in 1857 a group of women, Parkes among them, gathered in London to promulgate employment for women. In 1858, as the Langham Place group, they launched the monthly Englishwoman’s Journal, focussed on women’s education and employment. Without any adult alert to these developments, Clara and Hester are unlikely to have been aware of them. The sisters’ needs for secondary and tertiary education occurred very early in the incremental changes that women’s education underwent between 1850 and 1880. There were no women’s university halls (later to become colleges) until 1869 and 1879 in Cambridge and Oxford, nor were women permitted to enter for local examinations in Oxford until 1865. By 1858 there were secondary schools for women: Queen’s College, in Harley Street, London, created in 1848, initially focussed on the education of governesses, but in 1853 widened its remit to the education of all girls aged twelve to twenty; in 1850, North London Collegiate School opened. Had the Paters had money, the young women could have attended either. Mary Arnold (Mrs. Humphry Ward), who had attended Queen’s College, came to know Clara Pater well and observed in the early 1870s how modest Clara’s learning was.2

After costs, timing seems crucial. Arguably, the Pater sisters were too early for developing institutions and arguments to influence their lives. It would be twenty years after they left England for Germany before all degrees in London University were open to women; it was ten years afterward that the first women’s hall was established at Cambridge. In 1865, when girls were admitted to local examinations in Oxford, Clara and Hester had already been back in England for two years, and they were getting too old for entering the examination round. The possibility that they might attend Queen’s College, in Harley Street, after they returned, like their cousin who lived in Lonsdale Square, was similarly undermined by their age.

Much of the further education of women in these years, and the arguments in favour of it, were aimed at economically insecure, middle-class women who
needed an income. The borders between respectable and socially compromising work were delicate: having to board with someone else, as a governess for example, was regarded as respectable but regrettable; school teaching was independent but socially dangerous, unprotected as a single woman might be; living at home as a translator, author, or tutor was far more commensurate with gentility, as the employment was invisible, and compatible with private domestic and social life. While a number of women became professional novelists, writers, and translators, they produced their work from home; even women who wrote for the press seldom appeared in journalism offices.

Clara’s and Hester’s stay in Germany between 1858 and 1862—first in Heidelberg, then in Dresden—neatly coincided with Walter’s undergraduate years. Just after he took his degree, their aunt died on 28 December 1862, and Walter accompanied his sisters on their return to England. Certainly their sojourn in Germany had some positive results. We know that Walter took advantage of his sisters’ location, during his visits, to improve his German;3 Clara was able to tutor in German once she was in Oxford. Both sisters returned to England unmarried; if suitable matches were another aim of their continental education, they did not materialise.

The problem of living arrangements for two unmarried, unemployed sisters is evident in the period 1863–9, before the three siblings took a house together in Oxford. The years were crucial in the formation of all of them: Walter was finding his feet, having graduated—first as an impecunious ‘coach’ outside the colleges trying to piece together an irregular living; then in 1864 as a College Fellow, when he had a small stipend, lived in College rooms, and ate College meals. He began lecturing in the spring of 1867, and in the 1871 census described himself as a tutor at Brasenose College. Not surprisingly, the two women had to live frugally and safely, somewhere, on an income that stemmed from their two brothers and a small legacy from their mother. One or both of them probably worked as tutors in modern languages, or possibly as governesses.

In 1869, just as the Pater siblings locked themselves into a collective pattern of housing that significantly changed their lives, two events of import in the development of opportunities for women occurred—the prototype of Girton, the first university college for women in Cambridge was launched in Hitchin, and Woman’s Work and Woman’s Culture, edited by Josephine Butler, was published.
by Macmillan. They were too late for the Pater sisters, now twenty-eight and thirty-two respectively. Butler’s book was a collection of essays, not only about women, but by women—Jessie Boucherett, F. P. Cobbe, Butler, Sophia Jex-Blake, Elizabeth Wolstenholme, and Julia Wedgwood. The influence of Girton and Butler’s book undoubtedly underpinned what followed in Oxford.

In 1869 Walter shifted the location of his publications from the *Westminster Review* to the *Fortnightly*, which had already signalled its tolerance of Aestheticism by the regular publication of Swinburne’s criticism and poetry. For the first time, Walter was paid for his work, he could sign it, and his articles were stand-alone pieces, not reviews. Moreover, he had more freedom in his choice of subjects, and submitted successive pieces on a single topic—the art of the Renaissance in Europe, which he could collect to produce a thematic book. That his *Fortnightly* articles were shorter made them more accessible to a wider range of readers in periodical and book forms, including his sisters and other women. While the *Fortnightly* carried fiction, attracting this wider readership, the *Westminster* made few accommodations to genteel female readers: it excluded fiction, favoured political economy instead, and encouraged long, often arcane, review articles. While Walter’s explicit piece on ‘Winckelmann’ (1867) could appear comfortably and anonymously in the *Westminster*, it is unlikely that the *Fortnightly*, given its female readership, would have published it.

In the early 1870s, a new north Oxford estate was developed with the express purpose of housing married Fellows. The needs of Fellows with families were to be accommodated, but out of College. The Paters, although anomalous, were a family. In their rented house in Bradmore Road they could presumably live more economically together than separately. The sisters were respectfully housed in an environment ‘protected’ by their brother, and Walter had his sisters to ‘look after him’, helped by servants. The siblings could fashion a home to their own tastes, and live more comfortably together than in college rooms or in a succession of rented accommodations across the country. The sisters were also now productively located in an academic environment, with opportunities for learning, teaching and suitable friends. It is possible that in this environment, Clara had more opportunities to coach or tutor pupils in German and French, much as Walter had tutored outside the colleges in 1862–4.
Many of Walter’s colleagues lived in north Oxford. About a year and a quarter after the Paters moved in, Walter’s ex-pupil and youthful colleague at Brasenose, T. H. Ward, took the house across the road for himself and his wife, Mary. As Ward had spent the long vacation of 1867 in Sidmouth with Walter, he already knew the sisters who had been living there, and it is possible that Clara and Hester had met Mary Arnold in Oxford society before they became neighbours in 1872. By 1873 Mary Arnold Ward and Clara Pater were engaged in the formation of a local group dedicated to improving the higher education of women by establishing classes for them. It was this group, the Association for the Promotion of Higher Education for Women (AEW), which spearheaded, along with sympathetic male Fellows, friends and families, the development of the two first Oxford halls for women, Somerville and Lady Margaret Hall. They both opened in the autumn of 1879, a decade after the Paters had arrived in north Oxford, where Clara had been able to continue her delayed education, and to learn Greek and Latin. By the time the women’s halls opened, she was the designated teacher of classical languages to their new students. The new institutions were residence ‘halls’, and drew on the AEW for teaching at the beginning, although Clara Pater was more closely affiliated with the non-sectarian Somerville than the Anglican Lady Margaret Hall. Clara was teaching classics in parallel with Walter.

The very presence of the two women in the household meant that Walter became subjected to the requirement of respectability for the family. If this account invokes the notion of mutual surveillance, it is in the context of shared goals, the protection of the family as a unit and as individuals. Clara’s public entry into history, through her affiliation with Somerville from 1879, intensified this element of the siblings’ relationship. The sensitivity of the women’s colleges to the criterion of respectability—lest the families of young women not risk their daughter’s reputations to anything compromising—required that Walter’s published writing needed to meet this expectation. Once Clara entered Somerville, she had to ensure that Walter behaved within these boundaries. In return, the family household, outside of the watchful eyes and ears of their respective colleges, gave Walter the cover he required to entertain his favoured male youths in safety.

We glimpse a party in Mark Pattison’s sour account in 1878, and gain a sense of the complicity of the two sisters. This is before the launch of the two women’s halls, and Clara’s public affiliation with them. In 1873 Walter had doubly exposed
himself to censure: by supporting Simeon Solomon, a homosexual artist friend, who had been charged with importuning; and to blackmail by Benjamin Jowett in the same year, when discovered in a stairwell in the university in the embrace of an undergraduate at Balliol, of which Benjamin Jowett was the Master. Carpeted by Jowett, Walter was deprived of eligibility for university office, and threatened with exposure should it or anything similar reoccur. Walter may have been forced to inform his sisters of these catastrophes, lest they be informed by others first; after 1879 he had to be more cautious and take fewer risks. These tensions between Walter's sexual orientation and the family reputation go some way to explain why the survival of letters among the siblings is nearly nil. It might also account for the care he took after 1873 to be as circumspect as possible in private correspondence. Walter seems to have put his efforts into his writing, rather than pursuing various positions at the university; when he applied for the Slade Professorship in 1876, and controversy loomed in early 1877, he immediately withdrew. He continued to publish in the periodicals in the 1870s, and from 1880 onward he honed his writing and teaching—spending time in Rome in 1882–3, and giving up his time-consuming tutoring in 1883 in an effort to research and write his first novel, *Marius the Epicurean* (1885). With Clara's salary from 1879, and his additional income from periodical essays and *The Renaissance*, the family unit could support this adjustment to Walter's work commitments. Once *Marius* was published, the siblings changed their lives significantly. They gave up Bradmore Road and by October 1885 they had moved house to Kensington in west London. In so doing, the family removed themselves from watching Oxford to the more anonymous, convivial, and cosmopolitan London, where they lived closer to friends, the Robinsons in Kensington, and the Wards in Russell Square. Without an Oxford home, Clara took on the post of residential tutor of classics at Somerville, which provided her with board and lodging in college; Walter too resided in his college rooms during term time. It seems that Hester’s role in the Paters’ households was to organise and run them, while the other two worked and earned incomes. We know very little about Hester, but one visitor to their London house noted her Berlin wool embroidery. Walter and Clara spent weekends and vacations in London, aided by good rail service. Between 1885 and 1893, Walter was particularly productive under this arrangement, being on his own during the week, and with family at weekends. In the second half of the 1880s, he wrote and published four short stories (collected in *Imaginary Portraits*, 1887); started
(and stopped) another novel, this time to publish it in monthly instalments in 1888; wrote a series of anonymous reviews for the Anglican church’s *Guardian*, 1887–90, and other reviews for various newspapers and periodicals; composed one of his major critical articles on ‘Style’ and built his fourth book around it, *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style* (1889). He also oversaw a third edition of *The Renaissance* in 1888, to which he confidently restored the ‘Conclusion’. If the years in Bradmore Road helped root and educate the sisters, and resolved some of the problems of their years in the wilderness, the seven years in London and Oxford from the autumn of 1885 seemed to foster good contacts and writing conditions for Walter. There is manuscript evidence that on occasion Clara Pater took on the role of her brother’s secretary, and wrote out fair copies of Walter’s drafts. Apart from these, there is no independent evidence that Walter relied on either of the sisters to assist him in his professional work. After Walter’s death in July 1894, Clara left her post at Somerville; her letter of resignation is dated before his death, and she cleanly broke with Oxford and decamped with Hester back to the anonymity of London’s Canning Place, Kensington. There they lived so impecuniously that Edmund Gosse applied for a Civil List Pension to help them survive. Between 1898 and 1900, however, Clara was teaching Latin and Greek again at King’s College London, in the Ladies’ Department in Kensington Square, within easy walking distance of their flat; there she came across Virginia Stephen (later Woolf), whom she coached.

Two aspects of Clara Pater emerge from this late interaction with the young Virginia Stephen. Janet Case, Virginia Stephen’s subsequent tutor in classics, decried the quality of Clara’s tuition. More than once, Virginia Stephen expressed pity in her diary for the poor, ageing, declining Pater sisters, but she also drew on Clara twice in her fiction, as the lesbian governess, Julia Craye, in the *Moments of Being* story, ‘Slater’s Pins have no Points’ and as Lucy Craddock in *The Pargiters*, a poor academic fond of a female student. This reading is corroborated by an observation of Vernon Lee in June 1893, reporting on a party at the Paters, where women—perhaps members of the Souls—fill the rooms, while only two men were present. But there is no further evidence to corroborate this, and the possibility of a queer household, with Walter and Clara both interested in same-sex relationships, is no more than a possibility. (Vernon Lee, for example, has nothing else to say about Clara and Hester on this topic).
That Clara and Hester acted as guardians of Walter’s reputation appears to be the case already before his death, but posthumously they were self-conscious gatekeepers, distinctly cautious when Walter’s publisher and friends consulted them about publication of his writing, or works about it or him. They were not enthusiastic about Gosse’s request that he publish Walter’s anonymous pieces from the *Guardian*, with the result that the volume was issued privately, initially in a small print run. While they gave Macmillan permission to publish it in a cheaper and more accessible edition, they refused to approve Macmillan’s intention to include it in the Library Edition of Walter’s volumes. The firm ignored their preference, and published the volume uniform with the Library edition but not explicitly part of it. Clara and Hester also collaborated with Walter’s friends such as Gosse and Shadwell, passing on MSS posthumously, not for money, but out of recognition of the men’s status as Walter’s friends. At the same time, they resolutely rejected any cooperation with the investigative biographer, Thomas Wright, a (lowly) school master, yet willingly helped Arthur Benson, Wright’s rival biographer, a Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge and son of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Benson’s book was official, contracted to take its place in the distinguished Macmillan series, English Men of Letters, and approved by Walter’s watchful publishers.

This was a close-knit family relationship of siblings, initially due to childhood experiences of bereavement. Emotional bonds were reinforced by economic constraints and a difficult struggle in their formative years when the household split up after 1858. These bonds and the enhanced economic interdependence after the death of their aunt, their last link with their parents’ generation, defined the seven-year period of separation between 1863 and 1869, when the sisters were in a limbo of life-defining events and choices—of marriage, economically independent employment, or lives as dependent spinsters. Unfortunately, we have little insight into this struggle. In these years the sisters stayed at various seaside spa towns—Hastings, Brighton, and Sidmouth—thus raising the recurrent issue of Clara’s health. (Concerns are intimated in an early letter by Walter, in April 1863; by a Somerville colleague, 1884–7; and a letter written after Clara resigned.) If Clara had health problems that made her job at Somerville exhausting, or even life-threatening, that would explain her otherwise surprising decision to give up paid work at Somerville, full-time or self-employed, even when Walter’s death deprived the sisters of any income at all.
Clara Pater was at the cusp of the development of higher education for women. She was among the pioneers of female university teachers, whose students—unlike their teachers—could graduate with a diploma within three years. Like most of her generation, she was unlikely to possess any formal qualifications. It is clear from Somerville’s history that Clara’s competence was overtaken by the time she resigned, fifteen years after she commenced teaching, and possibly before that. One wonders how a woman from Clara’s class and gentility felt about having to work outside the domestic sphere, where private time was limited, and had to be adjusted to the demands of teaching, residency, and young students. Clara may have had doubts about the necessity of a genteel woman to work for money. Ironically, although her failure to marry and be supported by an economically viable partner resulted in this necessity to work, her single state was a prerequisite of eligibility for this work she undertook in the women’s colleges. Although Mary Arnold Ward was better educated and qualified than Clara to teach at the colleges, she was disqualified because she was married, as was her husband, T. H. Ward, who was deprived of his Fellowship at Brasenose College, and relegated to the post of tutor. Clara’s reservations about her vocation may have combined to prevent her from publishing anything during her years at Somerville or afterward. In ‘The Author of Beltraffio’, a novella published in 1884, Henry James offers a pejorative and constraining male perspective on the figure of what he calls ‘the sister of the artist’, in which circulating category Clara and Hester might be perceived.

I have tried to suggest a less misogynist, more empathetic, equitable, and balanced model of a queer family of three unmarried siblings, all defined by mixed expectations and performances of gender, of their own and others, which fit imperfectly into the workplace and into the world. This family unit, however, seemed to work as a satisfactory base. Walter struggled to find a balance among teaching, writing, and his social and sexual life. Clara eventually acquired a homemade education, which allowed her to be part of the collaborative efforts to establish institutions of higher education for women of the immediate future, which were not in place for herself and her sister. We know little about Hester, the largely invisible housekeeper, beyond her birth and death certificates, and her status as daughter, sister, and eventually head of household in the census. Most of the information about Clara is due to her participation in public institutions such as the AEW and Somerville, which willingly populate history—keep records, take photographs, publish newsletters and memoirs, and accommodate paintings. A
family like the Paters, uncomfortable with their history, terrified by biography, and anxious to keep their gendered secrets to maintain respectability, saw no alternative to destruction of most of their intimate correspondence, diaries, and memorabilia. The dearth of such material suggests concerted acts of policing and destruction by Walter’s sisters and friends, immediately after his death in 1894, probably again in the spring of 1895 after the Wilde trials, after Clara’s death in 1910, and finally after Hester’s death in 1922. Without the enriching interchange of family correspondence, Hester remains tantalisingly elusive, reduced to the dash of the census taker under ‘Occupation’ in 1871.

Birkbeck College, London

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NOTES

1 William Pater left the family in Enfield for London for an apprenticeship with an apothecary; his subsequent work, as a medic in the Kent Militia, took him away from England and to various stations across the country, as did his last appointment as a hospital administrator in Stafford.


3 In Oxford, Walter’s knowledge of German was supported by the well-stocked modern language library of the Taylorian Institute, founded in 1849, from which he borrowed. See Billie Andrew Inman, Walter Pater’s Reading: A Bibliography of his Library Borrowings and Literary References, 1858–1873 (New York: Garland, 1981); Inman, Walter Pater and his Reading, 1874–1877: with a Bibliography of his Library Borrowings, 1878–1894 (New York: Garland Press, 1990). The teaching of modern foreign languages—which the university did not otherwise offer—was affiliated with the Institute.

4 T. H. Ward, who entered Brasenose College as an undergraduate in 1864, was elected a Fellow in 1870 (the youngest ever). He was one of Walter Pater’s earliest students.

5 Other such groups existed across the country: see Josephine Butler and Annie Clough’s Liverpool group, founded in 1867, the North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, which was dedicated to improving the status of governesses and female teachers; Butler served as president until 1873. See Joyce Goodman and Sylvia Harrop, eds., Women, Educational Policy-Making and Administration in England: Authoritative Women since 1800 (New York: Routledge, 2000), 38.

6 Mark Pattison, Bodleian MS Pattison 131, f. 29. Pattison observed, ‘To Pater’s to tea, where Oscar Browning, who was more like Socrates than ever. He conversed in one corner with 4 feminine looking youths “paw dangling” there in one fivesome [?], while the Miss Paters & I sate looking on in another corner—Presently Walter Pater, who, I had been told, was “upstairs” appeared, attended by 2 more youths of similar appearance.’


See Edmund Gosse’s letter to Pater, 8 Aug. 1894, in the *Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. Lawrence Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 156; and two letters in the Brotherton Library, Leeds: from Ingram Bywater to Gosse, 3 Sept. 1894 about the sisters who ‘were much more dependent on him [WHP] than I supposed’, and a (later?) letter from Rev. R. L. Ottley to Gosse, 3 Feb. [1916], backing a request that the Civil Lists Pension for ‘Miss [Hester] Pater’ be raised by £50 ‘as there has been a heavy fall in the proceeds of the sale of Mr. Pater’s books’. The request was successful. The original Civil List pension of £50 for each sister was awarded in Jan. 1895.


Florence Rich, MS letter to Helen Darbishire (31 Aug. 1938), f. 20; Somerville College, Oxford.

This is suggested by Bywater’s letter of 1894 in the Brotherton. See n. 11.

Degrees from the university were withheld from female graduates in the women’s colleges at Oxford until 1914 when the B.A., but not the M.A., was opened to women. In 1920, women were admitted to full membership of the University, which entitled them to most degrees. See Carol Dyhouse, *No Distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities, 1870–1939* (London: Routledge, 1995); Janet Howarth, ‘“In Oxford but… not of Oxford”: The Women’s Colleges’, in Brocks and Curthoys, ed., *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. 7, part 2*, (Clarendon Press, 2000); 237–307.

