THE POLITICS OF AESTHETICISM:
PATER’S “IMAGINATIVE” SYNTHESIS OF EMPIRICISM AND IDEALISM THROUGH HERACLITUS AND KANT

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INTRODUCTION

In 1877, G. G. Zerffi, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, published in the fifth volume of the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* the first of his four essays on “The Historical Development of Idealism and Realism,” where he acknowledged that

> [f]rom the very first dawn of consciousness man tried to solve the phenomena surrounding him in two divergent ways, which up to our times have been followed by two opposed parties. The controversy between idealists and realists, or materialists, is as old as man’s power of thinking. The history of man’s intellectual development in a wider sense is but the struggle between the two (I, 120).

Zerffi’s interest in the topic was not accidental, since the critic was addressing, in the light of the historical research typical of his time, a phenomenon that had decisively shaped the character of 19th-century thought. This phenomenon involved the intellectual turmoil engendered by the “struggle” between the 19th-century “realists” on the one hand, as represented by Bentham’s political economy, Mill’s inductive empiricism, Comte’s positivism, Darwin’s evolutionism, and Tyndall and Huxley’s agnostic materialism, and the 19th-century “idealists” on the other, following the work of writers like Coleridge, Carlyle, Ruskin, Newman, and T. H. Green, who were influenced by Continental philosophy and upheld the importance of deductive thought, the return to religion, and the dynamic participation of the human mind in the production of knowledge. The marks of this “controversy” between the advocates of scientific relativism, naturalism and *laissez-faire* liberalism, who

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1 Gustavus George Zerffi (1820-1892) was a very interesting 19th century figure. He was a Hungarian journalist and a secret service agent of Austria, who moved to London in 1853 becoming a member of the Royal Medical College and a secretary of the German National Association. Later on, he became a lecturer at the National Art Training School in South Kensington writing extensively on history and art.
envisioned a radical disruption from traditional values, and the idealists or humanists, who struggled to salvage what was left of the “old” world, can be detected in nearly all facets of 19th-century thought. Indicative of this conflicting atmosphere was the intellectual climate at the University of Oxford, where there were two influences: “the one, in more or less cordial alliance with Comte’s positive philosophy; the other, the more theoretical philosophy which connects itself with the names of Kant and Hegel” (Young 13).2

Zerffi’s study, nevertheless, which was finished in 1880 with the publication of the fourth and last essay on the topic, also reflected a catalytic shift that was gradually taking place at the time in the course of this long-standing “struggle.” It was the significance of this specific shift, as we shall see, that Zerffi’s historical emphasis on the development of the phenomenon actually underscored. During the last quarter of the 19th century, the profound consolidation of the idea of evolution in the Victorian imaginary, along with the spread of Hegelian historicism, gave birth to a new cultural viewpoint, which, as the historian puts it, did not “isolate phenomena in nature, facts in history, words in languages, art-forms in aesthetics, diseases in medicine” (I, 143), but rather strove to attest “union and harmony” among “discordant voices” (I, 120).3 This reconciliatory trend, just before the expiration of the 19th

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2 This intriguing coexistence of conflicting outlooks, just before the advent of modernism, has been characterized as typical of 19th-century thought by a series of studies, which offer a multiplicity of perspectives on the complexity of the topic. The conflict between the two schools of thought in terms of philosophic speculation is the object of Wendell V. Harris’ *The Omnipresent Debate* (1981). There are certain other studies which touch on the issue by implication. I can indicatively mention here Emory Neff’s *Carlyle and Mill* (1926), David DeLaura’s *Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England* (1969), Edward Alexander’s *Mathew Arnold and John Stuart Mill* (1965) and *Mathew Arnold, John Ruskin, and the Modern Temper* (1973).

3 As Zerffi claims, “[s]cientific universal history becomes the more necessary the more the different special branches of science increase in details. History has to connect the apparently isolated facts, to trace in the discordant voices of generations and their complicated actions union and harmony” (I, 120). Later on in the same essay, after presenting “Darwin’s theory” as a principle of “union and harmony” too, he introduces Darwin as the first synthesizer of “realism and idealism”: “[t]he most important historical fact in the development of idealism and realism is undoubtedly Darwin’s theory. It is as influential as the astronomical discovery of Copernicus, the laws of Kepler or Newton’s theory of gravitation. It has been attacked as gross realism, and still the very basis of Darwin’s theory of descent
century, decisively affected the course of the long “controversy” between the two rival schools of thought, making Zerffi optimistically envision its ending by asserting in his study that “down to our times […] realism and idealism, speculation and experience, are trying to form the only possible united basis of our future scientific and historical progress” (I, 143). Paradigmatic of this climate of compromise was a series of late-19th-century thinkers, coming from different disciplines, who endorsed a radical form of reconciliation between the traditionally conceived “opposed parties:” Herbert Spencer, for example, fused a posteriori stimuli and a priori inherited mental formations so as to come up with “evolutionary Kantianism,” T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley grounded their absolute form of morality on an empiricist conception of feeling, G. H. Stout, H. Strut and H. Rashdall propounded a form of “empirical idealism,” H. S. Maine, W. Bagehot, W. K. Clifford, Leslie Stephen and D. Ritchie synthesized evolutionary biology, utilitarianism and Kantian criticism, whereas H. Sidewick blended utilitarian and idealist premises, following the early example of J. S. Mill’s union of Benthamite reason and Coleridgean feeling.

The impact of this ground-breaking shift in perspective that Zerffi portrays was also reflected in the literature of the time. One of the first writers who responded with his multifaceted work to this reconciliatory climate was Walter Pater, the father of British Aestheticism. As an Oxford don, Pater spent most of his life in the university, where he was directly exposed to the intellectual shifts and debates of the time. He was extremely well-read in both philosophical traditions due to his fascination with contemporary thought, as Billie Andrew Inman’s invaluable study of is, as his greatest antagonist, Agassiz, has acknowledged, an ideal theory, a thought engendered a priori” (I, 142). Zerffi’s whole consideration is actually permeated by the Darwinian and the historical perspective as his diction (“dawn of consciousness,” “surrounding,” “struggle,” “history,” “development”) clearly manifests.
his readings and library borrowings has demonstrated, and responded to the intellectual anxieties of the time with work which, from his first essay in 1864 to his death in 1894, extended over a period of time that distinctively overlapped with this stormy period. It comes then as no surprise that his oeuvre witnessed the paradoxical co-existence of elements coming from both schools of thought, to the extent that “it might be said that Pater’s great subject is the meeting of competing discourses,” as Laurel Brake puts it (Pater 25). This “meeting” was, in fact, the outcome of a sophisticated synthetic program that the critic, in full compliance with the appeasing spirit of the times, was systematically working on throughout his career.

The purpose of this study is to explore the form of synthesis that Pater promoted throughout his work between these two different modes of thought, which I shall rather term empiricism and idealism. Pater’s synthetic program has been cursorily acknowledged by a series of critics, but only seriously addressed by H. H. Young’s The Writings of Walter Pater: A Reflection of British Opinion from 1860 to 1890 (1933) and F. C. McGrath’s The Sensible Spirit: Walter Pater and the Modernist Paradigm (1986), to which this study is deeply indebted. In her extensive survey of the background of Pater’s thought, Young was one of the first to bring to the surface Pater’s “synthetic views” (37). Nevertheless, in her effort to enumerate all of Pater’s allusions, her short study inevitably lacked depth, projecting a fragmentary image of Pater’s thought where the Victorian writer was presented as a passive recipient of divergent contemporary ideas, who ultimately failed to make them connect.6

4 I am referring here to Inman’s Walter Pater’s Reading: A Bibliography of his Library Borrowings and Literary References, 1858-1873 (1981), and Pater and his Reading, 1874-1877 (1990).
5 I shall not use Zerffi’s distinction because “realism” and “materialism” have today different connotations. As W. V. Harris confirms, these schools have been designated variously as “utilitarian,” “materialist,” “rationalist,” “empiricist,” and “intuitionist,” “idealist,” “mystic,” or transcendentalist (8). I do believe that the terms “empiricism” and “idealism” can function as broader philosophical categories, under which the rest of the terms can be easily subsumed.
6 As Harrold argues in his review of Young’s book, “[n]owhere are we given the incisive and illuminating generalization which will synthesize her innumerable quoted phrases and isolated facts.
McGrath, on the other hand, by considering Pater’s work in terms of the “paradigms” that Thomas Kuhn established in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), produced an interesting and informative study of the Victorian writer’s reconciliatory model as a precursor of modernism, which, however, abstracted Pater’s thought by detaching it from its specific socio-cultural context, reinforcing, thus, the stereotype of the secluded aesthete in his Ivory Tower.

In view of the radical changes that have taken place in the field of literary studies since McGrath’s – let alone Young’s – study, my intention here is to readdress Pater’s synthetic model in the light of the rise of inter-disciplinary studies, which will enable me, as I will show, to surmount the critical limitations of their considerations in a decisive way by approaching the topic from a hitherto neglected perspective. The reception of Pater in the 20th century was, more or less, marked by T. S. Eliot’s reproachful critique of the Victorian critic as an “unworthy” writer (442) in “Arnold and Pater” (1930) and Rene Wellek’s rejection of the aesthete in the fourth volume of *A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950* (1965) as a thinker that bore no relation to the twentieth century spirit (381). In the 1980s, however, Paterian scholarship witnessed an unprecedented “renaissance” with the rise of gender studies, followed in the 1990s by a turn towards New Historicism, as recorded in the second international Pater conference, held at Queen’s College, Oxford, in 1988, which partially recovered the status of the Victorian writer. Taking into consideration these changes, I believe that the time is now right to return to Pater within the wider perspective suggested by an inter-disciplinary approach and consider the way our understanding of the Oxford don’s work can be enriched by different standpoints. This is precisely the task I have undertaken in this study. The fact that Pater was one of the first writers to consider his

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The chapters end without conclusions; the book ends virtually without a summary. This is all the more unfortunate since the exasperatingly vague and ambiguous character of Pater’s thought is precisely such as to demand firm outlines in its exposition” (111).
topics under various perspectives, bringing together “high” and “low” narratives through the utilization of the discourses of fiction, philosophy, science, history, journalism, literary theory, and art criticism, renders him a timely figure appropriate for such an approach. On the other hand, the complex and multifaceted heteroglossia of Pater’s prose, which can be seen as a precursor of modernist, and indeed even post-modernist, writing, can only be elucidated, as I intend to demonstrate with this study, through a cross-disciplinary reading, able to come to grips with such a rich and multi-layered textual structure by considering the significance of the intricate dialectics that the Victorian critic established between various discourses.

The discourse which becomes most prominent throughout Pater’s work, from his essays, to his short stories, novels and lectures, is that of philosophy, which, however, has either been selectively discussed so far by a very limited number of scholars, or partially considered as detached from its specific historical background. Since what I regard as the main thrust of the aesthete’s thought, his synthetic model, was a product of his extensive preoccupation with this particular discourse, I will employ a cross-disciplinary approach based on philosophy so as to examine the way Pater’s divergent readings in the history of philosophy consistently comprised an organized program. In order to avoid the abstraction and fragmentation of Pater’s thought that Young and McGrath’s studies entailed, I will, furthermore, attempt to contextualize and historicize his philosophic speculation so as to bring to the foreground its full implications. His reconciliatory system, which was, after all, a response to the radical shifts of his time, can only acquire its meaning when treated as part of the intellectual background it was engaged with. By providing a consistent and

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7 As we have seen, Young’s consideration of Pater’s philosophical background was selective and fragmented, failing to account for the way the critic systematized his allusions to philosophy into a coherent program, whereas McGrath’s study of Pater’s debt to philosophy avoided addressing the historical context of the Oxford don’s manipulation of the philosophical discourse, resulting, thus, in an abstract image of his thought.
systematic reading of Pater’s direct or indirect philosophical allusions and by considering their historical implications, my hope is that this interdisciplinary study will fill a gap in Paterian scholarship, shedding light on the complexity of his sophisticated synthetic vision.

A further innovation in this study involves the fact that my exploration of Pater’s synthetic thought and its historical magnitude will be organized around the critic’s hitherto unexplored readings of Heraclitean and Kantian philosophy. It is my contention to argue that the Oxford don promoted his reconciliatory program by utilizing throughout his work these seemingly unrelated philosophical doctrines. As I intend to show, Pater’s persistent preoccupation with them was neither accidental nor an isolated case in the course of late-19th-century thought, but rather symptomatic of his theoretic goals and of the overall intellectual climate. Both Heraclitus, the 5th-century BC natural philosopher from Ephesus, and Kant, the 18th-century German thinker, were employed by the Victorian writer as two large clusters of thought, two broad philosophical models that respectively epitomized in an emblematic form the empiricist and the idealist viewpoints. Furthermore, Pater’s specific engagement with these philosophers, as we shall see, was relevant to the fact that they both incorporated tenets from radically different systems of thought, providing Pater with synthetic prototypes from both philosophical camps that signaled the possibility of their convergence. Even though Heraclitus and Kant were separated by a vast temporal distance, and despite the fact that they represented different forms of speculation, they both functioned for Pater, this study maintains, as far-reaching paradigms that highlighted and dramatized in an allegorical way the need to bring together divergent structures of thought, the need to resolve, in other words, the longstanding rivalry between empiricism and idealism. To this effect, the coexistence
of Heraclitus and Kant in Pater’s work established, as I see it, a diachronic rhetoric that was, however, synchronically oriented towards a substantiation of the late-19th-century reconciliatory climate that Zerffi’s articles reflect.

Bearing in mind the fact that the complexity of Pater’s synthetic suggestion involves, to a large extent, the difficulty of the two philosophical systems it draws on, I shall examine his relation to Heraclitus and Kant separately, so as to facilitate the understanding of the critic’s philosophical allusions by considering them in terms of the larger systems they were derived from. Thus, the Oxford don’s debt to Heraclitus, which, to my knowledge, has been only superficially discussed so far, will be the object of the first chapter.8 The Heraclitean doctrine of flux, as we shall see, designated for the Victorian writer a primordial philosophical formula that encapsulated the thrust of inductive thought since it was validated, as he repeatedly asserted – from his *Studies in the History of Renaissance* (1873) to *Plato and Platonism* (1893) – by contemporary science. Heraclitus, as an archetypical empiricist, was accordingly associated with a sequence of 19th-century inductive thinkers, like J. S. Mill, Tyndall, Huxley, Bain and Darwin. In view of these historical correspondences that the aesthete established, I shall exploit Pater’s modernized reading of Heraclitean philosophy as a framework within which his relation to the politics of the concrete and the empiricist tradition will be examined.

As I intend to show, the reason why Pater addressed scientific progress and radical empiricism through Heraclitus involved the fact that he could strategically sublimate, via the distinguished and canonized status of the Ephesian philosopher, the materialistic and pagan connotations that the discourse of modern science was

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8 My intention, furthermore, is to contribute to an understanding of the impact that Heraclitus exerted on Victorian thought, opening a new field of studies, since the Greek philosopher’s relation to late-19th-century Britain, which as we shall see was decisive, has been largely ignored, as one can understand from Turner’s and Jenkyns’ influential studies.
invoking at the time. In this sense, Pater’s preoccupation with the ancient philosopher was no donnish backward-looking obsession, but rather a platform from which, as a typical man of his time, he was actively engaged with the forces of progress, and expressed his views on scientific induction. His systematic use of the Greek philosopher in order to bring into play 19th-century empiricism was representative of his own contribution to this wider discussion about the quality of the inductive method. Drawing on the way Heraclitus consistently counterbalanced the chaotic relativism of an empirical world in flux with the presence of a fixed rational force, Logos, I will explore the way that Pater utilized the Ephesian philosopher in order to epitomize his conviction that a certain amount of abstraction was paradoxically embedded in the empirical model itself. Likewise, the associations that Heraclitus, as the alleged father of empiricism, established between the seen and the unseen, between the concrete and the conceptual, between the senses and reason, typified for the Victorian critic an unambiguous overlapping, an irrefutable structural kinship between the empiricist and the idealist worldviews that encouraged him to envision, and subsequently promote, their synthesis. Indicative of the profound reconciliatory character that Pater assigned to Heraclitus was the fact that in Plato and Platonism he also proclaimed the ancient empiricist philosopher as the precursor of Darwinism and Hegelian dialecticism, encapsulating through a philosophical parable the late-19th-century awareness, which Zerffi’s essay documents, that it was evolution and Continental historicism that had engendered the climate of compromise between the two “rivals.” In the light of these considerations, it becomes clear that the largely unexplored question of Pater’s tactical manipulation of the Heraclitean doctrine that my reading brings to light can provide fresh insights into the way the critic’s relation to the empiricist tradition was decisively filtered by his synthetic politics.
The relation between Pater’s reconciliatory project and the school of idealism will, in its turn, be explored in the second chapter through an examination of the critic’s debt to Kant, which has been greatly overshadowed by the emphasis that a strong tradition of Paterian criticism maintains on the way Hegel’s philosophy influenced the writer’s aesthetic historicism. I have decided to focus on Kant, firstly, because the impact of his thought on the aesthete still remains for the most part uncharted, despite the fact that the German philosopher is repeatedly invoked throughout the critic’s work, and, secondly, because, as it is my contention to argue here, Kant, who laid the philosophical foundations of aestheticism,9 provides a far better base for the Oxford don’s synthetic politics, since, as I will show, his reconciliatory vision conspicuously echoes Kantian terminology at key junctures. My examination of the way both German philosophers were received at the time will, furthermore, uncover that, unlike Hegel, with his Absolute form of idealism, Kant was considered by Pater and his contemporaries as a “semi-empiricist” (Seth 546), as a modern philosopher who occupied the middle ground between empiricism and idealism, and, thus, his philosophy generally designated a system that was more compatible with the inductive method than Hegel’s. In view of this, I will present evidence that Kant’s attempt to surmount the shortcomings of rationalist absolutism and empiricist subjectivism by bringing the two systems together into a “deducto-inductive” approach, as Zerffi put it in “Immanuel Kant in His Relation to Modern History” in 1876 (76), was upheld by Pater, along with a series of late-19th-century thinkers, as a fitting response to the intellectual shifts of the time, as a philosophical paradigm that underscored how the limitations of empiricism could be insightfully resolved through the incorporation of a measured form of idealism.

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9 See John Wilcox’s “The Beginnings of L’Art Pour L’Art” (1953), and Frederic Burwick’s “Art for Art’s Sake and the Politics of Prescinding” (1999).
In order to specify the character and the role of Pater’s reconciliatory program, I will examine in detail the idealist elements that the Oxford don borrowed from the German philosopher in order to assimilate them into his own theoretical matrix. As we shall see, the Victorian critic selectively utilized various principles from the Kantian philosophy that were to a certain extent congruent with the empiricist tenets, so that a convergence could be established between the two systems. Analyzing this measured form of Kantianism and the way the Victorian writer employed it in his work, I will demonstrate that Pater’s systematic engagement with it signaled an implicit reintroduction of a form of Romanticism into the late 19th century. Pater has been famously hailed “the last Romantic.” His particular brand of Romanticism, I would argue marked no nostalgic retreat to the past, but rather the accommodation of the movement along the dictates of the “modern spirit.” This form of Romanticism will bring us to the key juncture of this study, where my exploration of what the two philosophical paradigms metonymically stood for in the critic’s work will make clear that Pater’s synthetic program involved the bringing together of Romantic idealism and the Enlightenment project of contemporary science that Heraclitus metaphorically invoked. Considering the specific ways in which Pater manipulated the Heraclitean and the Kantian paradigms, I will illustrate that the Oxford don upheld Romantic idealism as a means of counterbalancing the extremities of the empirical outlook, its possible effacement of the subject in the name of objectivity, its potential substitution of quality with quantity, its distrust and disrespect of art, while, conversely, 19th-century empiricism was suggested as a means of preventing idealism from lapsing into an elusive transcendentalism. The two philosophical paradigms, therefore, comprised for Pater two complimentary aspects of a single philosophical formula that united the two schools in a balanced and advanced manner.
The full scope of Pater’s reconciliatory formula and the specific ways in which he linked the Heraclitean and the Kantian paradigms will be examined in the third chapter, where I will turn to an exploration of the way the writer dramatized his synthetic vision in his fictional work by utilizing the philosophical frameworks I have established in the previous chapters. As we shall see, Pater’s fiction, just like his essays, was permeated by a preoccupation with philosophy and was chiefly employed as a platform where the writer embodied, through the vividness of the fictional narrative, his philosophical ideas, a fact which renders a cross-disciplinary approach the key to the decoding of his fictional world, as well. Under this prism, I will mainly focus on the Oxford don’s major historical novel, *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), because, as the writer himself admitted, the book illustrated in fictional form his theoretical aspirations. Exploiting the sequence of analogies that Pater established in *Marius* between 2nd-century AD Rome and late-Victorian England, I will set out to document, through a study of the way Cyrenaicism and Stoicism were represented in various texts of the time, that the synthesis of these ancient movements that the novel rests on, invokes in an allegorical form the dialectics between Heraclitean empiricism and Kantian idealism. By juxtaposing the late-19th-century representations of these Hellenistic movements with the Oxford don’s illustration of them, I will focus on Pater’s participation in the intellectual debates of the time, and consequently, the historical implications of the novel and its synthetic program.

Having come a full circle, let us now reconsider the intellectual background I have started my exploration of the topic with, so as to address the historical implications of Pater’s reconciliatory project in a more revealing way. The last quarter

10 As Pater wrote to the writer Violet Paget in 1884, “intellectual theorems seem like the life’s essence of the concrete, sensuous objects, from which they have been abstracted. I always welcome this evidence of intellectual structure in a poetic or imaginative piece of criticism, as I think it is a very rare thing, and it is also an effect I have myself endeavoured after, and so come to know its difficulties” (qtd. in C. Williams 169).
of the 19th century was a stormy period, when English society was shaken by the radical changes brought about by the accelerating pace of industrialization, the urbanization and mechanization of social reality, the revolutionizing impetus of scientific innovation, the profound transformation of the political system through the electoral reform bills of 1867 and 1884, and the relentless questioning of the status of the Church. All these changes resulted in a pervasive sense of newness, in a fascination with the “modern” that the late Victorians shared, which eventually gave rise to a deep interest in the redefinition of the relationship between “modernity” and the past.\textsuperscript{11} Decisive for this extensive responsiveness to the issue of cultural continuity were, of course, as Zerffi’s study attests, the ideas of evolution and Hegelian dialecticism, which philosophers and scientists were beginning at the time to apply in a variety of new fields so as to re-examine in their light the whole scope of human experience. This unifying tendency to establish continuities and connections triggered, in its turn, the proliferation of a series of interdisciplinary intersections and theoretical hybrids, where, as we have seen, radically different modes of thought were affiliated and employed as advanced organic wholes.

Beneath this late-Victorian preoccupation with organic continuities and holistic considerations, however, there also lurked a profound anxiety along with the need of a society on the brink of modernism to offset the sweeping force of progress, the fragmentation, specialization and radical break with the past that modernity vigorously called for. It was precisely on this Romantic, in reality, form of organic continuity with tradition that the Agrarian and Revivalist movements in the 1870s, like the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, were based, so as to express their distrust of the

\textsuperscript{11} We should not forget here that the Britons took pride of the notion of cultural continuity as, more or less, a national trait, and they constantly set it against the violent disjunctions that took place in Europe, and especially in France. This becomes manifest in Th. Carlyle’s \textit{The French Revolution: A History} and Ch. Dickens’ \textit{A Tale of Two Cities}. 
optimism that positivist progress signaled in the 1850s and 1860s. This urge to confront the past, which was both an outcome and a means of undermining scientific advance, this mixture of fright and fascination in the face of modernization, was symptomatic of the dilemma that the late-Victorian culture was forced to cope with, resulting in the realization that progress can only be resolved in relation to the past, either in its embracing or in its rejection, as the modernists some years later would agree.

Pater’s synthetic vision was an upshot of this specific socio-cultural context that took place in the twilight between the 19th and the 20th century, between the old and the new world. The Oxford don’s endeavor in the name of his reconciliatory program to realign the Romantic legacy with the givens of contemporary science in order to achieve a form of balance between the forces of progress and tradition, which had plagued the 19th-century intellect with their conflict, was characteristic of this late-Victorian climate that sought to establish a form of organic continuity with the past. Such continuity was reflected in the writer’s obsession with paradigmatic periods of transition, like the Antonine times, the Renaissance, and the 19th century itself, when tradition and progress merge into one so as to give birth to groundbreaking forms. By bringing together the givens of scientific advance and the speculative tradition, the critic’s project was timely because it dramatized that this coexistence could be attainable and constructive to both, optimistically responding, thus, to the anxieties of the time by salvaging a role for tradition in modernity and by illustrating the way progress could benefit from tradition. Pater’s attempt, in its turn, to harmonize in his writing novelty and tradition, British empiricism and Continental idealism, engendered, through a sequence of unorthodox relations, a radical hybridization and transfiguration of conventional narrative norms and techniques,
which signaled the advent of modernism in literature, as the impact of his synthetic politics on certain modernist writers like W. B. Yeats, E. M. Foster, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Wallace Stevens manifests. It was precisely this seeming paradox, which was produced, on the one hand, by Pater’s adherence to a conservative tradition, and his flirtation, on the other, with progressive novelty that rendered his program so typical of the late-19th-century intellectual climate and of pre-modernist thought.

As this study maintains, this form of paradox can only be accounted for through a thorough consideration of Pater’s reconciliatory system as a historically-specific idiom. By systematizing the philosophical and historical suggestions of Pater’s hitherto unexplored allusions to the Heraclitean and Kantian doctrines, my interdisciplinary approach aims to provide not only a series of fresh insights into the Oxford don’s synthetic vision by proposing a coherent and organized framework within which to consider what is regarded to be the most obscure aspect of his thought, but it also, by implication, contributes to the understanding of one of the most intriguing periods of British culture. Pater’s shift of focus throughout his career from the Heraclitean to the Kantian model so as to establish their interplay, as we shall see, reflects in a paradigmatic way the transition of the intellectual climate from the laissez-faire mode of individualistic induction that was dominant in the early 1860s to the humanist preoccupation with collectivities, welfarism and social obligation during the 1880s that the rise of British idealism in the early 1870s had brought about. My hope, therefore, is that this study will be read in two ways: as a thorough exploration of the way the late-Victorian thinker organized his synthetic philosophy through his readings of Heraclitus and Kant, and as an anatomy of the way

12 My consideration of the way the Oxford don transubstantiated philosophic speculation and scientific maxims into narrative depiction will be here quite revealing of his relation to modernist techniques.
the philosophical amalgamations of the time were reflected in the Oxford don’s writing, which renders his work, to borrow Carolyn Williams’ term, a unique “autobiography of the Zeitgeist” (189).\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} C. Williams applies this term so as to address the sophisticated analogies that Pater established between his own life, the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and Rome in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD, in his novel \textit{Marius the Epicurean}, while I am using this term generally here to refer to all of his work.
CHAPTER I

PATER AND THE EMPIRICAL PARADIGM OF HERACLITUS

The Spirit of the Age and Heraclitean Flux

The British intellectual climate during the period between the 1860s and the late 1870s was characterized by a profound empirical bias. From the skeptical empiricism of Hume and Mill, which was dominant in the early sixties and which widely spread the positivistic relativism of Comte, to the debates on the origin of species and to the gradual acceptance of a mechanistic vision of the world through the writings of Tyndall and Huxley, among others, metaphysical speculation was widely distrusted (Young 10-11). The late Victorians, thus, in a sense favored and safeguarded the realm of the “seen” by excluding considerations having to do with the unseen. The trajectory towards an all-encompassing scientific outlook was however not an easy one. Such uneasiness originated in the fact that the old world picture was radically subverted by a new one, as delivered by scientific progress, and there was much skepticism regarding the ethical ramifications of this “brave new world.”

Consider for example the sweeping shift in the perspective of the Victorian thought through the major publications and scientific advance of the time: Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* and J. S. Mill’s *On Liberty* set the tone for the 1860s with their respective publications in 1859. The new decade set off with the Huxley-Wilberforce debate at the Oxford BAAS Meeting and the establishment of science degrees from the University of London in 1860. Mill published *Considerations on Representative Government* and *Utilitarianism* in 1861 and 1862. Huxley’s *Man’s Place in Nature* and Tyndall’s *Heat as a Mode of Motion* were published in 1863. The following year saw the release of Spencer’s *Principles of
Biology and Pasteur’s invention of “pasteurization.” In 1866 Mendel discovered the laws of heredity, while the following year was shaken by the long-awaited Second Reform Act, which expanded suffrage in England. Arnold published *Culture and Anarchy* and Mill *On the Subjection of Women* in 1869, while the following year Newman released *A Grammar of Assent*. In 1871 Darwin published *The Descent of Man*, whereas the religious tests were abolished at Oxford as an obligatory qualification before a Master’s Degree¹ and the Trade Unions were legalized. In 1872 Darwin published *The Expression of the Emotions of Man* and Edison perfected the electric telegraph. As such, the 1860s was a decade permeated by scientific advance, and the democratization of English society accompanied, of course, by a considerate amount of skepticism about the ethical outcomes of such a shift, as we shall see in the second chapter.

It was not only scientific development which achieved this profound impact that science had on everyday life, but also the fact that it was “something of a national hobby” (Gilmour 111), since it was comprehensible by the lay person as well, unlike the extreme specialization of contemporary science. Science, thus, “became a hot subject in general intellectual journals precisely because so much of cultural weight depended on how it was imagining the world” (Levine, “Solipsism” 8). At the core of such scientific development lay, of course, the geological discoveries and their suggestions for the history of earth and the development of life forms, culminating with Darwin’s evolutionary theory of natural selection, which underlined the fundamental relation between the gradually changing species and their geographical environment so that adaptation and the reproduction of species would be secured. Darwin detected a mechanism of change, a principle of motion in nature, which

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¹ Ever since 1673 people wanting to occupy a civil position were obliged in England to take oaths of religious faith and to declare against transubstantiation.
altered man’s picture of it, since it “had the effect of immeasurably deepening contemporary understanding of the universe and mankind’s place within it” (Gilmour 111). Evolutionary theory was, thus, grasped as an intriguing narrative which captured people’s imagination in the form of an “imaginative history,” where the discourse on origins was socially received in terms of a historical adventure novel the resolution of which restored humanity to its mother-earth origins in the happily ever after manner of the Victorian family romance (Beer 8).² Inevitably, the extensive impact of science led to a dissemination of the scientific in all fields of the social web, establishing a solid rhetoric of scientism under which almost everything was presented, revealing its profound absorption into the cultural imaginary as a discourse of exemplary authority and vigor. Darwin’s influence, for example, can be evinced in all facets of the period: art (through Darwin’s offspring, naturalism), science, morality and religion through the subversion of the idea of the world as God’s Design. Tennyson, G. Eliot, Hardy, Arnold, Ruskin, and Carlyle are but a few writers who deeply responded to the ramifications of evolutionary theory in their work.

Furthermore, the discourse on science revealed a profound penetration of scientific method in the texture of late 19th century culture as a means of rationalizing the world and consequently of establishing a discourse of objectivity and “an almost ideal way of knowing” (Levine, “Solipsism” 14). The Victorian integration of scientific progress into the cultural imaginary could then be considered as “an intellectual rationalization and articulation of their experience” (Gilmour 112). Such rationalization provided mankind with a new outlook on the real, reshaping man’s

² Gillian Beer claims that “reading The Origin is an act which involves you in a narrative experience,” an experience, which “is always subjective and literary” (5). As Beer puts it, “evolutionism tended to offer a new authority to orderings of narrative which emphasized cause and effect, then descent and kin” (8). The metaphoric sway of Darwinian ideas eventually “[surpassed] their status in the text and [generated] further ideas and ideologies” (9), proving that “[o]ne of the persistent impulses in interpreting evolutionary theory has been to domesticate it, to colonize it with human meaning” (10).
relation to the world. Under this prism one can understand, for example, John Tyndall’s exploration of the effectiveness of prayers on a scientific axis, which reveals that “scientific objectivity in the 19th century was tightly allied to ethics” (Levine, “Solipsism” 8).\(^3\) And it was precisely when science failed to be firmly associated with ethics that it was highly criticized, as in Matthew Arnold’s “Literature and Science” (1882) where the influence of science was not altogether rejected but was criticized for failing to establish a connection with our “instinct for beauty, our instinct for conduct,” for failing to account for human spirituality as well (“Science” 1554).

Pater’s first book, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, was released in 1873, but actually comprised a series of essays published from 1867 to 1871 in the *Westminster Review* and the *Fortnightly Review*,\(^4\) and, thus, genuinely captures the uneasy atmosphere of the 1860s. As Ian Fletcher argues, “in periodicals such as *The Fortnightly Review*, the troubled English mind struggled with competing loyalties to science and religion, to authority and ‘the free play of mind,’ reaching a remarkably articulate stage of self consciousness” (6). Pater’s choice to publish his thoughts in the utilitarian *Westminster* and the scientifically orientated *Fortnightly* exposes his compliance with the empirical outlook and the progressive forces in their attempt to substitute traditional beliefs with a “modern” ethic compatible with the outcomes of new science. As such, it comes as no surprise that Pater’s *Renaissance* consists of an amalgamation of discourses that were dominant during this period. Therefore, as we

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\(^3\) This was actually an extreme expression of the overall tendency paradigmatically manifested in Mill’s and Spencer’s application of scientific approach as a means of social explanation.

\(^4\) “Winckelmann” was published unsigned in January 1867 in *Westminster Review*. “Poems by William Morris” was published unsigned in October 1868 in *Westminster Review*. “Notes on Leonardo da Vinci” was published signed in *Fortnightly Review* in November 189. “A Fragment on Sandro Botticelli” was published signed in *Fortnightly Review* in August 1870. “Pico della Mirandola” was published signed in *the Fortnightly Review* in October 1871. “The Poetry of Michelangelo” was was published signed in *Fortnightly Review* in November 1871.
shall see, the book is implicitly yet persistently permeated by Mill’s inductive approach, his deployment of a scientific mode as a means of social explanation and his utilitarian preoccupation with the hedonics of a pleasure principle, Spencer’s evolutionary program towards individualism, Tyndall’s materialism, Comte’s positivism, and Darwin’s obsession with origins and contingency, to name but a few.

Contrary, thus, to the stereotypical image of the aesthete who is locked in his Ivory Tower obsessed with his disinterested art, Pater, the father of British aestheticism, either directly or indirectly, participated in the debates of his time, providing his own opinion and thus contributing to the “spirit of the age,” as Mill would have put it. Even in his consideration of distant historical figures or trends, Pater always returns back to his own time implicitly commenting on the contemporary debates through historical paradigms, as it becomes obvious from his constant reference throughout his work (in Baudelairian fashion) to the spirit of “modernity.” And it is precisely this treacherous modern ground that actually initiates Pater’s project. Pater is trying to respond to the uneasiness, to the constantly shifting grounds of his time by setting up a theoretical model, which will be in direct relation to the troubling spirit of the age as an orchestrated answer to the problem evoked by the co-existence of divergent points of view, their ethical corollaries and the instability they engender for the individual. In this sense Pater’s aesthetico-ethical matrix is strictly focused on the individual’s response to the present, on individual perception, unfolding itself as an exemplary model of experience to be adopted as a means of coping with the highly enigmatic signs of the times.

It is my intention to argue that the fluid nature of the prevailing trend of relativism and the conflicting character of the late 19th century British intellect is

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5 I shall fully address this technique and its implications in the third chapter, where I shall explore the way Pater’s cross-cultural allusions specifically functioned.
paradigmatically encapsulated by Pater through his allegorical allusion to the Heraclitean image of the flow of the river. In this analogy that the Oxford don establishes, and which runs throughout his work as the core of his problematics, as we shall see, Pater associates the intellectual climate of his time with the pervasive and motive character of the Heraclitean doctrine. The specific ways in which the critic associated the late-19th-century climate with Heraclitean philosophy, and the relation between this peculiar association and Pater’s synthetic vision, which has not been addressed before, will be the object of this chapter. As I will show, the Heraclitean principle of flux is rendered by Pater the means through which the historical period of the Renaissance, as the paradigmatic era that suggestively reveals a shift from a Christian to a pagan outlook, metonymically invokes the writer’s transitional present in its surfacing of materialism, empiricism, individualism, aestheticism and humanism against a conventional background, represented by the traditional conservative forces and the Church. In its illustration of the harmonious transition from a Christian to a pagan paradigm, as evinced through the writers and artists that Pater analyses, the book is permeated by a joyous optimism regarding the critic’s historical present, an optimism that is actually dictated by the Heraclitean premise of the flux as a rejuvenating force, a force of cultural and individual re-birth. Unwilling to resist the flow of the times, Pater, thus, embraces its dictates and sets out under this prism to undermine whatever might obstruct the flow towards modernity, yet at the same time, as we shall see, mapping a territory, where what he considers should not be carried away and lost forever within the course of the current can be safely anchored down.

The name of Heraclitus appears throughout Pater’s work, from the earliest to the latest, as the founder of the doctrine of motion, establishing a point of reference and a connecting web for the aesthete’s doctrine. From its initial appearance in
“Poems by William Morris” (1868), its later reworking as the “Conclusion” to The Renaissance (1873), to Marius the Epicurean (1885) and Plato and Platonism (1893), Heraclitus’ theory upholds its dynamism all the way through Pater’s work, substantiating itself as his “Golden Book, frighteningly stimulating in his youth, and comprehended in a broader vision in his old age” (163), as Paul Zietlow puts it. Heraclitus, however, does not only orchestrate Pater’s presentation of the historical period of the Renaissance, but also the spiritual adventures of a 2nd century AD novelistic character, and, furthermore, the philosophic exploration of the Platonic doctrine, revealing the writer’s nearly obsessive preoccupation with the philosopher from Ephesus against divergent historical backgrounds. In Marius the Epicurean, it is actually Heraclitus’ fragmentary doctrine that initiates the protagonist’s philosophic quest throughout the novel. It is Heraclitus, “a very hard master,” that gives form to the young protagonist’s thought (Marius 127), as the eighth chapter, “Animula Vagula,” wholly devoted to Heraclitus, maintains. Marius’ development will be accomplished all through the novel along the lines carved by the Greek philosopher’s tenet. Considering the fact that Marius is widely regarded as Pater’s semi-autobiographical doppelganger, his fictional other, as we shall see in the third chapter, it becomes evident that the Ephesian philosopher embodies a distinguished status in Pater’s theoretical system, not only as a primal philosophical initiator but also as the fundamental conductor of the critic’s doctrine. Likewise, in Plato and Platonism (1893), one of Pater’s later works, the critic sets off by employing an exploration of Heraclitus’ “doctrine of motion” so as to unfold his illustration of Plato. Despite the fact that the book is a study of Plato, as its title indicates, Heraclitus seems to be lurking underneath Pater’s consideration and it actually shapes the Victorian thinker’s
presentation of Plato since the Greek philosopher is presented as bringing together the Heraclitean doctrine of motion and Parmenidean\(^6\) rest.

In order to highlight the specific ways in which Pater associated the empirical and positivist bias of the 1860s with the Greek philosopher, I will now turn to an examination of the Heraclitean doctrine. My exploration of Heraclitus’ philosophy will be employed as a means of juxtaposing it to Pater’s thought so as to bring to the surface certain principles in the Victorian writer’s work, which, as I will set out to prove, are tightly linked to the Ephesian philosopher, and which are revealing for my consideration of his synthetic program. As I intend to demonstrate, Heraclitus provides a consistent framework within which the relation between the school of empiricism and Pater’s synthetic model acquires its full meaning. By considering Pater’s debt to Heraclitus I will, thus, gradually pave the way towards the critic’s synthetic model.

**The Heraclitean Doctrine**

Heraclitus of Ephesus was one of the most prominent Pre-Socratic philosophers of the fifth century BC, who decisively inspired (among others) the influential Platonic doctrine. He was known in antiquity as “the Obscure” (Skoteinos), primarily because of his highly dense and figurative use of language. As fragment 59\(^7\) self-reflexively puts it, “<the> way of writing <is> straight and crooked.” Heraclitus’ statements were, thus, delivered through a series of condensed images articulated in a poetic

\(^6\) Parmenides of Elea, along with Zeno, was a prominent pre-Socratic philosopher. In his poetic narrative, entitled *On Nature*, Parmenides argues that the phenomena of the real world constitute an unchanging whole, implicitly thus becoming one of the first exponents of the duality between the way things are and the way things seem to be. According to Parmenides we can reach an understanding of the world not through sense perception, but through reason. In this sense, he deeply influenced Plato.

\(^7\) For Heraclitus’ fragments, I will be employing T. M. Robinson’s translation, indicating solely the number of the fragment.
dition, “an apophthegmatic, not to say hierophantic, manner of communication,” as Robinson asserts (4). The fact that only fragments - about 130 aphorisms - have been saved of his work has considerably added to this illustrious obscurity. Despite his aristocratic descent, Heraclitus turned against the royal authorities and traditional religion, replacing the harmony that the Pythagoreans celebrated with clash and strife as the primary characteristics of life. After all, for Heraclitus, “[w]ar is father of all, and king of all. He renders some gods, others men; he makes some slaves, others free” (fr. 53). Accordingly, beneath apparent rest, Heraclitus detected a constant struggle between opposites. In On Nature (Peri Phuseos), which, according to his will, was only posthumously released, the prominent notion of the perpetual strife of flux is delineated in terms of the basic natural elements, which maintain their physical core, yet also function at the same time as metaphoric vehicles. The notion of fire, employed as the primary form of the unceasing process of reality, is actually the natural element that Heraclitus considers as paradigmatically embodying the concept of strife. Fire, therefore, in a cyclical process, is transformed through air into water, water into earth and earth ends up as fire in a cycle of rebirth. Heraclitus’ natural theory, thus, stresses a fundamental process of flowing change structured upon oppositional relations (fire/water, up/down, one/many, cooling/heating, day/night, life/death). Nevertheless, beneath such struggle, Heraclitus identifies as lurking a profound unity holding the phenomena together, since the removal of one term of the opposition obviously leads to its collapse. What is permanent in this procedure is not the disparate, discordant manifestation of substances, but the harmonious law of

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8 Most of which are actually citations by authors from the period AD 100-300.
9 His aversion for tradition is even manifested through the fact that when he once got sick, he denied the help of doctors but instead he lied in the centre of Ephesus all covered up in dung, where he was devoured by dogs.
10 “Fire’s turnings: first, sea, and of sea half <is> earth and half ‘burner’” (fr. 31a). “Fire lives the death of earth and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of air, earth that of water” (fr. 76a).
change itself. Thus, the way upwards and the way downwards, in fact, all oppositional pairs, comprise together the process of “becoming” (fr. 69). It is actually this tension between opposites that keeps the world together as a single phenomenon.\footnote{“[Heraclitus said that] what opposes unites, [and that the finest attunement stems from things bearing in opposite directions, and that all things come about by strife]” (fr. 8).}

Cosmic motion is symbolically presented through the notion of the flow of the water in the celebrated and often quoted image of the river. Within the flow of the river, every moment is rendered singular, making it impossible for an object or a subject to appear the same twice.\footnote{Fragment 12 argues that “[a]s they step into the same rivers, different and <still> different waters flow upon them”. Furthermore, fragment 91a states that according to Heraclitus “… it is not possible to step into the same river, nor is it possible to touch a mortal substance twice in so far as its state (hexis) is concerned. But, thanks to <the> swiftness and speed of change, it scatters <things?> and brings <them?> together again, [(or, rather, it brings together and lets go neither ‘again’ nor ‘later’ but simultaneously)], <it> forms and <it> dissolves, and <it> approaches and departs”.} Thus, Heraclitus underlines the relativity\footnote{The concept of relativity is central in Heraclitus’ system, as a series of fragments suggest. Consider, for example, fragment 82, which states that “the most handsome of apes is ugly in comparison with <a member of the> human race”. Or, fragment 102: “[t]o god all things are fair and just, whereas humans have supposed that some things are unjust, other things just”. Or, “God <is> day <and> night, winter <and> summer, war <and> peace, satiety <and> famine, and undergoes change in the way that <fire?>, whenever it is mixed with spices, gets called by the name that accords with <the> bouquet of each <spice>?” (fr. 67).} embedded in the nature of the flux itself, but such relativity is not negatively regarded.

If the world is a river, then its endless flow is the only way it can be, since in spite of its constantly changing nature, it never loses its totality: “[w]hile changing it rests” (fr. 84a). Therefore, the world is presented as the sum of its events and not its objects, as Wittgenstein will echo some 2.500 years later in \textit{Tractatus} (1). As G. S. Kirk adds, “it is the structure of things, rather than their material, that gives them their real unity” (“Sense” 107). That’s why the form that Heraclitus singles out for signifying the process of the world is fire. “In reality a material thing is like a flame; for a flame seems to be a material thing, but it is not: it is a process; it is in flux; matter passes through it; it is like a river,” Popper clarifies (“Kirk” 387). In contrast, thus, to the
philosophers of Miletus (Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes)\textsuperscript{14} Heraclitus claimed that the world, having originated from fire, actually maintains its form as a fire that burns with “measure” so as to remain orderly and constant: “\textit{<The ordered?> world, the same for all, no god or man made, but it always was, is, and will be, an everliving fire, being kindled in measures and being put out in measures}” (fr. 30).\textsuperscript{15} Thus, Heraclitus’ doctrine argues for a measured principle of stability and order yet it sustains at the same time through the image of fire the notion of transformation and change. As Popper affirms, “in order to appear as a stable thing, the process has to be regular, law-like, measured” (“Kirk” 387), singling out the principle of “measure” as the key parameter in Heraclitus’ theoretical universe and, moreover, as the predominant cause of “the balance of fire, of flames, and of things – of those processes and changes which appear as stable and as things at rest, and which are responsible for the preservation of things” (“Kirk” 392).

The principle of measure that grants unity and order to things and persons alike is for Heraclitus \textit{Logos}. “The measure, the rule, the lawful change, the logos is the cause of balance – including especially the balance of a fire when it is under control, such as a balanced flame or the sun or the moon (or the soul)” (Popper 392). The notion of Logos is, therefore, the organizing principle of Heraclitus’ theoretical system. It is the imperceptible order that runs through the course of reality keeping together what appears at first sight to be incoherent and fragmentary. It is the cosmic order that actually measures and balances change. What appears to be deceptively disconnected is in fact held together by Logos, which is the objective law of

\textsuperscript{14} These philosophers claimed that every natural object is the manifestation of a single material nature, such as water or air.

