

## WALTER PATER AND THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Walter Pater's significance for the institutionalisation of English studies at British universities in the nineteenth century is often overlooked. Addressing the importance of his volume *Appreciations* (1889) in placing English literature in both a national and an international context, this book demonstrates the indebtedness of the English essay to the French tradition and brings together the classic, the Romantic, the English, and the European. With essays on drama, prose, and poetry, from Shakespeare and Browne to Lamb, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Pater's contemporaries Rossetti and Morris, *Appreciations* exemplifies ideals of aesthetic criticism formulated in Pater's first book, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873). Subjectivity pervades Pater's essays on the English authors, while bringing out their exceptional qualities in a manner reaching far into twentieth-century criticism. This title is part of the Flip it Open Programme and may also be available Open Access. Check our website Cambridge Core for details.

CHARLES MARTINDALE is Professor of Latin Emeritus at the University of Bristol. He has published over a wide field, with particular emphasis on English–Classics literary relations, theoretical approaches to literature – in particular, reception theory – and Kantian aesthetics and the importance of 'beauty'. He is the author of four books, and editor or co-editor of fourteen collections.

LENE ØSTERMARK-JOHANSEN is Professor of English at the University of Copenhagen. She is the author of *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (2012) and of *Walter Pater's European Imagination* (2022). She has edited Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* for the Oxford Collected Works of Walter Pater (2019).

ELIZABETH PRETTEJOHN is Professor of History of Art at the University of York. Her recent research centres on relationships between the arts of past and present, explored in *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture* (2012) and *Modern Painters, Old Masters: The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War* (2017).

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 Charles Martindale, Elizabeth Prettejohn, Lene Østermark-Johansen  
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WALTER PATER  
AND THE BEGINNINGS  
OF ENGLISH STUDIES

EDITED BY

CHARLES MARTINDALE

*University of Bristol*

LENE ØSTERMARK-JOHANSEN

*University of Copenhagen*

ELIZABETH PRETTEJOHN

*University of York*



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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
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## *Figures*

Cover image Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Mariana*, 1870, oil on canvas,  
109.8 × 90.5 cm, Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums.

The cover image relates to two essays by Pater, one on Rossetti himself (whom Pater described in 1880 as ‘the greatest man we have among us, in point of influence upon poetry, and perhaps painting’), the other on Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*. Pater shared the unusual enthusiasm of the Pre-Raphaelite group for this play, and it is likely that two Pre-Raphaelite works helped inspire him to write about it: this painting by Rossetti (which we know was on the easel in Rossetti’s studio, where Pater must have seen it, between 1868 and its delivery in 1870 to William Graham), and William Holman Hunt’s *Claudio and Isabella*, which Pater had the opportunity to see in 1865, and mentioned in print a year later, the strong memory of which informs the passage in the essay where he emphasises the relationship between Claudio and Isabella. He also highlights the page’s song to Mariana, almost certainly under the abiding impression of the Rossetti. Rossetti is the modern British artist most important to Pater from the time of his first visits to Rossetti’s house in Cheyne Walk in the late 1860s through to the portrait of Marguerite de Navarre as Jane Morris in *Gaston de Latour*. We know that Pater had seen works by Rossetti, with great admiration, from the reference in ‘The School of Giorgione’; indeed Mariana would be of particular relevance, partly because of the music-making subject and partly because it is very much in Rossetti’s ‘Giorgionesque’ manner. The other painters who were particularly significant for Pater – Solomon, Burne-Jones, Legros, Whistler – were all members of the circle around Rossetti, the imaginative leader of this whole artistic movement.