F. S. Pattison is mainly known by modern students of the nineteenth century as the author of a contemporary review of Walter Pater’s *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) in the *Westminster Review* that lambasts this ‘history’ as being anything but historical: ‘For instead of approaching his subject, whether Art or Literature, by the true scientific method, through the life of the time of which it was an outcome, Mr Pater prefers in each instance to detach it wholly from its surroundings, to suspend it isolated before him, as if indeed it were a kind of air-plant independent of ordinary sources of nourishment’. Interesting though they are, Pater’s Studies ‘are not history’, the anonymous reviewer pronounces, ‘nor are they even to be relied upon for accurate statement of simple matters of fact’.¹

Every Pater scholar is familiar with this review, which has been invoked for being exemplary of the conservatism of Victorian readers unsympathetic to Pater’s experimental art writing.² It is commonly adduced as the probable explanation for Pater’s change of title for the second, third, and fourth editions of the book, which appeared, with the word ‘history’ expunged, as *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*.³ Some modern readers will be aware that the reviewer was Mrs. Mark Pattison, the ostensible historical model for George Eliot’s fictional

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Walter Pater and Emilia Dilke
portrayal of Dorothea Brooke, whose unhappy marriage to the older Oxford scholar allegedly suggested the Casaubon *mésalliance* in *Middlemarch* (1871). Not all will realise that, after Mark Pattison’s death, she became the second wife of Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke as he went through his own marital scandals in the mid 1880s, and that under both names, Francis Pattison and Emilia Dilke, she was a distinguished historian of Renaissance, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French art, and something of a celebrity in her day. For while Pater’s reputation has flourished, Pattison/Dilke’s has fallen out of view; while modern editions of his work are commissioned by major university presses, her own substantial scholarly studies, having been out of print for years, are now available only in unedited, digital reproductions; and while Pater’s *Renaissance* and his *Imaginary Portraits* (which she also reviewed, in 1887) are regarded as being generically formative, defining new ways of writing cultural history, her own ground-breaking art writing has been accorded relatively little attention.

Yet, when Pattison wrote her review of the book that made Pater both famous and infamous, the two Renaissance scholars, who were of an age and were neighbours and friends in Oxford, were of a similar standing. Although, as a woman, Francis Pattison could aspire to hold no more formal a position in the University than that of wife to the Rector of a College, in that role she hosted salons that gave her at least as high a profile as that of the self-effacing don. Hippolyte Taine, visiting Oxford in 1871 to deliver a series of lectures on Corneille, Racine, and their times, pronounced her ‘the leading mind’ among women working on art and literature in Oxford. While Pater was publishing the articles in the *Westminster* and the *Fortnightly* that were to be collected in the volume that would make his name, Pattison was announcing herself as a serious art historian in a series of signed articles on the French Renaissance in the newly-launched art journal *Portfolio*. Having staked her claim, she was to publish her own volume on the Renaissance, *The Renaissance of Art in France* (1879), six years after Pater’s. And, like Pater and their close contemporary John Addington Symonds, as well as, later, Vernon Lee, Pattison found in the Renaissance a period that enabled her to explore questions of identity and difference that were urgent personal concerns.

In his memoir of his late wife, Charles Dilke paints a picture of a close, mutually appreciative friendship between the two writers. Although he acknowledges the severity of her review of Pater’s *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, Dilke takes pains to emphasise the positive praise contained within it too. He represents
Pater as being accepting of ‘a criticism which was obviously honest and informed’, and he finds evidence of the two writers remaining on good terms both in their correspondence and in their continuing practice of exchanging gift books. According to Dilke, his wife ‘made amends to Pater’ after his death by having the copy of *The Renaissance* its author had presented to her bound ‘more beautifully than any other volume in her collection’—although, as Lene Østermark-Johansen remarks, it is hard to view the lavishly bound book embossed in gold with its new owner’s appropriative monogram as a gesture of ‘penance’. Charles Dilke reports that in her personal copy of her own first book of fantastic stories, *The Shrine of Death and Other Stories* (1886), she kept a copy of Pater’s letter to her saying that ‘to him their charm was that “the intellectual weight of purpose displayed in” what was to her “a new line of literature,” was lightened by simplicity and ease’.

Charles Dilke’s purpose is, of course, to memorialise his wife, and his focus is accordingly on her life and work. We might expect him, then, to ameliorate the differences, to underplay anything that might reflect negatively on her, and to emphasise Pater’s admiration for her. Thereafter, insofar as the relationship between Pater and Pattison/Dilke has been given serious attention by modern scholars, it has typically been viewed either from her perspective, by scholars keen to recover the work of neglected female writers and better understand the process by which they carved out a professional identity, or, more unusually, from his, by those interested in probing the fin-de-siècle milieu within which Pater wrote and who recognise the importance of her place in the contemporary cultural scene. Elizabeth Mansfield’s interesting article on Pattison/Dilke’s ‘articulation of authority’ in her early essays and reviews is a good example of the former. Pater is, she argues, one of the male mentors whose authority is appropriated and sloughed off by the female writer in the achievement of her own professional identity: ‘Her review of Pater marks the last step in her pursuit of her own system and her own voice’. And Nicholas Shrimpton’s piece on ‘Pater and the “Aesthetical Sect”’ is an excellent example of the latter. In a well-supported argument based on her anonymous article on ‘Art and Morality’ (January 1869), Shrimpton demonstrates Pattison/Dilke’s role in positioning the *Westminster Review*, and Pater, very precisely in relation to debates about Aestheticism.

Pater himself encourages us to view their relationship as one, not of rivals, but of equal scholars with a shared interest in the Renaissance, when in the third and fourth editions of *The Renaissance* he generously acknowledges his critic’s book
The Renaissance of Art in France as ‘a work of great taste and learning’. It is in this light that John Paul M. Kanwit, for instance, discusses the two art historians in relation to their writings on both the Renaissance and Impressionism, focusing on their shared concerns about art being too accessible to sentiments too easily evoked. What is striking about this and other aspects of both Pater’s and Pattison/Dilke’s work at this intensely formative moment when they are establishing their professional, and their personal, reputations is the complexity of their negotiations between opposing positions: between, for example, elitist and democratic attitudes towards art, between historical distancing and immersive experience, between the senses and the intellect, between form and feeling, and between pleasure and morality. They are at once audacious and careful. Pater published and then withdrew the bold assertion in the ‘Conclusion’ that ‘experience itself is the end’, that ‘To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life’. Pattison/Dilke treads a cautious path between art and morality in her article of the title, rejecting equally an aesthetic like that of Ruskin or Victor de Laprade that is driven by moral purpose, and the amoral drift of Aestheticism, what she refers to as the ‘rhapsodical hedonism’ of Baudelaire, Gautier, and Swinburne. Her sex, and Pater’s sexuality, made them vulnerable to criticism, as both knew very well, and both were drawn to the Renaissance as the historical site around which to articulate their positions.

Even in her critical review of Pater’s Renaissance Pattison/Dilke catches and echoes his sensibility and prose style. Praising ‘the charm of a charming book’, and Pater’s ‘unusual power of recognising and finely discriminating delicate differences of sentiment’, she observes: ‘He can detect with singular subtlety the shades of tremulous variation which have been embodied in throbbing pulsations of colour, in doubtful turns of line, in veiled words’. Furthermore, she notes, ‘he can match them for us in words, in the choice of which he is often so brilliantly accurate that they gleam upon the paper with the radiance of jewels.’ Notwithstanding her impatient debunking of the romantic legends surrounding the Renaissance artists that Pater so delightedly indulges and perpetuates, and her insistence on a more factually based history, she is not immune to seduction. The language of her own History of the Renaissance in France is, like Pater’s poetics of Renaissance Italy, erotically charged. ‘Fullest energy means fullest possibilities of pleasure’, she observes: ‘Those who can put most passion into their work can, if they turn that way, put most passion into their pleasure. The men of the Renaissance wooed
the secrets of the past, or kissed out their lives on the lips of their earthly loves with the same burning zeal. This is prose with a similar lexicon and timbre to Pater’s. It recalls not only his ‘burning with a hard gem-like flame’ but also John Addington Symonds’s description of the Renaissance as the historical moment when ‘Christianity and Hellenism kissed each other’. The Renaissance had a particular interest for aesthetic critics and cultural historians like Pater and Symonds grappling with the conundrum of the body and its legitimate and illicit pleasures and desires, and this was evidently part of its appeal for Pattison/Dilke too.

Perhaps it was in part because of their outsider status that Pater’s and Dilke’s leanings were, like those of Symonds and Vernon Lee, distinctly cosmopolitan. Both were drawn towards France, in particular, at once intellectually and personally, and this is reflected in their representation of the Renaissance. France was of course Pattison/Dilke’s main focus, as indicated by the title of her book, but Pater too began his Studies in the History of the Renaissance in France with ‘Aucassin and Nicolette’ (subsequently renamed ‘Two Early French Stories’) and the statement that, ‘The history of the Renaissance ends in France’. He questions the very idea that the Renaissance belonged to any one nation, or was a unified movement ‘conscious of combined action’, but, he proposes, ‘if anywhere the Renaissance became conscious […] if ever it was understood as a systematic movement by those who took part in it, it is in [a] little book of [the French poet] Joachim du Bellay’s’, which, he maintains, ‘it is impossible to read without feeling the excitement, the animation of change, of discovery’. Pattison/Dilke’s ‘Frenchness’ was only in part ascribed to her intellectual and professional interests in the history of French art. Although, as Kali Israel observes, she ‘was not explicitly associated with some of the most disreputably exciting possibilities of French womanhood’, her racyly unconventional personal style, her Parisian taste, her radical ideas, were all traits that identified her with contemporary France. Like Pater, she found affinities with both historical and present-day French culture. For both authors, their research on the Renaissance was undertaken in the context of fin-de-siècle Aestheticism. Pater, indeed, was credited, or vilified, for translating ‘l’art pour l’art’ into English, and Pattison/Dilke weighed into the debates about Aestheticism in her reviews for the Westminster with what Shrimpton describes as ‘a sanitized version of art-for-art’s-sake’.

Art, she concludes in her article ‘Art and Morality’, must be ‘allowed to go her
natural way in the unswerving search for beauty’. Amid late nineteenth-century debates about Aestheticism in Victorian England, writing about the European Renaissance offered both Pattison/Dilke and Pater a legitimate historical space in which to explore issues such as these, which had become freighted with new meanings. Art, beauty (including the beauty of the body), pleasure, and the freedom to pursue what is ‘natural’ (the liberation of the individual)—these were the watchwords of the Renaissance as well as of Aestheticism. While Pater’s emphasis is on the subjective personal response to art and the personality of the artist in ‘an age productive in personalities’ (‘What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to me? What effect does it really produce on me?’ he famously asks in the Preface to *The Renaissance*), Pattison/Dilke opens her two-volume study of the French Renaissance with an assertion of the personal motivation of the artist: ‘The art of the French Renaissance’, she claims, ‘depends for its charm on the nature of the purely personal motive by which it is animated’. Although she insists on the significance of ‘the conditions under which it was produced’, and devotes some space to exploring the historical context that she felt was so conspicuously and damagingly absent from his account, she, like Pater, is interested in identifying ‘[I]n whom did the stir, the genius, the sentiment of the period find itself?’ For the art of the French Renaissance was ‘the expression of the desires not of a nation but of a class’, she argues; it was ‘the result of individual needs, individual taste, individual caprice at a period when the life of the few had become exceedingly rich and complex’.

Both critics draw attention to the cultural traffic between France and Italy as an important aspect of the Renaissance, and both likewise in other ways acknowledge the ‘much wider scope’ of the movement than the fifteenth-century humanist revival of classical antiquity with which it had traditionally, and narrowly, been identified. Pattison/Dilke, like Pater and other Renaissance enthusiasts, celebrates it as an ‘outburst of life’, a time ‘when the imprisoned instincts of fifteen centuries burst their bonds’, and notes that the emancipation of the individual that took place over time in Italy was, in the case of France, ‘peculiarly sudden and complete’. The Renaissance is defined, for her and for others, by its contrast with and liberation from the Middle Ages. ‘One of the most significant signs of the time’, she points out, ‘was the delight in the nude which instantly manifested itself. The eye no longer dwelt with morbid satisfaction on the shrouded and emaciated shapes which haunted the cathedrals of the Middle Ages’. Nevertheless, as Pater
does, she recognizes the longer history of this sudden and instant phenomenon. Indeed, it is her interpretation of what he observes as the 'nicety', the 'light, aerial delicacy' and 'simple elegance' that may be found in French Gothic art, the way 'the rough and ponderous mass becomes, as if by passing for a moment into happier conditions, or through a more gracious stratum of air, graceful and refined', to which he alludes in his reference to her work in 'Joachim du Bellay'. ‘What is called the Renaissance in France’, he writes, is 'not so much the introduction of a new taste ready-made from Italy, but rather the finest and subtlest phase of the middle age itself'. Moreover, as Pattison/Dilke points out, France’s encounter with Italy did not suddenly begin with the Renaissance, even if that was when its influence was most felt. ‘It must not … be supposed that no intercourse had previously existed between France and Italy’, she reminds us. ‘The roads by Narbonne and Lyons were worn by many feet. The artists of Tours and Poitiers, the artists of Paris and Dijon, were alike familiar with the path to Rome’.

The relationship between Pater and Pattison/Dilke provides a window onto late-nineteenth-century intellectual history, enabling the modern scholar to reconstruct in a fine-grained way one strand in the evolution of Victorian ideas of the Renaissance. When another scholar of the Renaissance, Vernon Lee, was unjustly accused by Bernard Berenson of plagiarism, her defense was to assert that '[w]e were part of a mutually, perhaps unconsciously, collaborating band of enquirers'. This is how the history of ideas unfolds. In the case of Pater and Pattison/Dilke, there was never any suggestion of plagiarism, but rather an acknowledged and equal dialogue between two of the key contributors to late-nineteenth-century Renaissance scholarship. Each added texture and complexity to the other’s account. Beginning in the late 1860s, their interests and professional careers intersected and coalesced around the Renaissance: both wrote a series of articles that led to a significant book, Pattison reviewed Pater’s, he made reference to her book in later editions of his, she reviewed one of his later volumes. Both were working out their ideas about the Renaissance, and also about Aestheticism. And both were establishing new and highly distinctive methodologies for writing about art and its histories that were inclusive of both high and popular art forms, drew on individual experience, and emphasized pleasure in ways that spoke to contemporary aesthetics and identity politics. From the margins of the Oxford establishment they took the centre ground, forming a Renaissance chorus to the Hellenism that, as Linda Dowling has so brilliantly argued, was already
authorizing a liberal counter-discourse of freedom, civic diversity and self-development.

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NOTES


8 Pater published ‘Coleridge’s Writings’ and ‘Winckelmann’, both unsigned, in the Westminster Review in 1866 and 1867 respectively, and signed articles in the Fortnightly Review on ‘Notes on Lionardo


13 Mansfield, ‘Articulating Authority: Emilia DILKE’s Early Essays and Reviews’, p. 84.


16 See Kanwitz, Victorian Art Criticism and the Woman Writer, pp. 126–44.


A casual reader of the Pall Mall Gazette catching up with literary news in the summer of 1887 might have missed the concluding barb in a brief review of Vernon Lee’s recently published Juvenilia (1887). Although Lee is described as ‘remarkable’, with potential to be ‘among the very few best critical writers of all time’, her new book has an ‘increasing “ethical” tone’ that the reviewer, Walter Pater, fears bespeaks ‘a touch of something like Puritanism in her work’.¹ Coming at the end of the review’s mostly generous comments, the accusation barely prepares the reader for how prominently and negatively Pater’s own name figures in Juvenilia. The book is dedicated to Lee’s friend, the critic Carlo Placci, and in its opening pages Lee explains to him that the book’s title refers to the immaturity of believing that beauty necessarily equates with good. It was Pater’s Marius the Epicurean (1885), she states, that brought home this conviction to her. The aestheticism exemplified in its pages supports a state of fantasy that is gloriously pleasurable but dangerous in blinding its followers to ‘the ugly things in the world […] and the ugly things within ourselves’. To be good, she insists, one must face what is ‘ugly and foul’, and be able to see in the individual case the constitutive force of ‘great class evils’.² Pater had taught a generation about a world of impressions, evanescent and fleeting. Lee’s world is also in flux but, unlike Pater’s, its shapes are motivated, human and changeable. Wittingly or
not—(and for good or for evil)—‘we must take part in the movement that alters the world’, Lee insists in this perhaps unexpectedly sharp indictment of Paterian aesthetics.3

The exchange I have outlined is one of many, occasionally abrasive, scenarios that bind Pater and Lee despite the fact that the relationship between them was avowedly, and on both sides, warm and respectful.4 Lee certainly liked Pater from the moment of their first meeting, appreciating his courtesy and attention as she launched herself into London literary society in the early summer of 1881. Her first extended English visit is filtered through her letters home to Italy, themselves performance pieces of her energy and ambition presented for the benefit of her mother and brother. They are witness also to the volatile mix of her intellectual confidence and aspiration, which sits alongside a more fragile need for acceptance, affection and self-protection. In Oxford, dining with Mary and Humphry Ward and meeting Pater for the first time, Lee rattles through the adjectival list of characteristics that often accompany her acerbic descriptions of the literary celebrities she aimed to meet and cultivate: he is ‘heavy, shy, […] lymphatic, dull, humourless’. But he is ‘not at all like Mr Rose’, the parodied aesthete character in W. H. Mallock’s The New Republic (1877), being ‘quite unaffected’ and ‘[o]f all the people I have met in England […] the one […] most civil to me’.5 All her letters from the 1880s emphasize the hospitality and kindness of Pater and his sisters Clara and Hester: ‘The Paters were I can’t say how kind to me, all of them.’6

Lee also publicly acknowledged what most critics agree is the profound influence of Pater on her writing, from Belcaro (1881)—the collection of essays in which she announced herself ‘humbly gone to school as a student of aesthetics’—to work published well into the twentieth century.7 Still, she was later to take revenge on the accusation of Puritanism: Pater himself ‘began as an aesthete and ended as a moralist’, she insists in the ‘Valedictory’ that appeared the year following his death, in her collection Renaissance Fancies and Studies (1895).8 Stefano Evangelista reads the ‘Valedictory’ as both the ‘conclusion of Lee’s personal engagement with aestheticism’ and her declaration that aestheticism had run its course.9 He quotes Lee contrasting her own youthful ambition to be a writer, proud to include in Euphorion (1884)—the work she dedicated to Pater—the name of the man ‘I already reverenced as a master’, with her insistence that she now sees books ‘from the point of view of the reader’.10 It is from the reader’s viewpoint, Evangelista
argues, and as a kind of cultural historian, that she can reconcile her ambiguous, testy relationship with aesthetic writing and continue to value Pater.¹¹

In the remainder of this short essay I explore these threads of Vernon Lee’s relationship with Pater. If Pater set the terms for serious philosophical thinking about what beauty means in the modern world, it was Lee who, perhaps more than any other figure associated with late nineteenth-century Aestheticism, took up this challenge. Seeking a way to move further than Pater, she looked to the methods of contemporary science. She followed Pater in asking: ‘What is this song or picture […] to me? What effect does it really produce on me?’¹² In answering, however, she turned to the experimentalism of modern psychology as the human mind began to be moved inside the laboratory, under the conviction that ‘me’ can be objectively captured by science. Keenly attuned to new developments in experimental methodology, she pursued forms of parallel experimentation, mostly taking place in museums and galleries, often done collaboratively with other women, and aimed at illuminating what can be known of oneself, the world, and its human others. Here—possibly, potentially—was the material and the means for rethinking the relation between beauty and morality that Pater had challenged but could not manage fully to reconfigure. In pursuing her aesthetic studies, Lee never obeyed the demand of scientific materialism that observers annihilate themselves in the processes of investigation. Relationships, love, and friendships visibly pattern her work and, above all, gender and its power dynamics is always at issue. Born female, Lee’s dissidence—its objects and its methods—inevitably differed from Pater’s.