\textsuperscript{15} In contemporary terms this could refer to the principle of thermodynamics. As a matter of fact, this is more or less the way Pater employs the notion in the “Conclusion,” as we shall see.
transformation connecting through its vital force subjects and objects alike.\textsuperscript{16}

Heraclitus’ paradoxical system of a world in constant flux, which is illustrated through a series of oppositional pairs, does not, this way, render knowledge impossible for the individual. Knowledge is achieved for the Greek philosopher predominantly through Logos, the individual’s connection with the cosmic principle of unity by way of variation. In this sense, Logos stands for both the cosmic process and intellectual light. As the objective principle of order, it is available to all, but most people ignore it, failing thus to establish a connection with a common reality, occupying instead a subjective dream world. The disconnection of the individual from the common, the universal cause, results in a feeling of incoherence and disruption since even though Logos “is common, the many live, however, as though they had a private understanding” (fr. 2). Heraclitus, Pater emphasizes, repeatedly states “at the dullness of men’s ears […] [its] continuous strain of melody” (\textit{Marius} 18) but people prefer to ignore it. Or, as Heraclitus himself puts in a tone echoed by Pater, “uncomprehending, <even> when they have heard <the truth about things>, they are like deaf people” (fr. 34).\textsuperscript{17} It is only when the individual establishes a dialectic with Logos that the world is apprehended as a whole. This is actually the concealed harmony that Heraclitus detects lurking beneath the deceptive perceptible one\textsuperscript{18} to which the prominent fragment 54 refers by stating that “an unapparent connection is stronger than the one which is obvious.”

\textsuperscript{16} “Things grasped together; things whole, things not whole; <something> being brought together, <something> being separated; <something> consonant, <something> dissonant. Out of all things <comes?> one thing, and out of one thing all things” (fr. 10).

\textsuperscript{17} What is more, these people “are separated from that with which they are in the most continuous contact,” Heraclitus underscores (fr. 72).

\textsuperscript{18} An implicit ontological priority is thus handed to thought over empirical reality. Accordingly, the reality that the human mind captures is truer than empirical reality itself. This appears in a very indirect way to undermine Pater’s empiricism. This idea will be fully developed later on in our exploration of Pater’s relation to Kant.
In this sense, Heraclitus implicitly introduced an ascetic training of sense perception as a means of establishing a connection with the cosmic force of cohesion, since “sight is deceptive”\(^{19}\) (fr. 46), leading to the predicament that “[m]any people do not ‘understand the things they encounter’! Nor do they recognize them <even> after they have had experience <of them> - though they themselves think <they recognize them>” (fr. 17). Logos, thus, comes to the subject through the senses, but only through an ascetic selectiveness among objects of perception.\(^{20}\) Despite the deceptiveness of the senses, one should always exhibit a careful observation of what is common to all and establish a connection with it. Consequently, the “two necessary conditions for the success of such enquiry are openness to possibilities (fr. 18) and patience before the difficult task of uncovering a reality and truth which lie concealed (fr. 123) but are worth digging for (fr. 22)” (Robinson 182). For Heraclitus, knowledge was possible, but “its specific and most significant object,” as Robinson argues, was “the plan that directs the operations of the universe,” Logos (181).

Such a theory of knowledge, in its insistence on the inferring from the evidence of the senses, however, actually became an epistemology of the unseen, of what lies beyond perception\(^{21}\) via the seen. “Greek thinkers soon discovered that the preconception of unity in the world called for a reality-principle that lay behind phenomena,” which led them to explore the role of the senses as a means of grasping an unseen unity or truth (Kirk, “Sense” 116); and it was, in fact, as Kirk puts it, Heraclitus, who “was the first Greek philosopher whom we know to have made explicit reference to the unseen as something vital to apprehend” (“Sense” 108). Not

\(^{19}\) “Poor witnesses for people are eyes and ears if they possess uncomprehending (literary, ‘barbarian’ souls” (fr. 107).

\(^{20}\) As fragments 46 and 107 insist.

\(^{21}\) “Sensation confronts us with the evident by means that are un-evident, and all descriptions of it, even modern ones, contain conceptions that are unfamiliar, often improbable, and certainly far removed from the normal sphere of common-sense” (Kirk, “Sense” 112).
rejecting the role of the senses, but subjecting them to a critical scrutiny, Heraclitus underscored the apprehension of the unseen Logos amidst a highly fragmented and incoherent reality.²² Thus, the Greek philosopher managed to make “certainty of a quasi-logical kind positive by giving it unseen, but not anti-natural or in this sense improbable objects” (Kirk, “Sense” 109). Or, as Pater claims, echoing the dominant at the time doctrine of Comte, “the negative doctrine, then that the objects of our ordinary experience, fixed as they seem, are really in perpetual change, had been, as originally conceived, but the preliminary step towards a large positive system of almost religious philosophy” (Marius 130).²³

During Heraclitus’ time, at the end of the sixth century, the scientific tradition had begun to spread, starting to subvert the dominant culture of the popular poets, of Homer and the early sages (Khan 9-10). Thus, as Khan affirms, Heraclitus with his scientific interest presented in an almost poetic form, can be regarded as “the bridge between these two traditions” (10). The Greek philosopher, as a precursor of an early Enlightenment, was therefore predominantly interested in the nature of knowledge, its possibility or impossibility in a constantly changing world. It should be noted here, however, that this “positive” system, as Pater and Kirk call it, cannot be considered strictly speaking empirical, despite its apparent resemblance, because Heraclitus does not accept an antithesis between reason and the senses, he does not consider them as different things, as Axelos states (73); or as Minar argues, “the division of reason from sense” is not as early as Heraclitus (329). Despite, then, its metaphysical flirtation with the unseen on the one hand, and its emphasis on sensory experience on

²² It was actually with Parmenides that “the evidence of the senses must be utterly rejected in favour of a concept of Being which arose solely from the working of the mind on a single premise”, as Kirk puts it (110), and actually Pater agrees in his own presentation of Parmenides in Plato and Platonism by juxtaposing the doctrine of motion to the doctrine of rest.

²³ The full implications of Pater’s implicit allusion to Comte will be analyzed in the third chapter, where we shall explore Pater’s attitude to religion.
the other, Heraclitus’ system resists any classification as either idealistic or materialistic, since it points to a primordial stage in thought where things were treated in a holistic manner. As such, his theoretical matrix can be seen as occupying the paradoxical and peculiar “in-between” position, being situated in the twilight of the seen and the unseen, of sensation and thought, of science and poetry, of philosophy and literature; hence, its widespread and diverse sway in the course of Western philosophy as a paradigmatically synthetic theoretical vehicle. The problems with which Heraclitus preoccupied himself exerted thus a divergent influence on the course of Western philosophy. From Cratylus and Plato, to the Stoics, the Sophists, to the Christian Church (in its fascination and assimilation of Logos as God’s Word), to Boehme, Montaigne, Spinoza, Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx and Heidegger it becomes evident that “every generation and every school construed the doctrine of Heraclitus from its own particular vantage point” (Khan 9).

The diachronic character of the Heraclitean doctrine deeply involved its fundamental premise of change as flux; as such, it was systematically addressed during transitional periods. In this sense, the theory of flux can be termed the paradigmatic doctrine of historical transition, the par excellence doctrine that self-reflexively invokes periods of radical change. The 19th century, as we have seen, being host to a plethora of cultural changes was an era marked by radical shifts. Accordingly, Heraclitus was resuscitated during the 19th century, a time infiltrated by extraordinary change, brought about either by the political revolutions in France and America, or by science and the revolutionary industrialization of society that was imprinted, among others, on the theories of Hegel, Marx, Comte, Mill and Darwin. Most of these theoretical constellations employed the Heraclitean doctrine “in an attempt to institutionalize change,” as Fishman declares (382). Karl Popper,
moreover, in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) makes an interesting comparison between the 19th century and the time of Heraclitus, highlighting the similarities between the two eras. Popper considers Heraclitus’ doctrine of flux as symptomatic of an age of social upheaval, a reflection of “the dissolution of the ancient tribal forms of social life” (20).24 The end of the 6th century B.C., very much like the end of the 19th century, also marked in its shift from a poetical-mythological to a scientific vision of the world, the closure of a prior intellectual frame and the emergence of a new one. Indicative of this was the influential Darwinian doctrine itself, which, as James Paradis argues, heralded in the 19th century a shift from “the aesthetic idealism of Romantic art” to “the system building traditions of geological and natural sciences,” tracing “the historical path from poetic to scientific nature” (qtd. in Levine, “Knowledge” 379).25 And it was precisely to this radical shift that Pater responded by fittingly utilizing the Heraclitean doctrine as a theoretical symptom of an age in profound transition, as we shall see.

As a matter of fact, the Oxford don was one of the strongest advocates of Heraclitean thought in 19th-century Britain, despite the fact that his relation to the Greek philosopher still remains largely uncharted. It is on this neglected aspect of Paterian scholarship that I intend to focus by highlighting how Heraclitean philosophy can provide fresh insights into the critic’s synthetic program and its participation in the late-19th-century intellectual climate.

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24 Constance I. Smith characteristically argues that “Heraclitus’ philosophy of change arose out of personal experiences which were themselves terrifying: heir to the royal family of the priest-kings of Ephesus, he lived in a time of social revolution; there was an upsurge of new democratic forces and to these forces the Greek tribal aristocrats were beginning to yield. Heraclitus witnessed their yielding, and out of the suffering of this social experience was born the idea of the transitoriness of all things; everything is in continual motion and flux” (126).

25 Levine states that “Paradis’s analysis is surely correct: an essentially poetic response to the natural gives way to – I would prefer to say, generates – a scientific one (and I am uneasy about the implicit chronology of this) – first poetry, then science” (“Knowledge” 379).
Heraclitus and Science in the “Conclusion”

Let us now turn to the “Conclusion” of the Renaissance, which forms in a very synoptic way Pater’s early philosophic manifesto, and regard it in terms of the Heraclitean theory. The ideas contained in it originally appeared in a sketchy form as the concluding paragraph of “Poems by William Morris” (1868), one of Pater’s first publications. The “Conclusion” triggered a great deal of controversy because of its explicit paganism, as we shall see, to the extent that Pater was forced to reconsider and adjust some of the ideas originally contained in it, which of course did not include its intricate Heraclitean framework. The text sets off with an epigraph from Plato’s Cratylus that explicitly refers to Heraclitus: “Λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ότι πάντα χωρεί καὶ οὐδέν μένει” (150). This epigrammatically indicates that the text’s real subject, as Blinderman asserts, is not the historical period of the Renaissance, but the “ethical consequences” of the recognition of fluidity in the physical world and human thought (482). Revolving around the issue of fluidity and its relation to the individual, the “Conclusion” can be subsequently considered in its essence as another of Pater’s Heraclitean texts.

Due to this epigraph, many critics have indistinctly acknowledged the presence of Heraclitus in this section, yet none, to my knowledge, has thoroughly detected the way Pater specifically refers to Heraclitus, the intricate allusions he establishes in his text so as to orchestrate his argument. This epigraph, as it is my contention to argue, does not only organize the whole “Conclusion,” but it also imposes a Heraclitean viewpoint on it as the only key to its understanding. Such viewpoint does not actually involve solely Heraclitus’ epigraph, but Pater’s profound utilization of an army of Heraclitean tenets. The examination, thus, of the
“Conclusion” will provide me with a means of introducing and establishing a set of principal notions for my study of Pater’s synthetic program, notions that paradigmatically invoke the fundamental premises of the Heraclitean doctrine, such as the flux and its measured balance, Logos, the synthesis of opposites, ascesis, observation, and the very form of Heraclitus’ writing. A conclusion might sound as a paradoxical way of introduction, however, if we consider it from a Heraclitean perspective, it isn’t. We know that the cosmic drama is performed for the philosopher from Ephesus in a cyclical pattern of substances, where beginning and end coincide, as fragment 103 states. Likewise, Pater’s early publication, his so to speak premature thoughts were re-incorporated and set as the concluding section to his first book. These thoughts recurrently come out throughout the Oxford don’s work, being expanded, enriched, reworked, establishing a cyclical pattern, where beginning and end are united like the well-known image of the snake biting its tail.

The “Conclusion” has been traditionally read by Paterian critics along the lines of late 19th century scientific development. Monsman, for example, argues that the real subject of the “Conclusion” is not the Renaissance, but the ethical implications of new science (Pater 57), whereas McGrath affirms that “in the middle of the 19th century he had already accepted the vision of humanity bequeathed by modern science” (19). It comes then as no surprise that the “Conclusion,” which was written during the turbulent period I have sketched, on the one hand profoundly reflects this radical penetration of science into the cultural imaginary, while, on the other, it portrays it in a Heraclitean idiom. In the “Conclusion,” as I will argue, the Heraclitean doctrine gets implicitly identified with scientific progress; by metonymically invoking the contemporary zeitgeist, Heraclitus becomes a

26 “In the case of a circle [’s circumference] beginning and end are common”
philosophical vehicle for the promotion of the transformation of English society. And it is precisely on this relation between Heraclitus and contemporary science, where the Greek philosopher actually orchestrates Pater’s response to the new science that I shall mainly focus on, since it has been largely overlooked.

In the “Conclusion,” Pater begins by defining “modern thought” as the tendency “to regard all things and principles of things as inconstant modes of fashion” (150). The relation between Heraclitus’ epigraph and Pater’s confirmation determines, through an association of ancient with “modern thought,” the diachronic attribute of the law of change and the contribution of the ancient Greek philosopher to the current formulation of scientific relativity. Similarly, Tyndall in his address before the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1874, a year before the publication of the Renaissance, summarizes scientific progress by beginning his elaboration with ancient Greek natural philosophy - because “the science of ancient Greece had already cleared the world of the fantastic images of divinities operating capriciously through natural phenomena” (11). Likewise, Heraclitus is employed by Pater so as to implicitly invoke a scientific discourse and to indicate that contemporary scientific givens, as authenticated and substantiated through the course of western history, are going to be explored in his essay. This way, Pater resorts to an incontrovertible ground, to science, so as to securely structure his

27 As we shall see, Pater repeatedly throughout his work connects the ancient philosopher with a variety of contemporary scientific or philosophical doctrines in his attempt to establish in a “modern” idiom the currency of Heraclitus’ thought.
28 As R. Barton synoptically puts it, “[t]he core of the Belfast Address was an argument for the adequacy of materialism as a philosophy of science. Tyndall argued that the phenomena of vegetable, animal, and human life are all part of a chain of cause and effect governed by the law of conservation of energy and reducible to mechanical laws, the wonderful variety and complexity of the living world being explained by Darwin’s theory of natural selection” (116).
29 The similarities between Tyndall’s address and Pater’s “Conclusion” are striking. Of course Pater’s text was written and published before Tyndall’s. There is no evidence to my knowledge that Tyndall was directly influenced by Pater, yet there appears to be a fascinating convergence between a scientist and an artist, revealing the intellectual climate of the time and the extent to which science had infiltrated the Victorian cultural imaginary.
argument and sets off his exploration in a factual and impartial gesture that mimics scientific discourse, “with that which is without – our physical life” (150).

Right from the start, thus, “our physical life” is presented through a discourse that metonymically suggests the science of physics. Pater directs the reader’s attention towards the combination of natural elements, of “water” and “heat,” in a manner that resonates with Heraclitus’ diction concerning nature (150). Pater goes on in the manner of Heraclitus to underline the fact that these elements are not only constituents of the human body, but “we detect them in places most remote from it,” rendering “our physical life […] a perpetual motion of them” (150). Pater actually depicts our “whole physical life” as a “combination of natural elements to which science gives their names,” as a “process,” “which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces”:

[like the elements of which we are composed, the action of these forces extends beyond us; it rusts iron and ripens corn. Far out on every side of us those elements are broadcast, driven in many currents; and birth and gesture and death and the springing of violets from the grave are but a few out of ten thousand resultant combinations (150).]

By illustrating the physical components of natural constitution as being constantly and actively engaged in a cycle of life, Pater seems to be implicitly invoking within a Heraclitean framework the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy, where “the constancy and indestructibility of matter had been affirmed” in

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30 “Let us begin with that which is without – our physical life. Fix upon it in one of its more exquisite intervals, the moment, for instance, of delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat. What is the whole physical life in that moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names?” (150).

31 The interplay of these forces “rusts iron and ripens corn” but it can also be detected in “the passage of the blood, the waste and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of the brain under every ray of light and sound” (150). Moreover, Pater’s affirmation here reveals how well-informed he was on the science of his time.

32 “The ostensibly Heraclitean ‘doctrine of motion’ which Pater’s narrative maps out clearly also alludes to the 19th century principle of the ‘conservation of energy’ which proposes that energy persists
the realm of “organic nature,” since “the activity of each animal as a whole was
proved to be the transferred activity of its molecules,” “bringing vital as well as
physical phenomena under the dominion of that law of causal connexion which, so far
as the human understanding has yet pierced, asserts itself everywhere in nature,” as
Tyndall defines it in his address (46).

Pater’s reference, furthermore, to these “simpler and more elementary forces,”
to these “indestructible” “molecules” as Tyndall calls them, to “phosphorus and lime
and delicate fibres” (150), indicates, as many critics have pointed out, an explicit
allusion to the notion of “protoplasm.” In her influential survey “The Intellectual
Context of Walter Pater’s Conclusion,” Inman claims that the “Conclusion” employs
in its first part a discourse delivered from contemporary science, as it becomes evident
by the direct reference to science by name in the text (which is Pater’s imitation of the
style of scientific demonstration as exemplified by Bacon and Tyndall), and its
allusion to concepts developed by the most prominent biological scientists of the late
1860’s on the “physical basis of life, or the absence of any force but chemical forces
in all of life’s processes, including thought” (14). Inman also lists as crucial
influences on the “Conclusion” G. H. Lewes’ article33 on the simplest, the
microscopic form of organic life, the protoplasm and the constitution of every organic

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33 Inman refers to G. H. Lewes’ “Mr. Darwin’s Hypotheses,” published in the avant-garde Fortnightly
Review “at the beginning of the month in which Pater completed his review on Morris” in July 1868
(14).
or inorganic object by the relation of its molecules and “the relation of its substance to all surrounding objects” (qtd. in Inman 14), as well as Spencer’s discussion of the constitution of organic matter by chemical elements. In a similar manner, Blinderman in “Huxley, Pater and Protoplasm” regards both Huxley’s “On the Physical Basis of Life,” which was published in the Fortnightly Review in February 1869, and Pater’s essay on William Morris, which formed the backbone of the “Conclusion” and appeared in the Westminster Review in October 1868, as responses to the notion of protoplasm. Displaying similar “diction and figures” (482), both writers agreed on the role of protoplasm as the physical basis of life, as the means of “supplying a continuity among living things,” as Blinderman confirms (480).

Despite, however, the scientific evidence of the holistic pattern in “our physical life” as an extensively intricate interplay of cosmic energy, despite this “continuity among living things,” human understanding, anthropomorphically projects its own vision upon the world in an effort to transcend its shortcomings: “[t]hat clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours, under which we group,” as Pater asserts, the innumerous “resultant combinations” of these interrelated elements, as “a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it” (150). Heraclitus’ notion of “apparent and hidden” harmony can be traced here in Pater’s attempt to describe the way people organize the real in terms of their own conventional and highly superficial means, failing to account for a deeper, a

34 Despite the fact that, as Inman herself admits, it is uncertain whether Pater read Lewes or Spencer, both Lewes’ article and Spencer’s The Principles of Biology (1864–67) expressed the idea that “the physical constituents of the human body are constantly changing and that they are integral to a larger physical system” (Inman, “Context” 14). Such an idea is evidently present in the “Conclusion” and it is delivered, as we have seen, through a Heraclitean diction, since it definitely bears a resemblance to the Greek philosopher’s doctrine.

35 There cannot be established a direct influence between the two thinkers, as the chronology indicates. Nevertheless, as Blinderman argues, “the two essays are very much alike in their articulation of the meaning of protoplasm” (481).

36 As Blinderman argues, “the Darwinists were philosophically amenable to continuities of all kinds, the most notorious being those between apes and human beings” (480).
primordial force, the *physis* in them, the “law of causal connexion” present everywhere in nature, as Tyndall puts it (46). Pater, thus, suggestively ends his discussion on nature and the physical constitution of mankind borrowing Heraclitus’ central image of the fire, of the natural force that brings together all other elements: “[t]his at least of flame-like our life has, that it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways” (150). The Victorian notion of the conservation of energy is implicitly once again invoked through Heraclitean fire as the paradigmatic component that symbolically encapsulates the energetic recycling of natural elements in a vitally fluctuating process, the operation of which extends outside these conventionally schematized “outlines,” towards the whole realm of the physical world. In this respect, Pater’s exploration of nature concludes with a symbolic resolution of the gap between the individual and the world, captured through the unifying energy of fire, where man is illustrated as biologically participating in the cosmic process. Such an awareness, Pater seems to imply, actually possesses the key to instilling a harmonious relation between the individual and the world, and, by consequence, the subversion of its hasty transcendence.

Leaving behind the realm of nature and of physical science, Pater then in a Heraclitean gesture turns from the macrocosmic to the microcosmic, to “the inward world of thought and feeling” (151). Just like the Greek philosopher, Pater is chiefly interested in the way the individual responds to the concept of the flux and subsequently in the possibility of knowledge within this flow. Diels affirms that Heraclitus’ starting point for his conception of physics was actually the human subject: “[o]nce he had encountered the law of the microcosm within himself, he discovered it for a second time in the external world” (qtd. in Khan 21). And it is
precisely here that Heraclitus’ importance lies for Pater, in this merging interrelation between the private inside and the public outside under the aegis of the doctrine of unity, the flowing reconciliation of opposites. Indicative of this form of continuity is the fact that Pater’s transition from the physical world to the individual is established again upon the Heraclitean concept of fire. Accordingly, in the inward world Pater registers that “the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring” (151). Having exemplified the way flux, as a fundamental energy expressed through the image of the fire, physically constitutes human beings, Pater moves on to examine the ethical upshot of psychological fluctuation, portraying respectively the inside realm of the individual in constant flux, in terms of a “flame” as well. The flow of the river in its “apparent rest” and unity is replaced, however, in the interior by a racing and fragmentary “drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought” (151), signaling a radical shift in tone through the illustration of the world within as being permeated by anxiety, skepticism and nervousness, where the individual is actually lost within this “drift,” this “despair of knowledge” (Marius 132). Is then Pater pointing to the flux as the reason for this chaotic inner fragmentation, abandoning, that is, a principle that he had so enthusiastically endorsed? Within the

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37 An association is therefore established between the first and the second part of the “Conclusion,” between our “flame-like” physical existence and the impressions that “burn and are extinguished” (C. Williams 29), structured around the image of fire. Williams, nevertheless, asserts that the relation between the first and the second section might be taken as Pater’s urge to “fight fire with fire” (29). It is not, however, so much that Pater wishes to fight back, because that would imply that he does not fully endorse the burning stream of the flux. What the Oxford don wishes to stress instead is that the two presented fires are actually one and the same, establishing a relation between the outside and the inside, where “vital forces unite in their purest energy”. Both fire images emblematically point to a compatible interconnection of interior and exterior flux, a deeper unity that is there and holds together objective and subjective reality alike under the burning dictates of the cosmic fire. The strife for a balanced relation between outer and inner flame yields a rewarding bond between the individual and the world.

38 In a similar fashion, Pater states in Plato and Platonism, “[t]he principle of disintegration, the incoherency of fire or flood (for Heraclitus these are but very lively instances of movements, subtler yet more wasteful still) are inherent in the primary elements alike of matter and of the soul” (15).

39 “There it is no longer the gradual darkening of the eye, the gradual fading of colour from the wall – movements of the shore-side, where the water flows down indeed, though in an apparent rest – but the race of the mid-stream, a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought” (151).
stream of life things momentarily pass the individual, leaving the critic wondering: “[h]ow may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?” (152). The confusion that the internalization of the flux generates thus radically challenges an objective connection with the world for the individual, it undermines the possibility of a unified perception, of a stable reference-point for the individual, attaching a dreamy, a deceptive aura to its existence, Pater seems to imply.  

Pater’s concluding remarks offer a resolution to the perplexity of this predicament that causes strains of anxiety to the individual in its relation to reality. Since the whole essay maintains a Heraclitean framework as a point of reference, a turn towards the ancient Greek philosopher is necessitated, I believe, as the key to the way Pater resolves this problematic situation. Pater is not turning his back on the Heraclitean doctrine but insists that such anxiety is actually a plight stemming from a misunderstanding of the principle of the flux, as he later on acknowledges in Marius:

> [t]he swift passage of things, the still swifter passage of those modes of our conscious being which seemed to reflect them, might indeed be the burning of the divine fire: but what was ascertained was that they did pass away like a devouring flame, or like the race of water in the mid-stream – too swiftly for any real knowledge of them to be attainable (131).

What has been “ascertained,” thus, out of a superficial misreading of the “divine fire,” the Victorian critic asserts, is that it actually turns to ashes the solid ground upon which understanding and knowledge can perch. Or, at least, this is the impression that one gets when failing to account for the deeper structure of meaning.

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40 In his illustration of such “despair of knowledge,” of the treacherous ground between objectivity and subjectivity, Pater is actually restating a fundamental philosophical problem expressed by Kant that I shall examine in detail in the next chapter.
in Heraclitus’ theory. A failure to read between the lines of the Heraclitean doctrine and to grasp the essence of his premise, Pater implies, can turn a synthesis-principle into a fragmentary force, encouraging the anxiety of uncertainty and introverted isolation.\(^41\) As a matter of fact, Heraclitus himself refers to fragmentation and alienation, by claiming that for some people reality appears to be incoherent. This comes as a result of a failure to detect the inherent connection between things, the “hidden” harmony that permeates them, which Heraclitus calls Logos.

In fragment 2 the Greek philosopher determines that despite the fact that Logos “is common, the many live, however, as though they had a private understanding.” Such awareness is emphatically repeated in fragment 89: “Тοις εγρηγορόσιν ένα και κοινόν κόσμον είναι, των δε κοιμωμένων ἐκαστόν εἰς ἰδίον αποστρέφεσθαι”, which means that “for those who are awake there is a single, common universe, whereas in sleep each person turns away into {his} own, private {universe}.” As a matter of fact, Heraclitus consistently signals through the recurrent metaphor of sleep and wakefulness\(^42\) the situation of being connected with the unifying luminosity of public Logos on the one hand, and the private predicament, on the other, of dark alienation, where the individual is cut off from a common ground as a “prisoner of his own dream,” in Pater’s words (151). Likewise, Pater seems to climactically allude to Heraclitus in the last section of the “Conclusion,” where he resolves the problematic interrelation of the subject and the object, by culminatingly employing the Greek philosopher’s set of well established metaphors of fire/water, of

\(^{41}\) The implications are here obvious, since Pater seems to be self-reflexively referring to his own synthetic vision and the way it misunderstood by his decriers, but this is an issue I shall fully explore in the third chapter.

\(^{42}\) The Heraclitean doctrine is actually characterized by this recurrent motif. Thus, to cite but a few, fragment 26 states that “[a] person in <the> night kindles a light for himself, since his vision has been extinguished. In his sleep he touches that which is dead, though <himself> alive, <and> when awake touches that which sleeps”; and fragment 75 declares that “those who are asleep” are called by Heraclitus as “labourers and co-producers of what happens in the universe”.

being awake/ being asleep. As such, the subject’s inability to “discriminate” the profound scheme of things is “on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening” (152). A failure to account for the subtle motion of the world of phenomena is, thus, compared to falling asleep in a Heraclitean idiom. Conversely, coming in contact with “the sleepless, ever-sustained, inexhaustible energy” (Marius 130-131) of Logos, entails wakefulness on the recipient’s part and thus the darkness, the sleep of roughened, “confused” vision (Marius 129) is sharply juxtaposed by Pater to the image of the fire: “[t]o burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life” (152).

This often quoted phrase, which has provoked much academic discussion, has been one of Pater’s most characteristic and influential images. The paradox of a “success in life” brought about through burning, should not surprise us if we regard this metaphor in the light of Heraclitus. Pater seems to be plunging into the etymological depths of the Greek word “εγρηγορόσιν,” which means “awake,” “awakened” and “quickened,” as a tactic that stands in a paradigmatic accordance with the Heraclitean quest for the well-hidden cause of things. Accordingly, the critic grants philosophy and “speculative culture” the ability to actually “rouse” and “startle” the human spirit “to a life of constant and eager observation” (152). The eager alertness of fire, its dynamic motion, is actually the “intellectual excitement,” the “quickened sense of life,” the “multiplied consciousness” (153) that Pater proposes as “success in life.” The notions of “quickness” and “multiplicity,” as terms that refer respectively to temporality and spatiality, actually serve to bring together the spatial physical realm evoked in the first part of the “Conclusion” and the

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43 In a Heraclitean manner the meaning of this line is handed down to us through a dense metaphoric phraseology, to the extent that it resembles Heraclitus’ diction. I shall explore Pater’s use of language in a following section.
dimension of subjective temporality referred to in the second, where the notion of a subjective time is said to dissolve the solidity of objective impressions, as we shall see in the next section. The “success” mentioned is, then, none other than the harmonious bringing together of sections one and two, of the physical world and the inner world. And it is actually none other than Heraclitus’ link between flux and Logos that enables Pater to score a structural transition within the two domains, within the two parts of the “Conclusion,” through an embodiment of the form of the flow into a quickened perceptual apparatus as the paradigmatic instrument of both inner and outer order, of Logos.

In her extensive analysis of the intellectual context of the “Conclusion,” Inman discusses the central image of the fire as having originated from Tyndall’s “On the Relations of Radiant Heat to Chemical Constitution, Colour, Texture,” which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1866. Tyndall’s experiments with flames, and especially an experiment with lightless rays, the convergence of which produced heat powerful enough to fuse even the most solid of metals, appears for Inman to lurk beneath Pater’s representation of fire. Inman claims that it was this specific image of “the flame at the focus of the pale rays” (23) and its “dazzling diamond-like limelight” (24) which inspired Pater’s image of the flame throughout his work, in “Diaphaneite,” in “Rossetti,” in *Plato and Platonism*, and concludes that “the gem-like flame, thus, is associated with the white light, the perfect fusion of material and spiritual elements, the Dantean ecstasy” (24).

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44 Once again, Inman admits that “there is no proof that Pater read this article, but the least that can be claimed is that it is a scientific source that can explain the image” (23). A “scientific source that can explain the image,” nevertheless does not account for the connection between Pater and Tyndall.

45 Inman considers the reason why Pater terms the image of the flame “gem-like” and she concludes that “it is possible that Pater had conflated two images of flame described in Tyndall’s essay” (23), which reveals that the gem that Pater had in mind was the diamond – “hard and radiant” (24). Thus, “the focus of the purest rays, the heat hot enough to fuse metals, and the dazzling diamond-like limelight gave him exactly the scientific, imagistic detail he could use to individualize his rather
As we have seen, Pater’s “Conclusion” provides fertile ground for establishing a plethora of correspondences with contemporary science. Under this prism, the text can not only be seen as a subtraction of a stroll within the gallery of Renaissance culture, but also as the conclusion of a leisurely walk through the corridors of a late Victorian science exhibition – it becomes Pater’s own miniature version of the Great Exhibition. It seems to me, though, that this sort of reading indirectly sanctions the critically admitted fragmentation of the Paterian text by projecting an incoherent and disorganized discourse upon Pater’s argumentation that does not pay equal respect to the critic’s attempts to cohesion. Inman, for example, points to the correlation between Tyndall, Spencer and Pater, among others, yet she fails to account for the role of the epigraph and the overall scientific burden that Heraclitus occupies in Pater’s text. There is no question that Pater is implicitly invoking the findings of contemporary science since they had penetrated the social web to a great extent, and modern science was furthermore more or less the topic of Pater’s consideration. However, Pater is not employing a specialized scientific diction and “his technique is to hold scientific detail to a minimum and to use a maximum of metaphor,” as Inman herself asserts (16). The reason for such a rendering is obviously that Pater was not so much interested in science per se – even though he was well informed on science, conventional general concepts” (24). Thus, Inman employs a scrutinizing reading of Tyndall only to resort to the common image of the diamond, so as to account for her reading of the flame image. In this sense, if we are to paraphrase her own quote, Tyndall appears to give her exactly the scientific, imagistic detail she could use to individualize her own rather conventional general concepts.

46 Inman compares Pater’s following extract “This at least of flame-like our life has, that it is but the concurrence renewed from moment to moment of forces parting sooner or later on their ways” to Spencer’s statement that “There can be no doubt that this thermal re-action which chemical action from moment to moment produces in the body, is from moment to moment an aid to further chemical action” (15). As she confesses “if Pater did not read Lewes and Spencer, it is plain that he had acquired scientific information like theirs somewhere” (15); Pater seems obviously to have acquired such information from the overall scientific climate since the similarity in diction is only superficial.

47 The strategy organized here by Pater actually originates from the scientific camp itself since it resembles very much Darwin’s own, in the sense that Pater appears to be providing his reader with a proliferation of scientific instances that nevertheless serve as evidences of a connecting force that cannot be immediately or inductively grasped. But this is a point I shall take up later on.
he was not a scientist – but in the impact that the scientific evidence of cosmic flux had on the cultural imaginary; hence his employment of metaphor. Moreover, Pater’s allusions to science are exhausted in the first paragraph of the “Conclusion,” whereas a consistent Heraclitean framework is maintained throughout the essay. In view of this, it becomes clear that the critic employed Heraclitus’ doctrine as an extended, a diachronic paradigm, as a broad cultural metaphor so as to implicitly invoke contemporary science.

In this sense, Heraclitus’ premise implicitly but firmly directs one’s reading of the “Conclusion” as its point of reference. Indicative of this is the fact that Pater’s elaboration in the “Conclusion” is paradigmatically preceded by Heraclitus’ epigraph as the starting point of the critics’ exploration, as the perspective from which to consider the essay. In this respect, the issue of awakening, the notion of flux as the force permeating man and universe alike, the elements of water and fire, all comprise binding parts of the same Heraclitean narrative, the cohesion of which is secondarily substantiated by the discourse on contemporary science.48 Pater’s image of fire, likewise, is situated within a context of extensive allusions that point to the philosopher of Ephesus, maintaining its Heraclitean framework in a decidedly emblematic form.49 Mimicking, thus, the Victorian obsession with origins, Pater implies that the path led by contemporary science in all its divergent and extensive way, had brought to light, had excavated an old hidden truth: the fossil of Heraclitus’ word. And it is precisely this point that Pater wants to make evident when he declares in the maturity of his old age, in one of his last works, that “there is nothing

48 It is not only contemporary science that substantiates the Heraclitean doctrine. As we shall see, Pater employs also modern psychology and even aesthetics so as to verify Heraclitus’ philosophy.
49 The white light that it produces and the crystal clarity that is connoted out of Pater’s quotations, which Inman lists, are metaphorically colored by Pater only to point to Heraclitus’ sway, to the synthesizing power of Heraclitus’ fire, the liberating force of Logos, which renders all materials into a constant process, which transforms object into energy and energy into objects.
absolutely new,” only the “form is new” (*Plato* 8). In this respect, Heraclitus seems to occupy the content position, whereas Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, and a series of other major contemporary thinkers exchange their positions in the realm of form as new variations of an old, an ever-present truth. The philosopher from Ephesus appears to be the coordinating nucleus of Pater’s diverse reference to contemporary science as the centre that systemically organizes its periphery into a coherent whole. Heraclitus is ultimately presented as the “hidden” harmony beneath the aesthete’s widely inclusive and apparently fragmentary theoretical matrix. All other systems seem to underline the importance of it in a rapport that Heraclitus himself established between the “apparent” and the “hidden.” By failing to account for the role that Heraclitus occupies, I must admit that Inman appears to be missing the “hidden” harmony in Pater’s argument, which organizes his scattered reference to scientific data.

**Heraclitean Empiricism: Associationism and Sensationalism in the “Conclusion”**

As we have seen, Pater metaphorically employs in the “Conclusion” the Heraclitean doctrine as a philosophic formula of radical social change that is validated by contemporary science. It is interesting to note here that in his association with the scientific outlook, the Heraclitean metaphor is furthermore allied by Pater with the empirical tradition, supporting, and at certain points clarifying, as I will illustrate, the critic’s utilization of empiricism in his synthetic model, as it does with the critic’s scattered reference to science. After all, 19th-century scientific progress was tightly linked to inductive theory, which was the cornerstone of the empiricist school. Tracing the origins of the “debate” between the “transcendentalists” and the “empiricists,” W. V. Harris affirms that, “[i]t is because the essences of these mighty
opposites seem to lie imbedded in the preserved fragments of Parmenides and Heraclitus that these names stand out so prominently among the pre-Socratic Greek thinkers” (21-22). Such a distinction is actually confirmed by Pater as well in *Plato and Platonism*, where the critic in a similar fashion juxtaposes Heraclitus to Parmenides.50 Considering the fact that Heraclitus announces “evanescence and fugaciousness as the central truth of existence,” Harris concludes that in the Greek philosopher’s doctrine “lies the gate to empiricism, associationism, and universal contingency” (22). Likewise, Pater traces “the crude or turbid beginnings of scientific enquiry” in the Ionian cities, one of which was Ephesus (*Plato 6*), he acknowledges that “the seeds of almost all scientific ideas might seem to have been dimly enfolded in the mind of antiquity” (*Plato 18*), and associates “the most modern empirical philosophies” with “the ancient theorist of Ephesus” (*Plato 19*).

In the second part of the “Conclusion,” as we have seen, after the illustration of cosmic flux, Pater replicates Heraclitus’ focus on the individual and turns to the psychological depiction of the law of flux. Pater’s concentration on the individual, as a matter of fact, was also historically in full accordance with J. S. Mill’s empirical preoccupation with the individual as the paradigmatic unit of his analysis, implicitly substantiating the link that Pater established between empiricism and the Greek philosopher.51 Pater turns his attention to the “inward world of thought and feeling,” where we encounter the predicament stemming from “the race of the mid-stream,” from the “drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought” (151). This plight

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50 Having identified Heraclitus with the “doctrine of motion” and Parmenides with the “doctrine of rest,” Pater affirms that “in the nineteenth century, as on the one hand the philosophy of motion, of the ‘perpetual flux,’ receives its share of verification from that theory of development with which in various forms all modern science is prepossessed; so, on the other hand, the philosophy of rest also, of the perpetual lethargy, the Parmenidean assertion of the exclusive reign of ‘The One’” (42).

51 In 1865 Mill in *Auguste Comte and Positivism* criticized Comte’s advocacy of extreme altruism by arguing for a sufficient gratification of egoistic propensities as the prerequisite for the formation of a benevolent attitude towards others. As a matter of fact, the notion of the individual retains its centrality throughout Mill’s work, either in the consideration of its unprejudiced freedom, or in its utilitarian right to pursue its happiness and not to conform to the strictures of the mass.
is in fact engendered by the erratic relation of the subject to its contiguous object. The “sharp and importunate reality” of external objects is “dissipated” when the individual reflects upon it and its “cohesive force seems suspended like some trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions – colour, odour, texture – in the mind of the observer” (151), Pater exemplifies. Reality, in other words, seems to lose its objective touch when it gets absorbed and then ramified by the individual mind; the solidity of objects is unseated by a series of “unstable, flickering, inconsistent” impressions, “which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them” (151). The real, as solely a flowing impression, is now explicitly filtered by each perceiving subject “in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of the world” (151). This “dream of the world,” however, is further more unstable, fragmented, torn to pieces, since these impressions are in “perpetual flight,” “limited by time, and […] as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also” (151). What was regarded as real has been lost, “gone while we try to apprehend it” (151), Pater gloomily admits.

We can see that the Oxford don is replicating here the then dominant tradition of empirical skepticism, where “external phenomena” are reduced to “possibilities of sensation,” as Tyndall remarks, summarizing Mill’s empiricism (56). Pater is, in fact, utilizing Hume’s empirical formulation of the impression so as to account for the solipsism he sketches. As Matz asserts, Pater read Hume in 1861 and got from him

52 Inman specifically detects here in this quote Berkeley’s influence on the grounds that “[a]lthough Hume referred to senses other than sight in a general way, it was Berkeley who repeatedly referred to sensations from the other senses, as well as to colour in visual sensations” (19).
53 Consider here the striking similarity in tone and diction with Pater’s illustration of skepticism and solipsism within an empirical context when Tyndall states that “All we hear, and see, and touch and taste, and smell, are, it would be urged, mere variations of our own condition, beyond which, even to the extent of a hair’s breadth, we cannot go. That anything answering to our impressions exists outside of ourselves is not a fact, but an inference, to which all validity would be denied by an idealist like Berkeley, or a skeptic like Hume” (57).
54 Inman, on the other hand, argues that the skeptical argument expressed in the second and the third paragraphs of the “Conclusion” bear a close resemblance to Fichte’s *The Vocation of Man* “than to any
“his sense that impressions have greater vivacity than the ideas abstracted from them, that feeling is more reliable than thought and a better basis for belief, that science is a necessary corrective to errant metaphysical speculation” (62). McGrath also argues that Pater was influenced by Hume on the primacy of sensation and epistemological skepticism through the philosopher’s tenet of the subjectivity of knowledge (7). In *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume defines impression as a form of perception that comes before ideas and is responsible for them (3-4):

> An impression first strikes upon our senses […]. Of this impression there is a copy taken by the mind, which remains after the impression ceases; and this we call an idea. This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear, which may properly be called impressions of reflection, because derived from it (*Treatise* 7-8).

Hume, nevertheless, found no firmly grounded connection within the ideas that these impressions generate, which resulted in his epistemological skepticism. The ideas coming from impressions were loosely linked by *association*, which, as Basson argues, exercised a “gentle guidance, rather than a rigid control” of thought, since the British philosopher was chiefly concerned to “preserve some element of freedom in our thinking, and he [wanted] this freedom to be a kind of lawlessness or arbitrary irregularity” (52). By stressing that “we cannot go beyond experience” (xvii), Hume maintained an empirical basis that was, nevertheless, restricted to the individual sense perception, “in the mind, not in objects” (91), where “experience only teaches us, how one event constantly follows another; without instructing us in

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55 Hume introduced three “principles of association”: “resemblance,” “contiguity” in space and time, and “cause and effect” (Basson 51).
their secret connexion, which binds them together, and renders them inseparable”
(Enquiry 66). The fact, consequently, that we can have no knowledge of any real connections between objects, but only impressions, Hume argued, led to the mind being “nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement” (Treatise 252). And it was precisely in these terms that Pater murkily drew the anxiety of a lawless and arbitrary stream of impressions for the individual. It was ultimately for Hume only “habit” or “custom” that actually attached a sense of cohesion and unity to this sequence of impressions forming a sort of a personal identity (Treatise 253-5). Unlike Hume,56 however, Pater rejects the role of custom and thus “intensifies both the dynamism and the indeterminacy of the Humean impression, and makes Impressionism out of Empiricism” (Matz 63), which actually led to the Modernist “techniques of discontinuous juxtaposition and various forms of narration based on psychological perception rather than plot and character” (McGrath 63). This was in fact the technique that Pater followed in Marius, as we shall see in the third chapter.

Rather than arguing that Pater derived a form of “impressionism” or “modernism” out of the empirical tradition, and thus distancing or displacing Pater from his historical context, I would say that the Oxford don utilized the empirical canon so as to score an associationist and eventually a sensationalist57 formula along the dominant at the time Victorian tradition of sensation fiction that flourished in the 1860s as manifested, for example, by Wilkie Collins in The Woman in White (1860)

56 Matz nevertheless calls Pater’s debt to Hume “only superficial” on the grounds that “while Hume takes great pains to stabilize the impression through emphasis upon ‘custom,’ Pater endorses perceptual novelty; and whereas skepticism is for Hume a pretext for a more systematic science of knowledge, it is for Pater a pleasure in itself” (62).
57 In the last chapter we shall explore how Pater links sensationalism to Aristippus and the Cyrenaics.
and Mary Elisabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862). After all, as a review that appeared in the *Examiner* in 1873 argued, Pater’s *Renaissance* bore a strong kinship with the sensation novel. Pater’s “theory of life” to “squeeze in the maximum of pulsations between birth and death” (Seiler 74), which as the reviewer proclaimed “is simply the old story of Cyrenaicism over again” (Seiler 75), is ultimately something that “[t]he housemaid who revels in the sensation novels of the ‘London Journal’ holds with” (Seiler 76). A closer look at the way Pater linked sensationalism to the Heraclitean paradigm can be highly revealing here.

By arguing for a form of “association” between ideas, Hume was actually establishing the tradition of associationism, which Pater also encompassed in his illustration of inner flux, as we shall see. British associationism in the 18th and 19th century was a school of philosophy and psychology deeply rooted in Locke’s account in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) of knowledge as firmly based on sensation; hence its upshot, sensationalism. The associationist tradition, which basically consisted of David Hartley, Hume, James Mill, his son, and Alexander Bain, among others, principally argued for a non-innate form of association between ideas originating from certain simple, elementary sense-experience regularities. Leslie Stephen in the second volume of *The English Utilitarians* (1900) considers James

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58 Sensation fiction can be traced back to the Brontes. The tradition paved the way for mystery fiction by emphasizing secrecy, conspiracy and dramatic events. Yet there are sensation novels that do not involve mystery but just highlight intensely experienced narrative moments. The tradition also includes: Joseph Sheridan’s LeFanu’s “Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess” (1838), Henry Wood’s *The Mystery at Number Seven* (1877), Richard Dowling’s “Negative Evidence” (1888), to name but a few.

59 Pater’s relationship to Cyrenaicism, which was an archaic form of sensationalism, will be fully explored in the third chapter.

60 For the relation between Pater and sensationalism, see Noel B. Jackson’s “Rethinking the Cultural Divide: Walter Pater, Wilkie Collins, and the Legacies of Wordsworthian Aesthetics.”

61 Warren in his *History of Associationism* has shown that James Mill thoroughly adopted the premises of Hume and Hartley in his doctrine (37).