- 1 William Blake (1757–1827), ‘When the morning Stars sang together, & all the Sons of God shouted for joy’, *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (1825), plate 14, 40.6 × 27.3 cm, Yale Center for British Art, Gift of J. T. Johnston Coe in memory of Henry E. Coe, Yale BA 1878, Henry E. Coe Jr., Yale BA 1917, and Henry E. Coe III, Yale BA 1946 (B2005.16.15). page 204
- 2 Louis Schiavonetti (1765–1810), after William Blake (1757–1827), ‘The Reunion of the Soul & the Body’, illustration to *The Grave, A Poem. By Robert Blair. Illustrated By Twelve Etchings Executed From Original Designs. To Which Is Added A Life Of The Author*, London, Published Mar. 1st 1813, by R. Ackermann, 101 Strand, sheet 38.1 × 28.9 cm, plate 29.8 × 22.9 cm, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (B1974.8.6). 212



## *Contributors*

STEPHEN BANN, CBE, FBA is Emeritus Professor of History of Art at the University of Bristol

SCARLETT BARON is Associate Professor of English at University College London

LUISA CALÈ is Reader in Romantic and Nineteenth-Century Literature and Visual Culture at Birkbeck College, University of London

KENNETH DALEY is Associate Professor of English at Columbia College Chicago

STEFANO EVANGELISTA is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Trinity College

MICHAEL D. HURLEY is Professor of Literature and Theology at the University of Cambridge, and a Fellow and Director of Studies in English at Trinity College

CHARLES W. MAHONEY is Professor of English at the University of Connecticut, Storrs

CHARLES MARTINDALE is Emeritus Professor of Latin at the University of Bristol

STACEY MCDOWELL is Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick

FERGUS MCGHEE is currently Departmental Lecturer in English at the University of Oxford, and tutor in English at Corpus Christi College

KATHRYN MURPHY is Fellow and Tutor in English at Oriel College, Oxford

*List of Contributors*

LENE ØSTERMARK-JOHANSEN is Professor of English Literature and Art in the Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies at the University of Copenhagen

ELIZABETH PRETTEJOHN is Professor of History of Art and Head of Department at the University of York

MARCUS WAITHE is Professor of Literature and the Applied Arts in the Faculty of English at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Magdalene College

ROSS WILSON is Associate Professor of Criticism in the Faculty of English at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Emmanuel College

ALEX WONG is a College Associate Lecturer and Director of Studies for English Literature at St John's College, Cambridge

## *Preface*

In our earlier collection *Pater the Classicist: Classical Scholarship, Reception, and Aestheticism* (Oxford University Press 2017) we sought to direct detailed critical attention to Walter Pater's writings on classical antiquity, including his book on Plato and his essays on Greek sculpture, which have been largely neglected. We aimed to show that Pater made a significant contribution to classical studies and to combat the idea that he has little to teach us today about his objects of study. Although himself a classicist, Pater also wrote widely about English literature, and collected many of his principal essays on the subject in *Appreciations*, first published in 1889. These essays too have not in general been accorded detailed analysis; all our contributors, whatever their differences of view, agree that Pater has novel, interesting, and important things to say about English authors that merit our serious attention. There is currently no systematic treatment of Pater as a student of English literature, despite its importance to him and his enormous sophistication as a literary critic; this volume aims to fill that gap.

For its realisation *Pater the Classicist* required bringing together Paterians and Victorianists with classicists, including classical philosophers and students of ancient art and archaeology, since in general classicists do not read Pater and Paterians are seldom experts in matters classical. For our new project we adopted a similar research methodology, essential in our view in the case of writings which are so wide-ranging, cosmopolitan, and interdisciplinary. We assembled a group of Pater specialists, Victorianists, and broad-minded scholars who specialise in the authors Pater wrote about, and who are sympathetic to reception studies and the view that Pater has much that is significant to tell us about these writers. In July 2018 we held a two-day workshop in Oxford for contributors (generously supported by the University's English Faculty and by the Department of History of Art at York, and ably managed by Alexandra Gushurst-Moore) to establish a clear sense of the scope and aims of the project and habits of

intellectual interchange. Three of the participants, Nicholas Halmi, Catherine Maxwell, and Daniel Tyler, have in the event been unable to contribute to the resulting publication, but assisted in its framing. Stefano Evangelista (one of the editors of *Pater the Classicist*) has not only contributed his own chapter, but has advised on the project throughout, in respect of design and scope. At the outset we received excellent and formative advice from James Williams and David Hopkins. We would also like to thank our anonymous readers for their suggestions and Bethany Thomas, our ever-helpful editor at Cambridge University Press.