Twenty-five years after the ‘Valedictory’ in Renaissance Studies and now in her 60s, Lee once again explicitly remembered Pater. In ‘Dionysus in the Euganean Hills: W. H. Pater in Memoriam’ (1921), she reflects back on a note she wrote in 1910 when she visited the Auxerre cathedral and found there ‘before my very eyes, [Pater’s] Denys l’Auxerrois’.¹³ Lee’s short essay is a meditation on time, history, and loss, coloured by a sad sense of the Great War’s damage and the dying away of the aesthetic literary world Pater had helped to make and of which she had been a part. Referencing directly Pater’s 1886 story about the historical reverberations of paganism relocated into melancholic Christian culture, Lee acknowledges the inevitability that succeeding literary generations must make things anew.¹⁴ Remembering aestheticism is now a consolation in a world disenchanted.
The ‘Dionysus’ essay points back not just to Pater’s Denys but also to Lee’s own ‘exiled’ god in one of her short fictions. First published in *Hauntings: Fantastic Stories* (1890), the beautiful but disturbing protagonist of ‘Dionea’, the girl child washed up onto the shore of Porto Venere in Italy and taken in by nuns, is most explicitly associated with Venus Aphrodite. Like Pater’s Denys, however, she presides over a frightening and ultimately tragic pagan revival, upturning the sexual mores of a small rural community. Reading this story as part of Lee’s literary conversation with Pater, Evangelista rightly concludes that it is ‘a feminist critique of the Hellenism promoted by the male aesthetes’. Symbolically, in the death of the sculptor, Waldemar (who, before taking Dionea as his model, crafts only male figures), it is dominant male cultural and aesthetic authority that is undone in the encounter with a strange past and unconventional femininity.

In this, as in everything else, ‘reverencing’ Pater as ‘a master’ was never straightforward for Lee. Although she generously celebrated those who helped and influenced her, she was never willing to accept the power differentials implied in courting or needing patronage. This too was a gendered matter and Lee wanted, at best, admiration and, at the least, mutuality. Writing to her half-brother Eugene Lee-Hamilton from London in summer 1882, she is delighted that Pater’s sisters had ‘said a great many sweet things about my book’. But ‘I fear that as to Pater & me it is a question of “caw-me-caw-you”’. Still a young woman not yet out of her twenties, Lee sought to project intellectual equality (‘I review you favourably; you reciprocate’). In truth, however, this bullishness was intended in part to forestall expectations about what she could do to help promote Eugene’s poetry and, perhaps, it fudges the anxiety she felt about Pater’s judgment of her work’s value. Ambitious to be at the centre, Lee constantly had to negotiate and put to creative use her marginality. In this task, her enthusiasm about psychological science was an access route to authority and, simultaneously, confirmation of the limitations of working as a woman.

‘Courting new impressions’: Paterian Experiments

Lee lent her Italian friend, Enrico Nencioni, a second edition copy of Pater’s *Renaissance* (1877). Writing to him in 1881, shortly after the English visit when she first met Pater, she urges him to consult the ‘first edition of [Pater’s] book’ to see ‘what is changed here and there’. The major missing element from the second edition, the ‘Conclusion’, famously recycles part of an earlier essay on
William Morris’s poetry (1868), the context of which makes clearer the modern philosophical positions Pater is presenting, testing, and rejecting. Pater’s philosophical seriousness, as much as anything else, was important for Lee. The ‘delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat’ in the ‘Conclusion’ presents a blunt empirical world of matter, and this is matched by the bleak implications of philosophical skepticism, reducing the world’s richness to an isolated self trapped within the narrow purview of its individual sensations and perceptions. In some of the few unused sentences from the original extract, Pater might have been drafting the type of bitter response with which many critics responded to the perceived materialism of the ‘Conclusion’, acknowledging that the subjectivism he describes evokes ‘the image of one washed out beyond the bar at sea, losing even his personality, as the elements of which he is composed pass into new combinations’. When he famously offers ‘experience itself’ as the un-homed modern’s only ‘wise’ response to this unsettling predicament of civilization, Pater is grappling with the question of the self: ‘The individual, and not art, is at the very heart of his aestheticism’, one recent critic claims. Pater tested western philosophy: the empiricism and skepticism of the British philosophers in the account of the relationship between self and world established by John Locke and David Hume; the German tradition as it sought to resolve the Kantian challenge to find reliable ground for the autonomy of the self. Experimenting with prose form was his immediate response to the modern condition, but it was probably never a sufficient one. As many critics have noted, Pater remained troubled by the requirement to feel for others, to attempt to understand their minds, when ‘nothing really comes to us […] but the stream of the phenomena of our own elusive inscrutable mistakable self’. What hope then, for understanding any one else if access to oneself has no dependable ground? As Pater well knew, the emerging discipline of psychology was leading the way in seeking new ways to pose, and to answer, such problems. His own engagement with psychology, though, was allusive. He was, as Matthew Beaumont has argued, more psychagogue than psychologist, an ironic necromancer mediating in his alchemical prose between the living and the dead. Devoted though she was to the past, adept at imagining its revenants in her ghost stories, fascinated by the transposition of ancient and modern culture, Lee also discerned a genuinely new, substantial and effective role for psychology in its most material
and empirical manifestation. Science promised the tools for explicating what is elusive, inscrutable or mistakable and to grasp the self from the standpoint of science was its proclaimed task. If scientific methodologies could access the self, then they could also facilitate an understanding of others and thus solve the problem of subjectivism that haunted Pater. Indeed, experimental methodology sought to make self and other exactly the same kind of objects of scrutiny and data.

For psychologists, access to the self began with skilled introspection. Prior to the dominance of behaviourism in the twentieth century, introspection was a key aspect of experimentalist methodology, as William James reminded readers of his Principles of Psychology (1890): ‘Introspective observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always’.26 James and his experimentalist peers believed mistakes could be minimized, and proper scrutiny sustained, by those fully trained in introspective analysis. Detecting, recording and interpreting physiology was the access route to mind. These methods Lee sought to replicate as she pursued her own aesthetic enquiries. Introspection also was central to how she managed and shaped the human relationships that accompanied her aesthetic investigations.27

Experimenting in the Galleries: Vernon Lee’s Aesthetics

Pater’s potent modification of Arnold’s injunction ‘To see the object as in itself it really is’ was to ‘know one’s own impression as it really is’.28 Lee recast this as the question of what art does with us: ‘What does it do for us, or rather do with us?’ she asked. In the mid-1880s Lee had become attached to a young Scottish artist, Clementina (or ‘Kit’) Anstruther-Thomson. Writing much later of their collaborative work, Lee represents her, romantically, as an ideal epistemologist, untainted by convention or creed, ‘full of intricate whys and wherefores’. Setting out to train herself in order to become an occasional lecturer at Toynbee Hall and Morley College, Kit had ‘no programme […] and no methodical reading’. Instead she looked at pictures, sculptures, and architecture, comparing what she saw and, Lee explains, comparing how her body’s responses ‘made her feel’.29 Like Pater, Lee believed that a materialist aesthetics was grounded in the body, and she began to encourage Anstruther-Thomson to notice and record her body’s responses. Viewing objects, Anstruther-Thomson realized that her breathing changed, her muscles contracted, her balance shifted. In ‘Beauty and Ugliness’, a jointly-authored essay for the Contemporary Review (1897) in which the women
published their findings, Anstruther-Thomson writes of how pattern affects her, making her conscious of being ‘bilateral’, helping her two lungs to breathe evenly; or of how a building modifies her posture, making her follow its lines by ‘a slight movement outward of the body above the waist or of the head’. The detailed record that Lee encouraged Anstruther-Thomson to keep of such experiences was, at the same time, a home-made training in experimental introspection and a claim to the authority of psychological method.

Over the next two decades, Lee developed and refined what she eventually called empathy—the term, derived from physio-psychological experimentation, that she believed explained what was happening in Anstruther-Thomson’s bodily response to objects. Coined in an experimental laboratory during the first decade of the twentieth century, empathy was a translation of the German *Einfühlung*, the process of ‘feeling into’ an object (and much debated in German late-century aesthetic theorizing). In Lee’s aesthetics it describes the human response to form: to lines, planes, and angles and the ideas they evoke of tension, weight, force or balance. Form precipitates corporeal, mimetic response in the viewer; the feelings produced by bodily changes are projected back into the object and experienced as if they originate and belong there. Lee saw this projective process as the key to understanding the self and its relation to the objective world, and whether we experience that world (and ourselves) as being beautiful or ugly. No longer interested, as so much Victorian art and literature had been, in the moral value of identification within a narrative scene (with its crucial evocation of sympathy), Lee posited instead these form-derived processes of identification and projection. It is the experience of life and vitality in the motion and force that shapes convey, whether discovered in mountains that rise up or Doric pillars that bear down into the ground, patterns that widen and expand or shapes that hold a viewer in place. The finding (or refunding) of one’s own vitality and life in a beautiful object is, for Lee, why beauty matters.

From the end of the 1870s, first in Germany and then across the United States and Europe, experimental psychology laboratories began to open in universities and, by the 1890s, experimentalism was confidently established. Lee knew and corresponded with many of its leading figures, even travelling to witness their work in action. In 1912, the intimate phase of her relationship with Anstruther-Thomson over, Lee re-published their joint article of 1897 alongside a series of essays that chart her changing understanding of empathy over a period of more
than a decade. Throughout, the book references her wide reading in contemporary European psychology, and it is dedicated to the French psychologist, Théodule Ribot, the man she called her ‘master on psychology’. Its Preface explicitly evokes ‘a kind of critic, namely, the Experimental Psychologist’, and she observes: ‘I have come away with the conviction not only that theirs is the future way of studying aesthetics, but also that is the way in which, alas! I can never hope to study them.’ The moral impasse of subjectivism in Paterian aesthetics could be overcome by scientific method, although her own ‘aesthetics of the gallery and the studio’ would, she confesses, never ‘achieve scientific certainty’.

Despite this uncharacteristic humility, Lee never relinquished her attachment to the ‘objective’ methods of science. Kirsty Bunting has written about the precariousness of a woman staking knowledge claims within the male-dominated environments of both science and aesthetics, and of how Lee’s relationships were marked by ‘her awareness of intellectual isolation from these communities of men’. Bunting reads Lee’s relationship with Anstruther-Thomson as damaged by this, as it replayed gendered inequity—Lee’s cerebral, masterful, and male-identified dominance over a receptive and passive Anstruther-Thomson. But these dynamics were not only destructive. ‘Psychology’ helped authorize Lee to herself, and helped hold in place her search for an ethical underpinning to the experience of beauty.

Describing the transposition between self and (beautiful) object she called empathy, Lee reiterates again and again that we attribute our ‘energies, activities, or feelings to the non-ego’. This relation to the object ‘non-ego’ is also the basis for what develops as human relationship: empathy is ‘an act necessarily preceding all sympathy’. Towards the very end of her life, Lee was working on *Music and Its Lovers: An Empirical Study of Emotional and Imaginative Responses to Music* (1933), a book ‘on aesthetics as a branch of psychology; […] aesthetics as an introduction, a *Vorschule* to psychology’. It is dominated by ‘my musical Questionnaires’, sent to more than a hundred respondents, through which means, she explains, she had been able to gain access to what ‘the French call *mobiles*; tendencies, habits of feeling and thinking; the not (in Freudian sense) unconscious, but unsuspected, modes of retaining, renewing, cud-chewing of one’s emotions’. The questionnaire responses show how perceptions are connected, or synthesized, or disguised ‘in my neighbours and in myself. About both of whom, directly and indirectly, I seem to have learned a good deal in the years of thinking over the information collected
Lee’s psychological aesthetics was, in truth, an ongoing effort to understand self and other, in their mutual relations, and in their diverse relations with the sources of aesthetic pleasure around them.

Human relationships pattern Vernon Lee’s work, woven into her aesthetic theorizing. Psychology helped authorize her passionate engagements with art and with women, and released her, perhaps, from the more risky associations of Aestheticism. The ‘touch of something like Puritanism’ in Lee’s work of which Pater complained was an aspect of her resistance to Aestheticism—but this was always a complex matter for Lee. In the letter to Enrico Nencioni in 1881, quoted earlier, she refers to Pater’s magic: ‘His fantasy shows him things that are true, and little known.’ But does he, as others say, really write immoral books? It is, Lee says, echoing the critique in the Juvenilia passage with which I began, not immorality but a ‘lack of moral fiber, such as to allow himself to place the artistic effect before any other interest’ that is at fault. Later in the letter, it is not Pater but others in the aesthetic movement who have ‘neglected or often insulted’ morality. In the end—and appropriately for Lee’s more mature ethics too—it is human relationships that really matter: ‘For the rest, Pater is my friend, and a man, in all familiar relationships, not only virtuous, but superb, and full of self-denial’.

Birkbeck, University of London

NOTES

1 [Walter Pater], ‘Vernon Lee’s Juvenilia’, Pall Mall Gazette (5 August 1887), 5.
2 Vernon Lee, Juvenilia: Being a Second Series of Essays on Sundry Aesthetical Questions (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1887), 7–8, 10, 12.
4 Lee and Pater’s friendship also fared better than many of Lee’s others following the publication of her novel Miss Brown (1884), a satire on Aestheticism and its personalities, including Pater. See Vernon Lee’s Letters, ed. by Irene Cooper Willis (privately printed; 2 Brick Court, Temple, London, 1937). For discussion of their relationship, and a persuasive case for its continuation after the appearance of Miss Brown, see Laurel Brake, ‘Vernon Lee and the Pater Circle’, in Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics, 40–57.


10 See ‘Valedictory’, 260.


17 See Lee to Eugene Lee–Hamilton, 29 June 1882; *Selected Letters*, 370.

18 Lee to Enrico Nencioni, 13 Nov. 1881; *Selected Letters*, 354. The original letter, written in Italian, has been translated by Crystal Hall.


20 Ibid., 311; Pater, *The Renaissance*, 150.


27 Introspection in the laboratory was, of course, never the objective record its proponents sought.


29 Lee, ‘Introduction’ to C. Anstruther-Thomson, *Art and Man: Essays and Fragments* (London: John Lane, 1924), 3–112. Quoted matter at pp. 28, 7, 28. For Lee’s relationship with Anstruther-Thomson, see Colby, *Vernon Lee*, 130–51; for further discussion of their collaborative work, see Carolyn Burdett, ‘“The subjective inside us can turn into the objective outside”: Vernon Lee’s


32 Lee offers one of her clearer accounts of this process in the Introduction to Art and Man: ‘what is in reality the beholder’s response comes to feel, as if it were an activity intrinsic to that shape’ (36).

33 The Doric pillar was a favourite example of the German philosopher, Theodor Lipps, who championed the concept of Einfühlung and whose work on aesthetics and optics became important for Lee. For further discussion of Lee’s development of empathy, see Burdett, “The subjective inside us can turn into the objective outside”, and Benjamin Morgan, ‘Critical Empathy: Vernon Lee’s Aesthetics and the Origin of Close Reading’, Victorian Studies, 55, 1 (2012), 31–56.

34 Wilhelm Wundt, University of Leipzig, established the first permanent laboratory dedicated to psychological research in 1879. For the first history of experimental psychology, see Edwin G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology (New York: Century, 1929).


36 Lee, Beauty and Ugliness, vii–viii.


38 Lee, Beauty and Ugliness, 47.


40 Lee to Enrico Nencioni, 13 November 1881; Selected Letters, 354.
Although critics today associate Walter Pater primarily with male homosocial networks, one of his female friends gives us a window on a very differently constituted Paterian circle. In June 1893, Vernon Lee wrote to her brother of a tea at the Paters’ involving ‘24 women and no man!’ In this essay, I explore Pater’s aesthetic criticism, often presented in feminized terms by Pater himself and later commentators, in the context of late Victorian women’s scholarly writing, focusing on works by two members of Pater’s London circle, Lee (1856–1935) and Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928). This essay thus extends and further delineates the ‘feminine counter-culture’ in which Isobel Hurst places Pater at Oxford. Jane Harrison was the ‘most famous female classicist there has ever been’: she was among the first students at Newnham College, Cambridge in the 1870s, and in 1898, returned to Newnham as its first female research fellow. In the 1880s, she gave popular lectures at the British Museum and published widely on ancient Greek art and religion. Harrison has become of increasing interest to literary historians as both a shaper of late Victorian chthonic Hellenism and as an interlocuteur for modernist-era female writers. While Harrison is still somewhat obscure, Vernon Lee is the subject of one of the most successful recent recovery efforts in feminist literary studies. Now
best known as a writer of weird stories and studies of ‘physiological aesthetics’, Lee launched her career in the 1880s with scholarly studies of Italian art and culture, and in her lifetime published prolifically across genres. Although she too was English, she lived an expatriate life in Italy, often spending summers in London where she mixed with Pater, Harrison, and others. Though both Harrison and Lee achieved literary success, they have been understood as marginal writers, both in terms of their places in literary history today, and in regard to their positions in their own lifetimes as women writing in typically masculine genres, as single women who had intense romantic relationships with other women, and as outspoken critics of social, religious, and political orthodoxies. In this essay, I will draw on their work to consider certain scholarly practices associated with women that flourished as humanistic scholarly writing was becoming a professional, and increasingly masculinized, academic practice. Pater’s aesthetic criticism is a part of this history; considering it as such will enable us to understand more effectively aspects of Pater’s writings and the relations among his work, Harrison’s, and Lee’s.

Lee’s (perhaps comically exaggerated?) account of Pater among the women invites us to consider how we might place Pater’s voice more distinctly within a conversation that contested femininity as a liability for knowledge work. In the 1880s, as Stefano Evangelista has shown, Lee and Harrison each wrote aesthetic, indeed Paterian, studies of their chosen subjects—Italian art and music, and ancient Greek art, respectively. By the 1910s, the women were engaging with Pater more obliquely. To adapt a famous formulation of Pater’s from *Greek Studies*, however, ‘feel[ing] our way backwards’ from Harrison and Lee to Pater enables us to see aspects of Pater’s aesthetic criticism in light of their less obviously Paterian work. In particular, we discern how all three were engaged in redefining creativity as being both derivative and collaborative. Harrison, in a late and as yet unacknowledged engagement with Pater’s work, extended this project in ways Pater could not have foreseen by theorizing and celebrating her gendered experience of knowledge. Although both Pater and Harrison practiced related forms of socially motivated scholarship—deploying the conventions of scholarly writing to give the common reader access to ancient Greek religion in a reconstructed form—Harrison more fully shifted the source of authority from historical precedent to emotional experience. This enabled her to orient her scholarship more to the future than the past. While Pater claimed his writing could help us ‘feel our way backwards’ to an image of the ancient Greeks through the historically and imaginatively
informed appreciation of art, Harrison argued that art should, and did, ‘look and feel forward, not backward’ into a new feminist era.5

Pater’s view that the ‘scholarly conscience’ was ‘necessarily male’ reflected a consensus in nineteenth-century Britain that scholarship was a masculine activity.6 Yet, as Bonnie G. Smith has shown, a feminine version of scholarship was also acknowledged, albeit one initially defined by women’s supposed limitations. As Harrison recalled, ‘Women, it is further urged, are no good at advancing knowledge; by nature they are neither artists nor inventors.’7 Supposed to lack genius, women were assumed to be incapable of creating theories, and regarded as fit only for support work such as reading aloud, transcription, or popularization. At best, they were seen as lesser collaborators.

Some women worked to increase the value ascribed to collaborative projects. Instead of presenting women as second-rate scholars because they were only capable of derivative work, they valorized derivative creation as a superior mode. Specifically, they reclassified the conventions of women’s scholarship as avant-garde practices.8 Harrison presented women’s exclusion from the ranks of creators to be an asset in an era when, as she asserted, knowledge progressed ‘not so much by individual emergence as by interdependent, collective advance’ (‘Scientiae’, pp. 122–3). Thus, women, best suited to collaborative work, had become best suited to furthering knowledge.

Harrison and her female peers found the conventions of women’s scholarship especially compatible with working in emerging disciplines linked to the so-called comparative method. This method assumed universal stages of societal development through which different societies progressed at different rates. A researcher could thus compare different societies at different stages, using examples from one society’s past stage to conjecture about an otherwise unrelated society’s past—or future. Anthropology, ethnology, folklore, and mythology, which took as their primary subjects religious rituals and beliefs, were among the emerging disciplines centered on this method. Harrison deployed this method in her anthropological classical scholarship, comparing ‘ceremonies’ found ‘everywhere, in Africa, in America, in Australia, in the South Pacific Islands’ in order to reconstruct archaic Greek rituals through ‘analogy’ with such putatively ‘primitive’ rites.9 This approach is especially prominent in her major work, Themis (1912), where she uses such comparative practices to fill in the gaps of a fragmentary ancient Greek hymn. By comparing ‘subjects apparently unconnected’ including
‘magic, *mana*, *tabu*, the Olympic games, the Drama, Sacramentalism, Carnivals, Hero-worship, Initiation Ceremonies and the Platonic doctrine of Anamnesis’, Harrison purports to recover the true form and meaning of the hymn and its corresponding ritual (p. xiv).