62 The first systematic account of associationism is to be found in Hartley’s *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1747). Other major titles in the tradition include: James Mill’s *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (1829) and Alexander Bain’s *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855), *Emotion and Will* (1859), and *Mind and Body* (1872).
Mill’s psychology and gives a synoptic account of associationism, which we shall follow since a full analysis of the school is beyond the scope of this study:

The general tendency of the ‘Association Philosophy’ is sufficiently clear. It may be best appreciated by comparing it to the method of the physical sciences, which it was intended to rival. The physicist explains the ‘laws of nature’ by regarding a phenomenon as due to the varying arrangements of an indefinite multitude of uniform atoms. I need not ask whether these atoms are to be regarded as realities, even the sole realities, or, on the other hand, as a kind of logical scaffolding removable when the laws are ascertained. In any case, the assumption is necessary and most fruitful in the search for accurate and quantitative formulae. Mill virtually assumes that the same thing can be done by breaking up the stream of consciousness into the ideas which correspond to the primitive atoms. What precisely these atoms may be, how the constantly varying flow of thought can be resolved into constituent fractions, is not easy to see. The physicist at least supports his atoms to have definite space relations, but there is nothing clearly corresponding to space in ‘ideas’. They are capable of nothing but co-existence, sequence and likeness; but the attempt to explain the meaning of these words ends in nothing but repeating them. We have indefinite variability because they may be collocated in any conceivable or inconceivable way. This becomes evident when we have to do with organisms by any kind: with characters or societies an organism varies, but varies along definite lines. But, on Mill’s showing, the organic Relations correspond to the indefinitely variable.63

Taking into consideration Stephen’s account of associationism, we can see that Pater in a similar fashion depicts consciousness in terms of the associations established between rudimentary sense percepts: as “a group of impressions – colour, odour, texture – in the mind of the observer.” His reduction of consciousness, furthermore, into its elementary constituents, which are “infinitely divisible” and “in perpetual flight” corresponds to the associationists’ method of analyzing

63 http://phare.univ-paris1.fr/textes/Stephen/Utilitarians2/
consciousness in terms of “primitive atoms” that form relations which are “indefinitely variable.” We can detect in this associationist approach the analogy that Pater establishes between the natural elements of the physical world in the first part of the “Conclusion,” and the minimal units of analysis he employs - this “group of impressions” - to depict the inner world in the second part. Moreover, the idea that impressions may be deeply rooted in sensation, yet the association of the ideas they generate takes place in the mind of the individual, is also shared by Pater when he states that “the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind” (151). Pater, as such, borrows an associationist idiom to depict the anxiety generated by the “dissipation” that “loosens” each object into an uncontrolled play of impressions, equating, thus, Heraclitus’ fluctuating “race of the mid-stream” with what Stephen calls the “stream of consciousness.”

Drawing on this associationist account of inner fluctuation, Pater respectively upholds a form of empiricism as the appropriate experiential model for the individual. This model is, nevertheless, explicitly presented through a Heraclitean idiom. The continuity of the individual with Logos, with the deeper scheme of things is established, according to Heraclitus, through the experience of sense perception. The

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64 Furthermore, by employing the givens of the natural sciences in his exploration of the individual, Pater was also aligning himself with positivism in another sense. His application of a scientific method on psychological considerations exposes Pater’s compliance with the long positivist tradition of Comte, Mill, and Spencer, to name but a few, as evinced in their utilization of scientific models on social explanation. Thus, in this exposition of the tight relation between the individual as organism and environment, Pater is actually invoking Spencer’s premise as articulated by Tyndall in his address, that “[t]he organism is played upon by the environment, and is modified to meet the requirements of the environment,” where life is defined as “a continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations” (47).

65 Similarly, Johann Bernard Stallo (1823-1900) in *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics*, which was published in 1881, but consisted of articles released in the 1870s (Herbert 91), stated that: “[t]he concepts of a given object are terms or links in numberless series or chains of abstractions varying in kind and diverging in direction with the comparisons instituted between it and other objects […] All thoughts of things are fragmentary and symbolic representations of realities whose thorough comprehension in any single mental act, or series of acts, is impossible. And this is true, a fortiori, because the relations of which any object of cognition is the entirety, besides being endless in number, are also variable – because, in the language of Heracleitos, all things are in a perpetual flux” (qtd. in Herbert 102).
energy of Logos, its warmth and radiance, its material quality can be grasped
predominantly through the senses in this system that resists metaphysical
preconceptions. As fragments 55\textsuperscript{66} and 101a\textsuperscript{67} make it clear, Heraclitus held in higher
estime objects of experience and especially sight. Axelos argues that vision is granted
a primary role in Heraclitus’ philosophical system (74-75); the eye bears a direct
relation to the real, that’s why Heraclitus’ thought is regarded as “plastic” (Axelos
75). An attentive observation paves the way, according to Heraclitus, towards the
unseen truth of the world. As a matter of fact, the ancient Greek thinker was the first
philosopher who directed his attention towards the nature of things and their
knowledge so as to grasp not an abstract, but the concrete wisdom of the world, as
Theodore de Laguna asserts (239).\textsuperscript{68} Tyndall, in a similar manner, reckons that Greek
natural philosophy

\begin{quote}
had shaken itself free from that fruitless scrutiny ‘by the internal light of the mind
alone,’ which had vainly sought to transcend experience and reach a knowledge of
ultimate causes. Instead of accidental observation, it had introduced observation
with a purpose; instruments were employed to aid the senses; and scientific
method was rendered in a great measure complete by the union of Induction and
Experiment (10).
\end{quote}

Very much in the spirit of Heraclitus, and along the dictates of empiricism,
Pater, right after his illustration of the chaotic inner flow of impressions, lays
emphasis on sense perception, on “eager observation” (152). The Victorian critic
considers “observation” as the golden measure between physical flux, expressed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{66} “Whatsoever things \textit{are} objects of sight, hearing, \textit{and} experience – these things I hold in higher
esteem”.
\item \textsuperscript{67} “Eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears.”
\item \textsuperscript{68} “The first claim of Heraclitus upon the attention of the world – his most distinctive and original
contribution, in which, so far as he knew, no other thinker had anticipated him – is his theory of the
nature of ‘wisdom,’ or science. […] His predecessors and contemporaries had endeavored to learn the
nature of things. He first turned his attention to the nature of that knowledge, which, in their
undiscriminating fashion they had tried to find” (de Laguna 239).
\end{itemize}
through a discourse of scientific objectivity in the first part, and the psychological fluctuation of subjectivism mentioned in the second part of the “Conclusion.” The eye as the meeting point, the measuring mediator, between the outside and the inside is considered as the means of instilling equilibrium within the existing tension between the real and the imaginary; it functions for the individual as a reminder of the ordered variation that is out there and it stirs the possibility of an inner projection in the way it gets harmoniously absorbed by the serene phenomenon of nature; hence Pater’s employment of an associationist discourse where both nature and psychology are analyzed in a similar manner so as to underpin this correspondence. By forming an analogy with the physical world and by maintaining an inductive focus, the impediment of solipsism, which lurks beneath associationist psychology, is strategically surpassed. In “Two Ways not to be a Solipsist: Art and Science, Pater and Pearson,” George Levine examines the impact of 19th century science on art and establishes a relation between the positivist Karl Pearson and Walter Pater on the grounds that “both aestheticism and positivism are deeply rooted in empiricism” (14). According to Levine, the epistemological tradition of empiricism that both thinkers drew on in their pursuit of knowledge led to certain “constraints” as fundamental prerequisites of knowledge, which were part of a wider “ascetic tradition” (14). Levine defines this tradition in terms of “an austere, rigorous restraint of the self that, from the basis of an inevitable subjectivity, issued in an impersonality that opened

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69 Pater’s promotion of the eye, which can be interpreted as if coherence is not physically there but artificially imposed by the subject itself, implies a certain idealistic rendering of the real that we shall turn to in the following chapters.

70 The fact that Pearson is widely known as a eugenicist is deliberately left out of Levine’s consideration, since, as he admits, it doesn’t fit with our contemporary political prejudices. Pearson, to our surprise, was also a social Darwinist, a feminist and a socialist. Nevertheless, Pearson’s Grammar of Science is regarded by Levine in another essay of his as “a summa of the empiricist-positivist tradition of 19th century science” (“Knowledge,” 373), and it is precisely under this perspective that Levine considers him.
both to art and to truth” (16). The “ascetic tradition” of the restraint on the self is considered by Levine as the strategic means of overcoming the threat of solipsism and establishing the impersonal objective vigor of the scientific into both art and science. In this sense, despite the fact that neither Pearson nor Pater was thoroughly committed to science, they sought to “establish something like objectivity, something like stable and shareable knowledge,” so as to bridge the gap between science and culture (14), between science and the individual.

Under this prism, Pater’s “eager observation,” by connoting the empiricist epistemology and by consequence the Baconian dictum that science always embarks from observation, grants an objective, almost material premise to Pater’s theory and it can be seen as his participation in the late Victorian debates about the status of science, the definition of objectivity and its role in the dawning of a new world. It is in this sense that, Pater claims, “the theory or idea or system” that imposes an abstract or rough vision, “the sacrifice of any part of this experience […] has no real claim upon us” (153), rejecting any form of thought that is not objectively grounded on sense experience, in the manner that Mill rejected the intuitionists and their deductive approach. On the other hand, the avoidance of fixed or abstract theories, of “facile orthodoxies,” of “habits” entails for Pater, to borrow Tyndall’s phrasing, “the union of Induction and Experiment,” it involves “to be for ever curiously testing new

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71 The ascetic imperative is seen by Levine as an interdisciplinary notion, pervading almost every aspect of the 19th century: “For science, universality depends on self-denial; for religion, salvation depends on self-denial. For ethics, true moral action depends on self-denial; for culture, universality depends on self-denial; for art, the aesthetic ideal depends on an ascetic discipline of perception” (13).

72 Pater’s constant appeal to “disinterestedness” and “ascesis” is viewed here in the spirit of “true science” and as part of the anti-metaphysical project of late 19th century, which influenced both art and science, and led to a partial rationalization of the aesthetic, as we shall see in the next chapter.

73 As Levine puts it, “the consequences of ascetic discipline, I want to argue, produce an aesthetic analogue of objectivity – a firm, even a ‘gem-like’ reality that is not merely subjective, that allows the perceiver to stand outside the flux he is describing, if only in order to describe it” (14).

74 See Mill’s “Hamilton.”

75 As Marius stresses when discussing the Heraclitean doctrine, there has to be “a denial of habitual impressions, as the necessary first step in the way of truth” (128).
opinions and courting new impressions,” as a means of adopting a skeptical viewpoint that accurately and objectively reflects the course of the real (152). The essence of truth has to comply with the essence of the flow of the world, Pater implies. Thus, the Oxford don in an inductive fashion argues for an empirical method of approaching the world through a constantly trained sense perception, where attentive observation paradigmatically invokes a radical subversion of deductive abstract thought.76 This “wonderful machinery of observation […] free from the tyranny of mere theories” (Marius 142) is actually the result of an invariable ascesis, of a form of “discrimination” (Renaissance 152), in the manner that Heraclitus too urges towards the constancy of training so as to be in contact with Logos, as we have seen, exposing the fact that the “ascetic tradition,” in contrast to Levine’s claim, can be traced long before Plato, in the very beginnings of the empirical tradition.77 Thus, individuals are not supposed to pursue their own independent subject positions to the point of undermining universal Logos, so objective vision must be cleared from any extremely subjective adjuncts. And it is precisely this Heraclitean ascetic sense of duty that Pater acknowledges as “the first instance” of an appeal “from confused to unconfused sensation” (Marius 129), so as to surmount the erroneous impression of “permanence or fixity in things, which have really changed their nature in the very moment in which we see and touch them” (Marius 129).78 It is through ascetic vision that the “roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations seem alike”

76 The whole scientific discourse of observation, experimentation and curiosity has been transubstantiated into a rhetoric of acutely monitoring and curiously “testing” new impressions and ideas, in a skeptic trialing that abolishes the solidly grounded “touchstones” of the past, as Arnold calls them. In this sense, Pater’s form of empiricism complies with Hume’s skepticism.

77 In the introduction of Dying to Know, Levine traces the roots of the “ascetic tradition” back to Plato (1-2).

78 Ascesis, then, becomes, as N. Scott Jr. correctly points out, a means of transcending the flux (97). But this is a point I will return to after I explore the transcending strategies of Pater and how he employs ascetic duty in terms of idealism.
(Renaissance 152) will be avoided, and the way will be paved for the un-confusing “hidderness of perfect things” (Marius 87), for the glory of Logos.

It becomes then clear that observation, ascesis and Logos are tightly interlinked, revealing the Heraclitean backbone of Pater’s argumentative line. These terms actually appear to be connected through the very etymological roots of the word “Logos.” Pater must have been aware of the etymology of the word, for often in his writings he exhibits a deep etymological knowledge of Greek. In his excellent survey, Minar states that the word “Logos” comes from the Greek verb “λέγω” which “means primarily gather, collect” and furthermore “pick up, gather, choose, count and say, speak”, as listed by Liddell and Scott’s Greek Lexicon (323). But Minar explains that “the fundamental idea of λόγος is that of an accounting, and that this idea is retained throughout the early history of the word at least as an undertone” (326). Thus, the etymology of the word appears to be synoptically holding together in its plurality of meaning the way the outcome of a trained, an ascetic observation, which gathers sense evidence and subjects it to a careful scrutiny, is then delivered through an articulated account in the manner of an unseen, yet material wisdom that permeates the world. Minar’s clarification of the etymology of Logos brings to light the fact that the acceptance of the doctrine of the flux entails the sanction of a distanced, ascetic observation, “the desirableness of refining all the instruments of inward and outward intuition” (Marius 143) as a means of maintaining an objective link to the real, which encapsulates Pater’s suggested experiential model.

As such, Pater’s psychological account - in its emphasis on the training of the sensory apparatus as a means of counterbalancing the threats of inner fluctuation - is deeply rooted in the empirical tradition but delivered predominantly through Heraclitean imagery. In “The Vocabulary of Pater’s Criticism and the Psychology of
Aesthetics,” Ian Small argues that Pater adapted “for his own special purposes” the discourse of the 1860s and 1870s British psychology (81), exposing the fact that psychology and literary criticism were then “adjacent discourses” (84). After having established a correlation between Herbert Spencer, James Sully, Grant Allen, and Pater, Small concludes his consideration with the way Alexander Bain’s *The Emotions and the Will* (1859) might have influenced the Oxford don. Small focuses on Bain’s associationist\(^79\) illustration of the ability to discriminate between consecutive impressions as “the fundamental property of the intellect,” arguing that “consciousness in Bain’s view became a series of impressions which were differentiated by novelty, or what he called ‘surprise.’ The greater the difference or discrimination between these impressions the more ‘conscious’ the receiver of these impressions was” (85).

Pater’s Heraclitean promotion of an attentive “discriminating” watchfulness, of a sharpening of the sensory apparatus through ascesis as an answer to the fluidity of the times can be furthermore regarded, I would add, in the light of Walter Benjamin’s argument for the hyperstimulation of the nerves as a product of modernization. In “Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” Benjamin calls shock the paradigmatic experience of 19\(^{th}\) century life in the newly developed metropolises.\(^80\) “The greater the share of the shock factor in particular impressions,” Benjamin asserts, sounding very much like Pater in the “Conclusion” and Bain in *The Emotions and the Will*, “the more constantly consciousness has to be alert as a screen against stimuli” (117). Accordingly, Pater yields the effect of Benjamin’s “shock” and Bain’s “surprise” through the Heraclitean imagery of awakening and the dynamic diction of

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\(^{79}\) As Hoeldtke argues, “Alexander Bain, too, wrote an extensive treatise in defense of the whole doctrine of associationism which greatly impressed John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer” (55).

\(^{80}\) Benjamin argues that “the shock experience which the passer-by has in the crowd corresponds to what the worker ‘experiences’ at his machine” (134), encapsulating the experience in the 19\(^{th}\) century metropolis.
the image of fire (“burn,” “hard,” “flame,” and “ecstasy”) so as to denote a highly
mobilized form of perception as a means of being “present always at the focus where
the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy” (152), which, like the
Heraclitean fire, should “always” be burning as a constant awakening, shattering
abstract and facile habitual thinking. It becomes evident that Pater’s concluding
statement that “[t]he service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human
spirit, is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation” (152 –
emphasis added), along with his incorporation of “shock” and “surprise,” denotes the
promotion of a form of sensationalism that the critic climactically upholds as the
appropriate experiential model that will turn life into a sequence of intensified and
amplified sensations “for their own sake,” into a work of art structured along the
dictates of flux.

Pater’s promotion of perceptual alertness, along with the dominant at the time
trend of empiricism with its focus on sensory experience, can be regarded as
originating from the radical shifts that the 19th century individual underwent, which
actually orchestrated such emphatic preoccupation with sense perception. The
experience of the relentless “shocks” that the subject went through via the
breakthrough reaffirmation of its world picture, the industrialization of its urban
setting and the corresponding new ethics, was actually tightly associated with the
predominance of an epistemological model where scientific discovery was
experienced through induction as a “surprise,” in the sense that it was not deduced but
it spontaneously sprang from experience itself. The notion of “surprise” was
furthermore sponsored by the steady yet dynamic commodification of British society,
which radicalized the notion of “novelty” as a means of promoting the commodities
that were paradigmatically displayed as sense stimuli to be expended and then
replaced in a vicious circle that eventually kept the consumers’ sensations constantly alert amidst a tantalizing flux of never consumed stimulation. Pater’s allusion to Heraclitean flux, in these terms, successfully also captures the flux of commodities and the sensationalism it, in its turn, evoked. It is actually under this prism that Pater’s construction of a theoretical model, which advocates sense perception as the appropriate response to the constant shifts of flux through the cultivation of receptiveness, historically situates the critic in the trajectory towards modernism. And such modernity was paradigmatically advanced for the critic through the Heraclitean doctrine as a philosophical formula that underlined, in an empirical idiom, the changes instilled by the acceptance of the principle of flux, both in the physical world and the human mind, through the promotion of a form of sensationalism.

In his attempt, thus, to employ Heraclitus as an extended metaphor that epitomized the givens of late-19th-century empiricism and scientific advance, Pater scored a profound modernization of the pre-Socratic philosopher. Indicative of this modernization was the fact that the critic utilized Heraclitus so as to address the progress of 19th-century induction and its ethical corollaries, as we shall see next, rather than nostalgically invoke the past. This modernization was eventually also symptomatic of Pater’s own synthetic model.

The Materialistic Ethics of Heraclitean Flux and Relativism

Pater’s promotion of sensationalism, his depiction of the inner world of the individual in terms of flux, actually comprised an ethical program that the critic upheld as the appropriate form of response against a constantly shifting world. Having internalized
the teachings of science, Pater participated in the mobilization of the late Victorian
“myth” of science as a means of ethically responding both to the past and the
treacherous present. Drawing on contemporary science as a discourse that decisively
authenticated Heraclitus’ reconciliation between opposites and the Greek
philosopher’s emphasis on sense perception, Pater’s ethical suggestion basically
involved the rejection of metaphysical abstractions in the form of a vigilant
pilgrimage to the “nowness” of now, which amounted to a relativistic and
materialistic outlook as a vehicle that would safely transport the individual along the
lines paved by the cosmic flow, along the fluidity engendered by scientific progress
and technological advance. Nevertheless, Pater’s ethical program was suggestively
delivered under a Heraclitean epigraph, it was delivered in the name of Heraclitus and
not of contemporary science, a fact that exposes, as we shall see, the strategic
manipulation of the Greek philosopher that the critic performed so as to sponsor his
controversial ethics. This manipulation was in effect indicative of the reason why the
Victorian critic employed Heraclitus so as to address late-19th-century induction.

Even from his first publication, Pater claims that the law of flux as captured by
the physical sciences yields a new kind of ethical form: “[t]he moral world is ever in
contact with the physical, and the relative spirit has invaded moral philosophy from
the ground of the inductive sciences. There it has started a new analysis of the
relations of body and mind, good and evil, freedom and necessity” (Appreciations
33). In Plato and Platonism (1893), Pater explicitly addresses the ethical
ramifications of the doctrine of motion. Heracliteanism as the advocate of change in
organic life gradually affects the operations of human mind and its perception of
reality. Fittingly, Pater considers the invasion of the notion of development and
change in “all the products of mind, the very mind itself” and how it influences “the
abstract reason; our certainty, for instance, that two and two make four” (*Plato* 20-21). In a world of constant flux, where everything is in motion, principles of fixity, “our certainty” (*Plato* 21), seems to wither infusing skepticism, which leads, if not to the impossibility of knowledge, to its relativity at least, Pater admits, reflecting the moral conflict implicit in the Heraclitean strife between the opposites, where “[g]ood and ill are one” (fr. 57). Moral strife then, which is seen as an extension of an organic struggle between natural elements, is presented as an unavoidable reality for the subject, establishing a tight correlation between the individual as a moral agent and the individual as a physical organism, between the individual and its natural environment81 that eventually sponsors a form of relativism.

Pater’s consideration here can be actually placed within the wider Victorian tradition of relativity as promoted by Cardinal Newman, Pearson, Spencer, J. S. Mill and Grote, among others. Ruth Child considers Pater “a seeker after truths, rather than a seeker after the truth, one and complete” (29) and she associates Pater’s relativism with Spencer’s *Principles of Psychology* (1872), where the relativity of feelings was elaborated (Child 30). According to Christopher Herbert the concept of relativity was coined as early as 1855 by Bain “as the foundation of a newly rigorous scientific rationality, one emancipated from the reign of ‘metaphysical’ absolutes unable to give logically coherent accounts of themselves” (‘Paradox’ 104). Abounding in political overtones, the scientific concept of relativity was regarded as possessing an “overwhelmingly ethical character” in its absorption into a moral code that denied any

81 It is interesting to consider this under a Darwinian prism. The survival of the fittest is transubstantiated within the ethical sphere into a struggle to adapt to ethical considerations as a means of achieving a fortified existence, as a means of establishing a tight connection to it. As Herbert claims, after all, the concept of relativity was synonymous with that of evolution (“Paradox” 104).
absolute reference (Herbert, *Relativity* xiii).\(^{82}\) In this sense, science actively participated in the formation of a new liberal ethics.

Pater’s acknowledgment that the “inductive sciences” had “invaded” the moral world, moreover, brings to light the fact that in its contribution to the emergence of a novel morality, the scientific project ultimately brought together various scientific doctrines under a common ethical guise. Pater’s consideration exposes that in its anti-absolutist ethical cause, the notion of relativity as “the principle that nothing exists but relations” (Herbert, “Paradox” 104) was tightly allied with associationist psychology, which, as a matter of fact, first brought to the foreground the concept of relation, where the “exteriority of relations” was chiefly employed too as “a vital protest against principles” (Deleuze 55).\(^{83}\) Since “the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind,” where “[e]xperience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality” (*Renaissance* 151), the associations established out of the relentless flow of impressions are inevitably relative. The critic’s adaptation of an associationist discourse in his illustration of the inner world, which, as we have seen, establishes an interconnection between physical and inner flux, underpinning the role of relations, promotes an experiential model that liberally eschews through a plethora of relations the rigid fixity of absolute givens.\(^{84}\) We need not elaborate more on this

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\(^{82}\) It is actually in these anti-authoritarian terms that Pater claims in the opening paragraph of his “Preface” to the *Renaissance* that “[b]eauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative” (xix).

\(^{83}\) As Deleuze puts it, “[i]n this respect what is it that the empiricists found, not in their heads, but in the world, which is like a vital discovery, a certainty of life which, if one really adheres to it, changes one’s way of life? It is not the question ‘Does the intelligible come from the sensible? but a quite different question, that of relations. Relations are external to their terms. ‘Peter is smaller than Paul,’ ‘The glass is on the table’; relation is neither internal to one of the terms which would consequently be subject, nor to two together. Moreover, a relation may change without the terms changing […] Relations are in the middle, and exist as such. This exteriority of relations is not a principle, it is a vital protest against principles” (55).

\(^{84}\) “The relative spirit, by its constant dwelling on the more fugitive conditions or circumstances of things, breaking through a thousand rough and brutal classifications, and giving elasticity to inflexible
issue, however, because the full implications of Pater’s relation to Victorian relativity will be explored in the second chapter, where I shall examine the surprising association the critic establishes between relativity and Kantian idealism.

By considering the physical constitution of man as analogous to that of the natural world, Pater in the first part of the “Conclusion” subverted the claim for the theological descent of man, he substituted a metaphysical force with a physical one, replacing God’s design with a cosmic material substance, which was regarded as the component that grants life and death alike in a cyclical ever-present pattern of energy. The Heraclitean awareness that man is made of the same substance as the rest of the universe this way anchored down human existence to a relativistic and materialistic framework, dissolving its transcendental throne and highlighting the role of the senses as the appropriate compass to truth.85 Just like Tyndall, thus, who in his “Address” upheld science in its rational superiority over religious prejudice, Pater’s “Conclusion” appropriates the anti-metaphysical tone of a scientific manifesto to implicitly endorse a materialistic contention. As Blinderman claims, Pater’s materialism, like Huxley’s, originated from his acceptance of “the fundamental dynamics of our life, especially its turbulence and transience,” which resulted for both of them into a dynamic sharpening of perception, an attention to the “here and now” (483). Both Huxley and Pater, in this respect, provoked outrage with their publications and ended up being accused of promoting materialism, of subverting Christian ethics and of “trafficking with paganism” (485).86 Dawson in “Intrinsic principles, begets an intellectual finesse of which the ethical result is a delicate and tender justice in the criticism of human life” (Appreciations 51).

85 In this sense, Pater scored, as Linda Dowling argues, “the reconciliation with the earth” by promoting the primacy of “the material or physical dimension of human life” (211).
86 As Blinderman asserts, even though “Huxley warned against the derivation from materialism of any ethics subversive to Victorian morality” his idea of protoplasm was massively attacked by editorials in the Spectator, the Pall Mall Gazette, and The Saturday Review (484). In 1875 an anonymous burlesque was published, quite indicative of the whole climate, entitled Protoplasm, Powheads, Porwiggles; and
Earthliness: Science, Materialism and the Fleshy School of Poetry” also regards both aestheticism and science as an overlapping between literary immorality and scientific materialism since both were considered “conjoined manifestations of an amoral secularism, which according to their critics, urgently threatened Christianity and human civilization” (128). In its association with French Revolution and the Enlightenment, the notion of materialism, additionally, “carried dangerous connotations of un-British foreign heterodoxy as well as lower grown atheistic working class radicalism” (Dawson 114) to the extent that at the time even Huxley and Tyndall struggled to dissociate their works from any hint of materialism.

Dawson’s analysis of Pater’s debt to materialistic ethics is of special importance for our consideration here, because it indirectly highlights the critic’s manipulation of the Heraclitean doctrine in an illuminating way. Considering the tie between aestheticism and science in the face of a common ethical objective, Dawson explores the 19th century notion of “materialism” and the strategy Pater employed to

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87 Dawson’s essay refers to Pater’s introductory essay on Rossetti for the revised second edition of The English Poets in 1883, that is, during the period that Pater was writing Marius the Epicurean. Nevertheless, the essay is of interest to us in our consideration of the “Conclusion” because it reveals the way the critic employed Heraclitus, as we shall see.

88 Such “overlapping” is also highlighted by Levine, who in “Two Ways not to be a Solipsist: Art and Science, Pater and Pearson” considers Pater as participating in the “ethical project” of scientific epistemology (13).

89 Dawson defines materialism as a non coherent doctrine, the most fundamental proposition of which is “simply that nothing exists independently of matter, with even human consciousness being at some level a correlate of the mechanical activities of the nervous system” (114). The term originated, as Dawson claims, in France but became also widespread through 19th century German scientists and philosophers and it was employed in Victorian Britain as a “pejorative label that could be used to tarnish the reputation of those who challenged the old tradition of natural theology and instead insisted on a naturalistic – though not a materialistic – understanding of the universe” (114).

90 Tyndall’s Address was denounced in the Edinburgh Review for “repudiate[ing] the grand traditions of English philosophy” by promoting the “nihilism of the latest school of German materialists” as well as the “excluded delusions of primitive heathenism” (quoted in Dawson “Earthliness” 114). Furthermore, Buchanan attacked Tyndall in “Lucretius and Modern Materialism” published in the New Quarterly Magazine in April 1876 where Tyndall’s “scientific naturalism becomes another version of the fleshy creed promulgated in the verse of Rossetti and his coterie of licentious companions,” revealing his consideration that Victorian science is highly akin to poetry in their promotion of fleshliness (Dawson, “Earthliness” 118).
resist being accused of it in his defense of Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s style.91 Dawson illustrates how Pater incorporated a materialistic rhetoric similar to Huxley’s so as to underline the connection between literary and scientific materialism and to valorize the charges against Rossetti and himself by establishing a form of continuity between the materialism of the 19th century poet and Dante. In this sense, Pater is actually employing the canon so as to surreptitiously subvert it. Canonized Dante is manipulatively relativized so as to promote a controversial ethic. Thus, Pater achieves a re-evaluation of the term, a sublimation of his promotion of materialism by endowing it with medieval, and by implication Christian associations, so as to explicate Rossetti’s sensualism as the most appropriate means of “registering […] the beauty of the phenomenal world” (128) in Dante’s way, which did not provoke the church. As Dawson puts it, in Pater’s essay, “the alleged materialism of Rossetti’s lushly sensuous verse, once it has been sequestered from such pejorative associations, becomes a devout and reverent transcription of the most ethereal forms of aesthetic experience” (116). Dawson’s article in a very perceptive way captures the organized tactic that Pater utilized so as to overcome, through a profound form of sublimation, the conservative or conformist obstruction and the impeachment of materialism.

In view of Dawson’s argument, it is my contention that Pater employed the same strategic shift in the “Conclusion” so as to mitigate the pagan connotations of his materialistic ethics. Even though Pater’s text provides ample evidence of an intrigue affiliation with the scientific discourse, as we have seen, science is never mentioned by name, but only metonymically invoked through Heraclitus’ doctrine. The Greek philosopher, as such, becomes a means of sublimating the materialistic

91 Pater’s defense can then be seen as an indirect reply to the harsh critique urged against Rossetti, Morris and Swinburne by Robert Buchanan in his “The Fleshy School of Poetry: Mr. D. G. Rossetti,” which appeared in the conservative Contemporary Review in October 1871, where the pre-mentioned poets were criticized for promoting immoral poetry in the fashion of Baudelaire.
discourse of the new science, yet at the same time of implicitly solidifying its presence in a vague and, therefore, harmless way. And that was precisely the way Heraclitus’ epigraph instrumentally functioned in the “Conclusion.” From the vantage point of an epigraph, Heraclitus projected, as a historical and philosophical authority, a form of an objective perspective on the essay, verifying Pater’s moral claims and underpinning the historical continuity of the critic’s attitude. Heraclitus, moreover, philosophically and historically authenticated Pater’s moral claims. Encircling the traditional moral standards of his reader with a scientific discourse that is constantly invoked yet never explicitly mentioned on the one hand, and a historical figure that is placed in an authorial position on the other, Pater implicitly brought to the foreground science and history, the foremost constituents of 19th century temperament as a stratagem that would render any potential moral objections outdated or relativized. Therefore, the “modernity” of Pater’s argument was not based on contemporary scientific givens but on a long established doctrine that belonged to the classic cannon of western tradition and which the critic had modernized by associating it with scientific advance.92 Such paradox did not only serve Pater’s sublimation but it also instrumentally highlighted the character of his ethical model: in his implicit affiliation both with contemporary science and ancient Greek culture, Heraclitus provided Pater with the ideal means of invoking, to borrow Blinderman’s words, “a new morality, one which could without too much effort be understood as an old immortality, paganism” (483).93 Therefore, despite the fact that the Heraclitean doctrine seemingly functioned as a sublimating mechanism, it eventually unleashed an immoral code,
which was encrypted in the form of a Trojan horse that sneakily yet firmly launched a pagan besieging of Christian morals. In this sense, Pater’s preoccupation with the ancient philosopher was not a donnish backward-looking, but rather the means through which he was engaged in an undisruptive way with the intellectual debates of his time.

In a more or less similar manner, Pater promotes his pagan materialism through the historical paradigm of the Renaissance. The critic situates his ethical considerations within the historical context of the Renaissance as an era that underlined the return of a pagan ethic, a historical period that emphasized “the care for physical beauty, the worship of the body, the breaking down of those limits which the religious system of the middle age imposed on the heart and the imagination” (xxxii). Drawing on Burckhardt’s and Michelet’s influential exposition of the Renaissance as the threshold towards modernity, where the two critics firmly associated the specific historical period with the 19th century, Pater seizes the opportunity to employ the Renaissance as the allegorical vehicle for the promotion of his own materialistic ethics. In this sense, “Pater’s conception of the Renaissance is substantially that of Burckhardt (and Michelet)” as “the age that makes the discovery of man, of his body and his senses; the age that accomplishes the revelation of antiquity,” as Wellek asserts (386). Being close in date to the publication of both

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94 Jules Michelet was the first critic who employed the term “Renaissance.” In 1855 he published his seventh volume of *The History of France*, focusing on the Renaissance, which the French critic basically defined as a 16th century French phenomenon. Considering the Renaissance under the prism of his admiration for the French Revolution, Michelet emphasized the liberal qualities of the historical period. On the other hand, Jacob Burckhardt defined the Renaissance as a 15th century Italian phenomenon and he tightly linked the historical period with the creation of modern individuality and of the beginning of modernity in general.

95 As a matter of fact, Pater’s consideration of the Renaissance in terms of the materialistic 19th century spirit was not that mistaken after all. As Martin Jay puts it, “[n]ot only did Renaissance literature abound in ocular references, not only did its science produce the first silvered glass mirror able to reproduce the world with far greater fidelity than before, not only did some of its greatest figures like Leonardo da Vinci explicitly privilege the eye over the ear, but also the Renaissance saw one of the most fateful innovations in Western culture: the theoretical and practical development of perspective in the visual arts” (44).
Burckhardt’s *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860)\(^{96}\) and Baudelaire’s writings, Pater’s *Renaissance*, furthermore, “both refines the Burckhardtian definition of the Renaissance as the origin of the modern world and at the same time ponders the art of his own day, its own possibility for cultural renewal, in terms of Baudelaire’s modernity,” as Barolsky adds (12). By tightly considering the historical period of the Renaissance in relation to the 19\(^{th}\) century, Pater achieved its profound relativization. Tracing the origin of modern materialism and relativism in ancient Greece and Heraclitus’ doctrine of flux, the Renaissance, by invoking the rebirth of the ancients and the origin of modernity, provided Pater with fertile ground for the allegorical promotion of his pagan ethics as an imitable cultural paradigm for the 19\(^{th}\) century.

**The Aesthete and the Scientist**

Pater’s alliance with the scientific project of his time was not, however, only restricted to the ethical compatibility that the critic established between his experiential model and the new science, in their common fight against traditional morality. Drawing on this compatibility, Pater fully incorporated the scientific project into his aesthetic program and eventually presented in the name of Heraclitus the givens of contemporary science as aesthetic ideals in themselves, coming up with a new – a rationalized – aesthetic form, where artistic process was presented as an equivalent of scientific research. Such rationalization, as we shall see, originated from the fact that science exhibited for the critic an aesthetic charm of its own; it was actually in this sense, that Pater detected in Heraclitus’ scientific and philosophical

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\(^{96}\) Unlike Burckhardt, however, Pater being highly influenced by the Darwinian theory, does not present the Renaissance as a radical break from the Middle Ages, but as its peaceful and harmonious continuation.
system “a poetic beauty in mere clearness of thought, the actually aesthetic charm of a
cold austerity of mind; as if the kinship of that to the clearness of physical light were
something more than a figure of speech” (Marius 124).

Pater’s sensationalist manifesto in the “Conclusion” culminates with the
promotion of art as the ideal response towards the phenomenon of life for the
“modern spirit.” It is the aesthetic dimension - art - that is expected to deliver this
“quickened” sense of life, it is “the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art
for its own sake […]. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the
highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake”
(Renaissance 153). In other words, Pater assigns to art the role of culturally delivering
the outcomes of physical science and its materialism as depicted in the first part of the
“Conclusion,” and of sensationalism and its relativism as illustrated in the second,
launching a structural association between aesthetics and the scientific project, where
scientific distance becomes aesthetic disinterestedness with Pater’s emphasis on “the
love of art for its own sake.” 97 Such association, by infusing epistemological premises
within the artistic temperament, as we shall see, illuminates the trajectory from
scientific distance to aesthetic detachment that took place later on in the short-lived,
yet for modernism decisive, tradition of the decadent aesthetes, like Wilde, Beardsley
and Dawson, to name but a few. 98

In contrast, thus, to Arnold, who in “Literature and Science” (1882)
skeptically declared that science failed to deliver “the sense in us for conduct, and the

97 One can always, however, read this contemporary doctrine of separatism in Heraclitus’ biography as
well. As Charles H. Khan asserts, Heraclitus stood out from most early philosophers who were
occupied with public activities by “refusing to engage in politics or to legislate for Ephesus” (1).
Heraclitus’ repudiation of political application can be regarded as an elitist instance of political
separatism. The full implications of Pater’s aesthetic disinterestedness will be analyzed in the second
chapter, where I shall explore Pater’s relation to the Kantian doctrine.
98 Nevertheless, even though Pater’s writings carry in embryonic form the seeds for such a decadent
development, Pater himself is not interested in social rupture but in unfolding his politics of accord.
sense in us for beauty” (“Science” 1558), Pater wholeheartedly embraces the ethical implications of the new science in the spirit of Bertrand Russell’s *A Free Man’s Worship* (1903) and Anatole France’s *Le Jardin d’Épicure* (1894), as Young stresses (33), and integrates it into his aesthetic program. This way, he brings together, as Arnold puts it, “the knowledge of things” with “the knowledge of words” (“Science” 1550) by associating aesthetics with science along the paradigm of Heraclitus, the poet-natural philosopher, who presented his scientific vision into a poetic diction. Accordingly, for Pater, the function of the aesthetic critic

is to distinguish, to analyze, and separate from its adjuncts, the virtue by which a picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book, produces this special impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate what the source of that impression is, and under what conditions it is experienced. His end is reached when he has disengaged that virtue, and noted it, as a chemist notes some natural element, for himself and others (*Renaissance* xxx).

The critic, as stated in the “Preface” to the *Renaissance* and argued for throughout the book, must, in the spirit of a chemist, look for the “formula” of an artist through a process of strategic condensation. In his quest for the “formula” the critic proceeds inductively so as to capture an objective ground that sums up the artistic oeuvre itself. Thus, “in its emphasis on analysis into simples” (Young 20), its underlining of analytic discrimination on the critic’s part, its highlighting of “fact” and the role of observation, the *Renaissance* harmoniously brings together the

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99 Russell’s celebrated essay was initially published in the December of 1903 as “The Free Man’s Worship.”

100 “To define beauty, not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible, to find, not its universal formula, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of aesthetics” (xxix). This way, Michelangelo’s essence is captured by his combination of “strength and sweetness,” Winckelmann’s “formula” coincides with his Greek temperament, Joachim du Bellay encapsulates the Italian influence on French taste, Giorgione the Venetian school of painting, Leonardo a return to nature and Pico the reconciliation of Christianity with Greek paganism.

101 The critic is urged to proceed with “facts” since “as in the study of light, of morals, of number, one must realize such primary data for one’s self, or not at all” (xxix).
fundamental premises of the “science of things” with the “science of words.” Such union is furthermore explicitly celebrated in “On Style” (1888), where Pater establishes in the fashion of Baconian objectivity certain restrictive tenets for the artist and the scholar. Both artists and critics have for Pater to conform to certain rules that are nevertheless borrowed from the scientific discourse: “Exclusiones debitae – the exclusions, or rejections, which nature demands – we know how large a part these play, according to Bacon, in the science of man” (Appreciations 4). The art of the scholar, very much like the scientist, “is summed up in the observance of those rejections demanded by the nature of his medium, the material he must use” (Appreciations 5). Such restrictions are promoted as a means of amplifying expression, “that absolute accordance of expression to idea” (Appreciations 15). This way, Heraclitean ascesis is tightly associated with a textual economy as a means of maintaining an intensified focus for the critic, where again scientific-like precision is applied to the quest for the most suitable word that will capture its objective essence. Self-restraint, renunciation and careful selection are proposed as a means of maintaining an analogy with scientific distance that will perfect artistic form. What is more interesting, nevertheless, is the fact that the ascetic discipline of the artist or the scholar is in itself aesthetically regarded as an artistic achievement itself:

[s]elf-restraint, a skillful economy of means, ascesis, that too has a beauty of its own; and for the reader supposed there will be an aesthetic satisfaction in that frugal closeness of style which makes the most of a word, in the exaction from every sentence of a precise relief, in the just spacing out of word to thought, in the logically filled space connected always with the delightful sense of difficulty overcome (Appreciations 6-7).

Heraclitus’ hybrid character as the poet-scientist is duplicated throughout the Renaissance with the profusion of a series of artists respectively illustrated through a
scientific aura. This way, Raphael is presented as an artist obsessed with knowledge, Winckelmann in his detachment and disinterestedness is illustrated as a scholar of scientific distinction, Giorgione’s emphasis on technique so as to attain objectivity is aligned with the scientific paradigm, and Pico, the scientist-humanist, is characterized by his obsessive pursuit of truth. Highly emblematic, nevertheless, of this correlation between the “knowledge of words” and the “knowledge of things,” between art and science, stands Pater’s depiction of Leonardo da Vinci as the model of the artist-scientist. “Leonardo,” moreover, is very crucial for our consideration here because it elucidates the grounds upon which Pater established such association. In order to highlight this correlation I will employ Engler’s account of the kinship between art and science, which I believe is very close to Pater’s view and it illuminates the critic’s model of the artist-scientist in the da Vinci essay.

In “From Art and Science to Perception: The Role of Aesthetics,” Engler argues for a similarity between aesthetic and scientific perception deeply rooted in a common, a shared “generic” origin which has to do with the fact that “order, coherence and unity have the effect of integrating formal features into structures that give the impression of constituting unified wholes (or organic unities), which have great aesthetic appeal” (207). Scientific research, Engler argues, exhibits a “pattern organization usually made about activities of the mind with respect to art” (208). Under this prism, both science and art can be termed as structures that exert an aesthetic appeal precisely on the grounds of what they manifest themselves as ordered and coherent wholes. Art and science, the subjective and the objective, are linked on the grounds of a common organizing perception of the world, which is after all deeply aesthetic, according to Engler. Taking into consideration Engler’s remark, we can return to Pater’s “Leonardo.” It gets extremely hard in this essay to distinguish the
scientific quest from the aesthetic. A tight analogy is established between science and art, since both of them are presented in a consummate Enlightenment œuvre:

if we think of him as the mere reasoner who subjects design to anatomy, and composition to mathematical rules, we shall hardly have that impression which those around Leonardo received from him. Poring over his crucibles, making experiments with colour, trying, by a strange variation of the alchemist’s dream, to discover the secret, not of an elixir to make man’s natural life immortal, but of giving immortality to the subtletest and most delicate effects of painting, he seemed to them rather the sorcerer or the magician, possessed of curious secrets and a hidden knowledge, living in a world of which he alone possessed the key (Renaissance 68).

Leonardo’s scientific quest and his aesthetic experimentations comprised for Pater facets of the same, unique world that he occupied. In other words, Pater does not differentiate Leonardo’s science from his art; he regards them both as parts of the same project. The illuminated alchemist-painter, with his experimental endeavors to capture “the most delicate effects of painting,” transubstantiated in the most profound way the scientific quest into artistic perfection; he turned science into art, and art into science. Having a closer look at the way Leonardo’s project is presented, I will demonstrate that what ultimately appears to interconnect science with art in Pater’s eyes is a Heraclitean principle. Leonardo’s scientific and artistic endeavors both involved his quest “to discover the secret,” the “hidden knowledge,” they both signified the Heraclitean pursuit of the hidden interconnectedness beneath an apparent discordance; they were both organized by the pursuit of Logos. The fact that Leonardo was a scientist and an artist led him to the awareness that both science and art amounted to the ordering of the mass of experience into coherent wholes, into Logos. It was eventually the vision of this profound unity that led Leonardo to present nature as art and art as nature. Belonging to a holistic tradition, very much in the spirit of Heraclitus, Leonardo refrained from a fragmented, a specialized version of the
world, but emphasized instead an organic interconnection of things by bringing together science and art.

In its quest for the non-apparent cause and scheme of things, science is joined by the aesthetic expedition to encapsulate the true, yet hidden, meaning in the world without distortion. Scientific objectivity and aesthetic depiction are therefore tightly associated with the way the phenomena are really delivered to us; Leonardo, after all, “had been always desirous of beauty, but desired it always in such precise and definite forms, as hands or flowers or hair,” Pater reminds us (82). This way, Leonardo “plunged into the study of nature,” because “nature was the true mistress of higher intelligences” (66), nature was the point of convergence between art and science since it did not only provide the model for aesthetic forms, but it also organized scientific regularities as well. It was from nature that Leonardo learned “the art of going deep, of tracking the sources of expression to their subtlest retreats, the power of an intimate presence in the things he handled” anticipating thus “modern mechanics” (66-67). Moreover, “[h]e who thus penetrated into the most secret parts of nature preferred always the more to the less remote” (70); in other words, Leonardo was striving in a Heraclitean manner to resist the “apparent” connectedness of things, keeping an eye always on the “hidden” aspect, the “unconfused” order of things, the luminosity of Logos, which he transported into his art. By bringing together “curiosity and the desire of beauty” (70), by associating science and art, Leonardo managed to create “that larger vision of the opening world” (72), he managed to awaken and quicken his perception by coming in contact with the “unconfused” light of cosmic Logos. And it was precisely, for Pater, this unifying, almost paradoxical, force of Logos that brought together the art of science and the science of art, curiosity and beauty. This unifying force that Pater attributed to Logos was indicative of the synthetic character that he
assigned to the Heraclitean doctrine, upon which he was eventually based on so as to structure and promote his own reconciliatory program, as we shall see.