The principal writings that deal with English literature treated in this volume are, in the order of their composition (with dates of subsequent publications in brackets), as follows:

- 1866 'Coleridge's Writings', rewritten as essentially a new essay 'Coleridge' for T. H. Ward's *The English Poets*, 1880, and the two combined for *Appreciations*, 1889 (hereafter *App.*)
- 1868 'Poems by William Morris', reworked as 'Aesthetic Poetry', *App.*, 1889, deleted from the second edition of 1890, and never thereafter republished
- 1874 'A Fragment on *Measure for Measure*', revised as 'Measure for Measure', *App.*  
 'On Wordsworth', revised as 'Wordsworth', *App.*
- 1876 'Romanticism', revised as 'Postscript', *App.*
- 1878 'The Character of the Humourist: Charles Lamb', revised as 'Charles Lamb', *App.*
- 1883 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti', in Ward's *The English Poets* vol. 4 (second edition), revised in *App.*
- 1885 'On *Love's Labours Lost*', revised as 'Love's Labours Lost', *App.*
- 1886 'Sir Thomas Browne', revised in *App.*
- 1888 'Style', revised in *App.*
- 1889 'Shakespeare's English Kings', revised in *App.*

There are also some pieces collected in *Essays from 'The Guardian'* (1908; vol. 10 of the New Library Edition), including reviews of a study of Robert Browning; *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; *Robert Elsmere*; and 'Four Books for Students on English Literature', among them Saintsbury's *Specimens of English Prose Style*; together with some uncollected items.

It is worth stressing that the collection, in this too like *Pater the Classicist*, is not a series of essays on disparate subjects loosely attached to a principal theme, but a single, focused project: a re-examination of Pater as a critic of English literature in the light of the development of English

studies and literary criticism during the period. In that sense it might be better regarded as a book with multiple authors than as an essay collection. Because no one scholar would have the necessary expertise or range required for the project, its successful achievement required such multiple authorship. (Of course one result of this is that there are differences of view and of emphasis in different chapters, but we regard this as an enrichment, not a defect.)

This is moreover an excellent moment for writing about Pater since Oxford University Press's fully annotated new Pater edition is bound to raise his profile and increase serious interest in his work; the first volumes have now appeared. Two of its team of editors are contributing to this volume: Kenneth Daley (*Appreciations*) and Lene Østermark-Johansen (*Imaginary Portraits*). There is evidence, from conferences and elsewhere, that younger scholars are increasingly attracted to Pater's writings. There is also a growing interest in the essay as a literary form and in style, including prose style.

The collection, while its primary focus is on Pater's essays on particular English authors, helps to situate those essays in various wider contexts, including developments in literary criticism and scholarship, and the gradual process that established English as a university subject. Pater, far from being a disengaged recluse, constantly engaged, if often in a characteristically covert way, with the views of his Victorian contemporaries, challenging (if only by implication) dominant views on critical and artistic practice, and on matters including religion and morality. The volume relates his work to other Victorian critics, including Arnold, Newman, and Saintsbury. And it offers material for the study of the development of English as a discipline as well as possible paths not taken (the relationship between English and Classics; the development of literary criticism and its styles; English and the literatures of continental Europe). The volume also contains some reflections on the reception of Pater: Pater as an imaginative writer (and thus himself the object of criticism); Pater and the leading anglophone modernists, including Woolf, Joyce, and T. S. Eliot (Pater is a presence in almost all of them, though often occluded); Pater and the deconstructionists (after the High Modernist period Pater falls to a significant extent into disfavour, but there is an extraordinary revival with the Yale critics, including J. Hillis Miller and Harold Bloom).