In order to make these comparisons, Harrison read widely in her specialist field of Greek art and religion, as well as beyond it in ethnology. She saw this approach as participating in a ‘new academic spirit that sees and feels its own specialism in wider, indeed, in world-wide, relations’.\(^{10}\) Such a ‘new academic spirit’ appealed especially to scholars on the margins of the professionalizing world of British scholarship. While professional or specialist scholarship could seem simultaneously limiting and out of reach—both too narrowly concerned with one time and place and yet demanding of skills (such as ancient languages) usually not taught to women—comparison seemed accessible yet prestigious. One did not have to know ancient languages to compare accounts of ancient societies published by expert historians, and one could infer connections among them by noticing patterns. Comparison promised to exceed the limitations of professional scholarship further by valuing imagination and intuition. It was associated with what Mark A. Schneider has called the ‘criterion of coherence’: the best theory accounted for the most facts in the most satisfying way (p. 110). By thus claiming narrative satisfaction among its standards of evaluation, comparative inquiries seemed to endorse intuition, aesthetic response, and emotion. As Vernon Lee recalled of applying such a standard in *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, ‘I never distinguished between [the] novelist’s plausibility and historic probability’.\(^{11}\)

Critics such as Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades have shown how Aestheticism, with its gendered emphasis on emotional responsiveness, was particularly hospitable to women in the fin-de-siècle. Comparative anthropological discourse, entangled with, but also distinct from, aestheticism, was similarly hospitable to female scholars—and to Walter Pater. For Harrison, Lee, and Pater, comparative anthropology enabled theorizations of communal authority and creation.

Lee explored both these ideas in her first two book-length publications, in which she conflated the authorial voices of the scholar and bearer-of-tradition to redefine literary creation as a communal practice. In the same year as her well-received *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, Lee also published the collection *Tuscan Fairy Tales* (1880).\(^{12}\) Both books were published anonymously, but, at first
glance, the anonymity of *Tales* reads differently than that of *Studies*. Lee presents
*Tales* as contributing to the comparative field of ‘popular mythology’. In this
tradition, the collector is effaced as an author. Instead, she is the translator of the
oral folk material for a reading public and is at once a scholarly authority, able
to participate in scientific and literary endeavours (collection, translation), and
also a kind of bearer of tradition, circulating these tales to additional audiences.
To this end, she has become something akin both to a feminine medium or a
masculine objective scholar, having recorded the tales, ‘without altering any point
of the narration, adhering as far as is possible to the expressions used by the rustic
narrators’ (p. 8). The narrators are themselves merely conduits of a collective creative
force, the ‘popular fancy’, which ‘has given the most symmetrical, and I might
almost say, artistic shapes’ to the ‘superstitions’ that form the raw material of fairy
tales (pp. 7–8). The anonymity of the Tuscan narrators and the collection’s English
compiler bypasses any sense of creation as a matter of individual imagination in
favour of creation understood as a communal process of reshaping given materials.

In *Studies*, Lee presents apparently more sophisticated forms of art, including
opera, as the products of such communal creation. In this way, she valorizes the
bearer-of-tradition as a type of artist, and herself as a scholarly writer akin to
such an artist. She claims that eighteenth-century music and art are a kind of folk
creation: a ‘national and spontaneous’ ‘artistic form’ (p. 9). The results of an artistic
evolution, they are the ‘culmination of a long and unbroken series of artistic
phenomena’ like that which produced ‘Phidias, Raphael, Dante, or Shakespeare’
(p. 9). Their so-called creators work in ways akin to *Tales*’ ‘popular fancy’ by
recombining materials at hand. Thus, in her first books, Lee-as-anonymous-
author appears as a scholar and bearer of tradition — a practitioner of a sort of
folk scholarship. To claim this kind of authority invokes different standards for art
and scholarship than writing as either a conventional first-rate masculine scholar
or second-rate feminine one. The folk scholar engages in what Helen Brookman
calls ‘re-creative’, rather than original or merely derivative creation.

Re-creative writing in this period was generally motivated by what we now
call recovery projects. These projects were largely invested in re-creating lost texts
or traditions—the hymn Harrison reconstructs in *Themis*, the ‘broken-down
mytholog[ies]’ Lee refers to in *Tales* (p. 8). Lee was content to let those broken-
down mythologies lie, while Harrison and Pater were concerned with preserving
the ‘spirit that lies behind’ them through reconstruction.
The recovery project Pater pursued across his oeuvre focused on ancient emotions, particularly those tied to religion. He aimed to reconstruct them, or, rather, enable access to some experience of them, for contemporary readers. This project is most central in the essays posthumously collected in *Greek Studies*. In these texts, most of which were first published in periodicals in the 1870s and 1880s, Pater discusses ancient Greek religion not to pin it down but to re-animate it within readers. He trains his readers to embrace the real existence and the continuing vitality of this ‘product of the human mind’. Recent work on Pater has credited him with having ‘attempted more seriously than anyone before him in England to understand the Greek gods as gods, not as long-dead divinities but as living spirits’. Such work continues to emphasize his aesthetic networks, and to include figures such as Harrison as his aesthetic heirs. But the continuity among these writers is less centered on aesthetic than comparative anthropological writing.

In ‘The Myth of Demeter and Persephone’ (1876), Pater endorses a comparative, reconstructive approach to prehistoric ‘origins’ in favour of an ‘over-positive’ empiricism (p. 112). He acknowledges the criticisms of such reconstructive practices: that in his treatment of the myth of Demeter, ‘much may seem to have been made of little, with too much completion, by a general framework or setting, of what after all are but doubtful or fragmentary indications’ (pp. 111–12). He then criticizes the criticism: ‘Yet there is a certain cynicism too, in that over-positive temper, which is so jealous of our catching any resemblance in the earlier world to the thoughts that really occupy our own minds’ (p. 112). Pater highlights the transhistorical in his historicism: in the story of the evolution of the human mind, there is continuity as well as change. While the historical method has made the past into another world, the comparative method allows transport from this world to that. The ‘earlier world’ of the ancient Greeks is not entirely lost to us: we—that is, Pater and his audience—can access a reconstruction of it via a combination of scholarly ingenuity, imagination, and responsiveness to resemblances between the mentalities of the ancient Greeks and ourselves.

Pater refers to this combination of scholarship, imagination, and emotional responsiveness as a process of ‘feel[ing] […] backwards’ (‘Demeter’, p. 151). To feel backward is a matter of both aesthetic sensibility and scholarly practice. The critic, pursuing a feeling of curiosity ‘justified by the direct aesthetic beauty’ of fragments of Greek art, ‘feel[s] [her] way backwards’ to a construction, an
‘engaging picture of the poet-people’, the ancient Greeks (p. 151). While the critic feels his way backward to this picture, it is also already there, waiting for her or him, having been created by ‘the ingenuity of modern theory’ which ‘has filled the void in our knowledge’ (p. 112). To feel backwards also highlights the physiological aspects of aesthetic and scholarly practice: it is modelled on the scholarly practices of Johannes Winckelmann, who, according to Pater, gained his pathbreaking knowledge of ancient art through bodily encounters with the Italian youths whose beauty was like that of ancient sculpture. Heather Love points to this haptic element of feeling backward as part of a tradition of ‘affective historiography’ featuring ‘an embodied, loving historical practice’. Pater aimed to introduce his audience to such an affective encounter with a re-animated archaic religion. Importantly, the first audience for ‘The Myth of Demeter and Persephone’ consisted of members of the Birmingham and Midlands Institute, an adult education organization; initially, the essay was a lecture. The injunction to feel backward is thus meant to be an inclusive invitation, an effort to democratize scholarly knowledge and the benefits thereof. These benefits constitute Pater’s social mission: the reward for feeling backward to the poetry of ancient Greek religion is the ‘elevation and purifying of our sentiments’ and ‘a pledge to us of the place in our culture, at once legitimate and possible, of the associations, the conceptions, the imagery, of Greek religious poetry in general, of the poetry of all religions’ (p. 151). In order to receive this pledge, one must have ‘admitted […] the elements of Greek religion […] as recognised and habitual inhabitants’ (p. 151). The ‘modern mind’ must make room for religion through scholarly study: for moderns, as Jane Harrison would vividly illustrate, it is necessary to practice comparative scholarship in order to experience religion (p. 151).

For Pater, comparative scholarship has significant ties to the creative processes behind Greek poetry and religion. In the way it operates by rearranging ‘fragments’, such scholarship is identifiable with the artistic myth-making process of ‘selecting and combining, at will’ which Pater attributes to Euripides. Pater illustrates this myth-making process with the case of Euripides’ artistic treatment of the mythical figure Dionysus:

in the Bacchanals of Euripides we have an example of the figurative or imaginative power of poetry, selecting and combining, at will, from that mixed and floating mass, weaving the many-coloured threads together, blending the various phases
of legend—all the light and shade of the subject—into a shape, substantial and firmly set, through which a mere fluctuating tradition might retain a permanent place in men's imaginations. Here, in what Euripides really says, in what we actually see on the stage, as we read his play, we are dealing with a single real object. (pp. 53–4)

Pater’s emphasis on ‘the figurative or imaginative power of poetry’ as the agent ‘selecting and combining’ resonates with the agency of ‘popular fancy’ in Lee. In this creation of something ‘real’, poetic fancy transforms immaterial oral tradition into something ‘substantial and firmly set’, suggesting the materialization of a gem-like object. This poesis is akin to aesthetic criticism, which also finds solidity in mere flux via its ‘burn[ing] with a hard, gem-like flame’ (Renaissance, p. 189).

The figurative ‘subject’ is transformed into a literal aesthetic and historical object that Euripides’ audience — in his day or Pater’s — could encounter.

Looking at Pater’s use of the comparative method in the context of Harrison’s and Lee’s scholarly projects can help us see how this method supports forms of authority grounded in collectivity and tradition. As Billie Andrews Inman has shown, through ‘selecting and combining, at will’ Pater himself creates artistic myths: his ‘attitude toward his sources has been the type that he attributes to the myth-maker in the third ethical phase of the myth’. The ethical mythmaker is one of ‘those more elevated spirits, who, in the decline of the Greek religion, pick and choose and modify, with perfect freedom of mind, whatever in it may seem adapted to minister to their culture’ (Pater quoted in Inman, p. xlii). Pater creates his own myth via his scholarship and aesthetic criticism: instead of acknowledging his creative authority and originality, he presents his version of the myth as one dependent on the authority of other writers. Comparative scholarship provides him with the form for this explicitly derivative creativity: it enables him to present his work as a mere rearrangement of given materials, as the derivative product that Carolyn Williams has labeled his ‘composite form’, rather than as a new creation (p. 90). Pater thus frames his creations as ‘original’, not in the sense of a new invention, but rather in the sense of being connected to precedent.

Understanding this kind of originality illuminates Pater’s strange practices of citation and attribution. Critics have offered various explanations for these practices, most suggesting they relate to some lack or vice in Pater, from
bashfulness to bad scholarship. In contrast, I consider Pater’s citational practices to be a strategic part of the mythmaking Inman has identified. As in Harrison’s collective scholarship and Lee’s folk scholarship, this effacing of individual scholarly authority is not mere modesty or a genuine attempt to fool readers (after all, in some cases Pater is writing for those students of classics who would also be familiar with his ventriloquized sources). Rather, this authorial strategy grounds Pater’s ideas in tradition instead of authorial invention. It is also consistent with the histories of scholarship Pater traces across his oeuvre, in which he represents earlier scholars, from Pico della Mirandola to Winckelmann, as proto-aesthetic critics and myth-makers in this tradition. Further, these citational practices can be understood as part of the practice of feeling backward: it is a site of continuity, a marker of resemblance between the modern person—Pater—and his predecessors.

To feel backward involves accepting the validity of ‘resemblance[s]’ between oneself and the people of an ‘earlier world’ (‘Demeter’, p. 112). Heather Love has shown, too, how ‘feeling backward’ is part of a ‘tradition of queer experience and representation’ linked to being marked as backward in the sense of undeveloped (p. 4). In another sense, feeling backward is also strangely straight: it assumes a surprisingly linear, and less surprisingly, masculine sense of history. In feeling backward, one traces a line from one’s emotions to the emotions of ancient Greeks through an unmarked, putatively universal historical lineage—the sort of so-called universal history that is constituted exclusively by men. In this way, Pater’s scholarly practice, while it has affinities with feminine scholarly approaches that emphasize the feminized categories of the folk and of communal creation, ultimately locates its source of authority in a masculine past.

By contrast, as Yopie Prins has argued, Harrison’s classical scholarship can be seen ‘as a reworking of Pater’s late Victorian legacy from a feminine and increasingly feminist perspective’ (p. 211). Like Pater, and inspired by him, Harrison initially worked to recover and re-animate archaic Greek emotions tied to religion, taking scholarship as the means of such reanimation. Through dramatic lectures and equally dramatic prose, Harrison encouraged her audiences to experience ‘the beauty and the thrill’ of Dionysian rituals experienced by the deity’s female worshippers, the Maenads (‘Alpha’, pp. 204–05).

Harrison not only departed from Pater by recounting feminist histories, but also by explicitly embracing feminine scholarly practices. Whereas Pater adopted tactics that were, by the fin de siècle, becoming coded as feminine, Harrison theorized
distinctly masculine and feminine approaches to scholarship, and embraced the latter. In a 1915 essay, she ‘argu[ed] for sex in intellect’, claiming both ‘between man and woman [there is] an intellectual difference’ and that this difference ‘makes their co-operation desirable, because fruitful’ (‘Scientiae’, p. 140). While Harrison was ambivalent about whether the difference derives from biological or social factors, she located the difference in women’s greater affinity for communal work (p. 126). Thus Harrison affirmed stereotypes of women, but celebrated them as being necessary to progress in knowledge. For Harrison, modern knowledge was collaborative—‘Science to-day is […] more co-operative, more democratic’—and women’s conventionally collaborative knowledge practices were especially suited to pursue it (p. 136). Moreover, she found women generally best fit for ‘[o]ur present age […] of co-operation’ and saw that they were already flourishing within it: ‘The present time is unmistakably one of the emergence of women to fuller liberty and increased influence’ (p. 135).

Harrison’s enthusiasm for this emerging feminist era led her to disavow recreation, which she simplified into mere revival, in favour of a form of creation based in analogy. Instead of re-animating historical emotions, Harrison suggested the need for the creation of new emotions according to the rules governing the relations among emotion, art, and religion she had formulated through her study of archaic Greece. Essentially, according to Harrison, ‘[a]rt is […] social in origin, [and] remains and must remain social in function’ (Ancient, p. 241). Its social function in the past was to conduct emotion from the community into spiritual or artistic creation, and, in the present, to conduct emotion from artist to audience. In both past and present, according to Harrison, art grants people an experience of collective life. Moreover, in Harrison’s view, art was increasingly fulfilling its social function in the feminist, collective era she believed to be at hand (p. 246).

Harrison’s optimism is reflected in her call, pace Pater, to ‘feel forward, not backward’: ‘[I]n art we must look and feel, and look and feel forward, not backward, if we would live. Art somehow, like language, is always feeling forward to newer, fuller, subtler, emotions’ (Ancient, p. 240). Instead of trying to re-animate archaic emotions, Harrison asked her readers to express ‘the emotion of today, or still better to-morrow’ (p. 236). She urged artists and their audiences to attend to a present-day archive rather than to a Paterian archive of historical artifacts: to respond to ‘the haste and hurry of the modern street, the whirr of motor cars and
aeroplanes’ rather than to engage in ‘the contemplation of Greek statues, […] the revival of folk-songs, […] and] the re-enacting of Greek plays’ (p. 237).

For Harrison, the past as primary source of authority had become superseded by the community—‘the collective will of the people’ (‘Scientiae’, p. 136). Although the community is made up of men and women (indeed, most of Harrison’s examples of modern art and science feature men), this form of authority is gendered female, since Harrison has identified women as being particularly connected with communal feeling. Instead of feeling backward through the subtle citation of past writers, as in Pater’s myth-making scholarship, Harrison understands modern artists and art lovers to be feeling forward through their communal experiences and collaborative efforts. Her central example of such forward-feeling art is the group of French ‘Unanimists’, whose poetry disavows individualism in favour of community. She ends her own book of popular scholarship with a Unanimist poem that features an image of a communal dance. In the book’s last sentence, Harrison observes that her study thus ‘ends where it began, with the Choral Dance’ (Ancient, p. 252). This ending suggests the cyclical, analogical form of feeling forward to new emotions and new artistic forms, according to the patterns Harrison first found in her classical work. Where the archaic Greeks had created the ritual dance out of their communal desires (and then, from the dance, their gods and their first art, the drama), modern Europeans were feeling new feelings, forming new groups, and creating new art—which might yield new spiritual practices.

Harrison’s ‘feeling forward’ directly reworks Pater’s ‘feeling backwards’. In this unmarked exchange between scholars at either side of a long fin de siècle, each explored how scholarly practices could draw on the distant past for the sake of modern audiences. While Pater suggested that modern people need to reconstruct archaic Greek emotion through scholarship in order to experience religion, Harrison suggested people needed to create new emotions in response to their new experiences, and that these emotions would function for them as older ones had for the Greeks. Pater’s feeling backward allowed him to link himself to the Greeks through a lineage of thinking and feeling men, from Euripides to modern classical scholars. By contrast, Harrison’s feeling forward united her with circles of artists and art-lovers. These circles explicitly included men and women working in collaboration and excluded ‘mere aesthete[s]’ such as Pater (Ancient, p. 214).
Vernon Lee did not explicitly take sides in Harrison's debate with Pater. Instead, she entered the exchange obliquely when she rebuked Harrison's enthusiasm for the authority of the collective. In a 1915 lecture, Lee argued that this enthusiasm implicated Harrison in war-mongering through embracing the madness of crowds (even though Harrison was, like Lee, an outspoken pacifist). Ultimately, Lee's early embrace of collective authority and creativity in folk scholarship led her to develop her own gendered experience of knowledge production into a celebration of collaborations, not between men and women, but among women and aesthetic objects. Thus, at the advent of the modern university, Pater, Harrison, and Lee developed scholarly practices that, informed by gendered encounters with knowledge, exceeded the emerging boundaries of professional academic work. Acknowledging these projects as variously complementary and critical collaborations with diverse outcomes may help us more fully feel backward and forward along our own scholarly trajectories.