**Pater, Darwin, and Heraclitus**

Indicative of Pater’s own fusion of scientific “curiosity” with the “love of beauty” stands the way the Oxford critic intricately converted the evolutionary discourse of Darwin into aesthetic form. The evolutionary discourse, after all, provided the 19th century with “that larger vision of the opening world” by highlighting, very much in the spirit of Leonardo, the way nature shapes (organic) form, the way both natural and aesthetic forms involve organized wholes that are interconnected throughout the course of time. Before having a look, however, at the specific ways in which Pater turned the doctrine of Darwinism into aesthetic ideals, I should like to consider Pater’s relation to Darwin and the manner in which the Darwinian discourse was presented in Pater’s text. As I will argue, bringing to light a hitherto unexplored aspect of the critic’s work, Darwinism was portrayed by Pater as an extension of Heracliteanism. Such an association was not at all accidental; as a matter of fact, this intriguing association, in my view, comprised Pater’s contribution to the contemporary debates on the validity of the discourse of evolution and the role of the inductive method, which I shall fully address in the last sections of this chapter.

Pater read *The Origin of the Species* and actively participated in many discussions on it when the breakthrough book was published in 1859 (Inman, *Reading 6*). It seems that Darwin’s theory deeply influenced Pater, whose compliance with the givens of Darwinism is manifested throughout his work. From a very early age, Pater shared the Darwinian awareness that

> [f]or us, necessity is not, as of old, a sort of mythological personage without us, with whom we can do warfare. It is rather a magic web woven through and
through us, like that magnetic system of which modern science speaks,
penetrating us with a network, subtler than our subtlest nerves, yet bearing in it
the central forces of the world (Renaissance 148).

Pater’s first book, the Renaissance, as Harold Bloom terms it, is a “Darwinian
book” (“Belatedness” 174), in the sense, I would add, that the writer used Darwin’s
theory as a general metaphor for modes of change. On the whole, the book is
structured upon an evolutionary model in its preoccupation with origins, presenting us
with the survival and the ultimate triumph of paganism throughout Europe, beneath
the surface of Christianity from the 12th century to the 18th and 19th centuries. In this
sense, Pater came up with a theory of the Renaissance which, as he himself admits,
established “a continuity,” “healing that rupture between the middle age and the
Renaissance which has so often been exaggerated” (2) in the manner that Darwin
established a continuity between the species and the ancestors from which they had
evolved. Pater’s evolutionary cultural model also underpinned the Heraclitean notion
of “no fixed parties, no exclusions” (17), in the sense of a reconciliation of
oppositional forces so as to celebrate a form of unity that emphasized historical
continuity in the Darwinian fashion. Indicative of the Darwinian spirit in which Pater
presents this linkage is the fact that the critic describes the Renaissance through a
botanical imagery that directly comes from natural science; hence the Renaissance,
like the “the anemone,” is presented as a natural outgrowth originating from the
fusion of the pagan and the Christian traditions (31). Moreover, in the

102 Critics and scientists have long since warned about the dangers of a loose appropriation of
Darwin’s theories. I need, therefore, to qualify here Bloom’s term by highlighting the fact that Pater
was not in the strict scientific sense a “Darwinian,” but rather a “cultural Darwinian.”
103 “When the ship-load of sacred earth from the soil of Jerusalem was mingled with the common clay
in the Campo Santo at Pisa, a new flower grew from it, unlike any flower men had seen before, the
anemone with its concentric rings of strangely blended colour, still to be found by those who search
long enough for it, in the long grass of the Maremma. Just such a strange flower was the mythology of
the Italian Renaissance, which grew up from the mixture of two traditions, two sentiments, the sacred
and the profane” (31).
“Conclusion,” Pater’s illustration of “our physical life” via a discourse that invokes the notion of the conservation of energy is also by implication Darwinian, in the manner that Tyndall too finds in his address a connecting line between physics and the law of evolution. In this sense, the “physicality” of human life, for Pater, denotes and establishes in a Darwinian fashion a profound biological continuity with the external world. In its emphasis on change and through the establishment of the human being’s creation out of these physical substances that also participate in the formation of its surrounding environment, Pater is actually drawing a Darwinian picture, or what could be called a generally Darwinian worldview.

As we have seen, Pater’s overall relation to contemporary science was firmly rooted within a Heraclitean discourse. Darwin was no exception to this rule for the Victorian critic; and, thus, along with the doctrine of the conservation of energy, scientific relativity, materialism, and empiricism, the discourse of evolution was also presented within a Heraclitean framework. As I intend to argue, Pater presented the idea of evolution as a 19th-century variation of the Heraclitean paradigm. In this sense, I will employ the Heraclitean doctrine as a means of elucidating the Oxford don’s relation to Darwinism, approaching the issue from a perspective that Paterian scholars have hitherto neglected. As we shall see, the link that Pater established between Heraclitus and Darwin can provide a series of insights into the critic’s synthetic politics and his relation to the school of empiricism. Right from the beginning of Plato and Platonism, the critic implicitly invokes Darwin when he launches his

104 “In our day grand generalizations have been reached. The theory of the origin of the species is but one of them. Another, of still wider grasp and more radical significance, is the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy” (Tyndall 45).
105 By insinuating a primordial unseen physical force of change gradually operating beneath our understanding, Pater is actually complying, as we shall later on see, with the Darwinian notion of the gradual and almost imperceptible law of change through natural selection from which “what are called varieties are continually produced” (Tyndall 38).
106 Such a consideration was very interestingly also shared by Henry Fairfield Osborn in 1894 in From the Greeks to Darwin: An Outline of the Evolution Idea.
analysis of the Greek philosopher by stating that just as “nature makes no sudden
leaps,” “in the history of philosophy there are no absolute beginnings” (5). The
projection of the physical process of the flux, which carries within its core the
connotations of scientific verification - especially at a time when Darwinism was at its
peak - upon the history of thought presents us with the origin of philosophical
thought. This origin is attributed to Heraclitus as the initiator of Western
philosophical discourse.107 Likewise, when Pater claims that in the products of human
genius “the seemingly new is old also, a palimpsest, a tapestry of which the actual
threads have served before, or like the original frame itself, every particle of which
has already lived and died many times over” (8), he is once again pointing through an
overtly evolutionary discourse towards the figure of Heraclitus as that “old” initiation,
as an origin in the Darwinian sense.108

Even “the entire modern theory of ‘development’, in all its various phases,
proved or unprovable – what is it but old Heracliteanism awake once more in a new
world, and grown to full proportion?” (Plato 19). By presenting Heraclitus as the
originator of the doctrine of development, it appears that Pater echoes Zeller’s remark
that “to Heraclitus all subsequent philosophies of change were traced” (qtd. in
Fishman 381) in A History of Greek Philosophy from the Earliest Period to the Time
of Socrates, a book that Pater read during a self-taught course in philosophy from the
beginning of November 1860 until December 1863, as B. A. Inman asserts (“Context”
16). Heraclitus, Pater asserts, was the first philosopher who had identified a process
“as literally in constant extinction and renewal” but he seemed “scarcely serious” to

107 Pater, thus, appears in his remark to prophetically lie in accordance with more recent critics who
regard Heraclitus as the first truly Western thinker (Axelos 2 & Khan 3).
108 As one of the three predecessors of the Platonic doctrine, along with Parmenides and Pythagoras,
Heraclitus is set as the first even though Pythagoras historically precedes him. Such historical
displacement reveals the role that is granted to him by Pater, even during his later works, as the one
who stood aside “to make the initial act of conscious philosophic reflection” (11), as the “absolute
beginning”.

those around him (Plato 20); in this, Heraclitus anticipated Darwin, as Pater’s choice of words emphatically suggests:

Our terrestrial planet is in constant increase by meteoric dust, moving to it through endless time out of infinite space. The Alps drift down the rivers into the plains, as still loftier mountains found their level there ages ago. The granite kernel of the earth, it is said, is ever changing in its very substance, its molecular constitution, by the passage through it of electric currents. And the Darwinian theory – that “species,” the identifying forms of animal and vegetable life, immutable though they seem now, as of old in the Garden of Eden, are fashioned by slow development, while perhaps millions of years go by: well! Every month is adding to its evidence (Plato 20).

The analogy here with Darwinism is substantiated on the grounds that “type” is not fixed but always becoming. Pater notes that underneath the apparent immutability of the “species,” which appear as if they came straight from the “Garden of Eden,” they are actually being “fashioned by slow development” (20). The analogy is further enhanced through the fact that the Heraclitean interplay of the fundamental elements that give birth and shape to the cosmic drama is by implication associated with the Darwinian scheme, which presented the huge variety of the species having originated through a selective evolution out of fewer earlier ones. 109

The implied linkage of the two thinkers is revealed through the weighty identification of their doctrines in Pater’s densely metaphorical image of the “great river of organic life” (21), which unites the philosopher and the scientist alike. Pater is very perceptive in his analogy between Heraclitus and Darwin and succeeds in associating the massively influential impact of Darwin’s theory with Heraclitus’ eclectic doctrine of the law of change, establishing thus a profound connection between philosophy and

109 “[T]he innumerable species, genera, and families of organic beings, with which this world is peopled, have all descended, each within its own class or group, from common parents, and all have been modified in the course of descent” (Darwin 434). “I believe that animals have descended from at most only four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or lesser number” (454)
science, and therefore a paleontology of scientific thought with Heraclitus as the fossil of its earliest origin. In these terms, modern Darwinism is considered as a thematic variation and subsequently an authentication of old Heracliteanism, which seemed to anticipate Huxley’s remark in “Charles Darwin” (1882) that Heraclitus was a forerunner of Darwin (246). It appears that Pater also influenced on this association his disciple, Gerard Manley Hopkins, who also considered Darwin’s system as a philosophy of flux (1658), as it, after all, becomes evident in his poem “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire” (1888).

Even Pater’s promotion of the ascetic form of induction, his “eager observation,” which is tightly linked with Heraclitus, bears an implicit connection to Darwin. Levine argues that Pater’s “eager observation” highlights the aesthetic espousing of Darwinian “gradualism” but also the “historicist implications” of “the necessity to consider one’s location as observer in space and time” (“Solipsism” 16). Darwinian evolution decisively elongated the human perspective, rendering the amplification of observation an indisputable necessity, so that the subject would firmly ground its historical presence within a now exceedingly widened spectrum, full of scattered visual signs coming from its long historical course that only a trained eye would be able to detect and, thus, reassert its present position in terms of a gradually emerging past. Exemplary of this is Darwin’s constant appeal to a highly trained

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110 The very fact that Heraclitus’ philosophy was only partially recovered, since what remained of it was only bits and pieces, seems to underpin here the formal association with fossils.

111 Huxley remarked in the second volume of *Darwiniana*: “One could not converse with Darwin without being reminded of Socrates. There was the same desire to find some one wiser than himself; the same belief in the sovereignty of reason; the same ready humor; the same sympathetic interest in all the ways and works of men. But instead of turning away from the problems of Nature as hopelessly insoluble, our modern philosopher devoted his whole life attacking them in the spirit of Heraclitus and of Democritus, with results which are the substance of which their speculations were anticipatory shadows” (246-47).

112 As Levine states in another essay, “the only special power that Darwin attributes to himself in his autobiography is the power of observation; through observation, natural selection conducts experiments and after much trial and error selects variations that will serve the ends of the species” (Levine, “Knowledge” 383).
observation as means of overcoming the difficulties of the geological record. The ascetic molding of one’s observation, therefore, becomes of foremost importance for Pater as a novel faculty of truth, as a means of “stabilizing the instabilities” (Levine, “Solipsism” 37) of both the subject position and the flux. In this sense, by regarding the world as a field pregnant with a hidden meaning waiting to be interpreted, the artist and the scientist join hands in their optimization of an optics of decoding as an instrument of realistic explanation. Indicative of this implicit affiliation between Darwinism and aestheticism, through their shared preoccupation with vision, which resulted in a form of corporeality, sensualism and sensationalism, is the fact that they both historically prepared the grounds for the emergence of Decadence. Pater’s role was decisive in the establishment of this affiliation, for he was among the first who transfigured evolutionary theory into aesthetic form, as we shall see next.

The Science of Imaginative Prose: Darwin and the Essay

Pater’s self-reflexive reference to the form of his writing establishes a meta-narrative implicit in his texts, where the critic provides the reader with a justification of his selected medium. In Plato and Platonism, Pater refers in a Hegelian fashion to three different intellectual traditions of “composition,” three different literary methods

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113 It is no accident that Pater’s study of Renaissance art is delivered through a scientific discourse, where the work of art as a system of signs is semiotically assimilated to scientific findings.

114 The quickening and expansion of sense perception implicit in the evolutionary discourse becomes manifest in Spencer’s theory, as summed up by Tyndall in his address: “With the development of the sense the adjustments between the organism and its environment gradually extend in space, a multiplication of experiences and a corresponding modification of conduct being the result. The adjustments also extend in time, covering continually greater intervals. Along with this extension in space and time the adjustments increase in speciality and complexity, passing through the various grates of brute life, and prolonging themselves into the domain of reason” (48). As such, the Heraclitean notion of quickness is primarily employed as a means of individual perfection in the Victorian fashion of “self-help”.

115 “Darwinism, I believe, was part of the network of ideas leading to the full expression of Decadence. It did appear, at least, to emphasize the animal resident in the human being. It did help corrode traditional religion. And if our relationship to each other is essentially that of protoplasmic machines, then the model for sexual engagement could well be that of predator and prey” (Blinderman 485-86).
throughout history: “the poem, the treatise, the essay” (175). Interestingly enough, Pater considers these three methods as “no mere accidents […] but necessities of literary form, determined directly by matter, as corresponding to three essentially different ways in which the human mind relates itself to truth” (175). Thus, “the poem,” responds to an age when “philosophy was still a matter of intuition, imaginative, sanguine, often turbid or obscure” (174). “The treatise” refers to a time “when native intuition had shrunk into dogmatic system, the dry bones of which rattle in one’s ears,” whereas “the essay,” Pater’s favorite, stands “midway between those opposites” (174). Pater’s justification for the appropriate form of writing is further on elaborated in “On Style” (1888), where he also considers that “midway” between poetry and the treatise, now termed as “imaginative prose,” to be “the special art of the modern world” (Appreciations 4).

The justification that Pater gives for this preference has firstly to do with the fact that the “chaotic variety and complexity” of intellectual issues render all restraints quite useless, as reflected in the “lawless verse of the nineteenth century,” and secondly that current “naturalism” involves “a certain humility of attitude,” moving towards “the less ambitious forms of literature” (Appreciations 4). Thus, Pater’s corroboration of his favored medium, the essay, or “imaginative prose,” revolves basically around two arguments: its privileged “midway” position between extremes, and the fact that it is considered as the most suitable response to the “naturalistic” call of the times. A closer look at Pater’s argumentation, nevertheless, reveals that both concepts implicitly invoke a scientific discourse, revealing Pater’s profound transfiguration of contemporary science into aesthetic criteria.

Standing “in-between” the inclusive oral tradition of poetry and the closed form of a rigorous discourse, the essay is favored as a balanced medium that, in a
Heraclitean manner, mediates between two oppositional poles bringing them together into a single whole. The prominent notions here of mediation, of hybridism, of a balanced struggle between different forms, firmly suggest a Darwinian undercurrent. Just like Darwin, who undermined the idea of clear-cut, stable, distinct species, and through the notion of hybridism was able to depict how certain traits as environmental mechanisms of defense are transported or developed into various species throughout time, Pater envisions, through a diachronic discourse, a cross-generic reciprocity between genres that enforces the vitalism of each genre, or of the essay itself, as a means of transcending their shortcomings. The essay presents us with a fortified, an evolved version of prior forms, where the biological principle of hybridism is transformed by Pater into literary form, rendering the critic able to infuse his promoted medium with the force of an organic vitalism, and to articulate his aesthetic considerations through a discourse that was dominant at the time. In this sense, the genres, and by implication the essay as the form of mediation, very much in the spirit of the species, are connected not only because they share certain characteristics, but mainly because they share an organic response to their needs, which leads to survival through adaptation to environmental stimuli and the inheritance of the most enhanced traits.

116 “[T]he species of the large genera are related to each other, in the same manner as the varieties of any one species are related to each other. No naturalist pretends that all the species of a genus are equally distinct from each other; they may generally be divided into sub-genera, or sections, or lesser groups” (Darwin 112). Furthermore, “the belief that species were immutable productions was almost unavoidable as long as the history of the world was thought to be of short duration” (452).

117 “[N]amely, that the vigour and fertility of all organic beings are increased by slight changes in their conditions of life, and that the offspring of slightly modified forms of varieties acquire from being crossed increased vigour and fertility” (437).

118 “Natural selection will tend to modify all the individuals of a varying species throughout the area in the same manner in relation to the same conditions” (149).
The beneficial power implicit in the amalgamation of divergent characteristics in the form of hybrids had already been celebrated in the Renaissance, where Pater stated that

in its special mode of handling its given material, each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art, by what the German critics term an *Anders-streben* – a partial alienation from its own limitations, through which the arts are able, not indeed to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally to lend each other new forces (85)\(^{119}\).

Pater’s obsession with historical periods of transition, which can themselves be considered historical hybrids in the sense that they harmoniously bring together the traits of a prior and an emergent tradition,\(^ {120}\) is also indicative of this Darwinian hybridism. One can, of course, detect in the background of Pater’s consideration Heraclitus’ fire smoldering and casting its light upon the critic’s thought.

Under the prism of Darwinian hybridism we can furthermore consider Pater’s prominent notion of aesthetic selection. The emphasized role of selection derives its significance not only from its affiliation with scientific objectivity, as we have seen, but also from the fact that it is presented as a life-giving principle, since the critic or the artist, in the manner of Botticelli, “plays fast and loose with […] data, rejecting some and isolating others, and always combining them anew” (*Renaissance* 35).

\(^{119}\) Pater then proceeds with a long list of artistic forms that actually benefit from their hybrid character: “[t]hus, some of the most delightful music seems to be always approaching to figure, to pictorial definition. Architecture, again, though it has its own laws – laws esoteric enough, as the true architect knows only too well – yet sometimes aims at fulfilling the conditions of a picture, as in the Arena chapel; or of sculpture, as in the flawless unity of Giotto’s tower in Florence; and often finds a true poetry, as in those strangely twisted staircases of the chateaux of the country of the Loire, as if it were intended that among their odd turnings the actors in a theatrical mode of life might pass each other unseen; there being a poetry also of memory and of the mere effect of time, by which architecture often profits greatly. Thus, again, sculpture aspires out of the hard limitation of pure form towards colour, or its equivalent; poetry also, in many ways, finding guidance from the other arts, the analogy between a Greek tragedy and a work of Greek sculpture, between a sonnet and a relief, of French poetry generally with the art of engraving, being more than mere figures of speech” (85-86).

\(^ {120}\) As a matter of fact, these periods of transition are all paradigmatically organized by the passage from a pagan to a Christian tradition, or the other way round, fusing the characteristics and thus affiliating two highly conflicting historical phases in the course of western intellect.
Aesthetic choice and the “new combinations” it scores becomes for Pater an equivalent of the Darwinian principle of “selection,” and consequently of “natural selection”. In *The Origin of the Species* (1859) Darwin starts his exploration from the strategies that domestic breeders employ, with “man’s power of accumulative selection: [where] nature gives successive variations [and] man adds them up in certain directions useful to him. In this sense, he may be said to make for himself useful breeds” (90). Moreover, Darwin admits that “breeders habitually speak of an animal’s organization as something quite plastic, which they can model almost as they please” (90). Man’s power to “adapt organic beings to his own uses,” however, is contrasted to “Natural Selection,”¹²¹ which “is a power incessantly ready for action, and is immeasurably superior to man’s feeble efforts” (115). Being a synonym of the struggle for existence, natural selection denotes that “any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be *naturally selected*” (68). What is important for our consideration here is the fact that the notion of selection, in its plasticity as a molding force, being a replication of the more powerful and extensive force of natural selection, actually bears a firm artistic undercurrent¹²² that provided Pater with the means of transubstantiating biological selection into aesthetic selection. The artist’s or the critic’s careful selection of words¹²³ as a means of perfecting form, is here paralleled to the organic sway of natural selection in its ability to fortify the form of the species in the evolutionary

¹²¹ For the differences between selection and natural selection see pp. 132-33.
¹²² “The literary artist, therefore, will be aware of physical science; science also attaining, in its turn, its true literal ideal” (*Appreciations* 6).
¹²³ In terms of “art and poetry” the aesthetic critic is urged to “discriminate between what is more and what is less excellent in them, or to use words like beauty, excellence, art, poetry, with a more precise meaning than they would otherwise have” (xxx). Furthermore, Pater claims that “to define beauty, not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible, to find, not its universal formula, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of aesthetics” (xxx).
scheme. Pater seems here to be borrowing from the Darwinian paradigm in his quest to establish an enhanced literary medium, a narrative that will endure the conflicting strains of his time. Thus, aesthetic choice for Pater replicates natural selection as an economy of survival.124

In his preoccupation with the dialectic fusion of different forms, with flux, which is actually aligned with Darwin’s concept of natural selection as the paradigmatic formless force of organic form,125 the essay, for Pater, becomes emblematic of an oeuvre to shape a “form of formlessness” (Iser 19).126 As Iser states, the essay “is a half-way house between treatise and fiction; in registering the facts of life it has the same reference as the treatise; in making their interconnections ambivalent and opaque it approaches fiction” (19). These are, more or less, the words that Pater himself employs in Plato and Platonism so as to describe Heraclitus’ writing, where Pater’s illustration echoes his own style when he talks about “a writer of philosophy in prose, yet of a philosophy which was half poetic figure, half generalized fact, a style crabbed and obscure, but stimulant, invasive, not to be forgotten” (12). Iser explicates such form on the grounds that “where cognitive criticism comes to an end, literature begins, for fiction alone can stage that which is

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124 We have seen that in “On Style” Pater considers the concept of selection in economic terms. As is well known, Darwin himself admits that he had been influenced by Malthus in his formulation of natural selection. Struggle for existence is actually “the doctrine of Malthus applied to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms” (68). In this sense, overpopulation leads to a harsh struggle for food supplies, which inevitably results in the fact that that only those individuals who are naturally selected can survive and propagate.

125 As a complex and sophisticated process, natural selection shapes the form of existence of the species, yet it is not easy for the humans to grasp: “If selection consisted merely in separating some very distinct variety, and breeding from it, the principle would be so obvious as hardly to be worth notice; but its importance consists in the great effect produced by the accumulation in one direction, during successive generations, of differences absolutely inappreciable by an uneducated eye – differences which I for one have vainly attempted to appreciate” (Darwin 91).

126 As such, the essay as a “form of formlessness” is closely related to the content of the aesthetic critic’s pursuit, exposing once again the tight interconnection between matter and form in Pater’s work. The aesthetic critic has to “estimate” the “peculiar and untranslatable sensuous charm” that each art possesses, “its own special mode of reaching the imagination, its own special responsibilities to its material,” “which is neither descriptive nor meditative merely” (83).
inaccessible to referential discourse” (x). This probably accounts also for the reason why Heraclitus himself developed such a hybrid medium, borrowing from both physics and poetry in order to capture a truth oscillating between the “seen” and the “unseen,” in order to map a zone beyond immediate perception.127 In these terms, Pater’s illustration of Heraclitus’ stylistics evokes a form of writing, very much like Pater’s own, that like the Oracle in Delphi “neither indicates clearly nor conceals but gives a sign,” as Heraclitus’ fragment 93 self reflexively puts it.

This formal kinship that Pater establishes with the philosopher of Ephesus, and by implication with Darwin, in terms of the hybridity of the essay, is not at all accidental since it provides a shortcut to Pater’s affiliation with a liberal discourse. In “The Essay as Form” (1954), Adorno stresses the fact that the essay by “achieving something scientifically, or creating something artistically […] reflects a childlike freedom that catches fire, without scruple, on what others have already done” (qtd. in Homer 21). This way the essay, according to Adorno, is highly heretical since it “eschews traditional notions of method and enquiry” (Homer 21) by taking what is already a given and casting upon it a new light, a new perspective, which illuminates an unheimlich dimension of what so far was considered as culturally familiar. As such, it becomes a means of reordering, of cutting through polar oppositions, of initiating a Hegelian dialectical correlation by establishing new relations between them, thus, emphasizing not the objects themselves but the potential relations between them.128 In this respect, the essay becomes the tool for the subversion – hence its

127 The far reaching implications of this oeuvre and its relation to Pater’s theoretic goal will be examined in the following section. It is interesting to note here, nevertheless, that Pater’s association of the prose-poem with Heraclitus casts a new light on the history of the genre, which has been, according to Zawacki, traditionally traced back to the 14th century and to Dante and Petronius (286).
128 This, as we shall see, was initiated by Kant, who brought to light issues of functionalism and not substantiality. As a matter of fact, contrary to the rest of the Frankfurt school, Adorno was highly influenced by Kant. “Adorno’s reworkings of Kant – into a late modernist, Left vocabulary – constitute invaluable appropriations and translations that might well be regarded at least in significant parts, as
heretical character – of conventional outlooks and it celebrates novel forms of perception. Under this prism, the essay provided Pater with the ideal means of transcending conventional considerations and of upholding cultural givens under a different light. Thus, as we shall see, he was able to transform Arnold’s conventional rendering of ancient Greece as paradigmatic of “sweetness and light” and bring to the limelight a darker Dionysian version of it; he was able to depict Lady Lisa, in his celebrated purple exploration of Mona Lisa, as a vampire; he was able to relate the (scientific) givens of his own time in a radical way and come up with a new experiential model. Pater’s Renaissance was criticized precisely on the grounds of such perceptual innovation; the critic was accused of being imprecise, historically lacking, oscillating between philosophy and fiction, between imagination and fact, long before deconstruction emerged. The hybridism of Pater’s chosen medium, by implication, can be considered as his reply to all this indictment, it can be seen as a response to Victorian censorship, as a means of highlighting and then diffracting materialistic, atheistic and even homosexual signs.

In its ability to surmount or ultimately subvert conventional givens, the essay is also associated with the dominant-at-the-time spirit of “relativity” (Plato 175). Such relativity involves both “the randomness of experience and the subjectivity of perception” (Iser 19). In its dialectical, its relative attitude towards truth, the essay seems to be “mimicking Darwin’s fact-finding voyage toward an unknown origin” (Booth 865) as the paradigmatic form that captures the “perpetual conflict of ideas, critical theory formally and phenomenologically indistinguishable from Kant’s own accounts of aesthetics and epistemology” (Kaufman 685).

129 Pater’s hybrid approach in the Renaissance highly confused his contemporary reviewers. This way, Mrs. Oliphant found Pater’s approach “pretentious” and “artificial” since it exhibited a “mixture of sense and nonsense, of real discrimination and downright want of understanding” (Seiler 19). Mrs. Pattison moreover regarded “the historical element […] precisely that which is wanting” since “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 it was a kind of air-plant independent of ordinary sources of nourishment” (Seiler 71-72).
which is the highest form of the struggle for existence” (65) in Ritchie’s words.  

Accordingly, throughout Pater’s discussion, the essay form is presented in the imagery of a journey (Plato 175, 178, 184), a process (Plato 179, 188, 192), juxtaposed to the exactness of mathematical reasoning (Plato 179) or the “absolute and eternal” (Plato 187), putting one into a “receptive attitude towards such possible truth […] [since] it does not provide a proposition, nor a system of propositions, but forms a temper” (Plato 188). And this temper is actually the upholding of a skeptic attitude towards truth. In this respect, Pater’s incorporation of relativity in his stylistics, as McGrath puts it, reveals his belief that under the aegis of the relative spirit “modern prose style would become a much more appropriate vehicle to convey the subtlety, complexity, flexibility and fugitive nature of experience” (29-30).

It is precisely because of this pervasive relative character that the essay is singled out as “the characteristic type of our own time, a time so rich and various in special apprehensions of truth, so tentative and dubious in its sense of their ensemble, 

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130 Ritchie, in 1893, implicitlyalludes to Darwin through a discourse that constantly invokes the scientist so as to promote an appropriate form of thought for the “modern spirit”: “[t]he great constructive philosophers seem indeed to gather up into their thought all the elements that existed scattered in preceding systems; but the time comes when a new criticism and then a new reconstruction are needed, if philosophy is to remain living and not to be fossilized in a traditional dogma. ‘Let us follow whithersoever the argument leads us’; and, if we do not let ourselves become ‘misologists,’ we must hold fast this Athenian faith in the value of the perpetual conflict of ideas, which is the highest form of the struggle for existence” (65).

131 Pater’s effort to transport a form of organic vitality to aesthetics, his endeavour to present artistic form as an organism that constantly develops and is alert to external stimuli leads him to apply “the universality of natural law” not only to aesthetics but to “the moral order” as well (Renaissance 148). Once again thus, Pater’s suggestion is extended to the point of instilling skepticism as the appropriate modus vivendi, exposing Pater’s highly ethical gesture. The whole undercurrent of relativity is reflected in the form of the essay, which best suits a mind “for which truth itself is but a possibility, realizable not as a general conclusion, but rather as the elusive effect of a particular personal experience” (Plato 175). The skepticism invoked here involves the condition of “suspension” of judgment, a form of “receptivity” as the “salt of truth, even in the most absolutely ascertained knowledge” (196) that the form of the essay promotes through the endless succession of arguments that are not forced to reach a conclusion. There is no space, according to Pater, for fixed absolutes in these “modern” times but only for reconciliatory relatives. Even “beauty” is rendered according to the scientific spirit as “relative” (Renaissance xxx). Exemplary of this skepticism, as a successful medium, is not only Darwin’s scientific project, the Heraclitean doctrine and the form of the Platonic dialogue, which in its dialectic tactics is actually considered by Pater as an essay despite the fact that it often passes into the “prose-poem of Heraclitus” (176), but also Montaigne, “that typical skeptic of the age of Renaissance” (194). Montaigne, as a matter of fact, had written on Heraclitus and must have been himself influenced by the philosopher’s form. Once again then, the influence of Heraclitus is implicitly stressed.
and issues” (Plato 174). The zeitgeist is, in this sense, presented by Pater as permeating and ultimately bringing together both historical content and historical form into a whole, the embodiment of which is formally encapsulated in the medium of the essay. In this, Pater establishes a nearly modernistic interrelation between relativistic content and relativistic form, which, as a matter of fact, can be traced back to Heraclitus, who deals with the relativity that stems from the cosmic flow in an equally relative medium, philosophic prose-poetry. Accordingly, Pater informs the reader about the essay that “the very form belongs to, is of the organism of, the matter which it embodies” (Plato 176), it is said to be “co-extensive with life” (Plato 188) in the manner that Leonardo turned the matter of physical science into artistic form.\(^\text{132}\)

The essay as a medium is preferred because its form appears for Pater to be replicating the inexorable vitality of the flow; it appears to be made of the same organic substance, the same material that the rest of the universe is constructed of.

Such interdependence, however, between form and content is not a new one since it had already been formulated and put into practice in the Renaissance. In “The School of Giorgione” Pater states that “[a]ll art constantly aspires towards the condition of music,” since in music it becomes impossible “to distinguish the matter from the form” (86); in this sense, “the arts may be represented as continually struggling after the law or principle of music” (88). Pater’s interconnection of matter and form evidenced through music - the paradigmatic rhythmical ordering of cosmic Logos in Heraclitean terms\(^\text{133}\) presented as a form of “struggle,” echoes Darwin’s

\(^\text{132}\) Ostermark-Johansen argues that Pater’s obsession with flux was evident through the fact that the Victorian critic transfigured the Renaissance artistic devices of the “figura serpentinata” and the “contraposto” into a “a literary style” that relies on “antithesis and inner dialectics” (457), which to a large extent encapsulates Pater’s conception of the medium of the essay.

\(^\text{133}\) I am borrowing here the terms of Pater’s own metaphoric rendering of Heraclitean Logos: “[y]et from certain fragments in which the Logos is already named we may understand that there had been another side to the doctrine of Heraclitus; an attempt on his part, after all, to reduce that world of chaotic mutation to cosmos, to the unity of a reasonable order, by the search for and the notation, if there be such, of an antiphonal rhythm, or logic, which, proceeding uniformly from movement to
illustration of form as an outgrowth of the content of the struggle for survival, which reveals the profound unity of the phenomena of life. The Darwinian notion of a deep organic force coordinating the formal development of the species, the Darwinian awareness that the form of each species is directly related to its environmental needs and to the struggle for survival seems here to be orchestrating Pater’s consideration. As such, Pater accounts for the birth of the school of Giorgione on the grounds of a geographically specific stimulus, to which the artists of Venice responded and created their particular art by replicating it. Even religious form is anthropologically considered in its tight relation to historical content through an evolutionary discourse:

all religions may be regarded as natural products, that, at least in their origin, their growth, and decay, they have common laws, and are not to be isolated from the other movements of the human mind in the periods in which they respectively prevailed; that they arise spontaneously out of the human mind, as expressions of the varying phases of its sentiment concerning the unseen world; that every intellectual product must be judged from the point of view of the age and the people in which it was produced (Plato 22).

movement, as in some intricate musical theme, might link together in one those contending, infinitely diverse impulses” (Plato 17-18).

134 As a matter of fact, this idea is constantly repeated in Pater’s work. In Plato and Platonism, Pater, as such, considers the “Ionian ideal” as an upshot of the “people of the coast who have the roaming thoughts of sailors, ever ready to float away anywhither amid their walls of wood,” whereas he explicates the Lacedaemons in terms of their “hostile, inaccessible in its mountain hollow” geographical location (24), which ultimately gave birth to “the Dorian influence of a severe simplification everywhere, in society, in culture, in the very physical nature of man” (104).

135 “Only in Italy all natural things are as it were woven through and through with gold thread, even the cypress revealing it among the folds of its blackness. And it is with gold dust, or gold thread, that these Venetian painters seem to work, spinning its fine filaments, through the human flesh, away into the white plastered walls of the thatched huts. The harsher details of the mountains recede to a harmonious distance” (97).

136 The echo of Spencer’s social evolutionism is also highly prominent here. Furthermore, R. Crawford, focusing on the friendship between Andrew Lang and Pater, detects an interconnection between Pater’s aestheticist credo and scientific anthropology. Lang’s discovery of “the manner in which primitive elements […] were gradually transmitted through a process of continuing refinement into higher mythological works” (868), allowed Pater to work out the refined development of paganism into the Renaissance and the following centuries. Lang’s workings on the notion of “poetic evolution” and its Darwinian overtones bring to mind not only Pater’s project but also aspects of M. Arnold and Swinburne’s work. Thus, Crawford substantiates an interconnection and a parallel development of anthropology and late Romantic literature.
Pater’s promotion of an interconnection between matter and form exposes not only the prevalence of the discourse on evolutionism and its dynamic impact on the Victorian cultural imaginary, but it also reveals, as we shall see next, Pater’s “sentiments concerning the unseen world,” and the way this “unseen,” abstract world gradually made its way into the critic’s overt promotion of the “seen,” which, after all is tightly interlinked – in Pater’s words – with “the point of view of the age and the people in which it was produced.”

The “Relish” of Flux: Abstraction in the Renaissance

Even though the Renaissance in all its empirical bias and its incorporation of scientific discourse aspires to promote the “cult of the concrete,” as McGrath terms it (55), Pater’s narrative throughout the book does not actually succeed in presenting the reader with it, since the very medium that Pater utilizes appears to eventually subvert his effort. Formally, his writing is well wrought and suggestive to the extent that it nearly becomes abstract;\(^{137}\) hence Barolsky’s claim that “Pater’s poetry is of an abstract type” (42).\(^{138}\) Pater’s long sentences, his fastidious search for the right word, the integration of poetic techniques within his philosophic narrative, the intrusion of a variety of discourses within the main body of his narrative, the allusion to a plethora

\(^{137}\) Quite indicative of this is Pater’s celebrated extract on Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa,” which we shall shortly examine.

\(^{138}\) This abstraction was also implicitly acknowledged by one Pater’s disciples, Oscar Wilde, who in The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) described a “yellow book” that Lord Henry had given to Dorian, arguing that “[t]he style in which it was written was that curious jeweled style, vivid and obscure at once, full of argot and of archaisms, of technical expressions and elaborate paraphrases, that characterizes the work of some of the finest artists of French school of Decadents. The life of the senses was described in terms of mystical philosophy. One hardly knew at times whether one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of some medieval saint or the morbid confessions of a modern sinner. It was a poisonous book. The heavy odor of incense seemed to cling about its pages and to trouble the brain. The mere cadence of the sentences, the subtle monotony of their music, so full as it was of complex refrains and movements elaborately repeated, produced in the mind […] a form of reverie, a malady of dreaming, that made him unconscious of the falling day and the creeping shadows” (107).
of interdisciplinary thinkers and the interplay he establishes between past and present practically undermine his theoretical effort towards the concrete. Such formal shortcomings actually correspond to Pater’s tentative processing of a premise of rest into his theoretical matrix of motion. The critic might have fully embraced and celebrated the law of flux and all of its ramifications, yet he also “aspired to some kind of stability within the world in flux,” according to Levine (“Knowledge” 51). As Loesberg formulates it, Pater’s problem was precisely to find a way to “define a position from which to savor sensation, one that accepts friction but that is not caught up within it, a position that transcends sensation” (19-20). In a similar fashion, Fletcher sees the Renaissance as an organized “search for fixed points within the bewildering flux of the modern world” (13).

Taking a closer look at Pater’s texts, we shall note that under his consideration of flux, there indeed lurks a longing for a resting place. Before, however, exploring the mechanisms and the reasons beneath this seeming contradiction in the Paterian text, let us have a closer look at the way it is expressed. Pater’s alignment with the scientific dictates of his time and their promotion of the relativity and skepticism engendered by flux conceals a profound nostalgia for stability. In “Pico Della Mirandola” Pater states about the science of Pico’s time:

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139 Pater’s incorporation of a form of generality within his preoccupation with the concrete will be the object of the next chapter. What is of interest to us here is the way such generalization is implicit in the Heraclitean paradigm itself.

140 We have seen, furthermore, how, according to Levine, the ascetic imperative implicitly created an objective ground of fixity as a means of at least describing the flux. As Levine synoptically clarifies in “By Knowledge Possessed: Darwin, Nature, and Victorian Narrative,” “Pearson’s theory of science, Committing itself fully to the implicit subjectivism of empiricism, might usefully be seen in conjunction with Walter Pater’s impressionism as an attempt to recuperate the subjective and the personal in scientific discourse while maintaining as fully as possible the possibilities of transcendence of the merely personal that science has always needed” (373).

141 Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) was an Italian Renaissance humanist characterized by his quest of knowledge through a neo-Platonic framework. He wrote extensively on astrology. Pico’s Heptaplus, a mystico-allegorical exposition of the creation according to the seven Biblical senses, elaborates on his idea that different religions and traditions describe the same God. Thus, Pico becomes highly
That whole conception of nature is so different from our own. For Pico the world is a limited place, bounded by actual crystal walls, and a material firmament; it is like a painted toy […] How different from this childish dream is our own conception of nature, with its unlimited space, its innumerable suns, and the earth but a mote in the beam; how different the strange new awe, or superstition, with which it fills our minds! ‘The silence of those infinite spaces,’ says Pascal, contemplating a starlight night, ‘the silence of those infinite spaces terrifies me.’ – *Le silence eternal de ces espaces infinis m’effraie* (27).

Pater nostalgically expresses a desire for a prior stability by acknowledging the consolation it provided for the individual contrary to the modern world and its agonizing limitless flux. Accordingly, Pater implicitly constructs in his book certain parameters of stability as resting shelters from the sweeping force of the flux. Thus, even though the Renaissance covers an extensive period of nearly eight centuries, from 12th-century France to 18th-century Germany, where the notion of flux is evinced through the various changes that the passage of time and the geographical transport throughout Europe brought about, the notion of ancient Greece and its pagan ideal is presented as a fixed point in European culture. Hellenism, Pater states in “Winckelmann,” is “not merely an absorbed element in our intellectual life; it is a conscious tradition in it,” becoming thus “an element of permanence, a standard of taste” (128) that actually “preserves the identity of European culture” (145). As a matter of fact, Pater in his study of the 18th century German historian detects a “universal pagan sentiment, a paganism which existed before the Greek religion, and has lingered far onward into the Christian world, ineradicable, like some persistent vegetable growth, because its seed is an element of the very soil out of which it springs” (129); such paganism is identified with “the fixed element” of all religious illuminative as a paradigm of the convergence that Pater strives to establish throughout the period of the Renaissance in terms of paganism.
practice, as we shall see (130). Hellenic paganism, this way, is rendered by Pater into a set standard of the European progress, providing the individual with a firm ground to step on amidst the sweeping sway of the changes that time and scientific advance begot.

Similarly, the “formulas” that Pater comes up with for each thinker or artist that he considers can be regarded as an effort to “fix the secret individual experiences of a few personalities […] by attempting to define in them some central quality, some fixed point in the flux” (Fletcher 28-29). Michelangelo’s “strange interfusion of sweetness and strength,” thus, becomes the fixed point throughout his troubled life (62), whereas Leonardo da Vinci’s “curiosity and the desire of beauty […] are the two elementary forces in Leonardo’s genius” (70), and Winckelmann’s importance, as we have seen, lies in the fact that he brought to light the “fixed” element of European culture, its ancient Greek roots. In this respect the Renaissance presents us with a collective endeavor, expressed through a sequence of individual efforts, to transcend the flow by technically producing the effect of a remnant, of a “relish” (113), as evidence of the success of the subject’s struggle to come to terms with the force of flux. In “Two Early French Stories” the notion of companionship underpins the role of human agency in its ability to construct rigid points of reference that resist being carried away by the power of time. In “Luca Della Robbia” Pater claims about the Italian sculptor, who developed the art of pottery by making his creations more durable and thus more suitable for the exterior of buildings, that “something more remains of Luca Della Robbia; something more of a history, of outward changes and fortunes, is expressed through his work” (41), whereas the school of Giorgione is singled out for its ability to capture “exquisite pauses in time, in which, arrested thus,

142 Luca Della Robbia (1400-1482) was a Florentine sculptor.
we seem to be spectators of all the fullness of existence, and which are like some consummate extract or quintessence of life” (96); the consideration of Joachim du Bellay’s poetry, on the other hand, is concluded thus: “[a] moment – and the thing has vanished, because it was pure effect; but it leaves a relish behind it, a longing that the accident may happen again” (113).

The characters examined in the Renaissance do not only present us with exemplary instances of individuals who managed to transcend the flux by establishing a form of fixity, by solidifying their presence and leaving an irremovable mark behind which flux was unable to do away with; in a paradoxical relation to the politics of the “concrete” that Pater strives to establish throughout the book, they also illustrate paradigms of an attempt to etherealize form. This way, Michelangelo, in his effort to “press forward” from “outward beauty” to “the unseen beauty,” came closer to “that abstract form of beauty, about which the Platonists reason” (56), whereas Luca Della Robbia balanced “a too heavy realism, that tendency to harden into caricature which the representation of feeling in sculpture is apt to display” (43-44) by spiritualizing form in the manner of Botticelli and his “visionary” paintings (35). In a similar fashion, Winckelmann and Goethe promoted “breadth, generality, universality,” those ideals they found employed in Greek sculpture, which expressed “only what is structural and permanent”:

In this way their works came to be like some subtle extract or essence, or almost like pure thoughts or ideas; and hence the breadth of humanity in them, that detachment from the conditions of a particular place or people, which has carried their influence far beyond the age which produced them, and insured them universal acceptance (43).

143 Joachim de Bellay (1522-1560) was a French poet-critic, and a member of the “Pleiade” (a 16th century group of French Renaissance poets, which borrowed its name from the Alexander Pleiad in 3rd century B.C.). De Bellay stressed the need for the cultivation of the French language and actually insisted on employing native language instead of Latin in higher forms of poetry.
In its capacity to evoke “not the special situation, but the type, the general character of the subject to be delineated” (138), sculpture is rendered as a paradigmatic form of abstraction since the “type” of statues in its “generality or breadth” (137) is achieved “not by accumulation of detail, but by abstracting from it,” as Pater asserts (138). Thus, the mechanism by which “type” abstracts gets explicitly highlighted. The concept of “type,” despite the fact that it originated from a specific instance, it is meant to evoke a general class, a paradigm evinced in many instances. Indicative of that stands the fact that the notion of “type” also contains in its core both a synchronic and a diachronic dimension by invoking a relation between an original prototype and the way it gets dispersed and evolved throughout time. Accordingly, each individual in the book is considered against a distinct historical background, yet all of them together are regarded as contributing to the period of the Renaissance in its extensive time span. Thus, through the concept of “type,” Pater was able to fully and with no inconsistency whatsoever integrate within his politics of motion the principle of stasis as a fixed absolute in the course of things. The Renaissance sharply encapsulates the process of flux in its obsession with historical periods of transition and the troubled background of the thinkers it considers, yet in capturing the essence and the mark these individuals leave behind, or the way they have im-pressed their followers, the book is turned into a gallery of “types” presenting the reader with a

144 C. Williams argues that “[i]n his early essays Pater develops the type as a category to mediate between absolute specificity and generality in both aspects of historicist speculation. Synchronically, Pater’s type is conceptually poised between the unique personal vision and the general ‘spirit of the age’; diachronically, the type is conceptually poised between absolute historical difference and repetition […]. The fact that Pater uses it in both synchronic and diachronic critical operations shows how powerful and flexible the type can be as an instrument of historicist thinking. But it is also an aesthetic category, synchronically fixing a figure against its background, diachronically ranging figures in a rationalized series” (124).

145 By interlinking the diachronic and the synchronous, the concept of “type,” furthermore, brings together evolutionary classification and aesthetics in the sense that it has decisively influenced the emerging at the time discipline of art criticism, through the fact that a work of art was both regarded in its synchronic and diachronic sphere. In this sense, Pater captures in a fascinating way the transposition of an evolutionary term into the aesthetic canon.
sequence of havens, of cherished moments of pause within the flux. Throughout the wide temporal span of the book, the reader can detect the development and interrelation of these “types” via a complex interplay between motion and rest that replicates the Darwinian discourse of evolution and highlights the profound fusion that Pater was actually aiming at.