Quotations from the writings of Pater are cited within the text in abbreviated form (see xv–xvi for a list of abbreviations). Documentation for all references and citations is given in full in the notes to individual chapters. (For books, the place of publication is London unless otherwise

specified.) Our volume also contains, at the end, a specially compiled general bibliography on the subject: this provides overall guidance on publications about Pater and English Literature.

Our group of scholar-critics includes established academics who are leading authorities in their field and those who are nearer the beginning of their career. Our volume is designed not only for enthusiasts for Pater but also for anyone interested in 'Eng. Lit.' and the way it is written about, the history of criticism, and the institutional history of English as a discipline and object of study. We hope that our inclusive, outward-facing, broad-minded approach would also have met with the approval of that most cosmopolitan of writers on English literature: Walter Horatio Pater.

**Charles Martindale**  
**Lene Østermark-Johansen**  
**Elizabeth Prettejohn**  
*York and Copenhagen, 2022*

## Abbreviations

Quotations from the writings of Pater (an inveterate reviser of his own works) are taken, unless otherwise explicitly stated, from the edition of *The Renaissance: The 1893 Text* by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1980) and, for the rest, the New Library Edition published by Macmillan in 1910. We also give references for the published volumes of *The Collected Works of Walter Pater*, general eds Lesley Higgins and David Latham (Oxford 2019–), vol. 3 *Imaginary Portraits*, ed. Lene Østermark-Johansen; vol. 4 *Gaston de Latour*, ed. Gerald Monsman; vol. 8, *Classical Studies*, ed. Matthew Potolsky.

The following abbreviations for Pater's works are used throughout:

'AP'	'Aesthetic Poetry', in the first edition of <i>Appreciations</i> (1889), 213–27 (thereafter replaced by 'Feuillet's "La Morté"')
<i>App.</i>	<i>Appreciations: With an Essay on 'Style'</i> (New Library Edition, vol. 5)
'CW'	'Coleridge's Writings', <i>Westminster Review</i> n.s. 29 (January 1866), 106–32
<i>CW</i>	<i>The Collected Works of Walter Pater</i> (Oxford)
<i>Essays</i>	<i>Essays from 'The Guardian'</i> (vol. 10)
<i>Gast.</i>	<i>Gaston de Latour: An Unfinished Romance</i> (vol. 9)
<i>GS</i>	<i>Greek Studies: A Series of Essays</i> (vol. 7)
Houghton MS	Walter Pater's manuscripts held in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMSEng 1150
<i>IP</i>	<i>Imaginary Portraits</i> (vol. 4)

xvi	<i>List of Abbreviations</i>
<i>ME</i>	<i>Marius the Epicurean</i> (vols 2–3) (In citations from <i>Marius</i> , i and ii refer to the two volumes of the novel; chapter numbers are also given.)
<i>MS</i>	<i>Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays</i> (vol. 8)
<i>PP</i>	<i>Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures</i> (vol. 6)
<i>Ren.</i>	<i>The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry</i> (Hill edition)

Other abbreviations used in the notes are:

Arnold, <i>Prose</i>	Matthew Arnold, <i>The Complete Prose Works</i> , ed. R. H. Super, 9 vols (Ann Arbor, MI 1960–73)
<i>Critical Heritage</i>	<i>Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage</i> , ed. R. M. Seiler (1980)
Inman (1981)	Billie Andrew Inman, <i>Walter Pater's Reading: A Bibliography of His Library Borrowings and Literary References, 1858–1873</i> (New York and London 1981)
Inman (1990)	Billie Andrew Inman, <i>Walter Pater and His Reading: 1874–1877: With a Bibliography of His Library Borrowings, 1878–1894</i> (New York and London 1990)
<i>Letters</i>	<i>Letters of Walter Pater</i> , ed. Lawrence Evans (Oxford 1970)
Ricks, 'Misquotation'	Christopher Ricks, 'Walter Pater, Matthew Arnold and Misquotation', in <i>The Force of Poetry</i> (Cambridge 1984), 392–416