*Virginia Commonwealth University*

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Lee, Vernon, Vernon Lee Collection, Colby College (Waterville, Maine, USA), ‘Harrison Unanimism Lecture: War, Group=Emotion and Art’, holograph MS (3 June 1915)


NOTES

1 Lee quoted in Brake, *Walter Pater*, p. 15.
2 Howarth quoted in Hurst, p. 39.
3 Beard, p. 162.
7 Harrison, ‘Scientiae’, p. 122.
8 See Winick, ‘Collaboration’.
9 Harrison, *Themis*, pp. 18, 511. Further references to this book are given after quotations in the text.
10 Harrison, Review, p. 132.
12 My brief discussion of this text is indebted to Lee Behlman’s paper, ‘Modern Folklore and Renaissance Anti-Allegory in Vernon Lee’s *Tuscan Fairy Tales* (1880)’, presented at the North American Victorian Studies Association/Australasian Victorian Studies Association (Florence, Italy), May 2017.
13 Lee, *Tales*, p. 6. Further references to this book are given after quotations in the text.
14 Brookman argues that for Jessie L. Weston, a peer of Lee and Harrison, ‘The line between scholarship and re-creation was not a clearly defined one’ (p. 143 n. 76). I contend that to these women, legitimate scholarship was re-creation.
17 Fowler, p. 241.
18 Love, pp. 37, 39.
19 Pater, ‘Euripides’, pp. 53–4. Further references to this essay are given after quotations in the text.
20 Inman, xli.
21 Christopher Ricks’s 1977 article is the ur-text for such interpretations. Inman notes this tendency in Pater’s writing, but suggests it is motivated by a desire to avoid controversy: to ‘come boldly forward as in the “Conclusion”, with a pronouncement — that way danger lay’ (xlii). By contrast, Østermark-Johansen cites Pater’s misattributions as a creative practice ‘which (mis)appropriates the words of better writers in pursuit of subjective criticism as a fine art’ (301).
22 Colby College (Waterville, Maine, USA), Vernon Lee Collection, ‘Harrison Unanimism Lecture: War, Group=Emotion and Art’, holograph MS (3 June 1915).
Lesley Higgins

Living Effectively: Charlotte Green and Walter Pater

Proof of their friendship is slight—an indirect remark in one letter, and one short, specific missive. Otherwise, there are only fugitive traces of their association. Why, then, discuss Charlotte Green¹ (1842–1929) and Walter Pater? To examine how their lives intersect and overlap is to realize how much of Pater’s existence eludes us. Just as importantly, measured against the commitments and compulsions of Green’s life, Pater’s privileges and non-interests are more readily discerned. It is a study that sheds some light on four figures: Pater and his sister Clara (1841–1910), who, like Green, played a role in the women’s education movement at Oxford, and Green and her husband, Thomas (1836–82), philosopher, Balliol Fellow, and an ardent political activist.²

The friendship of Green and Pater was made possible by proximity—a proximity conditioned by gender norms and entitlements. He was an Oxford don; she, an Oxford don’s wife. More accurately, he was, in the early 1860s, that rare university Fellow who did not have to take holy orders before assuming his position; the post at Brasenose College was a godsend in that respect. She was that all-too-common phenomenon, a young woman of intelligence and enthusiasm
who initially knew about Oxford vicariously, through her brother John Addington Symonds (a contemporary of Pater and a close friend of Thomas Hill Green in the late 1860s; all three were members of the Old Mortality essay society). Charlotte met Tom Green in 1862; they renewed the acquaintance in 1870, became engaged in January 1871, and after their marriage in the summer of 1871 she moved to Oxford. Permission for Oxford dons to marry had only been granted the previous year.

Nonetheless, Green and Pater confounded stereotypes and instantiated two different modes of conducting an effective life. Green was thirty-nine when her husband died, in March 1882. She could have played the very Victorian role of The Widow (financially comfortable, doer of good deeds, a fixed figure at Balliol social events), but she did not. Instead, by training in Oxford and London, she re-invented herself through private and public nursing, her commitments to women’s education, and unheralded secretarial work for an aging Jowett. As an editor and writer, she organized her husband’s papers after his death, drafted material for R. L. Nettleship’s *Memoir of T. H. Green*, helped Evelyn Abbott and Lewis Campbell collect documents for their life of Benjamin Jowett, and wrote the introductory chapter for *Somerville College (A Historical Sketch)*. As a benefactor, she provided funds for high school and female college students’ scholarships (‘exhibitions’), for the Jowett memorial, and for Balliol. However unassuming Green seemed, she tested gender norms for more than six decades. Pater, *sotto voce*, transgressed conventional disciplinary boundaries, and heteronormativity, in his writings. His *métier* was intellectual daring, not social activism. He fashioned a canon *à rebours* through transhistorical and intermedial studies of art, literature, and philosophy. Both redefined themselves in the 1880s: Green, as an independent person; Pater, as a London-based author and social figure. Rather than perpetuate the myth that Oxford was Britain’s intellectual *omphalos*, he divided his time between Brasenose and Kensington from 1885 until 1893, published widely in leading (that is, non-academic) periodicals, wrote fiction, and enjoyed his aesthetic life.

Oxford in the second half of the nineteenth century was a vexatious place, roiled by controversies both ideological and personal. Religious debates were acute: if one were Broad Church, like Green’s friend Jowett, one might be accused of heresy; if Tractarian, the threat or promise of conversion (or ‘perversion’) to Rome was always near; if one were wavering about Christianity, like Pater, a so-called friend could—and did—report the transgression to a higher authority. Green’s
life was marked, but not marred, by a broadly defined Anglicanism. In the 1880s, when the issue of whether the new women’s ‘hall’ at Oxford should be church-affiliated or wholly secular, she and her husband supported the establishment of Somerville, a non-affiliated institution (the founders of Lady Margaret Hall took the opposite approach).

Two Letters
Charlotte’s first thirty years followed a predictable enough pattern—with flares of independence. She stayed home, was privately educated by a governess, partook in the ‘comfortable opulence’ of life at Bristol’s Clifton Hill, and served as a companion to her widowed father (her mother died in 1844). In July–September 1863, while her brother John and Tom Green toured Switzerland and Germany, she awaited letters at home about their adventures. Yet, Dr. Symonds took ‘the duties of rearing his brood with intense seriousness’ and encouraged continental travel. Charlotte toured Europe five times with her father, ‘through various parts of Germany, Switzerland, and Lombardy; the final trip, spring 1869, to Italy (including Naples, Rome, Florence, and Venice) and Germany.’ At home in Bristol, she benefitted from the opportunity to mix with regular visitors such as Jane and Thomas Carlyle, William Shairp, and Jowett, and guests such as Jenny Lind Goldschmidt. The family circle also included ‘such notable women as Mary Clifford, the Winkworth sisters, Frances Power Cobbe, and Anne Clough.’

In the 1870s, Clough would become the guiding force for the establishment of Newnham College, Cambridge, and Green contributed to ‘the organisation of lectures and classes for women’ in the Clifton area.

Despite a mutual interest in Renaissance art and culture, Pater and Green’s brother, J. A. Symonds, were never friends—‘never anything but waspishly antagonistic. Pater is said to have referred habitually to Symonds as “poor Symonds”; in May 1872, Symonds described Pater to a friend as looking ‘well dressed & ghastly….There is a kind of Death clinging to the man’. When Pater quoted from Symonds’s translations of Michelangelo’s sonnets in The Renaissance, he praised the texts but did not name the translator. Symonds’s review of The Renaissance in The Academy, 15 March 1873, ‘sidestepped outright condemnation and yet [Symonds] wondered nervously whether Pater would take offence. Reassurance arrived from Charlotte in Oxford. “I am pleased to hear that Pater liked my review”, he wrote thankfully.’
is the only indirect evidence that survives of the Green–Pater friendship: the letter demonstrates that by March 1873, Charlotte knew Pater sufficiently well to discuss her brother’s review with him.

For one thing, they were neighbours. In the 1870s, the Greens, Pater and his sisters, and Mary16 and T. Humphry Ward (Pater’s Brasenose colleague) all lived on Bradmore Road, part of a north Oxford suburb developed when dons were allowed to move out of college and marry. Mary Ward vividly describes the Paters’ rented, semi-detached ‘villa’ on Bradmore Road, and praises Clara Pater as a ‘personality never to be forgotten by those who loved her’ (‘her point of view, her opinion, had always the crispness, the savour that goes with perfect sincerity’17). Ward warmly expresses her admiration for T. H. Green’s ‘nobility’ and intellectual prowess, but never mentions Charlotte Green by name.18 And yet, Ward, Clara Pater, and Charlotte Green joined Louise Creighton to establish the Lectures for Women Committee in 1873, the group that galvanized the cause of university education for women.19

After Tom Green’s death, Charlotte settled into a house on nearby Banbury Road.20 The Paters moved to London in 1885. The one letter extant that directly connects Pater and Green was written in February 1887, redirected from London to Oxford:

Brasenose College, | Feb. 10.

Dear Mrs. Green,

Many thanks for the note, which has been forwarded to me here, and to Mrs. Ritchie for her kind invitation. Alas! I shall not be in London again till the 24th. I wonder whether you could accompany me to Wimbledon on Saturday afternoon, Feb. 26th. It would give me great pleasure if you could, supposing that day were convenient to Mrs. Ritchie. I am reading [Robert] Browning’s new volume, which well repays a little patience, and hope to bring it [to] you when I come to London.

Very faithfully yours

Walter Pater.21
Pater was very good at putting off unwanted or inconvenient social commitments; on this occasion, however, he seems eager to reschedule. The mutual friend and potential hostess in question was Anne Thackeray Ritchie (1837–1919), the much-admired daughter of William Thackeray who was a well-regarded novelist in her own right, and the wife of a civil servant in the India Office. Since 1884, the Ritchies and their two children lived with Ritchie’s mother at her home in Wimbledon. Southmead has been described by another guest as “a lovely large house, with room enough for everyone to have their own quarters. Lady Ritchie had a study where she wrote and the children had a schoolroom smartened up with a wicker cage of Doves, given by Mrs. Fanny Kemble. The whole house was pervaded with an atmosphere of dignified comfort. Cozy armchairs covered in flowing shiny chintz, big coal fires…. Well known writers, artists and musicians were constant visitors. The house was gay and happy for people felt at home in Lady Ritchie’s company. She was always a perfect hostess.”

Anne Ritchie was a considerable figure in the Victorian literary establishment (close ties with the Tennysons, and with her brother-in-law Leslie Stephen; friends and acquaintances such as the Carlyles, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë). She was quite prepared to be unconventional. Not only was she an ‘omnivorous reader’, she shared with Pater ‘a great love for French Memoirs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’, and she subscribed to French-language journals such as Revue des Deux Mondes. Robert Browning was another writer greatly admired by both. Ritchie had met the Brownings while travelling in Italy with her father; one of her critical successes would be Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning (1892). When, in December 1886, Arthur Symons sent Pater a copy of his first book, An Introduction to the Study of Browning, Pater’s note of thanks acknowledged Browning as ‘one of my best-loved writers’. Neither Pater nor Green is mentioned in Ritchie’s published letters or memoirs. Only the short note cited above, which somehow made its way from Green’s home to the archives at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, reveals the connection—one that places Pater and Green in decidedly wider social and cultural circles.

Posthumous tributes often exaggerate merits and gloss over personal deficiencies, but the people who praised Charlotte Green after her death unanimously cite characteristics that one can imagine Pater appreciating: A person of ‘strong character and deep conviction’, she was known for being shrewd, sympathetic yet astringent, and graced with good humour. ‘She has admirable
sense’, Jowett explained to Florence Nightingale, ‘power of sympathy, energy, quiet
ability—is absolutely trustworthy’.26 ‘A talk with her sent one away, refreshed by
laughter at one’s own absurdities as well as those of other people, and inspired by
a clearer vision of the end of one’s labour.’27 Green played several significant roles
during one very long and accomplished life: dutiful daughter, devoted marital
partner, professional nurse, and educational reformer. When the university’s
Delegacy for Women Students was formed in 1910, Green was one of two
women appointed by the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors. Another form of public
recognition came in 1921, when Oxford granted her an honorary MA.

Educating Women
From the mid-1870s onwards, Charlotte Green was at the forefront of the debate
concerning the ‘place’ of women in higher education. It was not a cause that Pater
shared, despite the commitments of his sister, Clara. He was not, like the Greens, a
feminist;28 in the numerous lists of financial contributors to Oxford organizations
working for the cause of women’s university education, Pater’s name does not
appear. And yet, in 1883, when the Association for the Education of Women
[AEW] petitioned the university to open up the examination ‘schools’ to women,
Pater was among the 121 signatories.29

In 1873, Green became secretary of the Lectures for Women Committee
(LWC),30 the initial lectures, provided by Oxford dons such as A. H. Johnson and
Henry Nettleship, commenced in the spring of 1874.31 (Pater did not participate.)
Four years later, the LWC expanded into the Association for the Education of
Women, and the Greens served as members of its council. In October 1879,
the twelve-person steering committee included Clara Pater, Mary Ward, and
Henry Nettleship; Charlotte was one of two Honorary Secretaries until 1882, a
position that included organizing the lectures, coordinating students’ schedules,
finding accommodations for them, and dealing with all correspondence regarding
scholarships. Green was an elected member of the AEW until 1913–14, and then
an appointed member until the Association was dissolved in November 1920.32

Green was also involved in the establishment and administration of Somerville
and St. Anne’s. She supported Somerville with her time, expertise, and money.
Records of the Hall (it became a college in 1894) indicate that she attended
meetings faithfully and voted conscientiously. She was a regular member of the
Somerville Council until 1924, when she was voted a ‘Life Member’; from 1908
until 1926, she was one of its two vice-presidents. For St. Anne’s, her particular focus became administering the Oxford lives of female students who lived out of college and in private homes. On behalf of those ‘Home-Students’, Green arranged accommodations and contacted potential tutors to act as a chaperone at lectures and social events.\textsuperscript{33} She served on the governing Committee of the Oxford Home-Students Society from 1893 to 1921, when the organization was dissolved.\textsuperscript{34} For all such organizations, Green was a ‘trusted and wide-minded adviser in the women’s cause’.\textsuperscript{35} In 1884, she was ‘asked to stand for the headship’ of Girton College, Cambridge, but declined because she believed ‘nursing [was] her vocation’.\textsuperscript{36} When, in 1889, Madeleine Shaw Lefevre was stepping down as the first principal of Somerville, Green was approached ‘as a possible successor’, but her brother ‘doubted whether she had “the versatility of intellectual sympathies” which the job required’. She refused the appointment.\textsuperscript{37}

Medical Matters

Pater’s father, Richard Glode Pater (1797?–1842), was a surgeon; his brother William (1835–87), who also qualified as a surgeon, became the director of a Staffordshire county hospital for the mentally ill. Their medical education is undocumented, but in Victorian England ‘surgeons’ (always addressed as ‘Mr.’) were variously qualified to operate on patients, and were in the second tier of the professional hierarchy. The first tier was zealously guarded by the physicians (addressed as ‘Dr.’), whose qualifications had to satisfy their licensing body, the Royal College of Physicians. Green’s father, Dr. John Addington Symonds (1807–71), did his initial training in Oxford’s Radcliffe Infirmary and, in 1828, graduated as an MD from the University of Edinburgh. After three years of working with his father, a surgeon-apothecary, Symonds moved to Bristol in 1831. There he married Harriet Sykes, became a leading figure in the local Literary and Philosophical Society, and began to publish in leading medical journals. In 1863, he was elected president of the British Medical Association.

One can only wonder what Dr. Symonds would have made of his daughter’s decision to become a nurse. Two issues were inextricably intertwined for the Victorians: questions of public health reform, and social concerns about fraying gender and class norms. Despite the exceptional public service of Florence Nightingale, the professionalization of nursing was a contentious issue. Stereotypes such as Sairey Gamp from Charles Dickens’s \textit{Martin Chuzzlewit} or Grace Poole
from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* were difficult to unseat. Many preferred the saintly 'healing woman', a 'strong subspecies of the angel in the house', to remain at home; for social and public health reformers, 'the heroic nurse best exemplified the ability of domestic morality and purification to move out of the home and into the tainted public domain'. Nightingale promoted the 'art' of nursing, a 'calling' more than a profession. Working-class women were considered dubious candidates for nursing because of moral and hygiene issues; 'ladies' could be suspect because of their inability to work hard. Middle-class male doctors resented women of an equal or higher social standing who might 'undermine their authority'. As an 1881 editorial *Lancet* insisted, nurses 'must always be servants, and they cannot safely be permitted to rise about that position in society'; 'obedience' was paramount. Male doctors were very reluctant to share their scientific domain, but by the late 1870s British hospitals took control of nurses' training partly because of the 'large forces of probationer labour' that the programmes made available.

Green, in her early 40s, was slightly older than the preferred age: Nightingale, writing in 1858, suggested that nurses should not be under 30 or more than 40; in 1873, the Central London Sick Asylum District was authorized 'to receive single women or widows between 25 and 35 years of as nursing probationers'. That Green was trained in two hospitals marks her inclusion in the third wave of nurses in the nineteenth century: no longer the volunteer, neighbourly 'night-watcher' who tended to the sick, nor the untrained but experienced women who 'went out nursing', but a 'modern' professional. Put another way, Green was not just dispensing band-aids and bromides—she was expanding her sphere of influence in the community, often among the economically disadvantaged, and demonstrating another means of advancing women's education. Helen Darbishire, Principal of Somerville from 1931 to 1945, recalled: 'My mother… told me how she met [Green] on her return [from London], when her training was over, and how she looked a transformed person… as if something dead had come alive again. She used her new knowledge and skill in nursing the sick in the poorer districts of Oxford, and in promoting the scheme for District Nursing in the city.' 'At the Radcliffe Infirmary', well into her 70s, Green 'was a constant visitor, well known in all the wards; a member also of the Committee of Management'.

Conclusions and Suggestions
Charlotte Green and Walter Pater provide two very different examples of how to live fully and conscientiously. By choice and gendered circumstances, she was the ultimate supporter of other people (her father; her husband; Jowett) and public causes (AEW; Somerville; St. Anne’s; nursing). That she helped to nurse Pater in 1893–4 when he suffered from gout and then rheumatic fever, and that she helped Clara and Hester to deal with his posthumous affairs, is further testimony to her commitment. (Pater died intestate; the Certificate of Administration drawn up in lieu of a will and signed on 19 September 1894 was witnessed by Hester Pater and ‘Charlotte Byron Green’. Pater by all accounts led what people today would consider a closeted life, yet he expressed himself abundantly and creatively in his fiction, journalism, art criticism, and lectures. A number of Oxford students, including Gerard Manley Hopkins, Charles Shadwell, and Oscar Wilde, were influenced by him; his writings, whether admired or contested, would influence modernists from W. B. Yeats and Virginia Woolf to James Joyce and T. S. Eliot. Although Pater’s art criticism is not riddled with the casual sexism or demeaning erotic commodification that marks the work of so many of his male contemporaries, he was not interested in the causes of women’s education or rights—not even to support his sister Clara. Green’s financial security compares vividly with the financial constraints of Pater (who for decades had to provide for himself and his sisters) and what seems to have been the increasing poverty of Clara and Hester in their later years.

One could argue that both Charlotte Green and Walter Pater were ‘diaphanous’, in the sense that ‘the main current of the world’s energy’ passed through each of them, although in different ways; they were transparent to those forces of ‘the world’s energy’ yet not too ‘forceful’ themselves, not egotistically self-displaying. Certainly both demonstrated a ‘truthfulness of temper’ that was ‘really lifegiving in the established order of things’.

York University, Toronto
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My thanks to Carolyn Williams for her editorial insights.

NOTES

1 She identified herself as C. B. Symonds (Charlotte Byron Symonds) before her marriage, and Mrs. T. H. Green once married, or Charlotte Byron Green; I will use Charlotte Green.

2 In Dec. 1864, while hoping for a permanent academic position, T. H. Green was a schools enquiry commissioner for Staffordshire and Warwickshire. In spring 1866, he became Senior Dean at Balliol, and Tutor. In addition to various campaigns for women’s university education, Green supported the Oxford Reform League, the National Education League, the National Church Reform Union, and the Oxford Band of Hope Temperance League (his brother Valentine Jr. was an alcoholic; see Denys P. Leighton, *The Greenian Moment: T. H. Green, Religion, and Political Argument in Victorian Britain* [Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004], 51, 148 n. 62). In Nov. 1876, Green was elected Town Councillor for the North Ward of Oxford.

3 In ‘Notes of Recollection by J. A. Symonds’, the author states: ‘I well remember [Green] coming back from hearing Pater read an essay at the Old Mortality, beaming all over with the high theme expressed in thrilling language: “It was a Dithyramb”.’ Papers of T. H. Green, Balliol College Archives, 1.d. fol. 85.

4 Charlotte Green to R. L. Nettleship, 24 Dec. 1887; Papers of T. H. Green, Balliol College Archives, 1.d.10i.

5 Dr. Symonds died 25 Feb. 1871; he ‘had given Charlotte and Green his blessing some months before his death, and a family conclave decided that there was no reason for the marriage to be postponed.’ The Greens honeymooned in Switzerland. Phyllis Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian: A Biography of John Addington Symonds* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 144–5.

6 In her will, she left all the royalties for her husband’s publications to Balliol.

7 In winter 1859, John McQueen, Pater’s friend since their days at King’s School, Canterbury and also an Oxford student, reported Pater’s apparent apostasy to Rev. H. P. Liddon, who advised McQueen to contact Rev. Archibald Tait, Bishop of London. Pater did not take Anglican orders. Denis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 28.