The fusion of the synchronic and the diachronic, of the concrete and the universal, deeply rooted in the Darwinian discourse, which will be fully explored in the next section, is paradigmatically invoked in the Renaissance through Pater’s exploration of da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa.” As an exemplary “type” Lady Lisa presents us with the most synoptic history of human civilization, with a “second order myth, a myth of myths” (Williams 122), in Pater’s most celebrated passage 146:

The presence that rose thus so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all ‘the ends of the world are come,’ and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the mysticism of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her;

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146 It is not only that this extract is the most oft-quoted passage from Pater’s work, but it has also been one of the most influential in terms of the impact it made on the succeeding generations of writers. In this sense, Pater’s Lady Lisa exerted a tremendous influence on Decadence with its illustration of Gioconda as a primordial femme fatale, and one can detect its effect on Yeats’ Vision, Eliot’s Waste Land, Pound’s Cantos, Woolf’s Orlando, Joyce’s Ulysses, to name but a few (Williams 123).
and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants: and, as Leda, was the
mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has
been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with
which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the
hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences,
is an old one; and modern philosophy has conceived the idea of humanity as
wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life.
Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol
of the modern idea (80).

Pater employs here his impressionistic criticism, developed out of
Swinburne’s technique and the Ruskian tradition of visual “close reading,” so as to
present the reader with the anthropological evolution of the human species captured
through the “Gioconda.” As Bloom characteristically argues, “[t]he Lady Lisa, as no
human could hope to do so, stands forth as a body risen from death, and also as
symbol of modern acceptance of necessity, the nondivine evolution of our species”
(“Belatedness” 177). Da Vinci’s portrait is turned into an embodiment of the “modern
idea” of “perpetual life” encapsulating the evolution of human culture from ancient
Greece to Pater’s time, presenting the progress of culture in Darwinian terms. It gets
easy to see here how abstraction operates within the framework of this painting. The
specific synchronic image of the individual in the portrait gets disseminated through
the emphasis of the diachronic discourse that it evokes, presenting the reader not with
the illustration of a specific situation but with the history of mankind. As Williams
puts it, the “type,” “by involving linked levels of specificity and generality –
graduated levels of typification from image to artist to school to historical period –
portrays the historical body rising into spirituality” (131). In a similar manner, in his

147 Bullen argues that Swinburne’s influence of “Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence”
becomes especially manifested in Pater’s “Botticelli” and “Leonardo” through his interpretive,
impressionistic representation of illustration (78).
attempt to render paradigmatic the characters that Pater explores in his book, the critic eventually conceptualizes them through idealization.  

We have only partially covered Pater’s abstractionist politics by exploring his debt to Darwinian “type” and the inevitable generalization it entails. There seems to be a much deeper force coordinating Pater’s incorporation of the notion of rest in his promotion of motion, a force which actually holds the key to the understanding of the critic’s attempt to synthesize the abstract and the concrete.

Heraclitus and Abstraction

As we have seen, the sum of Paterian critics agrees on a form of abstraction that is implicit in Pater’s preoccupation with flux. Heraclitus’ partaking in Pater’s abstraction of flux, however, has remained wholly unspecified and uncharted. Taking into consideration the fact that Heraclitus comprises the cornerstone of Pater’s thought and the principal coordinator beneath his illustration of flux and the politics of the concrete, my objective here is to draw attention on the role of the Greek philosopher as a means of contributing to the elucidation of this seeming paradox. As it is my contention to argue here, it was not only Pater’s politics of the concrete that was derived from the Heraclitean doctrine, but the critic’s abstractionist detours as well. This twofold character of the Heraclitean doctrine, which has been largely overlooked by Paterian critics, becomes meaningfully highlighted in Pater’s employment of the Greek philosopher as a consistent response to the shifting call of times. Set, on the one hand, against the historical background of the late 1860s and

148 Barolsky offers an interesting interpretation of the Renaissance; he considers that “[a]ll of the principal characters in his book fuse into a single being living through all of time. Impersonally and transparently rendered, this consciousness is, of course, Pater’s idealized self” (42).
early 1870s, when Pater’s major publications were released, and then on the other, against the late 1880s and 1890s, when Pater, older and more mature, returned to readdress his initial considerations from a different perspective, Heraclitus, as we shall see, maintains his centrality for the critic as a philosophical system of diachronic currency, especially in its profound ability to encompass and synthesize antithesis.

In *Plato and Platonism* (1893) Pater’s exploration of the ethics of the flux is slightly different from his earlier resolution. And this is only natural since approximately 20 years had passed since his initial explorations. From 1873 when the *Renaissance* was published, until 1893 when *Plato and Platonism* was released, Pater, along with the overall intellectual climate, had radically changed since now idealism had determinedly made its presence felt through its penetration into what was traditionally considered as immiscibly empiricist provinces. Decisive for this paradoxical affiliation was actually Darwin’s methodological approach in his theory of descent. The prominent evolutionary notion of the origin as a primordial force that contingently – and, thus, to our knowledge abstractly – results in specific organic forms exposed the fact that the Darwinian doctrine incorporated as its fundamental premise both the concrete and the conceptual, so as to highlight how the abstract past and the specific present were fused together into an organic whole.149 The difficulties encountered by Darwin in the formulation of his theory, so honestly confessed throughout *The Origin of the Species*,150 revealed a widespread scientific doctrine that was not solely based on strict scientific terms but on contingent indications and hypotheses, dangerously deviating from the Baconian dictums of objectivity and

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149 An implicit acknowledgment of this can be detected in Pater’s employment of the notion of “type”. Pater, as we have seen, in his exposition of “Gioconda” utilizes the concept of “type” within an evolutionary discourse, where “specificity” and “generality” get harmoniously fused against a Darwinian background.

150 pp. 340-41 provide a concise, yet very long list of the difficulties engendered by the fact that the geological record is imperfect.
Darwin, this way, asserted that he employed “the term Struggle for Existence in a large and metaphorical sense” (116) and that he could only answer “hypothetically” “where are the remains of those infinitely numerous organisms which must have existed long before the first bed of the Silurian system was deposited” (341). Furthermore, he concluded his study by stating that nothing at first can appear more difficult to believe than that the more complex organs and instincts should have been perfected, not by means superior to, though analogous with, human reason, but by the accumulation of innumerable slight variations, each good for the individual possessor (435).

In its deviation from the inductive method that opened up an amount of hypothesis, along with the acknowledgment that nature is not a-logical, the theory of descent was, moreover, regarded as promoting an approach actually analogous to that of the defenders of human “reason” and, thus, an interrelation was seen as being implicitly encouraged between idealistic progress and scientific development. By anchoring down the miracle of life in all its divergence to a single natural force, bringing together man and animal, past and present, science and ethics, Darwinism initiated the quest for a unifying thread evinced in its preoccupation with origins as an instigation that magically attaches progressive cohesion to its course. The deeper logic permeating natural life throughout the centuries, brought to light by Lamarck and Darwin, was in this way identified with the idealistic conviction of the presence of a single connecting force, which, like a human mind, was teleologically projecting relations upon the phenomena so as to come up with a unified vision. The Darwinian vision of the gradual development of the species was, thus, structurally correlated to the Hegelian vision of a synthetic progress towards perfection, and new ethical

151 “With respect to existing forms, we should remember that we have no right to expect (expecting in rare cases) to discover directly connecting links between them, but only between each and some extinct and supplanted form […]. We meet with no such evidence, and this is the most obvious and forcible of the many objections which may be urged against my theory” (438).
conclusions were drawn out of this combination, which were typical of the late-19th-century intellectual climate. In this sense, the period characteristically witnessed the proliferation of a sequence of most peculiar theoretical hybrids and syntheses, indicative of which was *Darwin and Hegel* published in 1893 by the idealist David Ritchie.

Pater, as a writer, who was deeply interested in contemporary thought, absorbed and reflected this radical transition within his work. It comes then as no surprise that during that very same year of 1893, Pater in his *Plato and Platonism*, after identifying Heraclitus, as we have seen, with “the most empirical philosophies,” proceeded to add that the philosopher from Ephesus could also be identified with “the most modern metaphysical” philosophies (19). Pater associated Heraclitus’ impact, and by implication Darwin’s as well, with Hegel in the spirit of Ritchie. The correlation I am establishing here between Pater and Ritchie by no means indicates that the two men influenced each other, since there is no evidence of this, but it certainly reveals a philosophical correspondence between an alleged empiricist and an

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152 While considering the rise of British Idealism and its relation to British philosophy, Wenley stated in 1901 that “[w]hile the British, having won, or being on the highroad toward winning, political, enfranchisement, proceeded to theorize concerning the abstract rights of the abstract individual, which they associated with it, the Germans, deprived of political outlet, proceeded to discover the principles underlying the relation between a man and his social environment. They extended this inquiry to all realms then known, and so formulated the *kulturhistorische* mode of thought, a tendency so alien from the English tradition that our very language lacks names, and even phrases, to convey it. This Teutonic development, to which such categories as evolution, organism, relationship, social pressure, and the like, are so essential, found representative expression in Winckelmann as early as 1755 […] Whether in art, in literature, in political philosophizing, in jurisprudence, or in reflection proper, the conception of the “social-individual” was winning its transforming way everywhere. In a word, a general outlook, not far removed from that of Darwin, but applied in the sphere of things ideal, was gaining a rapid mastery. It is the glory of the British idealistic movement to have brought authentic news of this renaissance to English culture” (463-64). Wenley proclaimed that all this resulted into the fact that “analysis, colligation, external classification have been dispossessed by synthesis, relationship, and internal self-expression as part of an organic whole. In one word, dialectic rules the universe of human experience. To be sure, not necessarily the formal dialectic of Hegel; but the conception of immanent principle pervading individual things” (464).

153 Accordingly, another major idealist, Edward Caird, who wrote against one-sided empiricism in his books on Plato (1865) and Kant (1878) argued, as Watson puts it, that “materialism and spiritualism, sensationalism and idealism, empiricism and *a priori* speculation, individualism and idealism, are not really absolute, but only relative opposites. The principles or ideas which have effected this irenicon are those of organic unity and organic development” (I, 159).
idealistic that brings to light the intellectual climate of the time, in which Pater
obviously participated. The Oxford don considers Hegel as undertaking to develop
Heraclitus’ idea of flux in terms of the Being’s ceaseless process towards totality, the
perfection of an Idea through the unity of opposites on its way towards Nature and the
History of Spirit: “Παντὰ χωρεῖ, παντὰ ρεῖ – it is the burden of Hegel […] to whom
nature and art, and polity, and philosophy, aye, and religion too, each in its long
historic series, are but so many conscious movements in the secular process of the
eternal mind” (19). Pater associates Heraclitus with Hegelian idealism through the
belief that the apparently mutable chaos is profoundly organized by a deeper force, by
Logos, the reduction “of chaotic mutation to cosmos, to the unity of a reasonable
order […], which proceeding uniformly from movement to movement […] might link
together in one those contending, infinitely diverse impulses,” as he puts it in Plato
(17-18). The critic appears to be utilizing the Heraclitean premise of Logos, of the
“eternal mind” as “a principle of sanity, of reality” (Marius 131), as evidence of a
profound ordering rule permeating all phenomena and interconnecting them so as to
associate it with the Hegelian vision of a purposive orchestration beneath the
progressive evolution of mankind towards perfection. Thus, the a priori idealistic
premise, implied through the notion of the “eternal mind” as a non empirical absolute
that suggestively “precedes” movement itself and connects the phenomena by
establishing relations – which was an anathema to the empiricists – is now seen as
being compatible with the scientific discovery of racially or culturally inherited traits,
established through the acceptance by the scientific community of the Darwinian
doctrine and the novel scientific paradigm it stood for.154 And this is how we can

154 Very interestingly in a similar fashion Tyndall, one of the strongest proponents of scientific
materialism, states: “Believing, as I do, in the continuity of nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our
microscopes cease to be use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the
eye. By a necessity engendered and justified by science I cross the boundary of the experimental
account for the fact that in the name of Heraclitus, Pater interlinks Hegel and Darwin. The idealistic claim for the presence of Logos could not be empirically proved, but neither could the scientific program of evolution, for its evidence was scattered throughout a wide temporal span that could not be purely inductively captured. In this sense, idealism and evolutionism seemed to join hands, making both Pater and Ritchie relate Darwin to Hegel.

It seems that Pater was aware of the idealist vein implicit in Heraclitus’ work from a very early stage. As Shuter shows, it must have been Benjamin Jowett in the early 1860s who exposed Pater to the Hegelian interpretations of Heraclitus through Ferdinand Lassalle’s influential work, *Die Philosophie des Herakleitos des Dunkeln von Ephesus* (1858) (Rereading 63). Fishman claims that Lassalle, as most German scholars of his time, “had a passion for origins […] and [the] development of thought and the connection of different systems of thought” but ended up having “misinterpreted Heraclitus [as] all later scholarship attests” by approaching the Greek philosopher solely in the light of Hegel. Under a Hegelian prism, Lassalle regarded Heraclitus as the originator of “the abstract idea of the speculative” (qtd. in evidence, and discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial Life” (qtd. in Barton 120).

155 Darwin, constantly throughout *The Origin of Species*, and especially in chapter IX, suggestively entitled “On the Imperfection of the Geological Record,” and chapter VI, entitled “Difficulties of Theory,” complains about this problem: “It cannot be objected that there has not been time sufficient for any amount of organic change; for the lapse of time has been so great as to be utterly inappreciable by the human intellect. The number of specimens in all our museums is absolutely as nothing compared with the countless species which certainly have existed” (439).

156 Shuter claims that “Pater was hardly the first to draw the analogy between Heraclitus and Hegel. By the end of the nineteenth century it had been repeated so often that it might be called a philosophical commonplace. It originated with Hegel himself, more particularly with Hegel’s reading of the history of early Greek philosophy” (Rereading 62).

157 Furthermore, “by the middle of the first half of the XIXth century, the early Greek philosophers were being widely used to support the validity of new systems of thought. Early Greeks were often acknowledged as the *Quellpunkt* of systems which used antiquity as a claim to respectability” (Fishman 381).
Lassalle read the Heraclitean unity of opposites as a “speculative idea” and “the principle of the dialectical opposition of being and non-being as a unity of process, the idea of becoming as the divine law” (387). Thus, Heraclitus’ Logos “became a law of thought […] the pure, intelligible, logical law of identity in process of being and non-being […] the law of opposites and the change into the same” (Fishman 387). For Lassalle, Heraclitus was this way idealistically identified with abstract thought. Fishman concludes, however, that on no grounds can Heraclitus, the physical philosopher, be considered an idealist, since “he regarded Logos as definitely bound to a material substrate – fire” and inseparable from the material world (379).

Lassalle’s or Hegel’s interpretation of Heraclitus might have revealed an idealistic reading of the Greek philosopher to the critic, yet Pater did not regard Heraclitus to be solely an idealist as Lassalle or Hegel did, as our exploration so far makes it evident. In his explicit distrust of metaphysical absolutes, after all, Pater was even distanced from Hegel’s overall “facile orthodoxy” (Renaissance 152); for Pater, Heraclitus’ philosophy ultimately “was formed with one eye constantly focused on the practical concerns of the world about him” (Minar 334). What eventually Pater’s allusion to Hegel within a Heraclitean framework served to score, was to

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158 Pater too considers Heraclitus as the originator of “the speculative,” as we have seen. Nevertheless, Pater employs the Heraclitean notion of a measured mediation and actually scores a balance by presenting the Greek philosopher as the originator of the empirical as well.

159 Pater, like Lassalle, had a “passion for origins” and for “connecting different systems of thought,” yet in his first book Pater illustrates Heraclitus as the originator of scientific development, not of idealism. His incorporation of the Heraclitean doctrine within an empirical discourse in the Renaissance and his overall disdain for metaphysical abstraction, clearly confirms that Pater grounded the law of the flux on firm materialistic grounds. Heraclitus, furthermore, as we saw in our analysis of the “Conclusion,” is associated with a “speculative culture,” but there is predominantly a material and a sensual dimension attached to him, as the means of overcoming the restrictions imposed by rigid thought.

160 Pater argues in the “Conclusion” that we should never acquiesce “in a facile orthodoxy, of Comte, or of Hegel, or of our own” (152). As Shuter asserts, the Oxford critic rejected Hegel’s “philosophic conclusions,” but he exclusively retained “his questionings of established certainties, not his doctrine, but his dialectical method” (Rereading 67).
invoke a form of abstraction that the inductive model of flux necessarily entailed.\textsuperscript{161}

Both Hegel and Darwin presented for Pater variations of Heraclitus’ primordial thought. And it seems to me that this was precisely the point that Pater wanted to highlight: the fact that in its profound ability to encompass and account for antithesis\textsuperscript{162}, the Heraclitean doctrine actually became an extensive philosophical formula that could incorporate both idealistic metaphysics (Hegel) and empirical science (Darwin).\textsuperscript{163} The hybrid character of the Heraclitean doctrine that Pater draws our attention to is also, as a matter of fact, manifested by the epistemological debate that still lingers, concerning the nature of Heraclitean speculation.\textsuperscript{164} We have seen how Kirk considers Heraclitus a materialist in sharp contrast to Popper, who considers the balanced operations of invisible change as having to be inferred “by reasoning,”

\textsuperscript{161} In a similar fashion, Ritchie in \textit{Darwin and Hegel} considers Heraclitus a materialist, but he nevertheless adds that “there is a great difference between ‘materialism’ before there was any philosophy that was not materialistic, and the conscious and explicit materialism of those who are in revolt against idealism of any kind. In other words, though we admit that the early philosophers were conscious only of discussing logical and ontological questions also (just as many religious and some political controversialists have discussed metaphysics without knowing it): and it was the logical and ontological aspects of their philosophies which had most interest for Plato and for Aristotle – and for Hegel” (48).

\textsuperscript{162} This potential to embrace “antithesis” was actually manifested through the divergent interpretations that were imposed upon the Heraclitean doctrine at the time, which Pater, being so interested in matters of “contemporary thought,” must have been definitely aware of. Addressing “[t]he increasing interest in early Greek philosophy, and particularly in Heraclitus, who is the one Greek thinker most in accord with the thought of our century” (558), G. T. W. Patrick summed the divergent responses to Heraclitus in 1888: “while Schuster makes him out to be a sensationalist and empiricist, Lassalle finds that he is a rationalist and idealist, while to Teichmuller, his starting point and the key to his whole system is found in his physics, to Zeller it is found in his metaphysics, and to Pfeiderer in his religion. Heraclitus’ theology was derived, according to Teichmuller, from Egypt; according to Lassalle, from India; according to Pleiderer, from the Greek Mysteries. The Heraclitic flux, according to Pfeiderer, was consequent on his abstract theories; according to Teichmuller, his abstract theories resulted from his observation of the flux. Pfeiderer says that Heraclitus was an optimist; Gottlob Mayer says that he was a pessimist. According to Schuster he was a hylozoist, according to Zeller a pantheist, according to Pfeiderer a panzoist, according to Lassalle a panlogist. Naturally, therefore, in the hands of these critics, with their various theories to support, the remains of Heraclitus’ work have suffered a violence of interpretation only partially excused by his known obscurity” (557-58).

\textsuperscript{163} Accordingly, Pater presents in the \textit{Renaissance} Heraclitus within a positivist framework, yet at the same time associates him with “speculative culture.”

\textsuperscript{164} Thus, Robinson considers Heraclitus as “the first great anti-idealistic, relativistic thinker, the very first outstanding representative of scientific philosophy,” whereas Diels regards the Greek philosopher along with Plato as the “joint founder with him of the Idealism which, under the influence of Plato and Christianity, has prevailed over other systems” (qtd. in de Laguna 598-99).
and as exhibiting Heraclitus’ “distrust of sense experience, thus preparing for
Parmenides’ still sharper distinction between sense and reason” (Popper, “Kirk” 392).

The idealistic leftover, the idealistic trace, as Derrida would have called it,
that we have detected in Pater’s illustration of flux, as such, seems to be embedded in
the very Heraclitean doctrine itself, which Pater utilized so as to explore flux. It
appears that Heraclitus’ system provided Pater with the means of incorporating an
idealistic component within his empirical standpoint, despite his openly expressed
relativism, skepticism and distrust of metaphysics, as an all-embracing apparatus of
analyzing and ultimately responding to the complex phenomenon of flux. Heraclitus
supplied Pater with a profoundly synthetic nucleus that in a compact fashion
encapsulated and amalgamated a plethora of connecting lines within divergent
doctrines, making the philosopher from Ephesus in Pater’s eyes a paradigmatic
epistemological meeting point, a holistic theoretical construct in the face of industrial
fragmentation. Thus, Heraclitean cohesion engendered through the strife between
different forms was transubstantiated into the Darwinian struggle for survival as a
development achieved by a selective yet fusing environmental incorporation,165 and
all this, in its turn, was associated with the Hegelian celebration of synthesis out of the
friction between thesis and antithesis. In this sense, the cohesion brought about by
Heraclitean Logos was identified with the continuity established with the past through
the Darwinian origin and the Hegelian vision of progress; Heraclitean flux was tightly
associated with Darwinian development and Hegelian synthesis; the methodological
notion of contingency ultimately brought together Heraclitus, Darwin and Hegel,
covering through an interdisciplinary approach a wide span of time. In its emphasis on

165 “In the preservation of favoured individuals and races, during the constantly-recurrent Struggle for
existence, we see the most powerful and ever-acting means of selection. The struggle for existence
inevitably follows from the high geometrical ratio of increase which is common to all organic beings.
This high rate of increase is provided by calculation, by the effects of a succession of peculiar seasons,
and by the results of naturalization, as explained in the third chapter” (Darwin 442).
the flux on the one hand and Logos on the other, Heraclitus’ philosophy seemed to equip Pater with a theoretical instrument that could flexibly adjust to the call of the times and its shift of emphasis from empiricism to idealism, summing up the zeitgeist, the theoretical flights of late 19th century thought in a profound way.

Accordingly, even though Heraclitus in the Renaissance is meant to underpin the law of flux as a means of instilling a sharpened receptiveness on the part of the individual, reflecting the intellectual climate of the period with its epistemological emphasis of induction, its materialism and individualism, in Pater’s second book, Marius the Epicurean, the Heraclitean doctrine metonymically invokes an explicit emphasis on the order, the pattern permeating such flow and the acceptance of its ethical corollaries, capturing, thus, the transition in the British intellect towards a gradual idealism, where the ethics of the community is underlined, as we shall see in our consideration of the book. In this sense, Pater, maintaining a firm Heraclitean ground from his first book to the second, actually turned from emphasizing the flux to emphasizing Logos. But even Pater’s Heraclitean vision as manifested in his later works seems to be implicitly at work in embryonic form in his early ones. The Renaissance, despite its overt promotion of the concrete, of induction and materialism, implicitly endorses (through a detour) a form of alleviation and amendment of its fundamental premises as well; it harmoniously engulfs, in a Hegelian fashion, antithesis within its thesis; it indirectly favors the dialectical interplay of Heraclitean opposites as a paradigmatic gesture of biological hybridism.

166 In these terms, Pater’s “later work is an outgrowth and not a rejection of the Heraclitean vision,” as Zietlow acknowledges (162).

167 Accordingly, Shuter is correct in establishing a continuity in the Oxford don’s work by arguing in Rereading Walter Pater that Pater’s writings demand “a twofold reading” in the sense that his “later texts function to convert the earlier texts into anticipations of themselves and thereby appear to reshape the body of that work” (xi-xii). In this respect, it is not only that Pater’s early considerations are manifested in his later works as well, but his later works actually serve to underline and explicate his early expositions.
Therefore, Hegelian and Darwinian contingency, deeply organized by Heraclitus, actually generates an implicit incorporation of abstraction within Pater’s polemics of the concrete and, thus, paves the way for his gradual integration of abstraction, evidenced in his later work through the celebration of the synthesis between empiricism and idealism. As Young suggests about his first book, “in Pater’s essays there are traces of other ways of thinking; for Pater had Green and Nettleship and Caird for friends” (36). Since Heraclitus strategically provided Pater with the grounds for alternating between empiricism and idealism, it appears that the germ of such a handling was present, yet hesitatingly active, throughout Pater’s Heraclitean considerations, even his earliest ones.

My examination of Pater’s allusion to Heraclitus provides a consistent framework within which to consider the way the Oxford don’s alliance with 19th-century empirical induction was decisively filtered by his synthetic politics. A failure to account for the role that Heraclitus occupied in Pater’s thought leaves the consideration of his reconciliatory program incomplete, as it must have become clear by now, since it was upon the Greek philosopher’s doctrine that Pater based his illustration of the way the empirical model inevitably entailed a form of idealist abstraction. Having explored how the empirical component of Pater’s thought is paradigmatically systematized by the critic’s hitherto unexplored reading of Heraclitean philosophy, which implicitly reaches out towards a form of idealism, I shall now turn to the idealistic side of Pater’s theoretical explorations as paradigmatically organized by Kant and his own synthetic model, which in its turn promotes a form of reconciliation with British empiricism for the critic. The

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168 The Heraclitean doctrine, in bringing together the seeds of empiricism and idealism alike, by implication unfolded a measured balance between them in the spirit of the rhythm that permeates the interplay of opposites in the cosmic flow that constitutes the universe, providing Pater with the means of employing a mitigated metaphysics within his empirical scheme, and at the same time a modified empiricism within aesthetic idealism, as we shall see later on.
interrelation that Pater established between these philosophers comprised, as I intend to demonstrate with this study, the backbone of his synthetic thought and the key to its understanding.
CHAPTER II

PATER AND THE IDEALIST PARADIGM OF KANT

The Paradigm of J. S. Mill

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the first half of the 19th century was characteristically permeated by a pervasive emphasis on “facts” that in the 1840s Gradgrind enthrallingly captured in the famous opening lines of Dickens’ *Hard Times*:

> Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir (47).

This discourse on “Facts” was socially engendered by the extensive distrust towards manipulative abstractions following the disillusionment of the Reform Act of 1832, which was merely “constitutional and legal and not administrative,” despite the fact that it promised to acknowledge the growing power of the middle class (Cockshut 14). As such, the obsession with facts was also politically allied with utilitarianism and Bentham’s “formula” that “every one is to count for one and no one for more than one” (Watson 148). On the scientific field, the appeal to facts was, moreover, substantiated from Tyndall to Huxley through the reign of empiricism, positivism, relativism and the rise of natural sciences. It comes as no surprise, then, that the prevalent philosophical and scientific trend in the 1860s was inductive empiricism

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1 Introduced by the Whigs, under the Prime Ministry of Lord Grey, the Reform Act of 1832, despite the opposition it met from the Tories, granted the right to vote to men who owned land worth at least 10 pounds and to tenants paying an annual rent of 50 pounds, expanding thus the number of the electorate. Yet, the vast majority of the population could still not vote and the power of the aristocracy was not seriously undermined.
It is precisely on the grounds of these overtones of social progress and reform accompanying the discourse of “facts,” which eventually embodied social agitation into a series of Reform Acts, that we can account for the fact that in Britain social change was established through a sequence of bills rather than revolutions, as in Europe. By the mid 19th century, thus, “British empiricist philosophy had become closely identified with the peaceable workings of British representative government and German metaphysics closely linked to continental upheavals and crises” (Den Otter 13). In spite of this, however, there were certain attempts throughout the century to embrace a form of measured deduction within the prevailing inductive model.

Such was the early case of John Stuart Mill, son of James Mill, the founder, along with Bentham, of utilitarianism. In the Edinburgh Review of 1829, Macaulay attacked James Mill’s deductive syllogisms in his promotion of representative democracy in Essays on Government, Jurisprudence, the Liberty of the Press, Prisons and Prison Discipline, Colonies, the Law of Nations and Education (1828), by employing the “method of Induction” and its emphasis on facts (Macaulay 321). J. S. Mill, acknowledging the shortcomings of his father’s project, which were, as it has

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2 Even by 1829 Carlyle had diagnosed the “Disease of Metaphysics” since “the Metaphysical and Moral Sciences are falling into decay” (qtd. in Harris 4).
3 It was precisely this empirical focus that the middle class maintained, this Whig habit of presenting “moderate, even conservative, views in language that sounds revolutionary” (Cockshut 28), this interest in facts and not ideals or ideologies that led to the gradual ascendancy of the middle class in a peaceful way, unlike analogous continental revolutionary resolutions.
4 It was partly on these xenophobic grounds that the early movement of the intuitionists was attacked, and also partly because of their affiliation with the Tories and High Church.
5 Macaulay repeatedly attacked Mill’s deductions: “[t]he style which the Utilitarians admire suits only those subjects on which it is possible to reason a priori” (284). “Certain propensities of human nature are assumed; and from these premises the whole science of politics is synthetically deduced,” he complained (285). Concluding he stated, “[o]ur objection to the essay of Mr. Mill is fundamental. We believe that it is utterly impossible to deduce the science of government from the principles of human nature” (317).
6 As a matter of fact, Macaulay provided the early Victorians in 1837 with a comprehensible introduction to Francis Bacon.
7 Mill asserts in his Autobiography (1875) that “the conflicts which I had so often had to sustain in defending the theory of government laid down in Bentham’s and my father’s writings, and the
been argued, responsible for the mental crisis he underwent during the winter of 1826-7, undertook the task of replying to Macaulay. Responding to Macaulay’s charge that “[t]he contempt which [the utilitarians] express for elegant literature is evidently the contempt of ignorance” (283), J. S. Mill published in the London and Westminster Review (March 1840) an article addressing a Romantic writer, Coleridge. Being predominantly an empiricist,8 Mill was, as expected, highly critical of the poet’s transcendental views and the perplexing idealistic jargon in which they were expressed.9 Nevertheless, implicitly restoring Macaulay’s charges, Mill also recognized the need for a renovation of Locke’s empirical tradition10 through a measured incorporation of Continental philosophy, since both Bentham11 and Coleridge were each other’s “completing counterpart,” and, to employ his famous acquaintance I had obtained with other schools of political thinking, made me aware of many things, which that doctrine, professing to be a theory of government in general, ought to have made room for, and did not” (94). This led to the conclusion that “there was really something more fundamentally erroneous in my father’s conception of philosophical Method, as applicable to politics, than I had hitherto supposed there was” (95). As he admits, “it thus appeared, that both Macaulay and my father were wrong; the one in assimilating the method of philosophising in politics to the purely experimental method of chemistry; while the other, though right in adopting a deductive method, had made a wrong selection of one, having taken as the type of deduction, not the appropriate process, that of the deductive branches of natural philosophy, but the inappropriate one of pure geometry, which not being a science of causation at all, does not require or admit of any summing-up of effects” (97).

8 Despite Mill’s reaching out towards Romantic speculation, he nevertheless strongly reacted against Carlyle’s statement that he was “a new Mystic” (Autobiography 104-06).

9 “There is no knowledge a priori; no truths cognizable by the mind’s inward light, and grounded on intuitive evidence. Sensation, and the mind’s consciousness of its own acts, are not only the exclusive sources, but the sole materials of our knowledge. From this doctrine, Coleridge, with the German philosophers since Kant (not to go farther back) and most of the English since Reid, strongly dissents. He claims for the human mind a capacity, within certain limits, of perceiving the nature and properties of ‘Things in themselves’” (125). “We are therefore at issue with Coleridge on the central idea of his philosophy; and we find no need of, and no use for, the ‘peculiar’ technical terminology, which he and his masters the Germans have introduced into philosophy, for the double purpose of giving logical precision to doctrines which we do not admit, and of marking a relation between those abstract doctrines and many concrete experimental truths, which this language, in our judgment, serves not to elucidate, but to disguise and obscure” (129).

10 “The doctrines of the school of Locke stood in need of an entire renovation: to borrow a physiological illustration from Coleridge, they required, like certain secretions of the human body, to be reabsorbed into the system and secreted afresh,” as Mill argued (129).

11 It was actually Bentham, under whose sponsorship “the empiricist line that begins with Locke enters the nineteenth century,” as Harris asserts (26). As such, Bentham was highly associated with Humean skepticism. In 1789, Bentham published his influential Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, a work in the Enlightenment spirit that initiated the prevalence of utilitarianism as a political and moral theory where action was measured against its consequences, as a principle that had to conform to the universal axiom of pleasure or the prevention of pain. James Mill and Bentham, the founders of utilitarianism, propounded a highly materialistic vision of society, by systematizing the 17th and 18th laissez-faire economy of Malthus, Ricardo and Smith.
words, “[w]hoever could master the premises and combine the methods of both, would possess the entire English philosophy of ‘their’ age” (121).\(^\text{12}\) The entirety of English philosophy for Mill consisted of bringing together Victorian observation with Romantic imagination, scientific truth with interpretative meaning, knowledge with philosophical wisdom: “[b]y Bentham, beyond all others, men have been led to ask themselves, in regard to any ancient or received opinion, Is it True? and by Coleridge, What is the meaning of it?” (119). As such,

> when society requires to be rebuilt, there is no use in attempting to rebuild it on the old plan. By the union of the enlarged views and analytic powers of speculative men with the observation and contriving sagacity of men of practice better institutions and better doctrines must be elaborated; and until this is done we cannot hope for much improvement in our present condition (138).

In this sense, Mill envisioned an ideal balance between Bentham and Comte’s\(^\text{13}\) inductive practice with the “enlarged” speculative deduction of Romanticism. He saw, in what his father and Bentham termed a conservative tradition,\(^\text{14}\) an instrumental means of counterbalancing the progressive atomism and rationalism of competitive *laissez faire* with the traditional Romantic vision of a community of altruistic individuals organically linked through feeling, as expressed,

\(^{12}\) And he adds, “Coleridge used to say that every one is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian: it may be similarly affirmed, that every Englishman of the present day is by implication either a Benthamite or a Coleridgian; either of Bentham or of Coleridge” (121). As a matter of fact, Mill covered the whole scope of English thought by successively printing in 1838 an article on Bentham, and in 1840 an article on Coleridge.

\(^{13}\) As Harris cleverly puts it, “since the primary meaning of ‘positive’ for Comte is ‘scientific,’ where that means the methodical analysis of experience, there was naturally much in Comte’s positivism that seems simply empiricism stated in mid-nineteenth-century terms” (38).

\(^{14}\) As he himself admits, referring to Bentham and Coleridge, “[t]he one took his stand ‘outside’ the received opinion, and surveyed it as an entire stranger to it: the other looked at it from within, and endeavoured to see it with the eyes of a believer in it; to discover by what apparent facts it was at first suggested, and by what appearances it has ever since been rendered continually credible – has seemed a succession of persons, to be a faithful interpretation of their experience” (119). “From this difference in the points of view of the two philosophers, and from the too rigid adherence of each of his own, it was expected that Bentham should continually miss the truth which is in the traditional opinions, and Coleridge that which is out of them, and at variance with them. But it was also likely that each would find, or show the way of finding, much of what the other missed” (120). Furthermore, Coleridge “has been the great awakener in this country of the spirit of philosophy, within the bounds of traditional opinions” (119).
among others, in the poetics of Burke, Goethe, Carlyle and Coleridge. Following a Romantic path, Mill in this way supplemented his father’s faceless universal axioms with the particularity of the specific individual, a trend that was also evident in writers like Carlyle, who were still moving within the Romantic tradition. At the same time, however, he also defended his father’s deductive outlook by claiming that the “enlarged” “analytics” of “speculation” could actually rectify the “sagacity” of the discourse on “facts.” By incorporating this form of Romantic “speculation” within his firm belief in “the methods of physical science” as the proper model for political analysis (99-100), Mill eventually enriched and expanded the utilitarian program into a theory “much more complex and many sided” (97), where both sides were incorporated as “mutually checking powers are in a political constitution” (122), transforming utilitarianism into one of the most influential nineteenth-century movements: liberal individualism.

It appears that Mill’s response to Coleridge set at the time the general tone for the reception of Continental philosophy in England. It is under this prism that we can consider Tyndall’s concluding remarks in his “Address” for the need to combine the “knowing faculties” with the “creative faculties”:

For science, however, no exclusive claim is here made; you are not urged to erect it into an idol. The inexorable advance of man’s understanding in the path of knowledge, and those unquenchable claims of his moral and emotional nature

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15 As he admits in his Autobiography (1875), Mill looked forward to “a future which shall unite the best qualities of the critical with the best qualities of the organic periods; unchecked liberty of thought, unbounded freedom of individual action in all modes not hurtful to others” (100).
16 Mill states that “it might be plausibly maintained that in ‘almost’ every one of the leading controversies, past or present, in social philosophy, both sides were in the right way in what they affirmed, though wrong in what they denied; and that if either could have been made to take the other’s views in addition to its own, little more would have been needed to make its doctrine ‘correct’” (Autobiography 122-23).
17 Pater’s relation to utilitarianism will be addressed in the third chapter.
18 As Barton puts it, “a recurring theme of the address was that human feelings – included here were wonder, religious awe, artistic creativity, and sexual passion – demand as much satisfaction as human intellect” (117).
which the understanding can never satisfy, are here equally set forth. The world embraces not only a Newton, but a Shakespeare – not only a Boyle, but a Raphael – not only a Kant, but a Beethoven – not only a Darwin, but a Carlyle. Not in each of these, but in all, is human nature whole. They are not opposed, but supplementary – not mutually exclusive, but reconcilable (65).19

Yet, Mill’s “Coleridge” set also the tone for the integration of Continental philosophy under the jurisdiction of an empirical outlook, so that expansion and enrichment would not be achieved at the cost of the empirical tradition. In this sense, it conditionally welcomed a balanced form of Continental thought that would have to be measured in terms of its compatibility with a non-negotiated empirical stance, so as to be accepted. Mill’s reaching out towards a modified form of idealism was fundamentally decisive for the way not only the empiricists but the British idealists themselves approached Continental thought, as we shall see next. Moreover, as I will argue in this chapter, Pater’s relation to idealism was moving along the paradigm set by Mill and encompassed certain characteristics of Mill’s approach, revealing not only the extensive scope of the utilitarian philosopher’s influence, but also the intriguing dialogue with major intellectual issues of the time that Pater’s text was actively engaged with.

Kant’s “Empiricism”: Victorian Responses to the German Philosopher

Mill’s essay entitled “Coleridge” encapsulated a revival of speculative thought in England, reflecting crucial aspects of the amalgamations that took place during that

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19 Pater’s œuvre in the “Conclusion,” as we shall see next, can be regarded within the framework of Mill’s fusion of Enlightenment and Romanticism. By concluding his scientific consideration with aesthetics, Pater seems to imply, in a Romantic fashion, that the scientific project cannot stand on its own, that it is in need of an aesthetic supplement, so as to cover dynamically the whole range of human perspective.
period. It was more or less during that time that Carlyle’s flirtation with German romanticism was gradually establishing its reputation, that a premature form of idealism was promoted basically through J. F. Ferrier’s *Institutes of Metaphysics* (1854), and that Platonic and German texts coyly made their appearance in Oxford through the studies of Jowett. This rise of speculative thought gave birth to a sequence of attempted reconciliations between empiricism and Continental philosophy.

Wendell V. Harris in *The Omnipresent Debate* (1981) considers within this framework Ruskin, “who combined incredibly patient empirical observation with an unswerving devotion to certain transcendentally guaranteed principles,” Arnold and Pater, whose “extraction of the last nuance from experience takes place against a transcendental backdrop of universal fugacity,” and finally Vernon Lee who “devoted most of her life to the attempt to adjust her allegiance to empiricism with certain persistent transcendental inclinations” (18). Of course, what we come to know as British idealism solidly surfaced during the 1880s and 1890s, chiefly through the works of T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley, among others. What is interesting to note here, even though the movement will be the topic of the third chapter, is that British idealism predominantly emerged as a critique of the atomism and the overall shortcomings implicit in the empiricist and utilitarian doctrines, and, thus, its seed can be traced back to Mill’s corrective reading of Locke and his father’s tradition, through an incorporation of Continental thought.

Mill’s determination to deal with Coleridge was not in the long run accidental. Coleridge was not only an influential traditional poet and thinker, but he was also primarily responsible for the introduction with his *Biographia Literaria* (1817) of
German thought, and especially Kant, to the English public.\textsuperscript{20} Despite the fact that Coleridge systematically overlooked Kant’s scientific framework and idiosyncratically presented the German philosopher as an anti-empiricist “stick with which to beat the utilitarian dogs” (Lindsay 298),\textsuperscript{21} his focus on Kant was not at all fortuitous. As Harris states, “[t]he version of idealism imported from Germany about the beginning of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century was not wholly exotic to England since it had been excited by Hume, the philosopher generally regarded as England’s greatest. Those who knew little else of Kant are likely to be familiar with his statement that he was awakened from his dogmatic slumbers by Hume” (31). There was, in this sense, a link between British and Continental idealism, which deeply involved empiricism and exposed an idealistic vein implicit in the very empiricist doctrine itself, as even Kant’s statement acknowledged. This link, in fact, had to do with the foundation stone of empiricism as set by John Locke.

Locke, the father of British empiricism, dismissed in \textit{An Essay Concerning Human Understanding} (1690) the belief that there are innate ideas. For Locke all knowledge was ultimately derived from experience through the establishment in the mind of “associations”\textsuperscript{22} between ideas of “sensation,” which originated from seeing,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{20} Coleridge was proclaimed as “the founder of the voluntaristic form of idealistic philosophy,” as Wellek puts it (\textit{Criticism} 151).

\textsuperscript{21} Due to the fact that there was no translation of Kant prior to 1830, by emphasising the metaphysical dimension of the Kantian doctrine, Coleridge decisively influenced the intuitionists (where he was chiefly employed to transcendental or ecclesiastical ends) like Sir William Hamilton’s “On the Philosophy of the Unconditioned” (1829) and Henry Longueville Mansel’s \textit{Lectures on the Philosophy of Kant} (1856). In this article in the \textit{Edinburgh Review}, Hamilton provided a critique of Auguste Comte’s \textit{Cours de philosophie} by combining the Scottish tradition of Common Sense with Kant’s cognitive theory, where, as Harris states, Hamilton “went on to emphasize so heavily the resulting phenomenal nature of all knowledge that man’s ignorance, not his knowledge, appears to claim priority” (36). It was in 1836 and 1838 that J. W. Semple translated \textit{The Metaphysics of Ethics}, and Francis Haywood \textit{The Critique of Pure Reason} that led to Kant being available in a more comprehensive form for the reading public (Den Otter 19).

\textsuperscript{22} “[M]ost of the simple ideas that make up our complex ideas of substances, when truly considered, are only powers, however we are apt to take them for positive qualities: v.g. the greatest part of the ideas that make our complex idea of gold are yellowness, great weight, ductility, fusibility, and solubility in \textit{aqua regia}, etc., all united together in an unknown substratum; all which ideas are nothing else but so many relations to other substances, and are on those real and primary qualities of its internal
smelling, touching, etc, and ideas of “reflexion,” which involved “the set of ideas derived by the mind through observation of its own operations, such as willing, feeling, and thinking” (Cunningham 3). Drawing on this distinction, Locke positively affirmed the existence of external objects, but he also reached the conclusion that “the simple ideas we receive from sensation and reflection are the boundaries of our thoughts; beyond which the mind, whatever efforts it would make, is not able to advance one jot; nor can it make any discoveries, when it would pry into the nature and hidden causes of those ideas” (Hepworth 43). “By making,” however, “all knowledge dependent on passively received sensations that could never be wholly accurate representations of the assumed external objects,” as Harris puts it, “Locke […] not only provided the foundation for empiricism but opened the door to idealism” (27). Thus, G. Berkeley, embarking from Locke’s conviction that objects are unknowable, reached the conclusion that what only existed were the ideas of the mind and that “[t]he objects of sense exist only when they are perceived” (Hepworth 75), which was the earliest form of British idealism. Reacting against Berkeley, Hume questioned not only the existence of objects, but also the existence of the mind itself as an idea that cannot be known, which led Locke’s ideas “into an abyss of scepticism” (Cunningham 6). It was eventually Hume, nevertheless, who paved a firmly empirical path out of Locke’s doctrine, trying to surmount the idealistic constitution, whereby it has a fitness differently to operate and be operated on by several other substances” (Hepworth 44).

Cunningham also argues that Locke’s ideas gave birth on the one hand to Hume’s philosophy, but also on the other to Berkeley’s, Reid’s and Hamilton’s systems (3).

In A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge (1710), Berkeley tightly associates ideas and sensations with “mind, spirit, soul or my self” (Hepworth 73), arguing that “there is not any other substance than spirit, or that which perceives” (Hepworth 74), that “[t]he objects of sense exist only when they are perceived: the trees therefore are in garden, or the chairs in the parlour, no longer than while there is some body by to perceive them. Upon shutting my eyes all the furniture in the room is reduced to nothing, and barely upon opening them it is again created” (Hepworth 75).

Actually, Edward Caird in 1879 would argue that compared Kant’s idealism, “the so-called Idealism of Berkeley” should “be called an undeveloped Sensationalism” (“Idealism” 557), manifesting the thin line between empiricism and idealism.

As Ritchie puts it, “Hume applied to mind the same analysis which Berkeley had applied to matter, and resolved mind into its component parts also” (Darwin 99).
implications of Berkeley’s theory, by tightly linking the “associations” of the mind with sense stimuli, arguing that the ideas of “existence, space, time and causality” were embedded in experience (Harris 25). The refutation of Berkeley’s immaterialism was ultimately continued by the Scottish school of “Common Sense,” where Thomas Reid and Sir William Hamilton, among others, rejected Berkeley’s account by arguing that it was “at variance” with common sense (Cunningham 7-10).

It was not, however, only Berkeley’s idealism which emerged out of an empirical doctrine. Kant’s system, even though it encompassed certain empirical elements, originally appeared as a reaction against a sequence of Humean blind-spots. Taking for granted the notorious intricacy and difficulty of the Kantian project, and the fact that the full analysis of its ramifications is beyond the scope of this study, I shall attend to a selective reading of it as a means of highlighting these parts of Kant’s system that appealed to the Victorians and that are useful for my exploration here. In the Critique of Pure Reason (1781) Kant attempted to map the full scope of human cognition by addressing the two dominant at the time philosophical schools, rationalism and empiricism. Trying to surmount the shortcomings of both rationalistic absolutism and empiricist subjectivism, Kant eventually brought together as complementary counterparts traits from both traditions into his own philosophical

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27 In A Treatise of Human Nature (1739), Hume turns against Berkeley’s immaterialism: “[t]he most vulgar philosophy informs us, that no external object can make itself known to the mind immediately, and without the interposition of an image or perception. That table, which just now appears to me, is only a perception, and all its qualities are qualities of perception. Now the most obvious of all its qualities is extension. The perception consists of parts. These parts are so situated, as to afford us the notion of distance and contiguity; of length, breadth, and thickness. The termination of these three dimensions is what we call figure. This figure is moveable, separable, and divisible. Mobility, and separability are the distinguishing properties of extended objects. And to cut short all disputes, the very idea of extension is copy’d from nothing but an impression, and consequently must perfectly agree to it. To say the idea of extension agrees to any thing, is to say it is extended” (Hepworth 125).

