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Walter Pater is increasingly being seen as a pivotal figure in nineteenth-century culture. His later work is often regarded as an effort to distance himself from his earlier, more controversial texts. William F. Shuter argues that Pater's writings demand a twofold reading. Shuter first offers a conventional account of the texts in the order in which they were written, paying close attention to the changes in Pater's thought and interests over time; he then returns to the earlier texts, showing how the later work serves, paradoxically, as an introduction to the earlier. Drawing extensively on unpublished manuscript material, Shuter reveals that Pater himself authorized rereadings of his work in an effort to rewrite his own literary past and the past of his culture. Such a rereading of Pater's work uncovers patterns of continuity and anticipation that decisively alter our understanding of Pater and his writings.

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WALTER PATER

WILLIAM F. SHUTER  
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*To the memory of my parents  
Animae eorum et animae omnium defunctorum  
per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace.*

And so it happens, to its greater credit, that the better interest even of a narrative to be recounted, a story to be told, will often be in its second reading.

Walter Pater, "Style"

If generation were only a straightforward movement from one condition to its opposite, not bending back or inclining, do you realize that in the end everything would have the same properties and reach the same condition and that change would cease?

*Phaedo* 72A

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## *Preface*

This study had its origins in my work as an editor of Pater's late texts. In the process of annotating these texts I undertook to reread Pater's early writings, looking for parallels to the language and themes I had found in his late work. It soon became apparent that I was engaged in more than an editorial exercise. I found it impossible to read these early texts in the same way I had before. The later texts had decisively intervened. In ways I could not yet specify they had imposed a reading of these early texts that rendered my own initial reading less and less adequate. Moreover, this rereading by the older Pater of his early writings was often less conventional and more interesting than the readings offered by many of his critics. Pater's writings demanded, it seemed, a twofold reading. They asked to be read in the order in which they were written, with due attention paid to the changes in his thought and interests and with due acknowledgment made of the ways in which the older Pater attempted to distance himself from his earliest work. But they also asked to be reread, as it were, in the inverse order, the later work serving paradoxically as the necessary introduction to the earlier. It is such a double reading that I have attempted to provide in the following study.

I begin with what I call an initial reading of the shape of Pater's *oeuvre*. To such a reading what principally seems to shape that *oeuvre* is the later Pater's effort to differentiate himself from the earlier Pater. Old interests are replaced by apparently new ones, but more often "second thoughts" are entertained with regard to familiar topics. In the subsequent chapters I return to these topics, undertaking a series of rereadings that, like all rereadings, render problematic the distinction between "later" and "earlier."

My book may therefore be described as a study of the change and of the continuity in Pater's work, more particularly, of the ways Pater's later texts function to convert the earlier texts into anticipations of themselves

and thereby appear to reshape the body of that work. In this sense, it may also be described as a study of Pater as a rereader (some would say a “misreader”) of his own texts. But it was not only his own texts that Pater reread. As my study illustrates, when treating such topics as the relation of a writer to his predecessors, or traditions in religion and philosophy, or, more generally, the relation of the present to its cultural past, Pater regularly employed a mode of retrospective reconstruction that may legitimately be designated “rereading.”

Pater’s strategies of rereading should be of particular interest to the contemporary reader. The possibility that the boundaries separating texts are in fact permeable, that the distinction between original and derived texts is illusory, that an earlier text may allude to a later as a later text may transform an earlier text into a precursor text, that a writer may create his own predecessors, that traditions are not so much transmitted as devised, these are among the paradoxes of rereading on which recent criticism has frequently had occasion to reflect. A thorough account of these speculations and of the degree to which they are paralleled in Pater’s practice would require another study, but I have made an effort to call the reader’s attention to these parallels when they are particularly conspicuous or when they have been noticed by another writer.

Several passages from my chapter 1 originally appeared in “The arrested narrative of ‘Emerald Uthwart,’” *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 45 (1990), 1–25. Sections of chapter 4 originally appeared in “Pater as don,” *Prose Studies*, 11 (1988), 41–60 and in “Walter Pater and the academy’s ‘dubious name,’” *Victorians Institute Journal*, 16 (1988), 129–146. Sections of chapter 6 originally appeared in “Pater’s reshuffled text,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 43 (1989), 500–525.

I am grateful to Ms. Catherine Jones and to her sisters, the legatees of Walter Pater’s estate, and to the Houghton Library, Harvard University, for permission to quote from Pater’s unpublished manuscripts. I also wish to thank the master and fellows of Balliol College, Oxford, for permission to quote from Benjamin Jowett’s Lecture Notebooks; Sandra Taylor, Curator of Manuscripts at the Lilly Library, Indiana University, for permission to quote from a letter from John Rainier McQueen to Thomas Wright insofar as the Library is “able to grant such”; and the trustees of the British Museum for permission to reproduce the Attic stele of Tryphon.

It is a fortunate author indeed who has occasion to acknowledge his debt to two ideal readers as well as to an ideal editor. I am deeply grateful

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*Preface*

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to my friend and colleague Donald Hill for his warm encouragement and wise counsel at an early stage, to Steve Connor of Birkbeck College for his uncommonly sympathetic reading of the completed manuscript, and to Josie Dixon at Cambridge University Press for her gracious consideration in the final stages of manuscript preparation.

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## *Frequently cited sources and abbreviations*

Parentetical citations within the text are to the works of Pater. I have used eight of the ten volumes of the Library Edition (London: Macmillan, 1910) and abbreviated the titles as follows:

<i>Marius the Epicurean</i>	<i>ME</i> I or II
<i>Imaginary Portraits</i>	<i>IP</i>
<i>Appreciations</i>	<i>AP</i>
<i>Plato and Platonism</i>	<i>PP</i>
<i>Greek Studies</i>	<i>GS</i>
<i>Miscellaneous Studies</i>	<i>MS</i>
<i>Essays from the "Guardian"</i>	<i>EG</i>

For *The Renaissance* I have used the edition of Donald Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), abbreviated as *REN*. For *Gaston de Latour* I have used the edition of Gerald Monsman (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1995). I have also used *Uncollected Essays* (Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher, 1903), abbreviated as *UE*. Frequently cited periodical pieces are abbreviated as follows:

- "CW": "Coleridge's writings," *Westminster Review*, n.s., 29 (1866), 106–132
- "EP": "Imaginary portraits. 2. An English poet," May Ottley (ed.), *Fortnightly Review*, n.s., 129 (1931), 434–448
- "W": "Winckelmann," *Westminster Review*, n.s., 31 (1867), 80–110
- "WM": "Poems by William Morris," *Westminster Review*, n.s., 34 (1868), 300–312.

Untitled manuscripts from the Houghton Library are cited by their MS number. Titled manuscripts frequently cited are abbreviated as follows:

- "AL": "The aesthetic life," bMS Eng 1150 (7), Houghton Library, Harvard University

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*Frequently cited sources and abbreviations*

- “AR”: “Art and rel[igio]n,” bMS Eng 1150 (11), Houghton Library,  
Harvard University  
“PE”: “Plato’s ethics,” bMS Eng 1150 (1), Houghton Library,  
Harvard University  
“WCN”: “The writings of Cardinal Newman,” bMS Eng 1150 (12),  
Houghton Library, Harvard University.