15 Ibid., 158.

16 Mary Arnold (1851–1920) married T. Humphry Ward (1845–1926) on 6 April 1872. In 1881, Humphry left academia for a position with *The Times*, eventually becoming the newspaper’s principal art critic. In November 1881, the Wards moved to London.
18 Ibid., 1: 176, 166.
19 Clara Pater worked with Louise Creighton as a ‘district visitor in Oxford, a new venture by the Church of England to visit the poor…. Louise and Clara Pater also established a small lending library in their parish district where they were volunteers, encouraging families to take out books.’ James Covert, *A Victorian Marriage: Mandell and Louise Creighton* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000), 128.
20 In her later years, Charlotte lived at 56 Woodstock Road, property now belonging to St. Anne's College. When the Paters returned to Oxford in 1893, they moved to 64 St. Giles's (within easy walking distance of Green's home), a property now part of a Dominican friary.
22 Richmond Thackeray Ritchie (1854–1912) was born in Calcutta, the son of Augusta and William Ritchie (then the advocate-general of Bengal). He was finishing his studies at Cambridge (and beginning to work in the India Office) when, on 2 Aug. 1877, he married his second cousin, Anne Thackeray. Ritchie was created KCB in June 1907.
24 Ibid., 176.
27 Butler, *History of St. Anne's Society*, 44.
29 Heads of colleges who supported the petition included Mark Pattison and T. F. Bright; professors, W. H. Acland, Henry Nettleship, and A. V Dicey; dons, R. L. Nettleship and, from Brasenose, F. Madan and Pater. Archives, St. Anne's College, A.E.W. 5.
30 This was the second such scheme; the first was organized in 1865 by Eleanor Smith. 'St. Anne's College Calendar, 1888–9'; Archives, St. Anne's College, R9/2.
32 Data collected from the AEW annual reports, now housed in the Archives of St. Anne's College, A.E.W.1/1. Clara Pater was a member of the steering committee from 1880 until 1886.
33 When male professors at Oxford agreed to allow women to attend regular lectures, ‘the presence of a chaperone was obligatory’ until 1893, and ‘up until the Great War might be required at any lecture at which only one woman was present’. Pauline Adams, *Somerville for Women: An Oxford College 1879–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 33.
34 Butler, *History of St Anne's Society*, 43.
35 Bertha Johnson (1846–1927) quoted in Gemma Bailey, ed., *Lady Margaret Hall, A Short History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), 44.
37 Adams, *Somerville for Women*, 24. Clara Pater was deputy Principal of Somerville in autumn 1880,
acting Principal 1885–6, and functioned as Vice-Principal in 1886; she served as a Classics Tutor from 1885 to June 1894, and as Resident Tutor for the West Building, 1887–94. Ibid., 35–6.


41 Ibid., xiv.

42 Ibid., 74.


44 Information about her training is sketchy: Jowett and others mention Green's instruction at the Radcliffe Infirmary, but its records do not go back before 1891; the name of the London institution where she trained is not known.


47 Ibid., 17–18.

48 On 24 Dec. 1887, Green acknowledged to R. L. Nettleship that, ‘Time seems very long, though life has much that is beautiful and I am very thankful to be well & able to go on alone—and do what my Husband wanted me to do—to make friends with working people & help them if I could that way. Almost the only thing personal he said ^to me^ when he knew he was dying was—that I was "to try and be happy & lead a useful life & do all we meant to do together".’ Papers of T. H. Green, Balliol College Archives, 1.d.10i.


51 Influence could take a negative form. W. H. Mallock parodied Pater as Mr. Rose in *The New Republic* (serialized June–December 1876; book form, 1877), the publication of which may have encouraged Pater to cancel, in Nov. 1878, a volume of essays tentatively entitled *Dionysus and Other Studies*. On the contrary, as a mark of profound respect, Mary Arnold Ward modelled the exemplary *Robert Elsmere* (1888) character Prof. Henry Grey after T. H. Green, co-dedicated the novel to him, and in the preliminary pages explained that several passages ‘are either literally or substantially taken from a volume of Lay Sermons, called *The Witness of God*, by the late Professor’.

52 Dr. Symonds gave Charlotte and Tom £10,000 in stocks and shares as a marriage settlement (in today’s terms, roughly £800,000); it ‘netted the couple between £750 and £880’ annually. Leighton, *The Greenian Moment*, 17.

In the nineteenth century, Leamington Spa in Warwickshire was a strange echo of an ancient Roman way of life, its great characteristic being that it sat upon medicinal springs of waters. The Romans had enjoyed and cared for their benefits but, when they left, their way of life remained as occult as its wells; the Anglo-Saxons condemned or forgot the gifts of nature. In the eighteenth century, its benefits were rediscovered; as in the past, the potential for growth lay again in the earth beneath their feet, in the warm waters flowing underneath. Reluctantly the sleepy town grasped the opportunity and numerous spas began to proliferate. The Royal Pump Rooms, built in 1811, brought in fashionable, well-off tourists looking for rest and recuperation. Queen Victoria, who cared greatly for a place she had visited when she was still a young princess, granted the town the title of ‘Royal’. Industry and commerce required architects, painters, dreamers.

She had been trying to recollect something eventful or interesting that might have happened to her in her life. But all in vain, she confessed to the German novelist Eufemia von Adlersfeld-Ballestrem in an early 1879 letter: hers was the simplest of biographies. And at twenty-two, she recited it, in case Ballestrem could make some use of it in any German journal she may write for, so that her little book *A Handful of Honeysuckles*, only one year old, may travel well abroad. ‘I was
born on the 27th of February 1857 at Milverton Crescent near Leamington in Warwickshire, my father being Diocesan Architect for the district: rather more than a year afterwards my Mother gave me a little sister' (Mabel, prose writer, only sister, dearest friend). The family circle was never any larger.

Children make poignant poets. When she would write of her childhood in Warwickshire, she would recall the countryside, full of animation, colour, and form. How carefully she and Mabel would kilt their skirts and go down the garden of the Hesperides to pluck ox-lips, pinks, and woodbines, laying them later on their bed. With the intensity of which she was capable, she soon pronounced herself an old poet. That she was so little she could not write her verses down did not worry her much or at all. The sensitive child was blessed with imagination, and though she did not know, her littleness was a triumph that liberated her from the discipline of the pen. Her mother, alert to her fancies, jotted the verses down and kept them for many years. The only thing at all noticeable in those early nursery rhymes was that she was very obstinate in describing things and sensations ‘exactly as I felt and saw them, however absurd or false these descriptions appeared to grown-up people.’ Her letter to Ballestrem confirms what one might have already unwittingly divined: she had been a Pre-Raphaelite child.

Her supple mind early turned to books, reading easily at five. Her education as a gifted child is familiar because recurrent in the case of female writers. Her father, a lover of old books, allowed her the use of his library. He taught her literature, caring to explain the difficulties of old spelling. Thus prepared, her intellectual hunger drew her freely into other older literatures of many periods: old chronicles and Elizabethan dramatists completed the wondrous exuberance of Grimms’ and Hans Andersen’s fairy tales—aesthetic readings for a girl allowed to indulge in her love of reading. To her vividly coloured imagination, textuality was a revelation; her mind expanding as she enlarged the breadth of her interests. It is natural to suppose a dreamy child easily impressionable by beauty. What else did she love? ‘After books the things I cared for most were wild-flowers and German music.’ ‘I love Beethoven all through, early works and late!’ We know today of her love of Pergolesi, of Berlioz. Music would always haunt her dreams yet awake from her deep bedtimes. Systematically she would feel that that vividness suffered in the writing down, such was the power of her dreams that demystified the conscious physicality of the writing: ‘Octaves from Death’s Gamut’, ‘In the Organ Loft’, indeed ‘A Child-Musician’. Music would thus always be a constant, a curiosity, a
yearning, the fabric of her thinking and of her poetry, the intense pleasure, beyond reason—she would write—one gets from combinations of harmony on music. ‘Music and poetry have their fortune in the modern world’, observes Walter Pater in *Studies of the History of the Renaissance*. Robinson felt a pang of recognition reading that very line in the ‘Winckelmann’ essay; yes, she would say to herself, in my youthful poems too. Louder, louder, louder sing.

By 1870, the young poet—she is thirteen—is learning Latin, and writing a history of Athens. One of her poems, ‘Sunset at Kenilworth’, has appeared in the local newspaper *Leamington Courier*. Firmly she believes in the emotional capabilities of her dolls, the result of which is a bad brain-fever that takes her time to recover. It is her first break down. (In 1888, she would articulate such suffering in ‘In Affliction’: ‘I am underneath. They do not dream how deep below the eddying flood is whirled.’) Yet at thirteen the recommended remedy is schooling in Brussels with her sister Mabel. Three years later, she is back in England. By now her parents have left Warwickshire. The family will continue to spend the holidays there, but they are now living in bohemian London, in Gower Street. She becomes a student of University College, London, close by, and where, after a year or so, she gives up general studies to attach herself to literature. About this time she joins a Greek class in the college, and for five years, from 1874 to 1879, she finds her chief interest in the study of Greek literature. She cherishes reading Plato in Greek; she is the only woman in class, and her professor treats her like a boy. More garlands: the Women’s Debating Society at University College selects her to be on the Committee. She feels ‘dreadfully out of place’, ‘a frivolous poet, among all the learned ladies in checked Ulsters.’ We today are unperplexed, for we understand she was chosen for her Hellenic humanism. The poet is frivolous because confident: she is the fashionable woman of genius.

Gracious, illusive, dreamy, Romantic, elusive. Was the young poet humbly looking back to the imaginative compositions of Dante Gabriel Rossetti in *A Handful of Honeysuckle*, some wondered? There are daring humument moments. And yet, one finds oneself admiring how the little book of verses, her first!, is a substitution of the typical for what actually took place in her thoughts; what she took with her from her childhood, that passion from wild flowers expressed as a sensibility, a desire of physical beauty—transcendent like day dreaming. Her world as it seems, as she daydreams the world. A flight of the imagination, a command of fantasy, D. G. Rossetti wrote to her upon reading the book in May
1879. We notice that her sunshine-yellow flowers are highly perfumed. That her honeysuckle, indeed, weaves poem with poem, twists them with fantastic grace into wreaths of fancies in paradise. Not even part of the bunch but the gift of a single flower is the opening sonnet that ties the book,

‘Honeysuckle’.
I gather from the hedgerows, where they spring,
These sunshine-yellow flowers, grown sweet i’ the air,
Fearing to hope that ye can find them fair,
Who at your wish could have a costlier thing.
Lovers, for you no passion-flowers I bring,
Nor any roses for your ladies’ wear,
No violets fragrant still from Sappho’s hair,
Nor laurel crowns to garland them that sings.

But these are all I have, and these I give.
True, they have languish’d since they came to town,
As music suffers in the writing down,
And well I know they have not long to live.
Yet for your sakes these left the country ways,
That, taken thence, are gown too poor for praise.

Robinson offers us the humble flower, conscious of its worn-out sweetness. Roses, violets, laurels mean too much. It is the honeysuckle that attracts the hummingbird. She knows that by the time of the gift, the honeysuckles may be jaded, but hopes that in their dying faintness we may find that fadeur exquise, that certain tenuity and caducity. The languid poet thus reveals herself, for she has her fantastic experiment welded in metal; she joyfully selects filigree gold honeysuckles for the cover of her book surely to anchor it on the steadfast rock of immortality. Gold, one also discerns, because it is a transitional metal. And so it goes in ‘Past and Present’: ‘I had great aims in youth (well it is right, those fair unfruitful flowers should flourish then though they fade soon) and now in the eyes of men my life seems worthy and my future bright.’ It was like a portraiture outlined in severe relief, though in itself a wonderful fancy work, her metal honeysuckle.
The peculiar character of her honeysuckle in gold was noticed by the curious as a distinction in her verse, such an elastic force in word and rhyme. The gold curvature of her flower seemed to indicate poetic triumph over a material partly resisting in its fragility, which yet at last took outline from her thought with the firmness of antique forms of poetic mastery. The antiquarian aesthetic of ‘A Rime of True Lovers. (After Bocaccio)’ impressed as it transmitted the pleasure from the past becoming the sweet force of present desire:

All lovers, who are beloved,
   All followers of Love’s vagrant feet,
All ye whose mistresses have proved
   Constant to change, true to deceit,
Listen, I’ll sing old rhymes to you,
   Of years gone by when Love was true,
Till through your dreams my singing soundeth sweet.

‘Queen Rosalys’, ‘Le Roi est Mort’, ‘A Ballad of Lost Lovers’, all partaking in different fashions—because from different traditions—of a joyful sensuousness; in truth one wishes to escape to those antique histories to feel the violence of that love. The poems are fragrant and colourful, mournful; one is eager to hold onto the sensation of their subjective immortality, to use a modern phrase, as we enjoy the secondary existence of those forgotten feelings. Ancient rhymes and meters feel refreshed to make us feel a naïve affinity with their forms, stirring yet pensive, passionately attached because detached. ‘Fiametta: A Sequence’ enchants:

   Her eyes are a flame
To fire the heart of me!
   A flame is her name,
Her eyes are a flame,
   My heart burns the same
The fiercest of the three.
   Her eyes are a flame
To fire the heart of me.
Boccaccio's sonnet 'On his Last Sight of Fiammetta' is the source. D. G. Rossetti's sonnet-painting, the haunting red double work, finished the same year as her *Honeysuckles*, is one echo and one refraction of many. The Robinsons and the Rossettis (the William Michael Rossettis, parents and children; Christina Rossetti and her mother) are Bloomsbury neighbours. They have known each other since 1876 and their friendship is intimate. Robinson's move away from the sonnet form into an octave enables the fiercest ecstasy, the intensity of the moment. In a letter to John Addington Symonds she opens her heart: 'I consider Mrs. William Rossetti as good & loveable a woman as you consider Christian a man.' Are we to take from this that Lucy Madox Brown Rossetti, painter and Pre-Raphaelite beauty, is her Fiametta? Robinson will have her portrait painted by Lucy's father, Ford Madox Brown, in 1881.

*Honeysuckles* is a success yet Dante Gabriel Rossetti warns her of her experimentalism, 'the extremes to which you carry form seem to hamper you sometimes: and indeed the simpler poems please me best.' Though with an air so disengaged, she seemed to be living as intensely in the invisible as the visible world. She is easily seduced by materiality, disappearing in it, as it decomposes into disembodied thought. Her friendship with Symonds is frank: he talks about his lover, Christian Boul, and shares photographs of other lovers with her. 'I cannot understand why people see, think “aesthetic” and “immoral” synonymous', she writes to him. The virginal poet is capriciously read, her Epicureanism worrisome. She complains to Symonds: 'Why would accurate perceptions of physical and natural beauty make one insensible to moral Beauty. I have always thought of them as different phenomena of one noumenon.' She had met Vernon Lee sometime in 1879 (soon their relationship begins). Under the auspices of her father's home, she has a salon where she receives, dressed in medieval costumes. And in 1879 she engages in finishing a translation of the *Hippolytus of Euripides*, which she was hoping to bring out in 1880. The very pleasure of verse meditation that the little drama affords her as she mimics and then implicitly delightfully feels the passions of her characters. She thinks of the translation as a new aesthetic for verse composition, and she begins to feel an even stronger appetite for fame, for distinction among her fellow poets. At the turn of the 1880s, when the spirit of Pre-Raphaelism was everywhere, and people were beginning to move towards more decadent forms of aesthetic culture, she comes to represent a new and peculiar phase of the period, a poet who blended the somewhat attenuated lines of
a thriving fin-de-siècle vision of an antique Renaissance with the strong lines of a modernity in verse. The Crowned Hippolytus when finally published in 1881 would complicate and slow down her fame. She knows her modernisms of feeling will be seen as a flaw but she is determined: the arrangement of Choriambs and Iambs, her melody, will beat like prose. She wills her contemporaries to read her Hippolytus like Euripides’ contemporaries read his Hippolytus. But she is also struggling and, fascinating to our imagination, also doubting.

With a flutter of pleasure she meets unexpectedly Walter Pater during her first ever visit to Oxford. The date is sometime in December 1880. The classical scholar and poet Frederick Myers, a former lover of Symonds, had set up an amateur theatre group with the aim of staging Aeschylus’ Agamemnon in the original Greek. Actors who could read and perform it in the original language, however, were difficult to find and Robinson, in the thick of her correspondence with Symonds, is asked to play the part of Cassandra. (Hellenism is a form of friendship, friendship a form of Hellenism—the inverse copula vitalises the intimacy, Symonds and Robinson discover, confident friends at the inner corner of the soul.) Robinson writes of the strenuous, long rehearsals; and of the rigorous attention paid to the play, which involved impenetrable choruses, speeches requiring a crowd of actors. At home she can be heard declaiming naturally lines in Greek. In between the rehearsals, Myers and Robinson discuss her modern translation of Hippolytus; he too is concerned about her modernisms. She remains firm, sympathetic to Euripides’ feminine tones, jealous of his virtuosity but rewriting his blind spots. Too many difficulties face the production of Agamemnon, which is in the end taken up by one of the Oxford colleges to be staged by an all male cast. Robinson loses the part and as a token of appreciation, she is sent an invitation to the premier. She stays in Oxford with her friends Humphry and Mary Ward and so she meets Walter Pater and his sisters, Hester and Clara.

He is intrigued by the young Hellenist and immediately borrows Honeysuckles from a common friend, Edmund Gosse. Avidly he reads the book and writes from Brasenose to Gosse on 29 January 1881. He had hoped to return the book in person, but what with the bad weather, and the quantity they had to do during their short stay, added to one of his sisters being far from well all through it, he had to leave without seeing Gosse, to his great regret: ‘Many thanks for the loan of the poems, which I, and some others here, much enjoyed especially the “Ballad of the Heroes”’. 
O conquerors and heroes, say—
    Great Kings and Captains tell me this,
Now that you rest beneath the clay
    What profit lies in victories?
Do softer flower-roots twine and kiss
    The wither bones of Charlemain?
Our crownless heads sleep sweet as his

*Now all your victories are in vain.*

Robinson can hardly imagine that the refrain has captured his perplexed imagination, the grave figure of beautiful soldiers, their corpses surrounded by flowers, the whimsical brutality of violence. The mad rage of blood; bodies placed in a hollow space prepared secretly or sacredly. Those who fell when Athens lost Amphipolis, those who fell dead at Salamis, Roman armies, Hannibal, Lascaris. The vain heroism by which the national wellbeing had been achieved or placed in danger. The ballad has the candour of decay and he rejoices in the subtle reference to Ariosto as he thinks of his growing manuscript, some imaginary portraits of young aesthetes, shadows of unhappy heroes—quivering, alive, prismatic—of which he has finished but one, ‘The Child in the House’. What, Pater thinks, what now about “An English Poet”? After two years, still unfinished; should I entwined or disentwined it? He is compelled (so to speak) to adjust it to it; to ascertain and accept that in it which should least collide with, or might even carry forward a little, his own characteristic tendencies. He is not ready for a host of minute recognitions on his part, of what that might involve. Then there is also the Euripides’ *Bacchae*, the Hippolytus. Robinson some may reason as the English poet. There is no theoretic equivalent—he reasons—to account for such connection with each other’s modes of thought and feeling, such is the matter of imaginative or artistic literature—a transcript, not of mere but of fact in its infinite variety as modified by human preference in all its infinitely varied forms. Beauty ascribed to measure.

Robinson’s first thought upon meeting Pater and his sisters is ‘three celibates’. She does not know what the learned man is writing; it is too early in their friendship. After seeing *Agamemnon* she pauses and imagines her *Hippolytus* staged by an all-female cast. Her mind goes back to the pressing translation. Hippolytus will tell his father:
'I love the Gods and fear them, and I use
No sin-experimentalists for friends.'

The unconquerable Eros that is chaste Dionysus. The plot and her modern translation of Euripides weigh heavily on her mind. Symonds helps yet interferes; there are many points, she thinks, on which the heart of Phaedra greatly needs to be touched. Mothers who love young men, then the terror of husbands who may not forgive and of fathers who may kill their offspring. She is daunted by what Vernon thought of her before she knew her, that her poetry was probably of the sort manufactured by Mallock’s recipes. Her poem begins with Hippolytus singing to the virgin goddess Artemis. He brings her a plaited wreath of flowers (had he learned knitting from his mother, the Amazon?). ‘All hail, most holy and virgin daughter of God!’ echoes the chorus. But the chorus insists as it warns; will Hippolytus hear any advice? ‘I bring a gift of council—will you take it?’ asks the Retainer: ‘Why greetest not one mighty goddess? Cypris, I mean; the goddess at thy gate’. Hippolytus greets her too, but far off, being chaste. And thus, Hippolytus’s fate is sealed. Cypris, accustomed to centuries of zealous prayer—she is Love—, feels the insult and claims vengeance for his proud refusal of desire. Is this not absolute chastity itself a kind of death? She was to dedicate the book to Mr Symonds, but now to Vernon Lee, too. ‘Now we have met we are safe’, Lee writes lovingly, forcefully, stitching words to her heart.