28 In A Treatise of Human Nature Hume states that, “[n]o discovery cou’d have been more happily for deciding all controversies concerning ideas, than that above-mention’d, that impressions always take the precedence of them, and that every idea which the imagination is furnish’d first makes its appearance in a correspondent impression. These latter perceptions are all so clear and evident, that they admit no controversy; tho’ many of our ideas are so obscure, that ‘tis almost impossible even for the mind, which forms them, to tell exactly their nature and composition. Let us apply this principle, in order to discover the nature of our ideas of space and time” (Hepworth 117).
system and in this sense he bridged the gap between them in his effort to account for objective knowledge.29 In a similar fashion, Kant approached the question of cognition by examining the interrelation between *a priori* knowledge (knowledge independent of experience) and *a posteriori* knowledge (knowledge based on sense perception, and thus on experience) (25). 30 As such, in his attempt to lay out the laws of human cognition, the German philosopher followed a deductive reasoning that emphasised non-experiential universals, which nevertheless originated from an inductive consideration, the outcome of the empiricist vein in his system and of the scientific quality of his exploration.31

Thus, G. G. Zerffi argued in “Immanuel Kant in His Relation to Modern History,” which appeared in the fourth volume of the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* in 1876, that in Kant’s system “the static and dynamic forces working in humanity were well balanced”:

Kant, as philosopher, is merely a link in a long chain of mighty speculative and empirical or deductive and inductive thinkers, who serve to illustrate, that from the earliest times of the awakening consciousness of humanity man tried to bring about an understanding of the natural and intellectual phenomena surrounding him. The method which these thinkers pursued was either *a priori* or *a posteriori*; they either started with general principles, and reasoned from them down to particulars; or they followed the more thorny path of arguing from particulars, in

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29 Rationalism held that knowledge was absolute since it was derived solely through the exercise of reason regardless of experience, whereas empiricism argued that knowledge springs solely from experience and thus is subjective.  
30 As Kant puts it, “there are two sources of human knowledge (which probably spring from a common, but to us unknown root), namely, sense and understanding. By the former, objects are given to us; by the latter, thought” (40).  
31 Kant was highly influenced in this project by the science of his time. Newton’s triumph in delineating the fundamental laws for the study of nature and the awareness that certain scientific inquiries mark universal and necessary claims without actually depending on experience, inspired Kant and gave him a sort of assurance in his quest for laying out the basic laws of human cognition, for bridging the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* in terms of knowledge (9, 33-34). As Körner puts it, “[i]t is, I believe, no overstatement of Kant’s twofold dependence on Aristotle’s logic and Newtonian science, if we describe his attempt at the discovery of all the Categories as an argument to the effect that the logical forms of traditional logic embody all a priori concepts of Newton’s physics, which for him was natural science” (50).
order to come to general conclusions. Finally, Kant stands by himself into these
two conflicting methods. He may be said to have been the only ‘deducto-
inductive’ philosopher. He was a genius able to grasp mind and matter, the
noumenal and phenomenal in their innermost connection, and succeeded in
destroying a one-sidedness in philosophy which often had been detrimental to the
real progress of science (75-76).

Indicative of this “deducto-inductive” method was the fact that the German
philosopher embarked on his analysis of cognition from the world of immediate
experience, from “sensibility,” 32 the faculty of the mind that is affected by external
reality through “intuition” 33 as the first, yet indispensable, stage of cognition. This
way, Kant, very much like the empiricists, highlighted the role of experience in the
acquisition of knowledge. 34 As the opening paragraph of the introduction of the first
Critique states,

[1]hat our knowledge begins with experience there can be no doubt. For how is it
possible that the faculty of cognition should be awakened into exercise otherwise
than by means of objects which affect our senses, and partly of themselves
produce representations, partly rouse our powers of understanding into activity, to
compare, to connect, or to separate these, and so to convert the raw material of
our sensuous impressions into a knowledge of objects, which is called

32 “The capacity for receiving representations (receptivity) through the mode in which we are affected
by objects, is called sensibility. By means of sensibility, therefore, objects are given to us” (Critique of
Pure Reason 41).
33 “In whatsoever mode, or by whatsoever means, our knowledge may relate to objects, it is at least
quite clear, that the only manner in which it immediately relates to them, is by means of intuition”
(Pure Reason 41).
34 Even though for both Kant and the empiricists, knowledge was rooted in experience, there were
crucial differences between them. In its emphasis on experience alone empiricism presented cognition
as subjective and relative, since knowledge was regarded as being identical with the subjective
conditions of the perceiving subject. Unlike the empiricists, Kant regarded the mind as an active
constructor of meaning rather than a passive recipient. Kant considered this dynamic agency of the
human mind as universal and a priori, as preceding experience by providing the form to the content of
experience and, thus, he was able to argue for the objectivity of knowledge; but this is a point that we
shall take up later on, since our focus here is on the points of the Kantian system that denoted a certain
compatibility with the empirical tradition.
experience? In respect of time, therefore, no knowledge of ours is antecedent to
experience, but begins with it (25).  

Sensibility, which is emphatically stressed throughout the first *Critique*
(Korner 45), becomes thus the fundamental starting point upon which Kant’s whole
argument is structured. Sensibility for Kant involves the “matter” of all appearances,
whereas - and here is where Kant differs from Hume - the “form” is contributed by
the mind itself, which orders appearances in certain relations as they are given to us in
time and space through the concepts of understanding. Having divided the world
of experience into “phenomena,” the world as we experience it, and “noumena,” the
world as we think it independent of experience, into “a mundus sensibilis and
intelligibilis” (188), Kant ultimately restricted knowledge to the phenomena. This
clearly implies that the things-in-themselves, the noumena, cannot be known because,
according to Kant’s scheme, which is reminiscent of Locke’s, knowledge cannot
transcend experience, “our faculty of cognition is unable to transcend the limits of
possible experience” (13). As the German philosopher puts it, “the pure conceptions
of the understanding are incapable of transcendental, and must always be of empirical

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35 Of course, the first line of the next paragraph states, “[b]ut, though all our knowledge begins with
experience, it by no means follows, that all arises out of experience” (25). In these terms, Kant
differentiates between a *priori* and a *posteriori* knowledge. But we shall turn to this distinction and to
the *a priori* aspect of Kant’s system later on. Our focus now remains on the *a posteriori* side of Kant
that certain Victorians employed so as to bridge Continental philosophy and British empiricism.
36 As Zerffi puts it, Hume “assumes analysis as the basis in mathematics. Kant asserts the very
opposite. Quantities and forms are the objects of mathematics; but these quantities and forms are not
given but constructed; they are combined, built up synthetically” (“Kant” 86).
37 Time and space are defined as “forms of sensible intuition” and are “conditions of the existence of
things as phenomena” (16).
38 As Kant puts it, “[t]hat which in the phenomenon corresponds to the sensation, I term its *matter*; but
that which effects that the content of the phenomenon can be arranged under certain relations, I call its
*form*” (41). If Kant had remained in his illustration of how cognition is produced on a passive faculty of
the mind, that would have rendered his system highly akin to Hume’s. The active principle that
achieves unity of intuition is “understanding,” and its concepts. And thus Kant continues, “[b]ut that in
which our sensations are merely arranged, and by which they are susceptible of assuming a certain
form, cannot be itself sensation. It is, then, the matter of all phenomena that is given to us a *posteriori*;
the form must lie ready *a priori* for them in the mind, and consequently can be regarded separately
from all sensation” (41). Here actually lies the keystone of Kant’s conception of the mind as a shaping
force, a point we shall, however, fully elaborate later on.
39 “The undetermined object of an empirical intuition, is called *phenomenon*” (41).
use alone, [since] the principles of the pure understanding relate only to the general conditions of a possible experience, to objects of the senses, and never to things in general” (184). As such, even though cognition involves the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, both the object of our senses and our mind, it can not move beyond the *a posteriori*. By claiming that we can only come to know the phenomena, Kant rejected any possibility for transcendent knowledge, coming up with a form of agnosticism that Oizerman characteristically calls “antimetaphysical” (341). Kant’s antimetaphysical limitation of cognition to the phenomena, to appearances, was apparently very close to the empiricist relativization of knowledge. And it was precisely here that Kant’s debt to empiricism lies – a sort of empiricism upon which the British idealists were based so as to introduce idealism to Britain.

The Britons had been so deeply infiltrated by Locke, Hume and the Mills that any other doctrine, especially one coming from abroad, was widely distrusted. Kantian theory, in its indirect association with British empiricism, both through Berkeley’s idealism and its incorporation of explicit empirical elements, on the other hand, designated a certain compatibility with the national temperament, which eventually distinguished him from the rest of the idealists by bringing the German philosopher closer to the empirical canon. In the April of 1884, G. J. Strokes culminatingly addressed the “widespread” cry raised for the necessity “to go back to Kant” on the grounds that “from the idealistic extravagance of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, Kant is free. His world has a solid basis of given fact supporting it, and the reader feels that he is on terra firma” (274). This “terra firma” precisely outlined

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40 As Eagleton argues, “[i]n the act of knowing, the subject cannot help but project from its inevitably partial perspective the phantasmal possibility of a knowledge beyond all categories, which then risks striking what it can know meagerly relative” (77).

41 Likewise, Ritchie argued in 1893 that “the point on which we must all always go ‘back to Kant’ and on which we cannot go back behind him, if we are profitably to face the problems of philosophy ow, is his conception of a ‘transcendental proof,’ and his view of the *a priori* element in all knowledge has
Kant’s acclaimed kinship to Hume, his affiliation with the British natural temperament. Likewise, in the second volume of *The Philosophical Review* in 1893, James Seth epitomized the appeal to the Victorians of the German philosopher by claiming that “Kant’s own solution, spite of his zeal for ‘pure reason’ and the skill with which he anatomizes its complex structure, spite of all his transcendental machinery, is not a transcendental solution, but empirical even as Hume’s own” (545-46), whereas Zerffi proclaimed that Kant’s “ancestors were of Scottish origin, thus Kant indirectly is a countryman of the great Scotsman, David Hume, from whom he descended in a direct spiritual line as a philosopher” (“Kant” 80).42 The claim that Kant was a “semi-empiricist” was actually derived from a selective reading of the Kantian theory that was, as a matter of fact, deeply rooted in certain parts of his epistemological doctrine as expressed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.43 As J. Seth urged, “it is more necessary to point out how deep this empiricism goes into the heart of the Kantian epistemology, how it is only the logical outcome of Kant’s central view of knowledge” (545-46). It comes, then, as no surprise that the claim for Kant’s “empiricism” did not go beyond these parts of the first critique, while, on the other hand, critics like Coleridge and Whewell, who wanted to present Kant as solely a transcendental thinker, systematically overlooked these parts.

On the grounds of such compatibility, moreover, Kant was initially preferred to Hegel by the British idealists themselves, because he provided them with “fighting weapons” to combat the empiricist establishment: “Hegel was not enough of an empiricist, his ‘sublimations’ did not give sufficient leverage to attack the empiricists, almost nothing in common with psychological theories of intuitionism, which are only revivals or survivals of the old ‘metaphysical’ (in the bad sense) doctrines of innate ideas” (*Darwin* 8-9).

42 In the first part of his study of “The Historical Development of Idealism and Realism” (1877), while considering the origin of the rivalry between empiricism and idealism, Zerffi sided Kant with “Demokritos against Aristotle or any of the modern antagonists of realism” (I, 128).

43 For more on this, see W. H. Walsh’s “Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason: Commentators in English, 1875-1945.”
they were not fighting weapons. Kant, in contrast, was [...] an empiricist with the insight to add what the empiricists had omitted, intelligible structure” (Randall 218).

The “intelligible structure” that Randall invokes refers to Kant’s illustration of the mind as an active agent in the construction of meaning, as we have seen, which did not, however, reach the extent of Berkeley’s immaterialism, and was different from Humean passivity. In these terms Kant was upheld by the idealists as an improved version of empiricism that insightfully supplemented the empirical tradition; he was treated as a corrective resolution of the shortcomings of the empirical doctrine.

Aiming to bring into the British temperament a form of Continental thought, the British idealists, thus, employed themselves the guise of an empirical argument. Decisive for that consideration was that Kant’s theory occupied the middle ground between empiricism and idealism, paying an equal “debt of gratitude” to both “Idealism” and “Materialism,” as Strokes puts it (280). The return to the originator of idealism was, therefore, grounded on the fact that Kant’s model underlined, in Strokes’ words, “the dependence of thought upon fact which determines thought rather than is determined by thought,” exposing a form of “idealistic speculation” that

44 The model of perceptual passivity implicit in the empirical doctrine becomes highlighted in Hume’s statement in A Treatise of Human Nature (1739), where the British philosopher states that even though “our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience” (Hepworth 127).

45 “Those great half-truths that there is reason in the world, that the world is essentially Thought, have an important meaning. It is true if we look these statements in the face they are downright nonsense. Reason is not in the world and also in consciousness, just like a stick here in the water and there out of it. What is in the world is not Reason itself but that through which Reason is Reason, an order of fact correlative to the inner order of thought. In like manner it is true that the world is thought, and the things in it thoughts, but these thoughts are the thoughts of something more than thoughts; they are the thoughts of realities, and the essence of things is not by any means exhausted or even affected by the thoughts of them” (280). Similarly, Edward Caird in the second volume of his study of Kant’s critical philosophy in 1889 proclaimed that the German philosopher, “by the conditions of his time as well as by the nature of his own genius, was prepared for a more comprehensive synthesis than was attained by any of his predecessors. He combined the scientific spirit of the eighteenth century and its suspicion of all mysticism and extravagance, - of all attempts to transcend the possibilities of experience, - with a deep intuitive apprehension of the secerts of the spiritual life, of the moral, to some extent also of the aesthetic consciousness” (631).
was carrying “[r]ealism in its womb” (275). Under this scope, Strokes proposed that Fichte, Schelling and Hegel should themselves be studied as introductory to Kant (281), reversing the course of German idealism from a less to a more transcendental mode into a trajectory from Continental thought to British philosophy through Kant, solidly maintaining in this way a focus on empiricism. It becomes then clear that the urge to go “back to Kant,” either through the adherents or the opponents of empiricism, was moving along the lines of Mill’s “Coleridge” as an implicit urge to actually go “back to Hume,” by enriching the home-grown empirical discourse on “facts” with the addition of the “intelligible structure” of Continental idealism. In this sense, the Kantian doctrine was utilized as a supplement, as an addition to the empirical tradition or as a weapon against it, but it was always regarded in terms of it as a point of reference.

Pater and the “Least Transcendental Parts of Kant”

It was precisely this widely-held at the time conception of Kant as a semi-empiricist that Pater utilized so as to structure a synthetic model that ultimately brought together empiricism and idealism, as we shall see. Pater’s synthetic politics, nevertheless, also drew on Hegel’s philosophy. The Oxford don, in fact, in his constant emphasis on zeitgeist and his allusion to Hegel’s aesthetics, is generally held by his critics to be a neo-Hegelian. Being introduced to Hegel by Jowett, Pater was in the early 1860s, as Edmund Gosse puts it, a “confirmed Hegelian” (qtd. in Shuter Rereading 63). Taking a closer look at Pater’s work, however, we will see that the critic selectively accepted certain parts of the Hegelian doctrine, while largely rejected others, which chiefly
involved Hegel’s transcendental and absolutist parts. What Pater considered to be of enduring value in Hegel were not his “philosophic conclusions, but his questionings of established certainties, not his doctrine, but his dialectical method” (Shuter Rereading 67); what basically attracted Pater to Hegel was not his absolutist doctrine, but his phenomenological and dialectical approach to experience, his concept of development, of “Becoming,” which, of course, as we have seen in the first chapter, the Oxford critic considered as but a variation and extension of Heraclitean philosophy. In this sense, we could claim that Hegel’s influence on Pater has been critically overemphasized at the expense of his Heraclitean framework, which after all was not absolutist or transcendental, and, thus, closer to Pater’s philosophical ideals.

Taking into consideration the fact that Pater’s debt to Hegel has been thoroughly analyzed by Paterian critics, it is my contention here to draw attention to Pater’s theory as a response to a world-picture delivered by Kantian thought, and as such, explored in Kantian terms; hence, I shall keep the Hegelian aspects of Pater’s thought to footnote form, trying to highlight the critic’s underestimated and unexplored relation to Kant. As it has become evident from the first chapter, in Pater’s scheme there appear to be certain predominant philosophical systems around which others are orchestrated as a response to them or as a continuation of them. In these terms, Heraclitus occupies a central position in Pater’s thought; he is presented as a fundamental parameter upon which other empirical or inductive systems (Hegel, Darwin, etc) are structured. Likewise, it is my intention to argue here that Kant comprised the organizing principle of Pater’s importation of Continental thought. It is

46 In the “Conclusion,” for example, Pater reject’s Hegel’s “facile orthodoxy,” as we have seen.
47 Pater, as we have seen, related Hegel to Heraclitus, showing that he was well aware of Hegelian philosophy since this association actually originated with Hegel himself. As Shuter informs us, “in the thought of Heraclitus Hegel found ‘a perfecting of the Idea into a totality, which is the beginning of philosophy, since it expresses the essence of the Idea […] as that which it is, i.e. as the unity of opposites’. ‘There is,’ Hegel tells us, ‘no proposition of Heraclitus which I have not adopted in my Logic’” (Rereading 62-63).
no accident, after all, that Pater’s initial publications primarily dealt with Kant and not Hegel as a form of idealistic thought that could be allied with British empiricism, as we shall see.

Pater’s response to Kant was moving within the framework of the wider intellectual climate with which the critic was in constant dialogue. The widely-held Victorian estimation of Kant as an empiricist, or at least as a semi-empiricist, also shaped Pater’s relation to the German philosopher. Pater was well acquainted with the founders of British idealism, E. Caird and T. H. Green, both of whom were members of the Old Mortality group, one “of the most significant societies for the idealist movement” (Den Otter 41) to which Pater, as a member himself, read “Diaphaneite” in 1864. In this sense, Pater seems to have been exposed through Caird and Green to the idealistic discourse from a very early stage in his career. Pater must have also been largely influenced by his tutor, Benjamin Jowett, the influential Master of Balliol College in Oxford, who succeeded in making Plato an English classic and was preoccupied with metaphysics. The Oxford don borrowed Kant’s Works in 1861, even though it is possible that he had read the Kritik der Reinen Vernunft in Heidelberg long before coming into contact with the other Critiques (Bibliography Inman 21). Inman, in her invaluable survey of Pater’s library borrowings and literary reference, also claims that Pater “might have formed even as early as 1858-63” his judgments concerning among others, Kant (29). She states that in his manuscripts Pater was critical of Kant’s intricately analytical method, his abstractions, and definitely his style (23), which certainly reminds one of Mill’s attitude towards Coleridge’s idealistic jargon. Kant’s minutely over-analytical style was after all not Pater’s cup of tea.

48 Pater’s position within the Oxford context and his relation to British idealism will be fully explored in the third chapter.
It seems, however, that Kant wasn’t solely negatively regarded by Pater, since there were certain aspects of the Kantian doctrine that Pater positively supported. As it is designated in Pater’s manuscript, “The History of Philosophy” (MS 3), which Inman argues was composed approximately in 1879 (*Bibliography* xl), Kant, Fichte, Berkeley and Spinoza were favourably termed paradigmatic sceptical thinkers.49 In “The History of Philosophy,” Kant becomes, as McGrath terms it, “a sceptical empiricist” and “the main thrust and body of the essay employs the arguments of Kant” (84). Taking into consideration the fact that Kant actually strove to challenge empirical scepticism, Pater’s reading of the German philosopher as a sceptic exposes his intention, along the intellectual fashion of the time, to cast an empirical light over the Kantian doctrine.

A similar argumentative line had already been adopted by Pater in his first publication as well. “Coleridge’s Writings,” which had been initially published unsigned in the utilitarian *Westminster Review* in 1866, was revised by Pater in 1880 and included in *Appreciations*50 in November 1889 as “Coleridge.” Certain corrections suggestively had to do with the fact that Pater mitigated his early hostility towards transcendentalism. Yet the paper, as a review of an anthology on Coleridge, maintained throughout all its versions its stark polemics against transcendental absolutes by upholding a firm empirical point of view.51 Such an empirical approach was furthermore obviously manifested by the context of Pater’s article. Pater’s inaugural publication in the philosophically radical *Westminster Review* focused on a

49 Berkeley’s *Theory of Vision* and “Kant’s Criticism [of Pure Reason]” are regarded in the manuscript as “milestones of modern scepticism” (Inman, *Bibliography* 14).
50 “Coleridge” combines sections from “Coleridge’s Writings” and “Samuel Taylor Coleridge,” an essay that Pater contributed to T. H. Ward’s *The English Poets* (1880).
51 It should be noted here that despite its overt hostility against the Romantic thinker, Pater’s essay, according to Bloom, is “still the best short treatment of Coleridge, and this after a century of commentary. Pater, who knew his debt to Coleridge, knew also the anxiety Coleridge caused him, and Pater therefore came to a further and subtler knowing” (Bloom, “Coleridge” 36). In his effort, of course, to support the “relative spirit,” the Oxford overreacted, as we shall see, in his critique of Coleridge.
writer that Mill had already dealt with in the very same periodical, and it implicitly revealed Pater’s intention to move within Mill’s framework by revisiting and certainly revising, after nearly twenty-five years, Mill’s initial consideration.52

As such, the Coleridgian doctrine was right away identified with an outdated, absolutist discourse contrasted to the empirical discourse of the “here and now” (52), which had, as Pater asserts, “triumphed” over Coleridge and “those older methods of philosophic inquiry” (32) into the things “behind the veil” (40).53

Modern thought is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the ‘relative’ spirit in place of the ‘absolute’. Ancient philosophy sought to arrest every object in an eternal outline, to fix thought in a necessary formula, and the varieties of life in a classification by ‘kinds,’ or genera. To the modern spirit nothing is, or can be rightly known, except relatively and under conditions (32).

Cognition of the natural world for the “modern spirit” is relative and conditional and not “fixed” or “eternal,” Pater emphatically stresses by suggesting the scientific relativism of the empirical discourse that the Heraclitean paradigm encapsulated, as we have seen in the first chapter.54 At the core of the critic’s consideration lay Coleridge’s conception of nature, which actually enabled the Oxford don to consider the Romantic thinker under an empirical prism. The natural realm becomes, in this respect, the battlefield where Coleridge’s transcendentalism would

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52 In April 1865 Mill’s “The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte” appeared in The Westminster Review. As Inman states, “[t]here is no evidence that Pater read it, but it relates importantly to the review of Coleridge that he was composing or would soon compose, and it seems likely that he would have taken note of a relevant article by so famous a contemporary as Mill, especially one published in the periodical for which he was writing the review” (Bibliography 81). Pater directly addresses Coleridge’s influence on Mill in the text: “Fragmentary and obscure, but often eloquent, and always at one earnest and ingenious, those writings, supplementing his remarkable gift of conversation, were directly and indirectly influential, even on some the farthest removed from Coleridge’s own masters; on John Stuart Mill, for instance, and some of the earlier writers of the ‘high-church’ school” (40).

53 Such empirical discourse, in its association with relativism, is reminiscent of Hume and Berkeley’s tradition of the flux of sense perception and its generated subjectivism.

54 Pater, likewise, rejected Hegel’s “hegemony of reason over sense in favor of the hegemony of sense over reason […] he rejected Hegel’s absolutist doctrines along with their transcendental foundations, while he embraced whatever in Hegel’s thought could assist his own understanding of experience, art, and culture” (McGrath 122).
confront the contemporary scientific outlook. In sharp contrast, therefore, to the empirical, or even its extension, the positive method, which “makes very little account of marks of intelligence in nature” and “in its wider view of phenomena, it sees that those instances are a minority” (37), Coleridge implied that “[s]cience, the real knowledge of that natural world, is to be attained, not by observation, experiment, analysis, patient generalization, but by the evolution or recovery of those ideas directly from within, by a sort of Platonic ‘recollection’” (38). Coleridge’s viewpoint, his conception of nature as a noumenon was, thus, ridiculed as naïve by being juxtaposed to the modern conception of the natural world as a (Heraclitean) phenomenon.55

It is interesting to note here that, according to Pater, Coleridge’s shortcomings amounted to his sticking to the “more transcendental parts of Kant” (40), to the noumena and not the phenomena.56 By implication, the “modern spirit” is identified with these “least transcendental parts of Kant”:

[1]he modern mind, so minutely self-scrutinizing, if it is to be affected at all by a sense of the supernatural, needs to be more finely touched than was possible in the older, romantic presentment of it. The spectral object, so crude, so impossible, has become plausible, as ‘That blot upon the brain, That will show itself without’; and it is understood to be a condition of one’s own mind, for which, according to the scepticism, latent at least, in so much of our modern philosophy, the so-called real things themselves are but spectra after all (49).

55 In this sense, Pater turned against Coleridge’s organic principle, presenting it in its emphasis on transcendental “ideas” as not organic at all. As we remember, Coleridge’s illustration of the difference between “Fancy” and “Imagination” is permeated by organic metaphors, by a “jungle of vegetation,” as Abrams puts it (Mirror 169). These images of sense, nevertheless, are, according to Abrams, “merely materials on which the mind feeds – materials which quite lose their identity in being assimilated to a new whole” (Mirror 172).

56 These “transcendental parts” Coleridge, basically borrowed from “the mystic Schelling” and his idiosyncratic systemization of Kantian philosophy, as Pater asserts (Appreciations 37).
Kant’s limitation imposed upon our knowledge of the phenomena and his emphasis on the fact that we cannot know the thing-in-itself, as established in the first *Critique*, seems to be fully at work here. Pater employed the discourse of Kant’s cognitive limitations so as to argue that Coleridge was not justified in his claim to possess a supernatural knowledge of the physical world; he was not justified in fancying that he could “trace, through all the simpler forms of life, fragments of an eloquent prophecy about the human mind” (38). He appeared to transcend Kant’s limits of theoretical cognition when he had “a like imaginative apprehension of the silent and unseen processes of nature, its ‘ministries’ of dew and frost, for instance” (45). In these terms, Pater paradoxically utilized “the least transcendental parts of Kant” so as to criticise Coleridge’s employment of the “more transcendental parts of Kant”; in other words, the idealistic paradigm was here negatively considered in Coleridge’s far-fetched transcendentalist deviation, and positively invoked through a measured version of Kant’s philosophy with its insistence on the limitation of knowledge, which actually approximated more the empiricist canon.

This positive side of Kant, according to Pater, signified a discourse that was highly akin to the scientific or the empirical one, since the Kantian exclusion of the *noumena* from theoretical cognition appeared to converge with the empirical “sciences of observation” (“Coleridge” 33) that similarly marked a sceptical limitation to excessive abstraction.57 Indicative of this is the fact that it becomes increasingly hard to disentangle in “Coleridge” Kant’s theory of the phenomena from the idiom of contemporary science. Pater, in this sense, employed the scientific status of his time as a measuring standard, as a corrective point of reference so as ultimately to condemn as paradigmatically unrelated to experience the over-exaggerated idealistic

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57 As McGrath puts it, “[f]or Pater, then, one of the primary functions of idealism, whether Berkeley’s empirical idealism or Kant’s critical idealism, is to support a Humean scepticism” (86).
departures of Schelling or Coleridge that had sprung from Kant’s initial project. At a
time, thus, when the majority of the nation found the “more transcendental parts of
Kant” highly antipathetic, Pater brought the German philosopher closer to the British
temperament by strategically distancing Coleridge as being far more alien to his
native intellect than even a Continental thinker. Kant’s position within Pater’s
empirical deliriums, then, paradoxically functioned as a means of defending an
empirical cause. The staging of the Kantian system as an empirically friendly
doctrine, on the other hand, paved the way for the accommodation of idealistic
insight; as McGrath puts it, “the essay represents the opening of one of the largest
conduits of German thought into the English literary tradition since Coleridge and
Carlyle” (82). By being critical of Coleridge’s importation of transcendental idealism,
this “opening” announced the possible compatibility between empiricism and
idealism, a possible fusion of the two schools structured upon “Kantian empiricism”
so as to “possess” the “entirety” of the age. In this sense, twenty-five years after
Mill’s suggestion, Pater revised Mill’s reconciliatory argumentation, implicitly
substituting, nevertheless, Coleridge with Kant as a representative of a more
temperate idealism able to be more easily subsumed within a contemporary empirical
program.

This line of thought was actually continued in Pater’s second publication,
“Winckelmann,” which was published in January 1867 in the Westminster Review,
exposing Pater’s organized attempt to promote under an empirical aegis the “least

58 Coleridge is systematically alienated from his home tradition. Pater states about Coleridge’s lines
addressed to Wordsworth after his recitation of “The Prelude”: “[i]t is like some exotic plant, just
managing to blossom a little in the somewhat un-English air of Coleridge’s own south-western
birthplace, but never quite well” (41). As Wellek also puts it in more favourable terms, “[i]n England
Coleridge stood quite alone, sharply distinct even from his close associates, Wordsworth, Lamb, and
Hazlitt, who had only very slight German contacts. The vocabulary, the dialectical scheme, the whole
intellectual atmosphere sets Coleridge apart. The difference is explainable only by Coleridge’s
adaptation and importation of the Germans” (Criticism 157).
transcendental parts of Kant”. After having considered how these empirical parts were negatively presented through Coleridge’s work, Pater turned to a positive illustration of “Kantian empiricism,” as exemplified by Winckelmann, who was quite surprisingly one of those thinkers who had decisively inspired and by implication initiated the trend of German idealism. In a line of reasoning similar to “Coleridge,” and in accordance with the liberal-utilitarian framework of the *Westminster Review*, Pater structured his argument upon the rivalry between the relative spirit and the absolute, between the politics of the concrete and the politics of the abstract. Once again the relative spirit and its emphasis on the concrete got aligned by Pater with Kantian epistemology. Winckelmann was not like Schiller, Pater claims, “for Schiller, and such as he, are primarily spiritual adventurers” (*Renaissance* 116), but he rather “protests against Christian Wolff and the philosophers. Goethe, in speaking of this protest, alludes to his own obligations to Emmanuel Kant. Kant’s influence over the culture of Goethe, which he tells us could not have been resisted by him without loss, consisted in a severe limitation to the concrete” (117). Winckelmann and Goethe were, therefore, presented by Pater as non-empirical thinkers who were nonetheless distanced from Wolff’s extensive rational idealism by quite paradoxically establishing, through Kant’s limitations on cognition, an atypical shortcut to the empirical outlook. In this sense, these two German thinkers formed the reverse analogue to Coleridge’s obsession with the “more transcendental parts of Kant,” which marked a detour from Coleridge’s native temperament.

In “Prosper Merimee,” published in the *Fortnightly Review* in December 1890, Pater considered the implications of post-Kantian thought and once more directly addressed the modernity of Kant’s doctrine and its association with the relative spirit,

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59 The full implications of Pater’s conception of Kant as a “relativist” will be addressed in the last sections of this chapter since they are very revealing for our concluding consideration.
which implicitly aligned the German philosopher with contemporary Victorian
science: “Kant did but furnish the […] innermost force [of individual experience] to a
more general criticism, which had withdrawn from every department of action,
underlying principles once thought eternal” (Miscellaneous Studies 1). The critic,
moreover, emphasized the fact that Kant’s critical philosophy, with its insistence on
the limitations on the human understanding, resulted in “a purely empirical
knowledge of nature and man […] in a somewhat novel attitude towards the practical
interests of life” (Miscellaneous Studies 1)\textsuperscript{60}. Pater then, like the majority of his
contemporaries, treated the Kantian paradigm as an empirical allegory. Throughout a
wide temporal span, from the early 1860s when “Coleridge” was written to the late
1890s when “Prosper Merimee” was published, Pater consistently regarded the
German philosopher from an empirical perspective, identifying a certain part of the
Kantian epistemology with empiricism and scientific relativism. The Victorian critic
upheld his selective treatment of the Kantian doctrine as an urge, coming from the
idealist camp itself, against absolutes and in favor of relativism; he considered, as we
shall see, Kant as a decisive sponsor of the “modern spirit,” implicitly aligning him in
his contribution to “modernity” with the Heraclitean paradigm.

McGrath in The Sensible Spirit: Walter Pater and the Modernist Paradigm
(1981), which is the most thorough and consistent exploration of Pater’s relation to
idealism, terms Pater’s incorporation of Kant “somewhat problematical” (80) on the
grounds that at the outset of his publishing career Pater “parades an inconsistent and
immature (or perhaps premature is a better word) synthesis of idealism with his
positivism and empiricism, all of which were major philosophical croscurrents at
Oxford in his time” (81). The problem, according to McGrath, arises from the fact

\textsuperscript{60} What had survived “all dead metaphysical philosophies” was “the empirical study of the facts, the
empirical science of nature and man” (Miscellaneous Studies 3).
that even though Pater constantly emphasized the primacy of sensation, which
instinctively led him to the rejection of abstractions and absolutes, he also repeatedly
maintained an “inconsistent” and under an empirical guise camouflaged
argumentative line paradoxically coming from the school of German Idealism.\footnote{As McGrath puts it, “[i]n contrast to the sceptical empiricism that led to his emphasis on sensation, the other side of the Paterian temperament was decidedly rationalist,” where “at times [Pater’s] emphasis on sensation and his views on abstract thinking flatly contradict each other” (74).} I
would argue, however, that Pater actually converted such idealism into empirically
compatible regularities, an awareness that McGrath systematically overlooks. Pater
by-passed the metaphysically transcendental aspect of Kant’s thought (the \textit{noumena})
and adhered to these parameters that appeared to be functionally valid for his own
empirical matrix. Thus, despite Pater’s effort to align Kant with empiricism, McGrath
argues that in “the Coleridge essay […] Kant is allied with absolutism” (84). By not
accounting for Pater’s insistence on these “least transcendental parts of Kant,”
McGrath fails to detect the way Pater gradually mediated a certain idealistic form\footnote{Pater’s work began in the early 1860s as an empirically oriented project, but taking the lead from the influence of the neo-idealists and their work in the universities in the 1870s and 1880s, it gradually shifted towards an idealistic direction. Such a shift was not radically brought about, but it gradually paved its way throughout Pater’s narrative via certain idealistically compatible terms that were already present in embryonic form from a very early stage. “Kant’s empiricism” served precisely this end.} and thus the Oxford critic’s fusion logically appears “inconsistent.”\footnote{In this sense, while considering “The History of Philosophy,” McGrath claims that Pater “has confused Kant’s premises with Berkeley’s when he says that after Kant’s critique of the mind, ‘what remained of our actual experience was but a stream of impressions over the supposed but wholly unknown mental substratum which no act of intuition or reflexion could ever really detect’” (85). As I see it, Pater has not really “confused” Kant since he seems to be in the heart of Kantian criticism by indicating the phenomena through the “impressions” and the \textit{noumena} through “the unknown mental substratum”.} Pater’s
conversion of Kant into an empiricist precisely served to pave the way, to introduce a
measured form of idealism as a means of enhancing native empiricism in the spirit of
Mill’s treatment. Such an intervention was executed on the grounds that there
obviously appeared to be for Pater a certain congruent attuning between the basic
tenets of the two schools, a compatibility that was actually provided by the Kantian
doctrine itself, with its constellation of hybrid terms that served to bridge the gap.
between rationalism and idealism, which will be the focus of this chapter. And it was
precisely this seeming friction, this Heraclitean, yet reconcilable conflict between
opposites that, in my view, actually drew Pater nearer to Kant as the paradigmatic
philosopher who first systematically attempted to resolve the tension between them in
the modern world, as Heraclitus did in the ancient world. If we regard his work in this
light, then “his emphasis on sensation and his views on abstract thinking” do not
appear to “flatly contradict each other,” as McGrath claims, for they are actually
presented as the two ends that Pater strove to connect (74). The awareness, in other
words, of Pater’s debt to Kant renders these “contradictions” as constituents of one
organic whole, which was after all consistently promoted by Mill, an empiricist
himself.

McGrath, in this extensive analysis of the idealistic backbone of Pater’s work
(Kant, Schelling, Schiller and Hegel) also associates such “inconsistency” with the
fact that, as he argues, Pater had only a partial understanding of Kant (81), which he
links to the British thinkers of the last quarter of the 19th century and their “very
imperfect grasp of Kant’s thought” (86). Pater’s utilization of Kant in these early
works may have been selective and partial, but that does not necessarily imply that his
understanding was also partial or distorted, and, as I shall argue, throughout the
passage of time, the critic adopted a more comprehensive esteem for the German
philosopher in his writings. If we, moreover, consider the fact that Pater’s work
maintained a stable Kantian problematic that was constantly revisited, updated and
measured against the new philosophical trends and scientific discoveries that surfaced
in the passage of these decisive decades, and furthermore regard the fact that the
works of Schelling, Schiller and Hegel, which Pater repeatedly evoked in his work,

64 Pater’s synthetic project moves along the way led by Mill. As such, Pater attempts through a
Hegelian holism to possess the “entire” philosophy of his time.
were actually a continuation of the Kantian theory, then all at once such “partial” understanding appears to extend its scope. The numerous and divergent threads of such an extensive scope actually converged on a single focal point, on Kant’s thought, which, after all, was not accidentally the topic of Pater’s inaugural publications. Pater was definitely not a philosopher, yet his understanding of Kant was much deeper than what McGrath implies, and he consciously, systematically and consistently\(^65\) employed certain aspects of the Kantian doctrine so as to render his fusion of empiricism and idealism quite harmonious and consistent, indeed. It is to Pater’s thorough utilization of the Kantian doctrine that we shall now turn to, by concentrating on the way the Oxford don consistently integrated within his matrix certain parts of Kant’s critical philosophy so as to come up with an amplified empirical formula that would also encompass “intelligible structure.” In an attempt to surmount the notorious obstacles of Kantian intricacy and obscurity, I shall now focus on the basic tenets of Kant’s system as they are reflected in Pater’s early work gradually paving a way towards a general picture of Pater’s debt to Kant, and the way it was associated with the Heraclitean paradigm.

**The *a priori* and Herbert Spencer**

From “Coleridge” to his later writings, one of the basic idealistic parameters that Pater incorporated within his theoretical matrix was a measured form of the *a priori*, which was actually never mentioned by name, but only implicitly invoked. It is thus very interesting to regard the way Pater encompassed the crux of idealistic discourse within an overtly expressed empirical idiom. The infusion of the *a priori* within an obviously

\(^65\) McGrath claims that “Pater seems unaware of how much Kant and idealism have already informed his own thought” (82). The way Pater employs the Kantian doctrine, as we shall see in the following sections, proves quite the contrary.
a posteriori system, like Pater’s, in other words, might sound like a paradox in terms, yet philosophically this odd coupling had already been put into practice in the 18th century by Kant. Taking into consideration Kant’s paradigm, I shall explore to what extent and use Pater employed this perspective. As we shall see, the Oxford don replicated Kant’s epistemological utilization of the a priori, maintaining, nevertheless, always an empirical focus, and in this Pater established a theoretical analogue with Herbert Spencer, who integrated the Kantian premise within his outlook so as to promote, in the scientific field, a balance between the a priori and the a posteriori, between induction and deduction.

We have seen how Kant interconnected the a priori and the a posteriori in his cognitive theory as a means of surmounting the shortcomings of both rationalism and empiricism, since the one principle paradigmatically referred to the faculty of the intellect whereas the other to the faculty of sensibility, as the fundamental bearers of the respective schools. Kant’s breakthrough insight, which was actually inspired from the realm of science, involved the fact that the German philosopher inter-crossed two fundamental distinctions of logic, the so-called “analytic” and “synthetic” judgments, coming up with his infamous “synthetic a priori” judgments. In his research into mathematics, geometry and the natural sciences, Kant came across a type of judgment lying at the core of these sciences that were considered by definition true and universal (a priori) despite the fact that they possessed a sort of empirical

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66 Following the traditional tenets of Logic, Kant differentiated between a priori and a posteriori statements. Kant also maintained the distinction in Logic between analytic and synthetic judgments, where the former analyze the subject of the judgment by explicating its constituent parts, whereas the latter increase our understanding and knowledge of the subject by adding a predicate to it. Analytic judgments are “those in which the connection of a predicate with the subject is cogitated through identity,” and synthetic, “those in which this connection is cogitated without identity […] The former may be called explicative, the latter augmentative” (Pure Reason 30). According to this scheme, analytic judgments are definitely correct, they cannot be denied without self contradiction since they are actually tautologies; they are logically necessary, that is, usually a priori and therefore predominantly theoretical, whereas synthetic ones are logically contingent, usually a posteriori, and thus practical (31).
content (synthetic) that led to knowledge. These judgments referred to something that was found in experience yet could not be immediately perceived through the senses; they were marked, Kant claimed, by necessity for they signaled the foundation, the presupposition of human knowledge, they depicted the way the human mind objectively works (32). This way, according to the German philosopher, scientific judgments derived their necessity and generality out of a transcendental function of the human mind itself, which encouraged Kant to deduce that all human science was structured in a similar fashion. This was briefly Kant’s answer to the question of what we can know regardless of experience, that is, how are synthetic a priori judgments possible. Kant called the project of rendering experience a priori viable, “transcendental philosophy.”

In a similar fashion, Kant considered time and space as the a priori forms of sensibility (Pure Reason 42), in the sense that time and space are not derived from experience, but pre-exist, rendering experience possible. As pure forms of intuition, space and time, were presented as the necessary features of the way we experience the world as a phenomenon, as appearance. Time and space, in this sense, are actually imposed by the mind in order to achieve an organization of what is presented through the senses, transforming sensation into perception. Likewise, in Plato and Platonism, while discussing Pythagoras’ contribution to the Platonic doctrine, Pater claimed:

> [t]ruths of number: the essential laws of measure in time and space: -Yes, these are indeed everywhere in our experience: must, as Kant can explain to us, be an element in anything we are able so much as to conceive at all. And music,

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67 In this respect, Kant argued that knowledge could be increased independently of experience in the manner of mathematics, geometry and physics since in their necessity and universality, this type of judgments actually rendered objective experience possible.

68 As Zerfli puts it, “Kant’s interpretation of transcendentalism was one which some people would not like to admit. By his expression, he meant simply to transcend, ‘to step over,’ the boundaries of dogmatism, and to ascertain, after having shaken off this dead weight, how far we might proceed in the regions of the supersensual” (“Kant” 83).
covering all it does, for Pythagoras, for Plato and Platonism – music, which
though it is of course much besides, is certainly a formal development of purely
numerical laws: that too surely is something, independently of ourselves, in the
real world without us, like a personal intelligible soul durably resident there for
those who bring intelligence of it, of music, with them (52-3).

By referring to the “formal” qualities of the “numerical laws” of time and
space, Pater was clearly invoking Kant’s exposition of time and space as the forms of
intuition. Pater’s allusion to these “laws” of number as an “element in anything we are
able so much to conceive at all” resonated with Kant’s exposition of the synthetic a priori judgments through the use of mathematics and geometry. By claiming that
these forms are “something independent of us,” Pater implicitly espoused their a priori character, which actually brought him to the core of Kant’s transcendental
consideration.69 In this sense, closely following Kant’s exposition of the inseparability
of matter and form, Pater brought together the a priori as the form of our experience
and the a posteriori as its content through the paradigm of music, where matter and
form are harmoniously fused into a whole. In this respect, he upheld in “The School
of Giorgione” music as an elemental artistic ideal70 because it was impossible to
distinguish “the form from the matter, the subject from expression” (Renaissance 88)71 – in Kant’s words, the perceiving subject from the object of perception, which
will be explored later on.

69 In a similar manner, Pater states, in Plato and Platonism about the Greek philosopher’s
“transcendentalism”: “Our common ideas, without which, in fact, we none of us could think at all, are
not the consequence, not the products, but the cause of our reason in us: we did not make them; but
they make us what we are, as reasonable beings” (168). This form of “transcendentalism” is, as a
matter of fact, very close to Kant’s.
70 “All art constantly aspirates towards the condition of music. For while in other kinds of art it is
possible to distinguish the matter from the form, and the understanding can always make this
distinction, yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it” (Renaissance 86).
71 “It is the art of music which most completely realises this artistic ideal, this perfect identification of
matter and form. In its consummate moments, the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the
matter, the subject from expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other” (88).
In “Winckelmann” (1867), Pater’s second publication, the critic implicitly
employed a balanced relation between the a priori and the a posteriori in order
to address and ultimately subvert Matthew Arnold’s claims about paganism in “Pagan
and Medieval Religious Sentiment,” published in 1864, where Arnold explored “the
real difference in spirit and sentiment between paganism and Christianity […] and
[…] the natural effect of this difference upon people in general” (Criticism 140).72
Comparing what he considered paradigmatic Greek and medieval instances of
religious art so as to sort out their relation to the modern spirit, Arnold claimed that
the pagan “religion of pleasure” treated the world “according to the demand of the
senses” (Criticism 148), and in its “outwardness” had “nothing that is consoling,
nothing that is in our sense of the word religious” (Criticism 145), since it referred to
people “who seem never made to be serious, never made to be sick or sorry”; it only
superficially stimulated “a single side of us too absolutely” in its gratification of the
“senses and understanding,” ending up “fatiguing and revolting us” (Criticism 146).
On the other hand, the Medieval Christian “religion of sorrow” treated in its
“inwardness” the world “according to the demand of the heart and the imagination”
(Arnold, Criticism 148).73 In this respect, Arnold contrasted the outward,
materialistic, empirical principle of “sense” and “pleasure” to an inward axis.74 In
view of this, Arnold suggested that sensual paganism could not, and should not, be re-
established unaltered in the “new, real, immense, post-pagan world,” since it failed to
offer “a comfort for the mass of mankind, under the pressure of calamity, to live by,”

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72 David. J. DeLaura consistently elaborates on the interconnectedness between Arnold and Pater in
Hebrew and Hellenic in Victorian England. It was DeLaura who pointed out that what firmly lurks
underneath Pater’s “Winckelmann” is a meticulous reply and rejection of Arnold’s article.
73 Likewise, the Renaissance, as “a return towards the pagan spirit” is presented by Arnold as the
opposite of the Reformation in its “moral” and “spiritual” reaction “against the carnal and pagan sense”
(149).
74 In this sense, Arnold implicitly expresses his distrust for the dominant trend of bourgeois
utilitarianism.
unlike the “religion of sorrow” which is regarded as “a stray for the mass of mankind, whose lives are full of hardship” (*Criticism* 151-52).

Pater rejected Arnold’s “religion of sorrow” by bringing to light the aspect of pagan tradition that the critic’s “sweetness and light” left out of its scope: the dark, sad, chthonian - the serious, in other words - dimension of paganism as a religion. The pagan sentiment, Pater argued, actually involved “the sadness with which the human mind is filled, whenever its thoughts wander far from what is here and now” (129). When the “inevitable shipwreck comes,” man “is careful for charms and talismans, which may chance to have some friendly power in them,” and this for Pater constituted “the eternal basis of all religions” (129). This crucial aspect of the pagan sentiment, according to Pater, gradually evolved into a ritualistic form (129), into the “indestructible” “basis of all religions,” since “its root is so deep in the earth of man’s nature” (129), and it was “destined to become the permanent element of religious life” (130). In this sense, Pater identified “a paganism which existed before the Greek religion, and has lingered far onward into the Christian world” with the “broad foundation, in mere human nature, of all religions as they exist for the greatest number” (129). As an element tightly allied with the world of nature and the sorrows of man, the “universal pagan sentiment” (129), according to Pater, involved the material, the formal aspect of every metaphysical quest, the form of all religious

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75 Pater, thus, turns against Newman as well, who in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1854) considered paganism to be gay and graceful (DeLaura 308, Inman 128). As he states: “Cardinal Newman speaks of the classical polytheism which was gay and graceful, as was natural in a civilized age. Yet such a view is only a partial one. In it the eye is fixed on the sharp, bright edge of high Hellenic culture, but loses sight of the somber world across which it strikes” (*Renaissance* 128).

76 Pater pursues a similar argumentative line in “A Study of Dionysus: The Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew,” which he published in November 1876 in the *Fortnightly Review*. Considering the origins of the religion of Dionysus, Pater presents Dionysus as “a dual god,” as “twofold,” as a “Doppelganger”: “like Persephone, he belongs to two worlds, and has much in common with her, and a full share of those dark possibilities which, even apart from the story of rape, belong to her. He is a Chthonian god, and, like all the children of the earth, has an element of sadness; like Hades himself, he is hollow and devouring, an eater of man’s flesh – sarcophagus – the grave which consumed unaware the ivory-white shoulder of Pelops” (*Greek Studies* 17).
content. Pater, therefore, climactically undermined the superiority of Arnold’s “religion of sorrow” by presenting a universal pagan equivalent tightly allied with nature, scoring thus an “unpleasant twist to Arnold’s favourable conception of religion as a refuge and consolation” (DeLaura 210). Pater actually achieved this inversal by attributing to paganism the status of an a priori form that eventually organizes metaphysical content, by presenting Christianity as the transient content of an ever-present pagan ritualistic form. The strategic shift that Pater employed to present the superiority of paganism not only resembled the core of Kant’s synthetic a priori statements - in the sense that pagan tradition is defined as that which ultimately makes Christian content possible - but it also appeared to follow the structure of Kant’s own “transcendental deduction.”

Even in “Coleridge” (1866), his initial publication, Pater exemplified a line of reasoning deeply involving the a priori in a disguised form. In his attempt to turn against transcendentalist and theological absolutes, Pater upheld the politics of the concrete through a relativistic discourse that was surprisingly infiltrated by a consideration for the a priori:

hard and abstract moralities are yielding to a more exact estimate of the subtlety and complexity of our life. Always, as an organism increases in perfection, the conditions of its life become more complex. Man is the most complex of the products of nature. Character merges into temperament: the nervous system refines itself into intellect. Man’s physical organism is played upon not only by

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77 One can detect here Pater’s allusion to Hegelian philosophy. Shuter argues that Pater borrowed from Hegel the idea of “cultural palingenesis” (“Palingenesis” 412), the pattern of rebirth, the idea of “metempsychosis,” which “forms a transition to the idea of renaissance” (413). As Shuter asserts, it was Bernard Fehr, who first detected Pater’s borrowings from Hegel’s Aesthetik in “Wickelmann” in 1916 (“Palingenesis” 411). “Winckelmann,” as both Fehr and Shuter claim, is a “sympathetic outline of Hegel’s Aesthetik”: “following Hegel, Pater defines art as the sensuous embodiment of a spiritual content and distinguishes three possible relations of spiritual content to its sensuous medium. These three relations determine the three phases in the development of art: the Symbolic, the Classical, and the Romantic (or, as Pater often calls it, the Christian)” (413).

78 Thus, “while the ritual remains unchanged, the aesthetic element […] expands with the freedom and mobility of the things of the intellect” (130).
the physical conditions about it, but by remote laws of inheritance, the vibration of long-past acts reaching him in the midst of the new order of things in which he lives. When we have estimated these conditions he is still not yet simple and isolated; for the mind of the race, the character of the age, sway him this way or that through the medium of language and current ideas. It seems as if the most opposite statements about him were alike true: he is so receptive, all the influences of nature and of society ceaselessly playing upon him, so that every hour in his life is unique, changed altogether by a stray word, or glance, or touch. It is the truth of these relations that experience gives us, not the truth of eternal outlines ascertained once for all, but a world of fine gradations and subtly linked conditions, shifting intricately as we ourselves change – and bids us, by a constant clearing of the organs of observation and perfecting of analysis, to make what we can of these. To the intellect, the critical spirit, just these subtleties of effect are more precious than anything else (33).

In this long extract, Pater’s liberal discourse of the concrete gets allied in its battle against dogmatic Christianity and Coleridgian conservatism with the evolutionary discourse, the breakthrough impact of which was quite recent at the time when Pater was composing his review of the Romantic thinker. Against the fixed formulas of abstract transcendentalism, as exemplified through Coleridge, Pater upheld the discourse of relativism, which highlighted the fact that “the earlier growth should propel its fibres into the later, and so transmit the whole of its forces in an unbroken continuity of life” (32). We can detect, in this long quotation, where the Heraclitean concept of the flux is represented through a thick web of relative interconnections, the Spencerian theory of organic development from simple to complex forms. Pater’s allusion to “perfection,” “complexity,” “refinement,” the

79 Pater also goes on with his depiction by emphasising in a gesture that resembles Spencer, the fact that relativism has even infiltrated the realm of morals, launching thus “a new analysis of the relations of body and mind, good and evil, freedom and necessity” (33). In a manner akin to the picture that Pater draws in the “Conclusion”, the individual is depicted as being caught up in the webs of interrelated natural and social influences (33).
relation between the “nervous system” and “intellect” within an evolutionary framework is indicative of this. There is, however, yet another way in which this extract connects to Herbert Spencer,\textsuperscript{80} which actually necessitates a closer look at the English philosopher and scientist. We have seen in the previous chapter that evolutionary theory, due to its methodological approach, approximated certain deductive premises within its inductive emphasis on observation. Likewise, in \textit{Principles of Psychology} (1855) Spencer scored a synthesis between Mill’s empiricism and Whewell’s intuitionism by advancing an empirically acquired set of \textit{a priori} relations, what is known as “evolutionary Kantianism,” as Robert J. Richards has shown.

Combining both Mill’s induction and Kant’s deduction, via Whewell, Spencer explained the “forms of thought” through two laws (qtd. in Richards 286). The first one, involving Mill’s empiricism, argued for a correspondence between external environmental stimuli and the generation of respective psychological corollaries, where the organism progressively related to the environment according to the law of intelligence, accelerating in its production of more complex forms of relations; hence Spencer’s account of progress from simpler to more sophisticated organic structures. The second law incorporated Kant’s deduction by claiming that “habitual psychical successions entail some hereditary tendency to such successions, which, under persistent conditions, will become cumulative in generation after generation” (qtd. in Richards 286). Such law of “the inheritance of characteristics” actually solved for Spencer “the deep epistemological problem dividing Whewell and Mill, that of

\textsuperscript{80} Herbert Spencer’s contribution to the spread of Darwinian theory was decisive. Spencer attached a moral attribute to Darwin’s theory by insisting that biological development was a matter of progress. Furthermore, by holding that every evolutionary process is a change from a simple homogeneity to an integrated and complex heterogeneity, he easily passed from the biological to the psychological and ultimately to the social field so as to account for the transition from simple to complex forms. Spencer stressed the dangers of intervening with this evolutionary process and, in this sense, eventually ended up asserting the rights of individuals against governments.
necessary laws in mind and nature” (Richards 286). By maintaining the adaptational experiences of the race in the inheritance of mental habits, Spencer was thus incorporating, through Whewell, Kant’s a priori deduction into his empirical model of psychological associations as a response to the environment.\textsuperscript{81} In this sense, Spencer brought together in a profound way empiricism and idealism within his scientific theory of racial inheritance.\textsuperscript{82} Pater, in his turn, by incorporating within his discourse of the empirically concrete “the remote laws of inheritance,” the individuals’ “reception” of “the mind of the race,” integrated, in a similar fashion to Spencer, the principle of the a priori\textsuperscript{83} in his relativistic discourse so as to account not only for racial inheritance but also for humanity’s progressive complexity. Such consideration subsequently addressed

\textsuperscript{81} An epistemological shift, however, is always accompanied by its ethical corollaries. This way Spencer firmly rooted his system on Lamarck’s vision of use-inheritance, which, unlike the non teleological Darwinian system and its insistence on the spontaneous formation of variations, “was ideally suited to the task of social evolutionists because it celebrated the ability of organisms to adapt themselves to changing circumstances, and thus seemed to preserve purpose and design in the evolutionary process” (Den Otter 90). As Richards claims, Spencer’s “evolutionary Kantianism” promoted not only an epistemological reconciliation but “certain moral ends” as well, through the fact that “he attempted to demonstrate scientifically that nature, particularly human nature, inexorably moved toward perfection, which in the case of man he interpreted as complete adaptation to the social state, a consummation in which evil and stupidity, both inadaptations, would be finally replaced by freedom from social coercion and by expansion of individual rational capacities” (287).

\textsuperscript{82} “Spencer’s theories of racial inheritance were seen to bear upon the ancient problem of nominalism and realism, offering a middle way between Hume and Kant, and widening the concept of experience so that mere associationism could no longer dominate psychology,” as Young puts it (14). Harris claims that Spencer’s views “put him somewhere between empiricist and transcendentalist positions, between Locke and Kant, between Hamilton and Mill. Yes, all knowledge came from experience, but that experience has in itself over the millennia created certain forms of thought now inherent in (‘inherited by’ to use a term closer to the evolutionary mode of thought) the mind. Moreover, his exposition of his system begins with an account of the unknowable – a something rather like Hamilton’s Unconditioned. Though Locke’s distinction between primary and secondary qualities stands at the head of the trail leading to those unplumbed depths referred to as things-in-themselves, the Unconditioned, or the unknowable, such assumptions make empiricism decidedly uncomfortable” (39).

\textsuperscript{83} In *Plato and Platonism*, Pater stresses again these Spencerian “laws of inheritance”: “[f]or in truth we come into the world, each one of us, ‘not in nakedness,’ but by the natural course of organic development clothed far more completely than even Pythagoras supposed in a vesture of the past, nay, fatally shrouded, it might seem, in those laws or tricks of heredity which we mistake for our volitions; in the language which is more than one half of our thoughts; in the moral and mental habits, the customs, the literature, the very houses, which we did not make for ourselves; in the vesture of a past, which is (so science would assure us) not ours, but of the race, the species: that Zeit-geist, or abstract secular process, in which, as we could have had no direct consciousness of it, so we can pretend to no future personal interest. It is humanity itself now – abstract humanity – that figures as the transmigrating soul, accumulating into its ‘colossal manhood’ the experience of ages; making use of, and casting aside in its march, the souls of countless individuals, as Pythagoras supposed the individual soul to cast aside again and again its outworn body” (72-73).
Coleridge’s “eternal outlines ascertained once and for all” by juxtaposing a discourse that highlighted “subtly linked conditions” (33). In this sense, Pater urged against Coleridge’s “more transcendental parts of Kant,” a discourse that encompassed the *a priori* in a measured balance with its *a posteriori* premises resulting in a relativistic and not absolutist idiom. The allusion to Spencer as such denoted a compatibility of idealistic principles with the modern spirit that was actually denied in Coleridge’s absolutist assimilation of Continental philosophy. And it was precisely this that Pater’s initial publication announced, the launching of an idealistic treatment that, in contrast to the Romantic thinker, would be employed in the service of empiricism.

Under the prism of Pater’s debt to Spencer, moreover, one can also account for the critic’s obsession with historical periods of transition, which in the *Renaissance* they mark a shift from a Christian to a pagan model, whereas in *Marius the Epicurean* from a pagan to a Christian tradition. It is important to notice here that Pater’s sketching of such periods chiefly focused on the dialectics established between the older, retreating tradition and the new emerging one, as we shall see in the third chapter. Consider for example Marius’ first contact with a Christian house:

> All around, in those well-ordered precincts, were the quiet signs of wealth, and of a noble taste – a taste, indeed, chiefly evidenced in the selection and juxtaposition of the material it had to deal with, consisting almost exclusively of the remains of older art, here arranged and harmonized, with effects, both as regards colour and form, so delicate as to seem really derivative from some finer intelligence in these matters than lay within the resources of the ancient world. It was the old way of the *Renaissance* – being indeed the way of nature with her roses, the divine way with the body of man, perhaps with his soul – conceiving the new organism by no sudden and abrupt creation, but rather by the action of a new principle upon elements, all of which had in truth already lived and died many times. The fragments of older architecture, the mosaics, the spiral columns, the precious
corner-stones of immemorial building, had put on, by such juxtaposition, a new
and singular expressiveness, an air of grave thought, of an intellectual purpose, in
itself, aesthetically very seductive (II 95-96).

Pater’s illustration of the notion of transition involved a cultural shift where
humanity responded to the call of the times for a new settlement of prior
establishments by bringing together the old and the new in a sophisticated fusion,
which signified a higher form of aptitude, a “finer intelligence.” Pater’s treatment
precisely underlined the need for a more complex perceptual model, paradigmatically
satisfied by this sophisticated blend of Christianity and paganism. The new emerging
ethic, moreover, by harmoniously engulfing prior, traditional elements into its body,
highlighted Pater’s compliance with culturally inherited traits that passed from one
generation to the other in their evolutionary process, manifesting the author’s appeal
to an a priori set of relations that were culturally inherited as well. In this sense, Pater
seemed to utilize Spencer’s model of the a priori to the utmost in his illustration of
such periods, so as to encapsulate the influence that the cultural environment exerts on
the individual. The fact that certain a priori forms dialectically mould the individual’s
perception was, furthermore, embodied into Pater’s interplay between the individual
and the cultural, historical impact. Both the Renaissance and Marius, as such, present
us with a series of portraits, where the force of intellectual or physical environment is
emphasized in its relation to the shaping of character. The two books illustrate the
way cultural stimuli trigger the individual’s “sensations and ideas.” Thus, as
Knoepflmacher asserts, “in Pater’s fiction it is not character but only the
‘environments’ which act upon character that can be truly said to hold any ‘points of
view,’ a term used in this sense by the author” (141). Knoepflmacher’s perceptive
highlighting of the issue of “environment”\textsuperscript{84} indirectly brings to light what I consider Pater’s compliance with Spencer’s “Kantian evolutionism,” his espousal of a mediated form of the \textit{a priori}, which is actually given the lead role in Pater’s writings, and which brings together the Kantian and Heraclitean paradigms through the evolutionary discourse.

\textbf{Aesthesis and Aesthetics}

The concept of the \textit{a priori}, like the sequence of terms that we have examined in the first chapter, were all notions borrowed from the philosophical or the scientific fields, which Pater employed to specifically aesthetic ends. We have already considered the extent to which Pater was inspired by the Heraclitean hybrid of physics and fiction, by the twilight of the prose poem. It looks as if the Kantian doctrine also encouragingly provided Pater with the means of pursuing his aesthetico-scientific alchemies in a way that the two philosophical paradigms were linked for the critic. After all, Kant established an implicit relation between cognition and art. Following A. G. Baumgarten’s definition of the “aesthetic,”\textsuperscript{85} Kant used the term in the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} mainly to designate sensibility: “[t]he science of all the principles of sensibility \textit{a priori}, I call Transcendental Aesthetic” (\textit{Pure Reason} 42). As Kant explained in a footnote, the term “aesthetics” is “merely empirical” and

\textsuperscript{84} It should be noted here that Pater’s work was permeated, as Knoepflmacher argues, by a common theme: “the search of the individual for the ‘influence’ of a meaningful ‘atmosphere,’ ‘background,’ or ‘environment’ (these four terms recur with an amazing frequency throughout Pater’s stories and essays) to be found in, but more often to be denied by, the physical or intellectual circumstances of the milieu into which that individual is placed” (140).

\textsuperscript{85} Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762), a disciple of Christian Wolff, was the German philosopher who first employed the term “aesthetics” in his influential work \textit{Aesthetica (Aesthetics)} (1750-58). Nevertheless, Baumgarten’s term “refers not in the first place to art, but, as the Greek \textit{aesthesis} would suggest, to the whole region of human perception and sensation, in contrast to the more rarefied domain of conceptual thought,” as Eagleton asserts when he opens his discussion in \textit{The Ideology of the Aesthetic} with the statement that “Aesthetics is born as a discourse of the body” (13).
In this account it is advisable to give up the use of the term as designating the critique of taste, and to apply it solely to that doctrine, which is true science – the science of the laws of sensibility – and thus come nearer to the language and the sense of the ancients in their well-known division of the objects of cognition into αισθητά και νοητά (42).

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant’s third *Critique*, nevertheless, the term came to signify the science of beauty and of taste (*Judgment* 286, 304, and 355), generating an apparent confusion and inconsistency with his previous definition. The truth is that for Kant there appeared to be a correlation between sensibility and beauty, between aesthesis and aesthetics, but not in the sense that the empiricists envisioned it. Kant turned against the empiricists on the grounds that they failed to incorporate within their subjectivist analysis the fact that judgments of taste involved an *a priori* principle as well. And this was precisely what the *Critique of Judgment*, in a manner similar to Kant’s other two critiques, set out to establish: the synthetic *a priori* statements of taste. When we express our judgment about an object, judging it as beautiful, Kant argued, we actually deceptively employ “an objective mode of speech,” as Kulenkampff puts it (94), so as to require universal assent (*Judgment* 86), even though we base our judgment solely on a subjective emotion of pleasure or displeasure. Kant claimed that the subjective conditions of a disinterested judgment of taste are “subjective universally” (*Judgment* 54), which entails that every person is capable of them, that they are valid for everyone in spite of the subjective conditions they generate. The universality of judgments on beauty, according to Kant, involves

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86 The full exploration of this link will be the object of the third chapter.
87 The third *Critique* predominantly deals with reflective judgments because they form an equivalent to the synthetic *a priori* judgments of the first and the second critique; they correspond to our sciences and morality that claim universality. They are synthetic because “they go beyond the concept of the object, and even beyond the intuition of the object, and add as a predicate to this intuition something that is not even cognition: namely [a] feeling of pleasure or displeasure” (153). They are *a priori* because they are universally valid; there is a sort of similarity running throughout our response to beauty (154).
“the mental state that we find in the relation between the presentational powers [imagination and understanding] insofar as they refer a given presentation to cognition in general” (61-2). Cognition in the first critique was accounted for on the grounds of imagination collecting a given manifold and schematically presenting it to understanding, which structures it through conceptualization into a unified whole. In judgments about the beautiful, however, imagination and understanding perform their tasks without being limited by a concept, they are in “free play,” they are not guided by any determinate concept\(^88\) (77). The mental state invoked here resembles that of cognition,\(^89\) since it involves the cognitive faculties, yet it does not employ a determinate concept that will ultimately lead to cognition, but a feeling instead of it.\(^90\) And it is precisely this harmony between the subject’s cognitive powers, upon which the presentation of the object we call beautiful is based, that is, universally communicable since it holds for everyone. Therefore, Kant concludes that “beautiful is what, without a concept, is liked universally,” substantiating the intersubjective universality of subjective aesthetic judgments (64). In this sense, aesthetic judgments.

\(^{88}\) Imagination and Understanding are quickened “to an activity that is indeterminate” (Judgment 63). The indeterminate concepts may not yield cognition, but they render the judgment of taste “valid for everyone, because (though each person’s judgment is singular and directly accompanies his intuition) the basis that determines the judgment lies, perhaps, in the concept of what may be considered the supersensible substrate of humanity” (Judgment 213). This way, feelings are communicable because there is a subjective accordance of the faculties without the mediation of a determinate concept, and this accordance is valid for everyone, it forms a common sense; such common sense, however, becomes “not simply a feeling but rather the capacity for a feeling just because it is a principle, rule, idea, or norm” (Crawford 129).

\(^{89}\) “We need imagination to combine the manifold of intuition, and understanding to provide the unity of the concept unifying the [component] presentations” (Judgment 62). This sort of universality then is very different from the \textit{a priori} universality in the other critiques. As Kant claims, it is precisely this “universal communicability of the mental state, in the given presentation, which underlies the judgment of taste as its subjective condition” that generates the feeling of pleasure in the object (61). Thus, cognitive judgments are based on objective \textit{a priori} principles, whereas aesthetic judgments are based upon subjective \textit{a priori} principles. In spite of the fact that cognition and the perception of the beautiful are different, there lies an implicit interrelation between the process we judge something as beautiful and the process of getting to know an object since both imagination and understanding get involved. This interrelation will be touched on later, for it forms a crucial component of Kant’s argument for the transition from nature to freedom and the role of the aesthetic. What is important, however, is the fact that Kant from this early point is already preparing, grounding this argument.

\(^{90}\) This universality, however, cannot arise from any concepts, “for from concepts there is no transition to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure” (54).
for Kant are a form of “pseudo-knowledge” (Eagleton 75); they employ the guise of knowledge (the cognitive faculties) but they do not yield to it. In terms of beauty then we utilize our cognitive faculties as if we were cognizing. It is precisely this as if structure that establishes an analogy between cognition and beauty in Kant’s project.

This analogy invoked by the Kantian aesthetic can be utilized to regard Pater’s trajectory from sense perception to beauty and then back again, since, in my view, it provides a better account of Pater’s interconnection between the concrete and the beautiful than the empirical outlook. Firstly, despite the fact that Pater promoted the politics of the concrete along an aesthetic framework, I have shown that this ultimately resulted in a certain sense of abstraction, which many critics, like McGrath, wrongly identify as inconsistent. For the majority of critics this inconsistency is generated through the fact that they impose an empiricist reading on Pater, but eventually empirical aesthetics cannot account for this form of abstraction, which, as we have seen, involved certain idealistic premises. Secondly, even though empiricism sponsors a subjectivist point of view, Pater’s repeated assimilation of the artist with the scientist, his integration of scientific premises within his aesthetic matrix in the name of Heraclitus, exposes the fact that the Oxford don was in fact reaching out

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91 As Eagleton later on repeats, the aesthetic is “a kind of parody of conceptual understanding, a non-referential pseudo-cognition” (85). Hannah Ginsborg also argues for an implicit link between cognition in general and judgments of taste through the character of reflective judgments. Both cognitive and empirical reflective judgments, she asserts, rest on the “principle that nature is systematically organized in a way that confronts to, or, in Kant’s terms, is purposive for, our cognitive faculties” (63).

92 As a matter of fact, we also demand the assent of others as if it was a moral duty, too: “[n]ow I maintain that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good; and only because we refer the beautiful to the morally good (we all do so naturally and require all others to do so, as a duty) does our liking for it include a claim to everyone else’s assent” (Judgment 228). But this is a point that I shall turn to in my examination of purposes.

93 This analogy can be considered under the prism of what Casey Haskins terms as Kant’s “instrumental autonomy” (43), where beauty is considered to be instrumental to knowledge, despite the fact that its autonomy is highlighted. I shall return, however, to this consideration in the last sections of this chapter.

94 Many critics, considering Pater’s theory as purely empirical, when confronted with non-empirical zones in his work, they inevitably and light-heartedly render it inconsistent.
towards an objective ground,\textsuperscript{95} as captured by the scientific approach that cannot be explained solely in empirical terms. It was precisely this form of empiricist limitation that the critic’s utilization of the Heraclitean paradigm served to underscore, as I have established in the previous chapter. In this sense, I believe that the Kantian doctrine provides a better understanding of Pater’s system on the grounds that Kant’s aesthetics highlight the subjective point of view, just like the empiricists, yet in sharp contrast to them, it also engulfs a claim for a form of objectivity, which is, in my opinion, paradigmatically encapsulated in the German philosopher’s analogy from aesthetics as sensibility to aesthetics as the study of the beautiful.\textsuperscript{96}

It is precisely this analogical character of beauty that Pater utilized in his promotion of Hellenism. We have seen how in “Winckelmann,” while responding to Arnold, Pater presented the relativistic and thus subjectivist, yet unanimous character of pagan aesthetics as a universal constitution in the mental faculties, closely replicating Kant’s argumentation of the \textit{a priori}, and thus, universally communicable and necessary form of judgments on beauty. A purely empirical reading of Pater’s handling would fail to encapsulate this twist in Pater’s reasoning - not to mention that Pater’s sponsoring of the Hellenic ideal, which was tightly associated with Continental idealism, would appear to be highly incongruous. On the other hand, the duality of aesthetics as both sensibility (\textit{aesthesis}) and beauty (\textit{aesthetics}) allowed the critic easily to pass from an empirical point of view and its sensationalist and subjectivist overtones to an aesthetic perspective that furthermore involved claims on

\textsuperscript{95} We have seen how Pater in the “Preface” to the \textit{Renaissance} presented the aesthetic critic through a scientific discourse, where “[h]is end is reached when he has disengaged that virtue, and noted it, as a chemist notes some natural element, for himself and others” (xxx). By maintaining a reference to the “others,” the work of the aesthetic critic was definitely not solipsistic, but it could be communicated.\textsuperscript{96} It was, after all, this form of objectivity that Pater wanted to integrate within the empirical outlook through his constant allusion to Heraclitean asceticism and the training of the senses.
universality and objectivity. In this sense, Pater turned to “the ancient Greeks,” just like Kant, so as to conjure up “τα άισθητα,” yet at the same time to put forward an aesthetic archetype, bringing Kant’s two versions of aesthetics into one cultural ideal.

The universal substratum as expressed through Hellenic culture, Pater emphasized, transubstantiated a potential of the mental faculties into an artistic ideal, in a manner that Christianity, being chiefly orientated towards metaphysical abstraction, failed to do. Unlike Christianity, thus, paganism provided fertile ground for the flourishing of great art through a “transformation” of “the thoughts of the Greeks about themselves and their relation to the world” “into objects for the senses” (Renaissance 131). It is interesting to note here that pagan art by being tightly associated with “the senses” also invoked the cognitive limitations of the phenomena, and, thus, was presented as an anti-metaphysical form of aesthetics in its emphasis on the concrete. In other words, pagan beauty formulated an analogy with the scientific limitations to the concrete; the Greeks were presented as if they possessed the knowledge of the phenomena that Pater’s contemporary scientists advanced. Arnold’s conservative contention in favor of Christianity was therefore contrasted to a twofold liberal discourse that selectively employed on the one hand the principle of aesthetic value, and on the other the epistemology of the empirical concrete with its emphasis on “the senses.” And it is precisely here that Pater’s utilization of Kant comes to light,

97 “Beautiful form for Kant is in essence only the ‘sketch’ (Zeichnung) within the manifold of space; within the manifold of time it is essentially only the ‘play’ (Spiel) or, more exactly, the composition of the play of sounds (Dusing 42). In this sense, especially with regard to the ‘sketch,’ Kant adhered to the classicism of Winckelmann,” as Dusing claims (83). Winckelmann stated that “[s]implicity consists in the design of an image which, with as little drawing as possible, expresses the thing to be given significance […]” (qtd. in Inman, Bibliography 107). The sketch here, furthermore, corresponds to Winckelmann’s loosely termed, abstractly conceived “types,” which carry the universal within the specific, a fusion that Kant’s formalism promoted by emphasising for example both the subjective and the universal side of aesthetic contemplation. Likewise, we can understand how Kant triggered the Hellenism of German idealism as expressed especially by Hegel, whose notion of the “universal concrete” seemed to evoke the “sketch” qualities of ancient Greek sculpture. Thus, the broad and general lines of ancient Greek art became the emblem of the fusion of the concrete and the abstract – a consideration that was repeatedly manifested in Pater’s employment of Greek art.
since Pater’s aspiration was ultimately achieved through a neo-Kantian idiom, which on the one hand connoted an epistemological limitation, and on the other it equipped Pater’s contention with a constellation of aesthetic terms and ideas, enabling Pater to align the sway of science with pagan art so as eventually to overturn Arnold’s claims. Against Arnold’s moral abstractions and his scientific distrust, Pater, thus, upheld the scientifically guised aesthetics of the concrete, where pagan tradition was implicitly identified with the “serious” project of the rising science of the time in their common antagonism against the “mystical,” “too inward” Christian metaphysics, “which still remains in the world of shadows” (Renaissance 132). Pater, thus, within the liberal frame of the “wicked” Westminster Review, as Arnold called it in 1868 (Brake 1990s 9), which was traditionally opposed to ecclesiastical dominance by emphasising empirical induction and envisioning uncompromised social reform, intricately orchestrated his aesthetic argument in an attempt to restore “the primacy of the material or physical dimension,” what L. Dowling calls “the reconciliation with the earth” (“Archeology” 210-211).

On the grounds of the aesthetic as the harmonious bearer of both the subjective (the individual) and the objective (the community) Pater, therefore, upheld Hellenism as a unifying cultural ideal “in which man is at unity with himself, with his physical nature, with the outward world” (Renaissance 143). Kant’s limitation of the concrete, the principle of aesthesis, along with its offspring, the aesthetics of Hegel, Goethe, Heine, Schelling and Schiller, among others, was transubstantiated into a

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98 Unlike pagan tradition, “the mystical art of the Christian middle age […] always struggling to express thoughts beyond itself” (Renaissance 131) is rendered by the Oxford don “too inward,” “inexpressible” because it employs “overcharged symbols, a means of hinting at an idea which cannot fitly or completely express, which still remains in the world of shadows” (132). As we have seen in the previous chapter, the notion of concreteness and relativity is tightly associated by Pater with a scientific discourse. As such, Christianity, in its affiliation with the absolute spirit, is presented as the opposite of science.

99 This “resurrection of the body,” invoked through the pagan ideal as handed by German idealism, becomes “a figure for the rise of ‘humanism’ which in turn signifies the attenuation of Christian doctrine,” as C. Williams puts it (165).
political cause, where the artistic ideal of ancient Greece was considered as a means of overcoming the divisions of polarities, the Entzweiung, and of achieving both cognitive and aesthetic completeness.\textsuperscript{100} And it was precisely the status that science had acquired in Pater’s time that gives confidence to the critic to envision a cultural rebirth. The Greek ideal as a suggested paradigm of aesthetic sense perception was mainly employed as a solution to the “modern spirit,” due to the fact that it metonymically pertained to a universal substratum of mankind, which had been hindered by Christianity, and that was optimistically encouraged to re-surface through its analogical affiliation with the prevailing scientific discourse. And it is in this sense that Pater fully utilized Kant’s double exploration of the “aesthetic,” so as to score the “primacy of the physical” by coming up with a discourse that eventually identified aesthetics with science as a means of completing the series of associations he established between the scientist and the artist within the empirical framework of the Heraclitean paradigm. The links then that the critic advocated between science and art were not only sanctioned by both schools of thought, but they also brought them together.

\textbf{The Centrifugal and the Centripetal}

Embarking from “Winckelmann,” Pater presented the amalgamation of empirical and idealistic premises against the background of ancient Greece. The fusion between the

\textsuperscript{100} A similar view was expressed in Grote’s influential \textit{History of Greece} (1846-1856), which in its affiliation with Mill’s inductive radicalism, considered the Athenian progress towards democracy and freedom as an imitable paradigm of cultural and political fulfillment. In this sense, the limitation to the concrete was endowed with political signification as a means of fighting against conservative abstraction. The affiliation of the Kantian limitation to the concrete with a liberal discourse is again restated in 1890, when Pater in “Prosper Merimee” associates the Kantian subjectivism with a political cause: “[a]fter Kant’s criticism of the mind, its pretensions to pass beyond the limits of individual experience seemed as dead as those of old French royalty” (\textit{Miscellaneous Studies} 1).
concrete and the universal that Pater promoted in the name of the Greek ideal was fully expanded and analyzed in his later writings, becoming much more revealing for our exploration here. In “The Marbles of Aegina,” which was published in April 1880 in the *Fortnightly Review*, and was eventually included in *Greek Studies* (1895), Pater utilized a form of opposition that was later on expanded in *Plato and Platonism* (1893). This rivalry involved what Pater in “Winckelmann” defined as the “concrete” and the “universal,” but now grown to full proportion and developed into a systematized model that, as I shall argue, was actually Pater’s replication of the Kantian aesthetic mode.

Elaborating on the fifteen figures of Parian marble that were discovered in 1811, Pater, right from the start of the article, considered “two opposing tendencies” at work in Greek art: a “purely sensuous,” chryselephantine aspect associated with Ionian, with the Asiatic influence, which had its patron in Hephaestus (122), and an “inward, abstract, intellectual ideal,” which reflected “an order, a sanity, a proportion,” the “order of human reason, now fully conscious of itself,” tightly associated with the Dorian - “or, in reference to its broader scope, the European influence” (121), which was embodied in the religion of Apollo (*Greek Studies* 122).

Pater classified the two tendencies under two concepts he borrowed from the scientific camp,101 and thus he called the Ionian tendency as “centrifugal” and the

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101 Pater’s polar pair of the centrifugal and the centripetal is reminiscent of Nietzsche’s distinction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian as established in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), where the German philosopher turned against the Apollonian as propounded by Winckelmann. It is interesting to note here that the late 19th century throughout Europe was marked by a proliferation of grand dichotomies as suggested by the works of Pater, Nietzsche, and Arnold, among others, which must have been due to the impact of Hegelian philosophy and its promotion of the dialectical approach between polarities as a means of highlighting their synthesis. This consideration was also reflected, in fact, in the scientific field through the prevalence of relativism, where again the interrelations between natural regularities was examined. We shall return, nevertheless, to this issue in our examination of the relation between empirical relativism and idealistic functionalism.
Dorian as “centripetal”\textsuperscript{102}; the former was regarded to be “wholly physical” (122)\textsuperscript{103} whereas the latter “exclusively ethical” (123).\textsuperscript{104} The centrifugal tendency, “flying from the centre, working with little forethought straight before it” (121) became in its “freedom and happiness” representative of “the development of the individual in that which is most peculiar and individual in him” subsequently leading to “individualism” and “separatism,” which made, as Pater claims, the unity of Greece impossible (122).\textsuperscript{105} The Dorian element, on the other hand, maintained “a severe simplification everywhere, in society, in culture, in the very physical nature of man” upholding human mind as “the most absolutely real and precious thing in the world,” enforcing thus “the impress of its sanity, its profound reflexions upon things as they really are, its sense of proportion” (\textit{Greek Studies}\textsuperscript{122}). Standing for “the reign of a composed, rational, self-conscious order,” of the “universal light of understanding,” the Dorian element, according to the critic, “links individuals to each other, states to states, one period of organic growth to another” (122). Pater employed this polar pair so as to illustrate his admiration for Greek sculpture on the grounds that it had

\textsuperscript{102} As a matter of fact, Pater introduced these terms in “Romanticism,” which was published in November 1876 in \textit{Macmillan’s Magazine}. Nevertheless, as one can understand from the title of the article, Pater employed this oppositional form so as to indicate the interplay between Classicism and Romanticism, as we shall see later. Pater’s consideration of the centripetal and the centrifugal in “The Marbles of Aegina” and \textit{Plato and Platonism} focuses more on the interplay between the concrete and the abstract, and thus is more fitting for our consideration here.

\textsuperscript{103} The Ionian tendency “throwing itself forth in the endless play of undirected imagination” delights in “brightness and colour, in beautiful material, in changeful form everywhere” (122).

\textsuperscript{104} “But Apollo, the ‘spiritual form’ of sunbeams, early becomes (the merely physical element in his constitution being almost wholly suppressed) exclusively ethical, - the ‘spiritual form’ of inward or intellectual light, in all its manifestations. He represents all those specially European ideas, of a reasonable, personal freedom, as understood in Greece; of a reasonable polity; of the sanity of soul and body, through the cure of disease and of the sense of sin; of the perfecting of both by reasonable exercise or ascesis; his religion is a sort of embodied equity, its aim the realization of fair reason and just consideration of the truth of things everywhere” (123).

\textsuperscript{105} The Ionian tendency, according to Pater “in the social and political order it rejoices in the freest action of local and personal influences; its restless versatility drives it towards the assertion of the principles of separatism, of individualism – the separation of the state from state, the maintenance of local religions, the development of the individual in that which is most peculiar and individual in him. Its claim is in its grace, its freedom and happiness, its lively interest, the variety of its gifts to civilization; its weakness is self-evident, and was what made the unity of Greece impossible” (122). In \textit{Plato and Platonism}, Pater employs these notions to account for Grote’s remark that the Greeks failed to attain unity on the grounds that “[t]he centrifugal tendency had ever been too much for the centripetal tendency in them, the progressive elements for the element of order” (\textit{Plato} 23).
“harmonized” these influences (121) into a form of art that brought together “the highest indwelling spirit of human intelligence” with “the great human passions,” “the calm and peaceful order of the soul” with “the affections of the body” (123). Just like “Winckelmann” then, where Pater initially regarded the way the Greeks brought together the “universal” and the “concrete” through their statues, Pater, after thirteen years, returned to Greek sculpture to present it as the point of convergence of two highly inclusive and apparently oppositional terms. But this is a crucial point I shall return to after taking a brief look at the way this form of opposition was developed in Pater’s study of Plato.

Pater utilized in *Plato and Platonism* (1893) this rivalry in exactly the same phrasing so as to clarify the Platonic doctrine. Taking into consideration the Heraclitean fusion of opposites, Pater declared that “[p]erfection, in every case, as we may conceive, is attainable only through a certain combination of opposites, Attic ἀλέιφα with the Doric ὀξος” (24). The critic actually summed up Platonic supremacy in terms of this “combination”: “[t]his inorganic, this centrifugal, tendency, Plato was desirous to cure by maintaining over against it the Dorian influence of a severe simplification everywhere, in society, in culture, in the very physical nature of man” (104). Accordingly, the Platonic doctrine was termed as a “dualistic” (46) system that brought together “the metaphysic of Heraclitus” with “the ideal of a sort of Parmenidean abstractness, and monotony or calm” (104), which eventually added “to the utmost degree of Ionian sensibility an effectual desire towards the Dorian order

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106 What Pater adds is the issue of geographic location, and, thus, the centrifugal is associated with the fact that the Athenians were “people of the coast who have the roaming thoughts of sailors, ever ready to float away anywhither amid their walls of wood,” whereas Lacedaemon being “hostile, inaccessible in its mountain hollow […] had no need of any walls at all, there were resources for that discipline and order which constitute the other ingredient in a true Hellenism, the saving Dorian soul in it” (*Plato* 24).
and *ascesis*” (110).\(^{107}\) We should note here, however, that Pater’s employment of the centripetal and the centrifugal necessarily seemed to entail for the critic the imposition of an aesthetic framework. We have seen that in both “Winckelmann” and “The Marbles of Aegina” the trajectory, the action-scope of this oppositional pair, was limited by Pater to the aesthetic field, to sculpture, despite its plethora of socio-ethical and even economic overtones. Likewise, Plato’s balanced fusion of the centripetal and the centrifugal, his bringing together of “the spiritual” and “the material” was illustrated by Pater in terms of Dante’s work (135); it was, in other words, presented as an aesthetic accomplishment, where the Platonic theory of ideas passed “into a phase of poetic thought; as indeed all that Plato’s genius touched came in contact with poetry” (155).\(^{108}\)

Pater calculatingly presented Plato’s fusion as an aesthetic phenomenon; and his limitation to sculpture was not accidental at all. In order to understand Pater’s strategic manipulation of the Platonic doctrine, I will turn to Kant, for it is my objective here to argue that Pater transformed the Greek philosopher into an artist by implicitly establishing an analogy with Kantian aesthetics. I base my claim not only on the fact that Plato was presented as a primordial Kant in the sense that he was surprisingly regarded by Pater as the originator of art for art’s sake, but rather on the fact that Plato’s transmutation was executed by the critic through the employment of a firm Kantian argumentative line. Under the prism of a Kantian reading, the reasons

\[^{107}\] Plato “asserts everywhere the principle of outline, in political and moral life; in the education which is to fit men for it; in the music which is one half of that education, in the philosophy which is its other half – the ‘philosophy of the ideas,’ of those eternally fixed outlines of our thought, which correspond to, nay, are actually identical with, the eternally fixed outlines of things themselves” (110).

\[^{108}\] Pater even went as far as to say that “the idea of Beauty becomes for Plato the central idea” (170). Plato’s “fascination” with “sensible things” was manifested “in the way in which he can tell a long story, - no one more effectively! and again, in his graphic presentment of whole scenes from actual life” (127). Plato “loves a story for its own sake, can make one of fact or fancy at a moment’s notice” (128). Ranking among “masters of literature,” he employed “the special creation of his literary art,” the dialogue, to capture his reader’s imagination (129) and he “would have been an excellent writer of fiction” (132). Even the form of the Platonic system, the dialogue, was regarded by Pater as a literary device of personification.
beneath Pater’s peculiar aesthetization will be clearly highlighted. According to the Kantian scheme, both cognition and morality consisted of determinative judgments, judgments that actually determined the particular under a universal. By subsuming the particular under the general, this form of judgments actually denoted the supremacy of ideas. Judgments about beauty, on the other hand, were reflective because they could not ascribe a characteristic upon particulars on the grounds that beauty was not considered to be an attribute. As such, reflective judgments did not involve determinate concepts or universals, but they rather highlighted the supremacy of the particular, of the concrete in its quest to find a general or a universal.

Taking into consideration this Kantian distinction, Pater’s portrayal of Plato becomes highly revealing in terms of the critic’s tactics. The Greek philosopher was chiefly illustrated as being highly “fascinated with the senses” (127), since he belonged, according to Pater, to a historical period when life was “a continuous surprise, and every object unique, where all knowledge was still of the concrete and the particular” (156). Due to this “fascination,” the father of idealism, according to Pater, employed a form of inductive method where the Greek philosopher transposed his attraction to the world of the senses (134) into “the world of intellectual abstractions,” “associating for ever all the imagery of things seen with the conditions of what primarily exists only for the mind, filling that ‘hollow land’ with

109 The reference of the presentation to the subject through the feeling of pleasure or displeasure “designates nothing whatsoever in the object” (44), which implies that beauty is not inherent in the object itself.
110 It should be noted here that by “judgment” Kant actually referred to “the faculty of thinking the particular as being contained in the universal. If the universal (the rule, the principle, the law) is given, then judgment which subsumes the particular under it is determinant. If, however, the particular is given, to which judgment is to find the universal, then it is merely reflective” (18-19). The role of the judgment in general was to take the particular empirical intuition and through the use of concepts to render it universally valid. Since in determinant judgments the law is a priori given, reflective judgments seek to establish a law for themselves so as to unite under a universal principle.
111 In this sense, Pater seemed to have adopted Grote’s point of view expressed in Plato, where the Greek philosopher was implicitly associated with the inductive method. This influenced Mill as well.
delightful colour and form” (140). Plato’s theory of the ideas, by consequence, was presented in the form of an aesthetic guise, it had “its delightful aesthetic qualities; almost every word, one might say, its figurative value” (140); in Plato “[a]bstract ideas themselves become animated, living persons, almost corporeal, as if with hands and eyes” (170). We can see, then, that it was not only that for Pater Plato approached the abstract in terms of the particular, but that he also artistically encapsulated it into the form of the concrete. The mechanism, then, according to my reading, that Pater strategically utilized to turn Plato’s theory into aesthetics was that he actually presented the Platonic doctrine as consisting of reflective judgments and not determinative ones, as it would have been apposite for an epistemological or a moral philosopher, as Plato is commonly held to be. Pater’s intriguing manipulation of the Platonic doctrine facilitated him, thus, in presenting it as a friendly empirical system. Kant’s reflective judgments enabled Pater to come up with a system that maintained the integrity of the empirical concrete in its relation to the abstract, since this way the particular evoked the absolute in a reflective, non-determinative way; otherwise, the particular would have to be subsumed under the general; it would have to be determined by it, something that would have been highly incompatible with Pater’s relativistic distrust of generic absolutes. As such, Pater’s allegory of Plato promoted, via Kant, the aesthetic as the safeguard of a balanced relation between the centripetal and the centrifugal, between the particular and the general.113

112 Furthermore, Pater asserts that “[i]t was to the lover dealing with physical beauty, a thing seen, yet unseen – seen by all, in some sense, and yet, truly, by one and not another, as if through some capricious, personal self-discovery, by some law of affinity between the seer and what is seen, the knowing and the known – that the nature and function of an idea, as such, would come home most clearly” (170).