Phaedra, Theseus’s wife, is infatuated with the son of the Amazon. Under a veil shrouding her golden hair, Phaedra lies sick in the house, pining for Hippolytus, her stepson. How her fiery soul feels the sickness, ‘the worst!’ She wishes in vain to gain the victory of self-control. The married veil is just too heavy as she dreams of being Artemis, hunting Hippolytus with her darts in the woods. For the landscape Robinson has in his mind using Warwickshire, for she realised its hayfield looked like the virginal meadow in Hippolytus after seeing a painting by her sister done during their last holidays there. Phaedra’s loving but interfering nurse thinks Phaedra’s madness can only have one solution: sinning will extinguish the fire of temptation; and the nurse corners a horrified Hippolytus, who is loud in his pride and will not hush such horrors in his ears. ‘Forgive me’, the nurse desperately tries, ‘it is human, son, to sin.’ Robinson feels Phaedra’s passion as her own as she summons Vernon Lee, the proud Hippolytus. Or perhaps Lee is Phaedra and she Hippolytus. Lizzie Sharp’s words trouble but please. Lee writes that she wishes
Lizzie's stupid joke were a reality, that she were a man and Mary her wife and that as a husband she could bend Mary to her will and force her to finish *Hippolytus*. Fearing her husband, Phaedra kills herself. She is found hanged by her own act; on her person, poisonous words accusing her stepson of violating her body. The translation starts to bleed.

‘I cannot make up my mind about my book’, she tells Symonds. ‘Everyone wants me to publish poems with the play, but Mr. Kegan Paul agrees with me that Hippolytus is best alone.’ ‘The Red Clove’, ‘During Music’, and ‘Wild Cherry Branches’ may be veiled under the dress of translation. The modern spirit wins and Hippolytus is published with other poems. And thus the fate of the book is sealed, reverted by critics to a small-minded view of some theory of translation. *Raffinirun* the reviews go on and on. It is a book for the delighted reading of a scholar, willing to ponder at leisure, to make his way surely, and understand! What is the prerogative of the poetic protest, Robinson wonders? Justice goes blindfold.

With a concentration of all her finer literary gift the crownless poet wonders two lifetimes later if she can arrest, for others, also certain clauses of experience as the imaginative memory presented them to herself. Writing went on. The escapes into landscape, into fiction, into history, into philosophy, into biography, into writing for the sake of writing; into writing for the need of money. People coming to her house to hear how *Marius the Epicurean* had been received by the literary world, for the Paters and the Robinsons are now neighbours, two curious eighteenth-century houses, where both families live following the caprice of their fantasies. The Paters invent families; the Robinsons are the materialised relatives. She remembers a Christmas, late at night. She was sent downstairs to the kitchen to get some water for the punch. The cockroaches, the sound of their swarming, made her go unconscious and she is found lying on the floor. Only Pater takes pity on her. ‘I understand Mary’s fright’—she still remembers his curious explanation—‘It is the horror of numbers that multiply. The horror of the multiplication of numbers to infinity, that at times I resented in contemplating the swarming stars in the Milky Way.’

She recognises in herself Pater’s sentiment, his formalism. He would attach so much value to the nuance of stuff, of one flower, to the form of an object. She remembers him once walking into his house with a radiant air because he had experienced the ecstasy of beauty. He explained that at the slope of Headington Hill he had seen a field of onion flowers on his right. ‘Everyday they are beautiful,
these pale and globular flowers, but there a happy accident had thrown up delphinium seedlings in the midst of these plants, which burst forth here and there, dull blue, pale blue, mauve blue, red and white, a sea of milky green onions, as a light breeze stirred all these flowers’. He was that great child, the boy to whom the view of a single hawthorn plunged him into ecstasy. Did she see with jealousy the growing friendship between Vernon and Pater? In truth, Pater was as amiable to her sister and to herself for he enjoyed the society of young women. She can still hear his ‘no doubt’ encouragements, the ‘really’ dubitatives he attached onto their beautiful stories; yet at times his tales were far more extravagant.

She lived her future. ‘Today’s critics’, Robinson would sharply observe in the twentieth century, ‘examine masterpieces with a patience equal to that with a psychopathologist uses to analyse the day-dreams of a sick man. Do not the tales we tell one another, like our precious day-dreams, furnish them with symptoms of our hidden torments? Although the novel Marius is replete with music and beauty, it is not what interests us particularly: it is the author’s soul.’ The bisexual Robinson of the twentieth century would read Imaginary Portraits, Marius, Gaston, Plato and Platonism for how these imaginary accounts helped Pater understand his very own struggles and existence. ‘Marius in Rome’, she writes, ‘understands the inmost barrenness and the heavy melancholy which oppressed Pater in his college at Oxford.’ ‘Pater saw Simeon Solomon fall, in one day, from the height of his glory, a fallen angel who should have seen the sky. The anxious feelings with which Pater guarded his insecurity, his apprehension about the vicious element hidden deep in his heart, possibly recalled the other origin of a similar catastrophe.’ This Robinson prefers the ‘virile’ Plato and Platonism, ‘the most beautiful book he has ever written’. That book, and the second chapter of Marius, ‘White Nights’. No more unhappy heroes, she notes, no more miserable aesthetes: it was thus that Pater returned to Oxford, to the fold.

She also took refuge in metaphysics, in Plato. Her first husband, James Darmester, will write of her idealism, of her Platonism when reviewing her new book of poems, that Italian Garden that he read in India in 1886. His golden utterance, ‘That which the historian finds in the archive, the poet has found in the movement of her heart’, really touching the core of her renewed aesthetic after some difficult time, the Hippolytus of course, but also The New Arcadia (is realism only for the materialists?). In the Italian book, the vestiges of her verses are recovered by way of an imaginary reinvention of past European poetic forms.
The lyre sings powerfully to tunes with stirring echoes of Sappho, of Shelley, of Baudelaire, but the tunes are new and they shine like fire-flies as they reveal a new personality, a new thought. The jealous verses of ‘Tuscan Cypress’, the Rispetti, are neither masculine nor feminine, is Symonds’s curious complaint. She wants the liquid melody of its sounds to feel like an improvised Renaissance. Her imaginary poems have the architecture of an Italian garden; the metal framework of its wrought iron gate is the entrance to a temple of garlands. Round about the doors of it hang her folletas, her riorfioritas, her posies, for the roses of the Past, gathered thus once, keep even when dried their form to remain always sweet. She thus freed the very perfume of the flowers. To create, to live, art and life, the occult pleasures of the Venetian night, are the echoes of her song we can barely hear in our London night. For, her crown veiled, Robinson would remain always of the poetic temper and would partly live, as it were, by system, much in reminiscence. The swan was flying and rising higher, rising and flying away and the burning life of her aestheticism drifted with her.

Tell me a story, dear that is not true,  
Strange as a vision, full of splendid things;  
Here will I lie and dream that it is not you,  
And dream it is a mocking bird that sings:

‘For art comes to us proposing frankly  
To give but the highest quality  
To our moments as they pass  
And simply for those moments’ sake.’

Birkbeck, University of London
As the curious reader familiarly versed in the period might have observed, the veiled stones for this mosaic work have been cut and put together using the following texts:


___, ‘Cosmopolitan Aestheticism: The Affective “Italian” Ethics of A. Mary F. Robinson’, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 10.2 (June 2013), 163–82

___, “Gay Strangers”: Reflections on Decadence and the Decadent Poetics of A. Mary F. Robinson,’ *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens* [En ligne], 78, Automne 2013, mis en ligne le 01 septembre 2013, consulté le 07 septembre 2017. URL : http://cve.revues.org/856 ; DOI : 10.4000/cve.856


___, *Marius the Epicurean. His Sensations and Ideas* (London: Macmillan, 1885)

___, *Imaginary Portraits* (London: Macmillan, 1887)


___, *Plato and Platonism* (London: Macmillan, 1893)

___, *Greek Studies*, ed. C. L. Shadwell (London: Macmillan, 1895)


Prins, Yopie, “‘Lady’s Greek’ (With the Accents): A Metrical Translation of Euripides by A. Mary F. Robinson’, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 34.2 (2006), 591–61
For all of modernism’s ostensible aversion towards Aestheticism (infamously dismissed by T. S. Eliot as ‘a soapy sea / Of Symonds—Walter Pater—Vernon Lee’), contemporary literary scholarship has been assiduous in exposing the broad continuities and even affinities that link the fin de siècle with the early twentieth century. David Deutsch’s new book adds to this growing body of criticism by exploring representations of classical music in a catholic range of British literature ranging from the Elementary Education Act of 1870 through to the end of the Second World War. Although his focus is primarily on writers from the early twentieth century, a guiding theme is the work of Walter Pater, whose ‘influence on the intellectual, social, and cultural interest of the early-twentieth-century literature’ constitutes ‘a thematic undercurrent through this book’ (p. 5). Accordingly, Deutsch’s first chapter is devoted to the question of music in Pater’s writings, and to his engagement with the musical life of nineteenth-century Oxford (some of this material appeared in the Walter Pater Newsletter in 2015). Moving swiftly on from the essay on Giorgione, Deutsch situates his reading in a wider analysis of Pater’s Platonism with a particular focus on the intellectual contexts of Victorian Oxford and the classical curriculum as it was propounded by Benjamin Jowett. Deutsch’s evocation of Pater and his works is a largely disembodied and sweet one. Although he is alive to the violent and
destructive narratives of such texts as ‘Denys L’Auxerrois’ and ‘Apollo in Picardy’, his emphasis is less on the dangerously seductive note sounded in the ‘Conclusion’ to *The Renaissance* than on what he calls Pater’s ‘spiritual’ aestheticism (p. 33, emphasis added). Deutsch’s Pater is one who ‘never advocated an excessive sensual license’, and who ‘frames his physical musical morality with a rhetoric of temperance’ (p. 37). This view of Pater’s aesthetics might strike some as rather chaste, but it is important in establishing Deutsch’s overarching claim for the importance of music ‘as a philosophical metaphor for social harmony among intellectuals across diverse social strata’ (p. 229). In the four chapters that follow, Deutsch pursues this metaphor through a number of case studies that treat music as both social practice and abstract idea. A chapter on Eliot, Huxley, and Woolf focuses less on their ‘fascination with musical-literary experiments’ and ‘formalist innovation’ (p. 88) than on their representation of classical music as a form of middle-class connoisseurship that bypassed both aristocratic privilege and working-class ignorance. This is followed by a chapter that explores amateur and middle-brow music-making as represented in the works of a wide range of authors, including Thomas Burke, Somerset Maugham, Compton Mackenzie, Shaw, Bennett, and Wells. The book’s unfolding chronological structure is abandoned at this point, and the next two chapters turn away from issues of class to address other forms of identity as represented through music. The first of these is homosexuality, where Pater figures as the precursor of writers such as Oscar Wilde, Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, Marc-André Raffalovich, and, of course, E. M. Foster (there are also some nice camp cameos by Ronald Firbank and Lord Berners). Finally, there is a chapter on cosmopolitanism which considers the diverse repertoires available to turn-of-the-century audiences, and in particular, the complexities of the relationship between British and German culture as it was played out in concert halls and in fiction.

The virtues of Deutsch’s account are many. Convincingly, he illustrates that despite the Wilde trials, Aestheticism did indeed constitute a powerful intellectual stimulus to cultural developments throughout the first half of the twentieth century. His definition of literary Modernism is also helpfully capacious, and his reading is wide, varied, imaginative, and refreshingly uncanonical. On occasion, his decision to root his argument in the intellectual culture of Victorian Oxford lends his writing an abstracted quality that risks overlooking the physical, corporeal experience of playing or listening to music (‘the piercing and the tearing and the soothing’ that
the hero feels when listening to Tchaikovsky’s *Pathétique* in Forster’s *Maurice*, for instance). Similarly, Deutsch’s emphasis on the theme of social harmony leaves little room for music’s capacity to elicit highly individual, even dissonant reactions (‘What is this song or picture, this engaging personality present in life or in a book, to *me*?’, as Pater has it in the Preface to *The Renaissance*), and the sense that British musical culture around the turn of the century was often violently polemical finds little echo in his account. Although wide-ranging in terms of the number of authors and texts he covers, and generous in the space he allots to pertinent quotations from them, Deutsch’s interest in the representation of music-making and appreciation means that he tends to favour prose fiction (and some poetry). Yet Pater’s example is also one that might open up other, non-fictional forms for consideration; his advocacy of the essay, the review, the imaginary portrait, or the fictionalized memoir might all point to the importance of such genres in British music-writing too, just as Vernon Lee’s *Music and Its Lovers: An Empirical Study of Emotion and Imaginative Responses to Music* (1932) attests to the importance of music as an object of enquiry in scientific studies of psychology and perception. Lee is, in fact, wholly absent from Deutsch’s book, which is a curious oversight in a project explicitly concerned with music and Aestheticism, and in the legacy of late Victorian culture in the age of Modernism. Indeed, Deutsch’s account generally favours men over women, despite the very substantial contribution made to British musical life by female teachers, performers, writers, critics, translators, and listeners (both professional and amateur). To be sure, Woolf does feature (as do, *en passant*, Katharine Burdekin, Amy Levy, and Radcliffe Hall), but the prominence accorded to female aesthetes in studies of literature and visual culture has yet, it would seem, to register when it comes to the writing of British music history.

*Philip Ross Bullock*  
*University of Oxford*
HE VALUE OF THIS BOOK is not only that it gives careful, sustained attention to Swinburne and Pater in relation to one another, but that it asks literary historians to think more ambitiously about a larger relationship in the period: between the tenets and assumptions of 'Aestheticism' on the one hand, and secularist thinking on the other. In the work of these two pre-eminently influential figures, the emphasis on artistic form was, by this account, 'partly a means of negotiating the conceptual difficulties they encountered when interpreting the West’s cultural inheritance through a secular lens' (p. 21). Their Aestheticism should not be treated as a 'mask discourse' serving ulterior, ‘coded’ concerns (p. 31); they really were writing and thinking about art, and not only as a cipher for something else. But art for them was nevertheless connected closely with questions of faith and doubt, and the prospect of a ‘secular’ society. Thus their aesthetic values emerged ‘as part of a complementary effort to formulate a vibrant alternative to Victorian paradigms of religious doubt and unbelief’ (p. 2).

Swinburne, who occupies the first half of the book, is first read beside Robert Browning, in order to show how the former adopts the dramatic monologue to explore the idea of the ‘blasphemous’, whereas Browning had used it to bolster the credibility of ‘respectable doubt’. Swinburne’s impatience with the melancholic decorousness of ‘honest doubt’ à la Tennyson (or Clough) is amply demonstrated, and the argument is made that this constituted a considerable motivation in much of his writing. Swinburne desired ‘to reinvigorate a tradition of Romantic iconoclasm’ (p. 51), and his thinking about religion was dominated by a ‘conflict between his desire to assert Christianity’s obsolescence on the one hand, and to condemn its continued and oppressive flourishing, on the other’ (p. 80). His sadomasochism, according to Lyons, was not just a personal preoccupation, nor merely a symptom of his desire to shock, but ‘part of an endeavour to find a rhetoric adequate to affirming both the joys and the pains’ of a secular world ‘purged of all desire for transcendence’ (p. 91). It is pleasing thus to see what many take to be self-indulgent quirks in Swinburne explained in terms of serious thinking about secularism and the modern world. ‘By the North Sea’ features extensively, depicted as an attempt ‘to cast atheism in affirmative terms’ (p. 95), and the reader is shown
how, in deliberate contrast with poems like *In Memoriam*, Swinburne ‘persistently invokes the sublime as a remedy to Victorian melancholy over doubt and lost faith’ (p. 109). This leads into a consideration of the ‘naturalistic determinism’ celebrated, it is argued, in *Tristram of Lyonesse*. There are many other original readings along the way, including an intriguing and convincing explanation of the foregrounding of ‘well-water’ in ‘The Leper’.

An important part of the general argument is that both Pater’s and Swinburne’s writings ‘can often appear nostalgic for the traditional tendency to conflate doubt with unbelief, and understand both in terms of sin’ (p. 39). This is more immediately obvious in Swinburne, certainly; but Pater’s *Renaissance* is presented as ‘a self-consciously heretical history’ of Western culture (p. 170), and indeed *heresy* is the key concept in Lyons’s readings of ‘Aucassin and Nicolette’ and the essays on Botticelli and Pico. In these early pieces, Lyons suggests, Pater’s preoccupation with the concept of heresy stems not from any commitment to the synthesis of paganism and Christianity, but from a bid to locate and glorify moments of secularising rupture within Christian culture and art’ (p. 164). Pater in his earlier work—and her prime example is the first Coleridge essay—‘often casts suspicion on “reconciliation” as an intellectual idea’ (p. 182); thus he ‘emphasises the “false basis” of Pico’s syncretism, and persistently inserts caveats that make it clear that he will only acquiesce in the rhetoric of reconciliation insofar as it flatters the pagan at the expense of the Christian’ (pp. 182–3). What, however, would his acquiescence actually entail? For if one asks oneself whether historical subject-matter must ordinarily work as a direct cipher for present concerns, Lyons’s own suspicion of ‘mask discourse’ exegetics suggests a negative answer—although it is clear that those concerns are usually, perhaps always, hovering close by. That hazy, potentially emblematic relationship between past and present in Pater’s historical imagination is perhaps the major challenging question underlying the whole book.

Lyons’s reading of the ‘Conclusion’ is interestingly polemical in its insistence that Pater’s mood was not as melancholic as commentators have made out. Critics ‘have often interpreted it as a lament for the loss of belief in immortality, rather than as an attempt to affirm the double-bind of mortality as the matrix of aesthetic experience’ (p. 190)—although these are not mutually exclusive alternatives, as Lyons finally concedes. Both the ‘Conclusion’ and ‘Coleridge’s Writings’ are read in relation to Mill, and generally the case is put that Pater follows Mill in trying to ‘rehabilitate Epicureanism’, and in elevating ‘aesthetic and intellectual pursuits
over frivolous and purely physical pleasures'. Yet, whereas Mill wants ‘to make “pleasure” a respectable ideal’, Pater signally diverges, ‘in that he does demand a “life of rapture”’ (p. 201). This detailed comparative reading (one of many) remains useful and salutary even if one quibbles about the meaning of ‘rapture’, or questions the implication that Pater meant to be unrespectable.

The latter point may, however, be connected with the question of Pater’s intellectual development. Lyons is commendably clear that she is discussing, until the penultimate chapter, mainly Pater’s ‘early aestheticism’. Of the later works, *Plato and Platonism* receives very little attention, and the essays on Greek sculpture none; so there is inevitably a tilt in the portrayal of Pater in toto. The author’s careful specificity is therefore a helpful guard against misinterpretation. To readers full of the later works, for example, Pater’s hostility to the abstract, the ideal and the spiritual—not quite the whole story, especially where the Plato lectures are concerned—may seem a little overstated, and so it is good to be reminded of the study’s quite legitimate parameters. Occasionally one wishes for more, and perhaps in the author’s future work we may look forward it. Lyons is particularly good, for instance, on the role played by ‘paganism’ in Swinburne and Pater, which, in her persuasive analysis, ‘often demands to be read as a form of secularism’ (p. 7); and at this point a reading of Pater’s studies of Greek gods would have been very welcome, could the space have been found.

The ‘late’ work is largely represented by *Marius the Epicurean*, which has a chapter to itself. According to Lyons, Pater ‘meditates on the implications of the mainstreaming of religious doubt and agnosticism in the 1870s and early 1880s’, which had by that time achieved a high degree of social acceptability and become ‘stale’ (p. 217). So the more mature Pater, not only as a consequence of changes in his personal outlook, but also because of an altered intellectual landscape, ‘apparently felt less impetus to construct aestheticism as an oppositional discourse, and more free to posit it as an extension of a prevailing cultural mood’ (p. 217). Although I am not sure that Pater ‘tends to be sceptical toward the idealisation of self-sacrifice, which he associates with dogmatic, totalising ideologies’ (p. 240), the whole of Lyons’s book provides an enriched context in which to reconsider Marius’s quasi-martyrdom, and to ponder the notion that it ‘is meaningful precisely because he sacrifices a life whose pleasures he appreciated fully and because he anticipates no “miraculous, poetic” reward’ (p. 243). Other promising thoughts are raised by the suggestion that ‘the real burden of Lucian’s apparently all-destructive scepticism
[ch. 24] is to invest very tenuous or problematic knowledge with ultimate sway over Marius’ (p. 228)—that is, to make him more receptive to Christian belief. Time for a Kierkegaardian reading of Pater?

Lyons’s concluding chapter provides an enlightening discussion of Swinburne’s unusual view of pantheism as a ‘deification of the human’ (p. 254), set beside an historicized view of Pater’s rather different conception of pantheism—described as being ‘closer to what is usually termed panpsychism or animism’ (p. 256). Swinburne’s ‘A Nympholept’ is given a detailed reading in relation to Pater’s ‘Conclusion’, and the monograph ends with *Gaston de Latour*, in which Pater was still thinking hard about questions of secularism and Christianity. In the unfinished novel, however, ‘aestheticism itself produces a stalemate’ (p. 262). To Lyons, that is, ‘the fate of the Pléiade seems to encode Pater’s perception that aestheticism has become the victim of its own success’ (p. 265)—this again inviting debate about the precise balancing of Pater’s priorities in exploring the concerns of his own age alongside, or up against, the truly historical consideration of other epochs for their own sakes. Further discussion draws out the implicit ‘parallel between Bruno’s axiom of indifference and the art for art’s sake doctrine of the disinterestedness of the aesthetic’ (p. 264), and this looks somewhat more multi-faceted after all the foregoing material offered by Lyons, who makes the thought-provoking proposition that Bruno’s pantheism ‘represents a kind of decadent theodicy’ (p. 265).

In an intellectual-historical enquiry, Swinburne’s ‘crusading secularism’ (p. 85) and strident rhetoric of course proves easier to pin down than Pater’s many-sided meditations in the ‘dialectic’ spirit. The two parts of the book have had different work to do. One aspect of the total achievement is that Swinburne gains in intellectual credibility whilst still becoming, as it were, a comparatively stable point of reference for the more elusive Pater—a good result for both authors. Their scholarly devotees should want to read this thoughtful and serious book; but even their doubters and detractors might be brought in by the thick contextual work and diverse literary comparisons.

*Alex Wong*  
*St. John’s College, University of Cambridge*

Victorian’ and ‘avant-garde’ might not seem to rest easily or informatively side by side, yet both phases of Pre-Raphaelite art (the Brotherhood, 1848–1854, and the subsequent and more diverse efforts in painting, drawing, poetry, and prose carried out by, among others, Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, Algernon Swinburne, Edward Burne-Jones, and Gerard Manley Hopkins) constitute vivid challenges to the aesthetic norms of their day, what David Latham terms the ‘revolutionary assaults the young artists were launching against the old paradigms of art’. The chapter combines persuasive assessments of aesthetic theories and practices, a historical overview of Pre-Raphaelitism that acknowledges the significance of Pater’s 1868 essay on William Morris’s poetry, and informative readings of exemplary texts. Particularly interesting is the focus on the Pre-Raphaelite artist’s ‘reflexive focus on art itself’ (Pater and Swinburne were the most prescient in developing a cosmopolitan hybrid of the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic and the continental commitment to ‘l’art pour art’ then being pursued by Théophile Gautier and Charles Baudelaire). Latham’s distinctions between Ruskin’s nostalgia-infused approach to Pre-Raphaelite painting and Pater’s discernment of
the poetry's concern with 'estrangement' (a theme which resurfaces in Pater's 1883 essay on Dante Gabriel Rossetti) are very informative. Latham not only surveys the writings of major Pre-Raphaelite figures, but tests his argument in relation to the poems of Elizabeth Siddal; Wilde’s *Salome* and W. B. Yeats’s *Shadowy Waters* are briefly considered as Pre-Raphaelite verse dramas. Among the central features of Pre-Raphaelite poetry perceptively explored: the choice of 'populist' genres; the often 'jarring … convergence of incongruities'; the privileging of grotesque visual and sensual elements; the tendency of the work to 'showcase[] the artifice of its own visionary order'; the creation of 'a Möbius strip of romance and reality that leaves the Pre-Raphaelite sensibility haunted by the abyss between the ideal of heaven and the reality of hell'; and the literary 'transgressions of the inhibiting boundaries of decorum.' This is the essay to which one will return for scholarly insight and intellectual guidance, and will recommend to undergraduates and graduate students for careful study.

*Lesley Higgins*


In a Bloomian reading, Zeff explores the evasive literary influence of Paterian Aestheticism on the prose and poems of Edward Thomas. Zeff reassesses Thomas’s, and his Modernist contemporaries’, ambivalent attitude to Pater and the (late-)Romantic tradition. While Pater’s early essay, ‘The Poems of William Morris’, ‘would continue to haunt Thomas whenever he set pen to paper’ (p. 107), Zeff suggests that Thomas differentiated himself from his own former self when he turned away from Pater (p. 100), and tries to illuminate the process of this transition rather than merely assert the sudden separation of Thomas’s writing from Pater’s influence. Zeff provides a close reading of Thomas’s ‘loveliest extended Paterian “prose poems”’ (p. 106) from
the final section of *The South Country*, side by side with Thomas’s reworking of particular motifs of nature in the poem ‘Birds’ Nests’. In this manner, Zeff reveals how Thomas’s Paterian prose poems or reveries anticipate and yet differ from Thomas-as-poet in ‘Birds’ Nests’, which is composed in ‘Thomas’s own distinctive voice’ (p. 108). In the concluding part, Zeff returns to Bloomian terminology to summarise this careful study of literary influence-anxiety: ‘Thomas’s agon with Pater, as with Wordsworth, Shelley and others, is an attempt to dissent from what is for Thomas-as-poet the literal truth of their imaginative stances’ (p. 113).

*Daichi Ishikawa*
ESSAYS


This article studies how the theme of ‘disturbances of the mind’ became more and more significant in Pater’s fiction and criticism at exactly the time he renewed relations with his brother, William Pater, a medical superintendent of a psychiatric hospital. Bizzotto provides extant biographical elements about William, whose relationship with Walter was quite complex (and led to their temporary estrangement). Bizzotto argues that William’s reports on his medical tasks constituted ‘a pattern for narratives’ in Pater’s works. She also correlates Walter’s interest in the link between altered mental states and creativity to William’s professional responsiveness to forensic pathology and psychiatry. Pater emerges as someone very attentive to contemporary explorations of what Freud would later theorize as neurosis or psychotic behaviours. This appropriately leads Bizzotto to call for further exploration of the brothers’ relationship so as to gain newer insights on Pater’s work in the wider context of studies of the relations between the then-emerging field of psychiatry and contemporary literature and culture.

Anne-Florence Gillard-Estrada
O’Connell, Rachel. ‘Reparative Pater: Retreat, Ecstasy, and Reparation in the Writings of Walter Pater.’ *ELH*, 82.3 (Fall 2015), pp. 969–86.

This article examines the various and subtle ways in which Pater ‘transforms and transvalues the experience of retreat’ in his writing (p. 971). O’Connell first provides a detailed reassessment of preceding scholarly discussions of Pater’s retreat. This is followed by a close examination of the subjects represented in ‘Emerald Uthwart’ and ‘Luca Della Robbia’, portraits which depict the characters’ submissiveness to and retreat from institutions or traditions: the English public school and the school of the fifteenth-century Italian sculptor, respectively. O’Connell thus reveals how otherwise negative motifs of retreat in the forms of ‘confinement, seclusion, silencing, and discipline’ are invested, through Pater’s reparative strategy, with positive and productive affective qualities that can be styled ‘sensations of pleasure’ and ‘a particular type of oceanic eroticism that interprets overwhelming disciplinary regimes as spaces of ecstasy’ (p. 971). O’Connell then discusses how Pater’s theorisation of retreat in ‘Charles Lamb’ and *Plato and Platonism* is aligned with his appreciation of ‘the essay tradition that accommodates hesitancy, reticence, and indecision—the retreating qualities that he favors’ and redefines (p. 981). For O’Connell, Pater’s essay on Lamb encapsulates ‘the rich but self-effacing tradition of reparative criticism’ and can be understood as ‘a project that caresses its loved objects with attention as part of a process of surviving in the world’ (p. 985). It is also suggested that Pater’s appreciative transvaluation of retreat anticipates the idea of ‘a reparative strategy’ (p. 972) as defined by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, from which Pater now emerges as ‘a queer theorist *avant la lettre*, embodying and theorizing queer reparative strategies at the *fin de siècle*’ (p. 985).

Daichi Ishikawa

Arata situates Henry James’s reflections on ‘novelistic form’ within the context of the late nineteenth-century decadent obsession with form. Focused primarily on James’s 1896 story, ‘The Figure in the Carpet’, as well as his 1893 and 1902 essays on Flaubert, Arata represents James as being ‘ambivalently drawn’ (p. 1019) to decadence, the example of Flaubert, and the preoccupation with aesthetic form. Arata reads ‘The Figure in the Carpet’ as a satire on obsessions that James acknowledged as his own, as well as a ‘canny commentary on the fetishizing of form’ (p. 1018). Rather than adopting Flaubert’s example, James ‘instead found ways to dramatize it in his fictions’ (p. 1025). The final section of the essay focuses on James’s commitment to the value of ‘waste’, a ‘key term in James’s critical lexicon’, (p. 1020), extraneous or asymmetrical matter that lies outside the ‘strict economy’ of narrative form.

*Kenneth Daley*


Reading Glenn Clifton’s substantial essay makes one reconsider—very productively—the many young or seemingly ageless men who populate Pater’s canon: Flavian, Marius, Florian Deleal, Denys l’Auxerrois, Emerald Uthwart. Pater’s writings constitute the ‘undercurrent’ of Clifton’s work, the context within and against which key texts by Oscar Wilde and Henry James are deftly interrogated. Of the four major strands in the analysis, three are especially worth pursuing. The comparison of ‘garden’ scenes in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Ambassadors* is illuminating, an excellent example of astute close reading. The discussion of how James ‘was preoccupied with his
relationship to Wilde in the later 1890s’ makes one wonder why the connections have not figured more prominently in accounts of late nineteenth-century Anglo-American literature. Thirdly and most substantially, one can imagine a number of new projects being inspired by this discussion of ageing as a sociological and anthropological concept in Victorian, Edwardian, and modernist studies, as an aesthetic opportunity (what Clifton terms ‘a realignment of aesthetic experience and perception with an older, “mature” consciousness’), and as a complicating factor in any assessment of the ‘cult of youth’ in decadent literature. Gender implications are also briefly considered. Only the section focusing on Giorgio Agamben’s notion of ‘impotentiality’ seems (like the Agamben source material) to be trying too hard to be relevant. Clifton is very conversant with contemporary scholarship in the fields he interconnects, and negotiates it perceptively and fluently as he explores the ‘meanings of age’.

Lesley Higgins


The article considers Gabriele D’Annunzio’s Notturno, a collection of lyrical prose fragments the author dictated while bedridden and half-blind in Venice, after a 1916 flying accident, from the perspective of its unexpectedly extensive references to visual arts. Even within D’Annunzio’s most experimental production, the Notturno stands out as an original work, both for its deeply introspective nature and for its in-betweenness in terms of style (neither prose nor poetry) and genre (autobiography, poetry and criticism). Such originality is also due to its conspicuous ekphrastic quality in whose elaboration, Mirabile convincingly argues, Pater played a foremost role. In particular, he influenced D’Annunzio’s perception of Giorgione, Titian, and the Venetian school, who are all fundamental presences in the Notturno as they were most famously in D’Annunzio’s novel The Flame of Life (1900), also set in Venice. Mirabile stresses the importance of Italian aesthete Angelo Conti in D’Annunzio’s
reception of Pater. Conti was the author of *Giorgione: Studio* (1894), through which Pater’s criticism of the Venetian school reached *Il Vate* (as is now widely accepted). Yet Mirabile is the first to propose a minute analysis of the presence of Pater’s ideas on the Giorgionesque and, more specifically, on the representation of Titian in the *Notturno*. He identifies clear Paterian ‘calques’ in D’Annunzio’s description of Titian’s ability to capture beauty in the ordinary aspects of nature through the trope of the ‘fili d’oro’, a literal translation of the ‘gold threads’ that these Venetian painters seem to work as well as for Titian’s ‘weaving of light, as of just perceptible gold threads’ in ‘The School of Giorgione’. Pater’s metaphor becomes D’Annunzio’s means of discussing artistic representations of reality, with consequent implications on such aesthetic issues as time-space linearity and the dissolution of the barriers between the arts. These subjects are equally central to Pater’s Giorgione essay, whose influence Mirabile ultimately explores not only in the *Notturno*, but also in other works by D’Annunzio.

*Elisa Bizzotto*

**Wilson, Cheryl A. ‘Bodily Sensations in the Conversion Poetry of Michael Field.’ *Victorian Poetry* 54.2 (2016), pp. 179–97.**

His essay focuses on the representation of bodies in the poetry of Michael Field, specifically the collection *Sight and Song*. As a context for her analysis, Wilson discusses the importance of Bradley and Cooper’s conversion to Catholicism in 1907 with respect to their depiction of the physical body. Post-conversion, the body is less a spiritual device used to seek salvation and more of a means of establishing a genuine relationship with the divine. Thus Wilson situates her reading within the larger context of Victorian Catholicism.

*Victoria Ashley Freed McCorkindale*
CONTRIBUTORS


LAUREL BRAKE, Professor Emerita of Literature and Print Culture at Birkbeck, University of London, works on the nineteenth-century press and print culture, and Walter and Clara Pater. She is the author of *Walter Pater: Print in Transition* and *Subjugated Knowledges*, editor of books on the press, including *ncse* (Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition; www.ncse.ac.uk), and *DNCJ* (*Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*), co-edited with Marysa Demoor; co-edited *W. T. Stead, Newspaper Revolutionary* (2012), a special issue on Stead in *19* (www.19.bbq.ac.uk/), and a book on the *News of the World* (2015), in which year several pieces on the press also appeared in *VPR*. She was the co-founder and co-editor of the *Pater Newsletter*, most recently publishing a piece on Pater and the *Guardian* essays. She is now writing *Ink Work* on Walter and Clara Pater, and editing a volume of Walter Pater’s journalism for the new *Collected Works*. 
PHILIP ROSS BULLOCK is Professor of Russian literature and music at the University of Oxford and Fellow and Tutor in Russian at Wadham College. His publications include The Correspondence of Jean Sibelius and Rosa Newmarch, 1906–1939 (Boydell, 2011) and Rosa Newmarch and Russian Music in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century England (Ashgate, 2009), as well as articles on the Soviet Russian reception of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde.

CAROLYN BURDETT is Senior Lecturer in English and Victorian Studies at Birkbeck, University of London. She is the author of two books on Olive Schreiner, including Olive Schreiner and the Progress of Feminism (2001), co-editor of The Victorian Supernatural (2004), and has published numerous articles on Victorian literary culture, feminism and nineteenth-century emotions. Her current project is a monograph entitled Coining Empathy: Psychology, Aesthetics, Ethics, 1870–1920.

KENNETH DALEY is Associate Professor and Chair, Department of English and Creative Writing, at Columbia College Chicago. He is the author of The Rescue of Romanticism: Walter Pater and John Ruskin (Ohio University Press, 2001) and essays and book chapters on Pater, Ruskin, and Keats. He is currently editing vol. 6 of the Collected Works of Walter Pater, Appreciations, and Later Essays and Reviews, 1889–1894. He has served as the Bibliographer for the Pater Newsletter/Studies in Walter Pater and Aesthetics since 2004.

HILARY FRASER holds the Geoffrey Tillotson Chair of Nineteenth-Century Studies at Birkbeck, University of London, where she is Executive Dean of Arts. She was for more than a decade Director of the Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies, and Founding Editor of its open-access e-journal Nineteen. She has written monographs on the Victorians and Renaissance Italy, aesthetics and religion in Victorian literature, nineteenth-century non-fiction prose, and gender and the Victorian periodical press. Her most recent book, Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2014, and she is now beginning a book on art writing and preparing a scholarly edition of The Renaissance by Walter Pater, both for Oxford University Press. She is currently President of the British Association of Victorian Studies.
Anne-Florence Gillard-Estrada is an Associate Professor at Rouen University. Her research and teaching interests include British literature, aesthetics, art criticism, and painting of the 1860s–1890s. She has co-edited Écrire l’art / Writing Art: Formes et enjeux du discours sur les arts visuels en Grande-Bretagne et aux États-Unis, with A.-P. Bruneau-Rumsey and S. Wells-Lassagne (Paris: Mare et Martin, 2015) and has co-edited “Curiously testing new opinions”: New perspectives on Walter Pater (Routledge, 2017), with Martine Lambert-Charbonnier and Charlotte Ribeyrol, as well as Beyond the Victorian / Modernist divide: Remapping the Turn-of-the-Century Break in Literature, Culture and the Visual Arts, with Anne Besnault-Levita (Routledge, 2017). She has also published a number of articles on Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, and British Aestheticism and ‘classical’ painting. She has a book forthcoming on the Greek body in British paintings of antiquity during the period 1860–1900.

Lesley Higgins is Professor of English at York University, Toronto, where she specializes in Victorian and Modern literature, poetry, and editorial theory and practices. She is the author of The Modernist Cult of Ugliness: Aesthetic and Gender Politics (2002) and co-editor of Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desire (2002) and Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Pater Across the Arts (2010). She is the co-general editor of The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins (OUP), and for that project has edited Hopkins’s Oxford Essays and Notes (2006), the Dublin Notebook (2014), and Diaries, Journals, and Notebooks (2015). Together with David Latham, she is the co-general editor of The Collected Works of Walter Pater (OUP).

Daichi Ishikawa, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English at Queen Mary University of London, has written on Pater’s varied representations of diaphaneity and more recently on Pater’s essay ‘Sir Thomas Browne’ and its nineteenth-century British contexts. He is currently working on a dissertation that explores the cosmopolitan notions of curiosity in late nineteenth-century British aestheticism with particular emphasis on the writings of Pater, J. A. Symonds, and Lafcadio Hearn.

Victoria McCorkindale, who holds an M.A. in English literature from York University, is now a student in law school.

Amanda Paxton holds a Ph.D. from York University and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Literature at Trent University. She has published articles on Thomas De Quincey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Siddal, and Charlotte Brontë. She is the Reviews Editor of the Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies and the Research Associate for The Collected W orks of Walter Pater. Her monograph Willful Submission: Sado-Erotics and Heavenly Marriage in Victorian Religious Poetry (University Press of Virginia) will appear in 2018.

Ana Parejo Vadillo is Co-Director of the Birkbeck Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies. Her books include Women Poets and Urban Aestheticism (2005) and Michael Field, The Poet: Published and Unpublished Materials (2009). Most recently she has published on Virginia Woolf and Walter Pater, on Amy Levy and cosmopolitanism, and on Michael Field, Nietzsche, and poetic drama. She has been a guest editor for the journal Victorian Literature and Culture and 19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Nineteenth Century, including The Nineteenth-Century Digital Archive (Issue 21: 2015).

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

Mimi Winick is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the English Department at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she is at work on a literary history of the pursuit of enchantment through scholarship in nineteenth and early twentieth-

Alex Wong is a Research Fellow in English at St John’s College, University of Cambridge. He has published a monograph on Renaissance verse, *The Poetry of Kissing in Early Modern Europe* (Boydell & Brewer, 2017) and an edition of the *Selected Verse* of Swinburne (Carcanet, 2015). His current work involves a study of the legacies of Ruskin and especially Pater in subsequent Anglophone criticism and aesthetic theory.