113 In this sense, Pater was turning against the orthodoxy of Platonic scholarship in Oxford at the time as represented by Benjamin Jowett, the influential Master of Balliol. As I. Small argues, Jowett employed the Platonic dialogues as a means of “defining the theism towards which Jowett was working” (371). Jowett highlighted “the Platonic notion of duty, and then virtually equated Platonic and biblical notions about the relationship between duty and happiness” (371). Thus, he regarded art as a visual expression of the divine, as Small asserts (372). By utilising the structure of Kant’s reflective
This was actually the gist, for Pater, of Platonic perfection. Such a gist involved Plato’s transition from “inductive reasoning” to “universal definitions” (160), his fusion of the general and the particular, which eventually lost no track of the concrete due to its reflective attitude. Throughout this trajectory from the concrete to the general and then back again to the concrete, the particular, Pater emphasized, benefited from this form of generalization, which was defined as “a method, not of obliterating the concrete phenomenon, but of enriching it, with the joint perspective, the significance, the expressiveness, of all other things beside” (158-9). Indicative of this “enrichment” was Plato, who actually endowed the concrete with “the whole colour and expression of the whole circumjacent world” (158), with the “accumulative capital of the whole world of humanity” (159).\(^\text{114}\) In this sense, Platonic “perfection” consisted of scoring a radical mediation between the “general and [the] particular, between our individual experience and the common experience of our kind,” which in its turn amplified the concrete itself (152). Such enrichment, as we have seen in the first chapter, was also achieved for Pater within the Heraclitean framework through the way the concrete was significantly filtered by cosmic Logos as the Darwinian method exemplified for the critic, which is indicative of the associations that the Victorian thinker was establishing between the idealist camp and science.

Taking into consideration Pater’s suggested ideal of the generalization of the particular, which reached its climax, through an allusion to Kant’s aesthetics, I cannot help but notice that what Pater had been actually preparing his reader for was addressing the very heart of Kantian criticism. H. Young, in a footnote which has

\[^{114}\] Plato, thus, brought “particular details under coherent general rules, able to foresee and influence the future by their knowledge of the past” (261).
almost passed unnoticed by critics, traces Pater’s use of centrifugal and centripetal to Wallace’s *The Logic of Hegel* (1874), where Wallace, quite revealingly for our consideration here, stated about the two currents he detected in any actual fact:

> [t]he one of these is the power of the kind, or universal, which tends to keep things always the same; the other the power of localized circumstances and particular conditions, which tends to render things more and more diversified. The one may be called a centripetal, the other a centrifugal force. If the one side be synthetic, the other is analytic (qtd. in Young 77).

It becomes then clear that what lurked beneath Plato’s fusion of the centripetal and the centrifugal, of the “universal” and the “particular”, was Pater’s own version of Kant’s synthetic *a priori* statements, where the British critic, like the German philosopher, brought together within his formulation the principles of the *a posteriori* and the *a priori*, of the empirically particular and the idealistically abstract.\(^\text{115}\) In a similar fashion, Pater envisioned a form of reconciliation between the principles of the *a posteriori* and the *a priori*, but he nevertheless upheld the aesthetic as a better shortcut to it, since it was regarded as a paradigmatic safety measure against the subordination of the particular to the abstract.\(^\text{116}\) Such aesthetic perspective was furthermore substantiated by Pater’s own treatment of Plato. Along the critic’s

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\(^\text{115}\) Harold Bloom considers Pater’s terms as a fusion of Darwinian epistemology with Hegelian idealism: “[f]rom reading both Hegel and Darwin, Pater had evolved a curious dialectic of history, expounded more thoroughly in *Greek Studies*, using the terms ‘centripetal’ and ‘centrifugal’ as the thesis and antithesis of a process always stopping short of synthesis” (“Belatedness” 187). In this sense, Bloom also acknowledges Pater’s effort to combine the principles of the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*.

\(^\text{116}\) “Those famous ποστοιχία τῶν εναντίων, or parallel columns of contraries: the One and the Many: Odd and Even, and the like: Good and Evil: are indeed all reducible ultimately to terms of art, as the expressive and the inexpressive. Now observe that Plato’s ‘theory of ideas’ is but an effort to enforce the Pythagorean πέρας, with all the unity-in-variety of concerted music, - eternal definition of the finite, upon το ἁπάντο, the infinite, the indefinite, formless, brute matter, of our experience of the world” (*Plato* 60). Furthermore, employing Grote’s analysis of the Platonic Republic, which is divided into three broad castes, “the productive class, the military order, the governing class thirdly, or spiritual order” (244), Pater metaphorically transposes this state division into the faculties of the individual and celebrates the unity that the aesthetic achieves between their “psychological analogues, the senses, the will, and the intelligence” (254), following precisely not only Kant’s distinction of the faculties but also the aesthetic as a point of their convergence.
illustration of Plato as a thinker who embodied his philosophical ideas into concrete, “animated,” “living persons,” Pater himself employed the Greek philosopher as a living animation of his own promotion of a synthesis between the abstract and the concrete. In this sense, Pater’s allegorical presentation of Plato as an aesthete who generalized the concrete, his aesthetization of the Greek philosopher, provided the ideal framework for Pater’s suggestion about the synthetic a priori judgments of beauty as the paradigmatic field where the particular and the general could be reconciled in a free way. As I see it, this was ultimately Pater’s proposal to both his empiricist and idealist contemporaries.

The Purposiveness of Pater’s “Imaginative Reason”

Summing up the relation between the concrete and the abstract in terms of Kantian aesthetics, Terry Eagleton asserts that

> [i]n the operations of pure reason, we bring a particular under a concept of universal law, thus sliding its specificity beneath the general; in matters of practical reason we subordinate the particular to a universal maxim. In aesthetic judgment, however, we have the curious sense of a lawful totality indissociable from our intuition of the immediate form of the thing (85).

The notion of “lawfulness” that Eagleton brings up actually involves Kant’s incorporation of a peculiar form of semi-purpose within the aesthetic that constitutes the cornerstone of Kant’s theory of art and an inseparable component of the synthetic a priori judgments of taste, of the relation between the particular and the general. In his consideration of Plato, Pater evoked, as we have seen, a fundamental Kantian premise as a means of harmonizing and coordinating the concrete with the abstract. Nevertheless, I must admit that such an allusion would have been only partial, and
highly superficial, if it left out of its scope this concept of “lawfulness” upon which Kant’s illustration was firmly based. My intention here is to show that Pater closely abided by Kant’s organization of the aesthetic not only by thoroughly applying the basic Kantian tenets on his analyses but also by manifesting a deep understanding of the Kantian infrastructure.

If we take a look at the chart that Kant offers to his readers in his second, shorter, introduction to the Critique of Judgment, where we have a schematic outline of the functional interrelations between the faculties as established in all three critiques, we will see that they are actually organized around a certain form of the a priori. The “lawfulness” of understanding, the “final purpose” of reason and the “purposiveness” of taste all denote a form of an a priori causality in the relation between the subject and the world: in the way the subject knows, acts, feels and legislates on the world. The broadened concept of purpose as a mediatory common feature underlying all synthetic a priori judgments (theoretical, practical and aesthetic), provides Kant with the means of determining the systematic unity of the three critiques, coming up with a tightly interconnected organization. But since my focus here is the third critique, let us have a closer look at the notion of “lawful” purposiveness, its centrality for the aesthetic and the way Pater ultimately utilized it.

In the Critique of Judgment (1790), Kant considers judgments of taste against the notion of purposes. The German philosopher defines “purpose” “as the object of a concept insofar as we regard this concept as the object’s cause (the real basis of its

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117 All the Mental Powers Cognitive Powers A Priori Principles Application to

118 In the first Critique, Kant explored the way understanding relates to reality and in the second critique he investigated the role of practical reason in its relation to action.
possibility),” whereas “the causality that a concept has with regard to its object” is termed as “purposiveness” (65). A purpose is thus linked to a cause, whereas causality is linked to purposiveness. Accordingly, there can actually be purposiveness without a purpose when we merely reflect on the causality of an object, on the relation of its constituent parts,\textsuperscript{119} without regarding its final purpose as an interest. Such, as a matter of fact, is the condition of the aesthetic. In terms of beauty, Kant asserts, we employ understanding and imagination, which are actually the cognitive faculties, but since a judgment of taste does not involve any interest or concept and cannot be based on any purpose – either subjective or objective (66) – imagination gets liberated from its cognitive subordination to understanding,\textsuperscript{120} which generates knowledge, and, thus, a harmonious “free-play” between the cognitive faculties is established as far as a given presentation is concerned.\textsuperscript{121} Being now fully harmonized, since they are not arrested by any determinate purpose, the cognitive faculties get playfully quickened in “an inner causality” that does not however yield knowledge but a feeling instead (68).

This pleasurable feeling involves the fact that through aesthetic judgments imagination and understanding are not cognitively employed as a means of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Kulenkampff is right in asserting thus that Kant’s notion of “purposiveness without purpose” “corresponds to Hume’s statement that beauty is a certain order or construction of parts” (98). What Kant actually means with this term, as Kulenkampff argues, “is the mere formal structure of integrated wholes. An integrated whole is nothing but a manifold of parts, all of which fit together such that nothing can be added, nor left out, nor changed in its position without destroying the structure that makes it a whole” (98). As Kulenkampff then adds, “to perceive beauty thus means to see that and how a given manifold of parts fit together into an integrated whole” (105).
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Within Kant’s aesthetic framework imagination is presented in its freedom (\textit{Judgment} 91), contrary to the cognitive process where imagination is arrested by the concepts of understanding so as to generate knowledge (\textit{Judgment} 51), or the practical, where it is captured by the purposes of a moral mission. Accordingly, Pater accounts for Winckelmann’s genius on the grounds that he “reproduces for us the earlier sentiment of the Renaissance. On a sudden the imagination feels itself free. How facile and direct, it seems to say, is this life of the senses and the understanding, when once we have apprehended it! Here, surely, is that more liberal mode of life we have been seeking so long, so near to us all the while” (\textit{Renaissance} 118). In a manner similar to Kant, Pater admits that this “more liberal mode of life” is actually triggered by the liberation of imagination.
  \item \textsuperscript{121} What determines a judgment of taste is “subjective purposiveness in the presentation of an object, without any purpose (whether objective or subjective), and hence the mere form of purposiveness, insofar as we are conscious of it, in the presentation by which an object is given us” (\textit{Judgment} 66). The purposiveness is accounted for through the fact that the cognitive powers are caused to be passively engaged because of the presentation and “it is the complete power of presentation that gains when the two states of mind harmonize” (78).
\end{itemize}
intellectually *explaining*, but rather as a means of emotively *comprehending* formal regularities in the world. It is precisely this form of comprehension that generates a pleasant feeling since, when triggered by a natural or artistic form, the mind is able via the reflective judgments to feel pleasure through the fact that it self reflexively contemplates on its own purposive compatibility with the world.\textsuperscript{122} A shape is therefore beautiful, if it is regarded as formally purposive for the free play of imagination and understanding and it is precisely the beautiful form that brings about this harmonious and pleasant free play of the faculties. Kant concludes his consideration by stating that “[b]eauty is an object’s form of purposiveness insofar as it is perceived in the object without the presentation of a purpose” (84), which implies firstly that to view something aesthetically means to pay attention to the way it is purposively fashioned and developed into a formal whole,\textsuperscript{123} and secondly that neither concepts, nor sensations can be regarded beautiful but only the form of something, rendering Kant’s aesthetics as a doctrine of “pure form” (Dusing 83).

\textsuperscript{122} As Kant claims, reflective judgments of taste are the only powers of the mind that directly refer “the reflection only to sensation, which like all sensations is always accompanied by pleasure or displeasure” (*Judgment* 415). As a matter of fact, the basic principle of the reflective judgment when it deals with appearances, is that “it deals with them *technically* rather than *schematically*. In other words, it does not deal with them mechanically, as if were, like an instrument, guided by the understanding and the senses; it deals with them artistically, in terms of a principle that is universal but also indeterminate: the principle of a purposive arrangement of nature in a system – an arrangement [made], as it were, for the benefit of our judgment – by which the particular natural laws (about which the understanding says nothing) are [made] suitable for the possibility of experience as a system, as we must presuppose if we are to have any hope of finding our way in [the] labyrinth [resulting] from the diversity of possible particular laws. Hence, judgment itself makes a priori the technic of nature [a] principle for its reflection. But it can neither explain this technic nor determine it more closely; nor does it have for this [adoption of this principle] an objective basis ([derived] from a cognition of things in themselves) determining the universal concepts of nature. Rather, judgment makes this technic its principle only so that it can, according to its need[s], reflect in terms of its own subjective law, and yet in a way that also harmonizes with natural laws in general” (402). The reflective judgment is able to a priori reflect on the fact that the forms of nature are purposive for our understanding of them. “Hence the purposiveness of nature is a special a priori concept that has its origins solely in reflective judgment. For we cannot attribute to natural products anything like nature’s referring to them purposes, but can only use this concept in order to reflect on nature as regards that connection among nature’s appearances which is given to us in terms of empirical laws” (20). As such, the natural object, under the prism of the aesthetic, appears to be meant to participate in a dialogue with the individual.

\textsuperscript{123} This way, Kant appears to be in tune with the intellectual and scientific climate of his time, which found its culmination twenty years after his death in Lamarck’s organic biological doctrine and after that in Darwin’s breakthrough theory of the species.
Pater exhibited a deep awareness of this Kantian tenet even from his initial publication, where, as we shall see, he actually employed the notion of purposiveness against Coleridgesian aesthetics. Pater argued that Coleridge applied “with an eager, unwearied subtlety” (*Appreciations* 36) transcendental absolutes that originated from his one-sided belief that “[w]hatever is, is according to reason: whatever is according to reason, that is” (37), to questions of “poetic or artistic criticism” (36). Coleridge’s aesthetics, as a consequence, comprised “the least fugitive part of his prose work,” since it was there that the Romantic thinker came “nearest to principles of permanent truth and importance,” Pater complained (36). The paradox that Pater underpinned involved the fact that Coleridge imposed the “eternal outlines ascertained once and for all” upon “a world of fine gradations and subtly linked conditions” (33), enforcing therefore preconceived and prescribed rational purposes upon a realm that just vaguely indicated dialectic formations. The paradox implicit in Coleridgesian aesthetics became even more highlighted in the contrast that Pater established between Wordsworth and Coleridge. The discourse of the “subtly linked conditions” was, Pater contended, positively invoked through Wordsworth, who was to be distinguished by a joyful and penetrative conviction of the existence of certain latent affinities between nature and the human mind, which reciprocally gild the mind and nature with a kind of ‘heavenly alchemy’ [ … ] [taking] the form of an unbroken dreaming over the aspects and transitions of nature — a reflective, though altogether unformulated, analysis of them (42).

It becomes obvious here that Pater’s reference to the “reflective” yet “unformulated,” “latent affinities,” which were received in a “joyful” fashion, expressed a clear allusion to Kant’s definition of the aesthetic as the paradigmatic

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124 Pater defines that Coleridge specifically applied “transcendental philosophy, chiefly as systematised by the mystic Schelling” (36).  
125 “In his unambitious conception of his function as a poet, and in the very limited quantity of his poetical performance, as I have said, he was a contrast to his friend Wordsworth” (43).
means of reflecting on formal purposiveness, which evokes a pleasurable feeling through the purposeful compatibility, the “alchemy” that it instils between man and nature.\textsuperscript{126} The notion of purposiveness was invoked here through the emphasis on Wordsworth’s “unformulated affinities,” which comprised a non-deterministic alternative to Coleridge’s rationally stern and pre-determined absolutes that paid no attention to formal development. By utilizing the notion of purposiveness through Wordsworth, Pater emphasised, as Kant had demonstrated in his exploration of the aesthetic,\textsuperscript{127} that the proper response towards art actually comes from the faculty of feelings and not of reason.\textsuperscript{128} In this sense, Pater implicitly alluded to Kantian orthodoxy so as to criticise Coleridgian aesthetics, indicating that the principle permeating art was purposiveness and not purpose. And this is how Pater actually accounted for Coleridge’s shortcomings: by mistaking aesthetics for ethics, by treating art in terms of purposes when only purposiveness was actually at work, in Coleridge’s “sadder, more purely intellectual, cast of genius, what with Wordsworth was sentiment or instinct became a philosophical formula, developed, as much as possible, after the abstract and metaphysical fashion of the transcendental schools of Germany” (43).\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{126} Pater is actually referring to the Kantian aesthetic project when he associates the aesthetic experience with “completeness, the perfectly rounded wholeness and unity of impression” (49), with “a quickened sense of the beautiful” and “human feeling” (50), underlining thus the aspects that, according to Kant, constitute the aesthetic.

\textsuperscript{127} Wordsworth “kept his conviction of a latent intelligence in nature within the limits of sentiment or instinct, and confined it to those delicate and subdued shades of expression which alone perfect art allows. In Coleridge’s sadder, more purely intellectual, cast of genius, what with Wordsworth was sentiment or instinct became a philosophical idea, or philosophical formula, developed, as much as possible, after the abstract and metaphysical fashion of the transcendental schools of Germany” (\textit{Appreciations} 42-43). This way, once again we see Pater moving along the dictates of the third critique for he insists on “sentiment” as the appropriate response towards art or the aesthetic contemplation of nature, and not abstracting reason as does Coleridge. In this sense, Pater appears to have a much deeper knowledge of the Kantian scheme than McGrath claims.

\textsuperscript{128} It was Wordsworth, after all, who spoke of “imagination as the light of reason.”

\textsuperscript{129} As we have seen, “the abstract and metaphysical fashion of the transcendental schools of Germany” actually refers to Schelling’s systematization of Kant as a purely rational doctrine. In this respect, Coleridge’s substitution of “sentiment” by “reason” actually led to the “deterioration of a productive or creative power into one merely metaphysical or discursive” (43). As Bloom argues, “Pater’s complain
The notion of purposiveness was, furthermore, highly foregrounded in Pater’s second publication, “Winckelmann” (1867), as well. There, Pater systematized the Kantian tenet in a very indirect way so as actually to address a neologism that Matthew Arnold coined when attacking pagan religion. Let us have a brief look at Arnold’s view so as to clarify Pater’s position. After having claimed that paganism could not be re-established unaltered in the modern world, Arnold emphatically declared in “Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment” (1864) that not even the German Hellenist Heinrich Heine, who divided the world into “barbarians and Greeks” in his attempt to re-establish a relation between paganism and the modern spirit, when confronted with death, was able to resist the soothing “stray” of Christianity. Taking into consideration the rapidly growing material individualism of his days, however, Arnold desolately knew that neither could Medieval Christianity be re-established unaltered. Thus, echoing the harmonizing climate, which led to the Second Reform Bill of 1867, Arnold concluded by calling for a bridging between the Hellenic free and spontaneous knowledge and the Hebraic strictness of conduct.\(^{130}\) In this respect, the abstract moral regard for duty of medieval Christianity, which “lived by the heart and imagination,” was brought together with the critical outlook of paganism, which “lived by the senses and understanding,” culminating in the awareness that “the main element of the modern spirit’s life is neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; it is the imaginative reason” (Arnold, Criticism 153). Such an “imaginative reason,” along the sane and measured
humanism of “sweetness and light,” was evoked as a “well balanced” means which satisfied both “the thinking power” and the “religious sense” (Arnold, *Criticism* 154), both the Hellenic aesthetic comprehensiveness “closely related to theory and intellectual speculation” and the moral commitment of Hebraic praxis (Gossman 25). In this sense, Arnold’s term was upheld so as to complement the superfluous pagan individualism, which he detected in the joyous rationalism of the flourishing *laissez faire*, with a moral seriousness orientated towards a qualified imaginary common good as expressed by Christianity. What Arnold essentially implied was, as he stated in 1861, that freedom needed to be “employed in the service of an ideal higher than that of an ordinary man, taken by himself” so that it wouldn’t be *Americanized* (*Culture* 67) and, thus, he proposed the function of a moral restraint as a means of curtailing such potential danger - a solution that put him back in line with the liberal conservativism of his father.

Pater, on the other hand, paradigmatically upheld Winckelmann and Goethe against Arnold’s vision of cultural completion as exemplified through the Christianization of Heine. Goethe “appears before us consummate and entire, complete in the ancient sense” (119); his “entirety”, Pater explicates, possessed “the completeness and serenity of a watchful, exigent intellectualism” (201-3), his “artistic genius” involved the force of “the imaginative intellect” (137), and as such was in no need of a Christian crutch. Pater’s “imaginative intellect,” however, as D. J. DeLaura correctly asserts, “points in the direction of a fusion of the sensuous and the ideal” (212) and it openly suggests Arnold’s “imaginative reason” in its power of synthetically bringing together the senses and understanding with the heart and imagination. Pater’s allusion to Arnold’s term, nevertheless, implied no identification with the critic, for Pater added a critical twist to Arnold’s notion, which actually
involved a Kantian perspective. Unlike Arnold, who introduced “imaginative reason”
within the framework of Heine’s Christianisation, Pater invoked Arnold’s concept in
terms of Goethe, who, although being an idealist, ultimately converted, along with
Winckelmann, to a form of empiricism (manifested in his limitation to the concrete)
through his compliance with Kant’s “least transcendental parts,” as we have seen.

Pater’s correlation established between “imaginative reason” and Goethe,
comprised part of a firm Kantian undercurrent, not only in the sense that Pater mainly
absorbed Kant through Goethe, as Hans Proesler claims (78-82),131 and thus Goethe
metonymically suggested the German philosopher, but also through the fact that
Pater’s illustration of the “imaginative intellect” of Goethe’s genius was clearly
presented in terms of Kant’s influential exploration of imagination and understanding
as “the mental powers whose combination (in a certain relation) constitutes genius”
(Judgment 185).132 This Kantian undercurrent was, as a matter of fact, furthermore
substantiated by Pater’s own definition of “imaginative reason.” In “The School of
Giorgione” (1877), Pater unequivocally alluded to Arnold’s notion by restating that
“art addresses not pure sense, still less the pure intellect, but the ‘imaginative reason’
through the senses” (Renaissance 83), whereas, elaborating on Plato’s fusion of the
particular and the general in Plato and Platonism, Pater maintained that “all gifts of
sense and intelligence converge in one supreme faculty of theoretic vision, θεωρία,
the imaginative reason” (140). Therefore, Pater’s “imaginative reason,” referred
neither to the realm of “pure sense,” which in Kant’s scheme indicated cognition, nor
to the realm of “pure intellect,” which specified the scope of reason,133 but involved

131 Proesler argues that what Pater primarily got from Kant through Goethe was his emphasis on the
concrete and the limitations on human knowledge (78-82).
132 Pater’s relation to the Kantian notion of “genius” will be fully explored later on.
133 For, as we know, aesthetic contemplation for Kant does not involve the strictness of reason, “hence
we can at least observe a purposiveness as to form and take note of it in objects – even if only by
reflection – without basing it on a purpose (as a matter of the nexus finalis)” (Judgment 65). The
both in a measured balance as captured by the Kantian premise of purposiveness, where causality is invoked instead of a final cause, and the cognitive faculties are employed not for the serious task of knowledge but for the mere sake of disinterested free play; and it must have been precisely this Kantian distinction that Pater had in mind when he restated Goethe’s remark about Winckelmann that “one learns nothing from him […] but one becomes something” (119).

By presenting “imaginative reason” within the context of Kantian aesthetics, Pater was able to highlight a purposive interplay between the senses and reason that could not, however, be bound within the limits of a prescribed purpose. In this sense, Pater managed to bring together imagination and reason without having to resort to Arnold’s appeal to Christian morality or his imposition of moral or rational restraints upon pagan imagination – a strategic shift that was actually executed on the grounds of Kantian purposiveness. As such, Pater exploited Arnold’s fusing model but eventually replaced his suggestion for the conjugation of paganism and Christianity with an alternative model that reconciled the senses and reason under an aesthetic prism as a means of safeguarding the autonomy of art from any moral jurisdiction. Yet, purposiveness was also promoted as a synthetic principle. A blueprint of the synthetic qualities of aesthetic purposiveness was actually provided by the very way Pater utilized the term. The critic applied the Kantian premise as a means of neutrally contemplating empirical forms by concentrating on their development without regarding ultimate purposes, tightly allying empiricist induction with disinterested aesthetic purposiveness; Kant’s tenet, in its turn, supplemented a loosely termed cohesive organization upon the phenomena that the empirical paradigm

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134 In this sense, Pater’s work complies with the largest aestheticist agenda, where the notion of art for art’s sake was employed, as R. V. Johnson puts it, as a “battle-cry for artists and critics claiming freedom of artistic expression” (9).
denied. In this sense, the Kantian notion was employed as a mediatory form between empiricism and idealism, despite its idealistic overtones, which were eventually neutralized by Pater’s focus on the aesthetic as the fundamental bearer of the senses. After all, the notion of purposiveness was implicit in the evolutionary model as well, through Darwin’s tenet that the form of the species was purposively fashioned by environmental stimuli, and it was present in the Heraclitean doctrine through the concept of Logos, as we have seen in the first chapter.

The Kantian maxim of purposiveness, as a notion that eschewed moral or cognitive limitation by advocating purposeful formal cohesion, facilitated Pater in optimistically encapsulating within a liberal discourse the “blending and interpenetration of intellectual, spiritual, and physical elements, still folded together, pregnant with the possibilities of a whole world closed within it” (Renaissance 140), it enabled the critic to unreservedly contemplate “a whole world closed within,” and impartially capture “the sharpness and reality of a suddenly arrested life” (134). It was, after all, this purposeful free play elicited by the most dominant subject of sculpture, youth, “where the moulding of the bodily organs is still as if suspended between growth and completion, indicated but not emphasised” that allowed “passion to play lightly over the surface of the individual form, losing thereby nothing of its central impassivity, its depth and repose” (139). As such, along the liberation of imagination that the notion of purposiveness engendered, there also lurked, I have to add, Pater’s implicit appeal to a theoretical apparatus that would shun moral or patriarchal constriction and eventually sanction the unreserved reflection of male statues, the free play of homoerotic imagination upon male form. Aesthetic
purposiveness was, in this sense, employed by Pater as a means of theoretically authorising the liberation of a sexually deviant discourse, as well.\footnote{In this sense, Pater came up with a discourse that turned the male body into stone, “allowing one to contemplate [it] with a good conscience” (Jenkyns 136) as a “subject of utopian speculation” (Mirzoeff 60). As such, “Winckelmann” is considered Pater’s “most homoerotic essay” (Walken 8), where Pater was advocating in an encoded manner (Shuter, “Outing” 491) “the vindication of love, or more precisely of eros, as an essential, ineradicable and healthy element of our human nature” (Dale 8).}

**A Model for the Individual**

Kant’s allegation of the aesthetic as the realm where the mind is regarded in its freedom from moral or cognitive limitation, actually stemmed from the tight association he established between judgments of taste and individual point of view. After having elaborated on theoretical cognition in the first *Critique* and the practical purposes of morality in the second, Kant turned in his third *Critique* (1790) to the aesthetic as the fundamental bearer of the subjective on the grounds that a judgment of taste was regarded as “subjective universally” (54) by referring “the presentation to the subject and his feeling of pleasure and displeasure” (44). According to Kant’s scheme, after all, beauty was not inherent in the object but in the subject’s mind. Taking into consideration the centrality of the *Critique of Judgment* for Kant’s overall project, subjectivity, by implication it was also assigned a pivotal function. The subjective condition of the aesthetic was instrumentally regarded by Kant as the point of convergence between our theoretical cognition of nature and the freedom we exhibit through the application of practical reason. Aesthetic judgments underpinned the capacity of the individual to comprehend, as we have seen, via a sequence of subjective judgments, the world of the phenomena as a prerequisite form of preparation before we put into action our rational purposes. Drawing on Kant’s consideration of the aesthetic as a field where imagination is celebrated in its freedom
from moral constraint, Pater, in a similar fashion, advanced a discourse on the
emancipation of the individual that was tightly linked to art. Pater’s conjunction
between the aesthetic and the subjective, his aesthetization of the notion of
individuality, which will be my focus here, was quite symptomatic of his indebtedness
to Kantian aesthetics, as I intend to argue. My exploration will mainly concentrate on
Pater’s “Winckelmann,” since the German framework of this specific article enabled,
as I have pointed out, the critic intricately to address, either directly or indirectly, a
variety of issues involving Kant.

Pater’s “Winckelmann,” as we have seen, was an implicit response to
Arnold’s article, where Arnold brought the “religious sense” (145) of the “Church of
the multitude” (137), the “popular religious use” (145) of the “majority of mankind”
(147) as a measuring balance against the “horrors of selfishness” (139), of the
“individuals driven mad by unbounded means of self-indulgence” (145). Against
Arnold’s subordination of pagan art under the moral restraints of the Christian
“multitude,” Pater upheld pagan art as representative of how “the moral instinct, like
the religious or political, was merged in the artistic” (120),136 which additionally
resulted in a profound form of individuality. The Greeks, Pater admiringly confessed,
were “great and free, and have grown up on the soil of their own individuality,
creating themselves out of themselves, and moulding themselves to what they were,
and willed to be” (141); “in Greek thought, […] the ‘lordship of the soul’ is
recognized; that lordship gives authority and divinity to human eyes and hands and
feet; inanimate nature is thrown into the background” (132). In this sense, Pater hailed
Greek art as “the first naïve, un perplexed recognition of man by himself” (137).
Greek art was not accidentally epitomized in its sculpture, which for Pater signified an

136 After all, for Pater, “[t]hat naïve, rough sense of freedom, which supposes man’s will to be limited,
if at all, only by a will stronger than his, he can never have again” (Renaissance 148).
artistic embodiment of the epistemological limitation to the concrete. It was actually artistic form that gave Greeks the opportunity to express their individuality by converting their limitation to the concrete into a limitation to the individual, Pater implied. As such, art became the plane of the emancipation for the individual, the vehicle of individual manifestation, but also the archetypal level upon which the subjective was freely articulated in a world of limitations imposed by the phenomena that the Greeks abided by: “and it is a proof of the high artistic capacity of the Greeks, that they apprehended and remained true to these exquisite limitations, yet in spite of them, gave to their creations a mobile, a vital, individuality,” as Pater put it (137). And it is here that one can in fact trace Pater’s debt to Kant, for this is precisely the quality that the German philosopher attributed to the aesthetic, as well.

All these considerations were symbolically encapsulated in Pater’s presentation of Winckelmann. Pater portrayed the German historian as having approached ancient Greek culture through an apprehension that was not based on “understanding” but on “instinct or touch” (124). Winckelmann, the critic argued, in his effort to multiply his intellectual force (116), “plucked out and cast from him” “other interests, practical or intellectual” (119) as “the highest expression of indifference which lies beyond all that is relative or partial” (140). Kant’s limitation to the concrete, in all its overtones of Baconian impartiality, nevertheless, also elicited the Kantian dictum of contemplative disinterestedness, and Winckelmann was ultimately depicted as reflecting “the archaic immobility […] a motion ever kept in reserve, and very seldom committed to any definite action” (119). In accordance with Kantian art theory and in the spirit of Theophile Gautier, who, under the aegis of

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137 As Kant himself admitted, in the products of sculpture, “art is almost confused with nature” (180).
138 And it was precisely this serious, this ascetically centralized passion, this nearly scientific goal which had nothing to do with Arnold’s pagan gaiety and superficiality, that actually granted him with “wholeness, unity with oneself, intellectual integrity” (119) to the extent that in Pater’s eyes he is petrified into a bust in all his “immobility” and self-reliance.
Winckelmannian aesthetics, rendered the materialism of the concrete into “the poetry of silence, […] the so-called doctrine of impassiveness and the l’art pour l’art mystique” (Giraud 182). Winckelmann, after having internalized the supreme qualities of pagan art, was presented in his “central impassivity” as the ultimate paradigm of an individual leading his life according to “the love of art for its own sake” (153). The characteristics of Winckelmann’s attitude towards Greek antiquity, as presented by Pater, however, his detachment and disinterestedness, his reflection based on a temperamental feeling, his unprejudiced stance towards Greek art that involved no moral or cognitive criteria, actually comprised the constituents of the Kantian judgment of taste that in Pater’s eyes formulated a form of temperament. This form of temperament was in its turn sponsored as an exemplary model for the individual against Arnold’s “multitude.” In this sense, “[w]hereas Hellenism for Arnold is an educational means of advancing England, Hellenism for Pater is purely an individual matter,” as Stone adds (183). Encapsulating the excluding and detached atmosphere of the scholars at Oxford, Pater’s “Winckelmann” can also be regarded within the context of Oxford as a response to the dominant figure at the time, Benjamin Jowett, and his ethical reading of classical antiquity.

But let us have a closer look at what precisely Pater’s model for the individual involved. “The basis of all artistic genius,” Pater emphasised, “lies in the power of

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139 See also, Mario Praz, Romantic Agony, p 464.
140 Pater defines them as “blitheness,” “repose,” “generality” and “breadth” (137).
141 We can detect here the fact that “the phrase l’art pour l’art was used […] as a synonym for the aesthetic concept of disinterestedness, which Kant had expressed as purposiveness without purpose,” as Wilcox argues about Madame de Stael’s influential systematization of Kantian aesthetics, in his consideration of the origins of aestheticism (377).
142 Winckelmann “made himself a pagan” so as to penetrate into the antique world (122) “by his passion, his temperament” (141). His enthusiasm was “dependent […] to a great degree on bodily temperament” (122). The key to understanding the Greek spirit, Pater adds, “Winckelmann possessed in his own nature, itself like a relic of classical antiquity” (141). “In Winckelmann, this type comes to him, not as in a book or a theory, but more importantly, because in a passionate life, in a personality” (146).
143 In contrast to Arnold’s claims for the need of a curtailment of individual freedom in terms of social cohesion, Pater upholds the emancipated, disinterested individual as the paradigmatic bearer of the need for more, and not less, freedom.
conceiving humanity in a new and striking way” “by generating around itself an atmosphere with a novel power of refraction, selecting, transforming, recombining the images it transmits” (137). Pater’s model designated the individual’s ability to “rearrange the details of modern life, so to reflect it, that it may satisfy the modern spirit” (148). We can see here that Pater’s model heavily drew on Kant’s definition of the “genius” as “the talent (natural endowment) that gives the rule to art” (Judgment 174), as “the exemplary originality of a subject’s natural endowment in the free use of his cognitive powers” (186). According to Kant, genius signified the gift to generate “aesthetic ideas,” the capacity to create “another nature out of the material that actual nature gives [us],” the skill to “process that material into something quite different, namely, into something that surpasses nature” (182):

the product of a genius […] is an example that is meant not to be imitated, but to be followed by another genius […]. The other genius, who follows the example, is aroused by it to a feeling of his own originality, which allows him to exercise in art his freedom from the constraint of rules […]. But since a genius is nature’s favourite and so must be regarded as a rare phenomenon, his example gives rise to a school for other good minds (Judgment 187).

After having borrowed Kant’s exploration of the genius and of the aesthetic ideas in his illustration of Winckelmann and Goethe, Pater set the German thinker as a paradigm to be followed by the individual. Pater’s vision of the individual, in other words, did not only address the production of art through genius, but also its reception through judgment since, in Kant’s words, “[j]udging beautiful objects to be such requires taste; but fine art itself, i.e., the production of such objects, requires genius” (Judgment 179). It was under the prism of the Kantian conception of genius that Pater

144 “[B]y an aesthetic idea I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it. It is easy to see that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a rational idea, which is, conversely, a concept to which no intuition (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate” (Judgment 182).
furthermore attacked Coleridge. Coleridge’s rigid conception of the universe, the Oxford don argued, was inevitably transported into his aesthetics, generating a mechanical account of artistic creation as well:

> [t]hose associative conceptions of the imagination, those eternally fixed types of action and passion, would come, not so much from the conscious invention of the artist, as from his self-surrender to the suggestions of an abstract reason or ideality in things: they would be evolved by the stir of nature itself, realising the highest reach of its dormant reason: they would have a kind of prevenient necessity to rise at some time on the surface of the human mind (Appreciations 38).

Coleridge’s vision of the artist, Pater implied, entailed the effacement of individual originality, of conception as an active intervention and thus presented artistic production, which according to Kant required the dynamic force of a genius, as passively static.

Returning to the question of what precisely Pater’s suggestion involved for the individual, I can now answer “a judgment of taste.” Indicative of this was the fact that for Pater individual freedom was mainly presented as a form of a judgment, where imagination, being disinterestedly free from the objective claims of both morality and cognition, selected and combined forms into organized wholes, dynamically asserting a unifying force upon phenomenally relationless particulars, that eventually resulted in a harmonious and purposeful comprehension for the

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145 Coleridge “exaggerates” (40) in his metaphysical zeal “an energetic unity or identity” into “something like the identity of a natural organism, and the associative act which effected it into something closely akin to the primitive power of nature itself” (39); he turned Schelling’s Philosophy of Nature into “a theory of art,” Pater emphatically complained (37).

146 As Inman argues, “Pater rejects [Kant’s] idea of categories as an explanation of perception, but likes the image it calls up of ‘the artist combining a few elementary colours, curves, sounds into anew whole’” (Bibliography 88). The image that Inman actually refers to is, I would add, the idea of the genius. Likewise, Pater rejects Coleridge’s notion of “organic creation” because it turns artistic creation into an “unthinking process,” as Inman puts it (88). Here, also lies the kernel of Pater’s critique against Coleridge for Bloom (“Coleridge” 37).
individual. Under a Kantian prism, it becomes then clear that Pater’s principles of selection, transformation and re-arrangement and their subsequent aesthetic context that he upheld for the individual, actually amounted to the notion of taste. As the field where individual freedom could be actively manifested, taste bore the distinguishing mark of the individual in the guise of an aesthetic expression since it, after all, belonged to the realm of the aesthetic. Under this scope, we can also account for the fact that Pater identified choice and taste with the individual when remarking that: “style is the man” *(Appreciations)* 16 in his essay on style. As I. Small, summarizing the article, asserts, for Pater “individual thought only properly exists in the individual expression or the process that leads to the formulation of that expression” (377).149

It is interesting to note here that Pater’s utilization of Kantian aesthetics in his promotion of individuality, intriguingly captured the intellectual climate of his time, revealing that the aesthetes’ claim for the autonomy of art was, in fact, prescriptive rather than descriptive. The turbulent economic instability of the late 1870s, after the prosperity of the 1850s and 1860s, marked a crisis that was expressed in the widespread questioning of faceless economical abstractions as evocative of a progress where the specific human condition was trivially regarded. Indicative of this trend was W. S. Jevons’ re-evaluation of Ricardo and Mill’s economic theories, where the English economist marked a shift from generalizations towards the specificity of

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147 In Pater’s terms, the liberation of imagination results in a form of “apprehension” that brings “the senses and the intellect” closer to the individual *(Renaissance)* 118.

148 Pater is here alluding to Buffon’s well-known dictum that “le style c’est l’homme”. Both in Pater and in Buffon the notion of style is identified with the concept of individuality: “[s]tyle […] is the very element of individuality itself, that mode through which the individual consciousness seeks to distinguish itself, to affirm its incomparable originality,” as Fr. Jameson puts it *(Form)* 334.

149 As Pater puts it in “On Style” (1888), “[i]n this way, according to the well-known saying, ‘The style is the man,’ complex or simple, in his individuality, his plenary sense of what he really has to say, his sense of the world; all cautions regarding style arising out of so many natural scruples as to the medium through which alone he can expose that inward sense of things, the purity of this medium, its laws or tricks of refraction: nothing is to be left there which might give conveyance to any matter save that” *(Appreciations)* 16.
conditions, “the subjective judgments of utility made by individuals in the market place” (E. Jay & R. Jay 15). Through a sophisticated analysis, Regenia Gagnier establishes a convergence between “Jevons, the mathematical economist, and Pater, the donnish aesthete […] in their promotion of subjectivism, individualism, consumption, and ultimately formalism” (54), which eventually reveals joint aesthetic and economic relations in the face of their liberation from moral jurisdiction. As Gagnier states, the notion of taste underwent a major shift around 1871 since it “ceased to be a moral category […] it became individual, subjective, psychological” (4). Pater’s insertion within this late Victorian matrix of the individual’s liberation from moral restraints, as specifically expressed through Kant’s subjective judgments of taste, in this sense seemed to echo all the social amalgamations, in which taste and style ultimately represented “an advanced stage of development […] [where one] must choose from a universe of goods on display” based on one’s “level of civilization” (Gagnier 145-148). The aesthetes, additionally, as Walter Benjamin argues in his influential Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism, treated language the way “the buyer faces the commodity on the open market” (105). Demanding an art cut off from the rest of the social web, the aesthetes came face to face with a shrunk social horizon, and an absent social cause which pushed them to the limits of their ivory tower, into an esoteric realm, where language only mirrored the autonomous individual and all “these elements that are reflected in taste”: “the idiosyncrasies, nuances, and imponderables of his nature” (Benjamin

150 As Fr. Jameson also argues, “style is a relatively recent phenomenon and comes into being along with the middle-class world itself” (Form 333).
151 The “advanced stage of development” is actually denoted in Pater’s text through the tight interconnection he establishes between aesthetic values and empirical science as exemplary of social progress.
Kant’s aesthetic legacy by emphasizing aesthetic disinterestedness and subjective reflection was, after all, quite crucial in this respect as Pater’s prolongation of the Kantian tradition in the later 19th century manifests.

It must have become clear by now that Pater appears to be closely following the German philosopher’s exposition of the aesthetic and not only his epistemological limitations, as McGrath argues. The notions of universality, of disinterestedness, of conceptual indeterminacy, of subjectivity, of reflective formal purposiveness that Pater utilized in his writings, actually comprised the four prerequisites, the four moments, as Kant termed them, of the judgments of taste. In view of this, the sum of Pater’s argumentative line seems to be borrowed from Kant. Indicative of this solid Kantian backbone was Humphrey Ward’s statement that “the young men of his day received their first notion of the theory of art for art’s sake from the papers on Coleridge and Winckelmann” (qtd. in Young 31). Taking into consideration the fact that art for art’s sake was tightly associated with the Kantian doctrine both in France and in Britain, Pater’s readers of these early essays must have found no difficulty in

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152 In this respect, the aesthete in his quest for the suitable word, able to express his individual taste, fascinatingly reflects the consumer’s abstraction of the real through the exercise of taste as a means of achieving the illusionary identity of a consumer citizenship. Pater in his article, and especially in “On Style,” where the quest for the right word is treated as analogous to scientific quest, fascinatingly captures this shift where freedom is substituted by the science of style.

153 Accordingly, Kant established that judgments of taste are disinterested (46), “subjective universally” (54), subjectively purposive yet without a purpose (66) and requiring universal assent (86). As such, statements of taste denoted a universal contemplative mental procedure that did not directly yield knowledge or morality, since imagination and understanding were not arrested by any specific concept or interest (51) and lay therefore in harmonious free play, which produced a subjective feeling of disinterested pleasure.

154 Wilcox asserts that it was the French litterateur, Benjamin Constant, who first used the phrase l’art pour l’art “as early as 1804 in summarizing a discussion of Kantian aesthetics he had heard in Germany” (360). Burwick adds that Constant mentioned the term in a conversation he had with an Englishman, Henry Crabb Robinson (121), which is an interesting remark, taking into consideration the fact that the movement of aestheticism chiefly prevailed in England and France, even though it had its origins in Germany (Burwick 118-119, Singer 345). Along with Madame de Stael, Constant disseminated the doctrine of l’art pour l’art within a solid Kantian framework, which was largely based, as Wilcox argues, on a “misunderstanding” of Kantian theory (361). Wilcox claims that even Gautier associated his aestheticist doctrine with certain Kantian ideas that “he was probably taking them by hearsay also” (376), resulting in the fact that “the phrase of l’art pour l’art was used in 1804 as synonym for the aesthetic concept of disinterestedness, which Kant had expressed as ‘purposiveness
tracing a Kantian argumentation which was not that blatantly expressed. In this sense, Pater’s articles beneath their empirical polemics actually sponsored idealistic aesthetics as expressed through Kant’s third *Critique*, the offspring of which was, after all, aestheticism.

**The Form of the Copernican Revolution**

Kant’s contribution to the cult of the individual was, however, as is well known, not solely restricted in his third *Critique*. The German philosopher’s vision of the individual was, as a matter of fact, firmly established even from the first pages of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, upon which his art theory was eventually based. Kant’s incorporation of the dynamics of the individual within his exploration of theoretical cognition entailed significant changes for the course of human science, which Pater fully encompassed in his own matrix as well, and ultimately promoted as a means of amplifying his empirical model in the manner of Mill.

Kant brought about a radical break when he claimed that there was no such thing as a totally detached observer, as a form of perception stripped of a perceiving subject. Inspired by Copernicus, who reversed the sun-earth relation, Kant turned against the prevailing notion of a passively recipient mind and argued that instead of considering the mind as being regulated by the world, we can actually regard the world as being actively constructed and ultimately conceptualized by the mind itself without purpose” (Wilcox 377). It becomes then evident that from its very beginning the movement of aestheticism was allied with Kantian aesthetics. 155 “We here propose to do just what Copernicus did in attempting to explain the celestial movements. When he found that he could make no progress by assuming that all the heavenly bodies revolved round the spectator, he reversed the process, and tried the experiment of assuming that the spectator revolved, while the stars remained at rest. We may make the same experiment with regard to the intuition of objects” (*Pure Reason* 12).
according to certain universal rules. Through this breakthrough change in perspective, which he paralleled to the Copernican Revolution, Kant eventually oriented his doctrine not towards the object of knowledge but towards the conditions under which it was individually generated, radically shifting, thus, the focus of science from the object to the subject. Consequently, Kant replaced the prevalent conceptions of the subject as a passive recipient with an image of the self as dynamically active in the construction of meaning. Kant’s trajectory from the “mirror” to the “lamp,” to borrow M. H. Abrams’ metaphor, was thus in compliance with the larger agenda of German enlightenment, which had been “on the whole anthropocentric, centred around the person and his environment” (Sutton 18).

The twist that Kant scored in terms of human perspective surfaced throughout Pater’s work as the most decisive constituent of the critic’s outlook. In Plato and Platonism (1893) Pater addressed the “Copernican” ability of the mind to “enforce a reasonable unity and order, to impress some larger likeness of reason, as one knows it in one’s self, upon the chaotic infinitude of the impressions that reach us from every side” (35-6). Likewise, “philosophy” was regarded as projecting “a similar light of intelligence upon the at first sight somewhat unmeaning world we find actually around us: - project it; or rather discover it, as being really pre-existent there, if one were happy enough to get one’s self into the right point of view” (36). In Marius the

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156 Or as Kant put it in the preface to the second edition, “before objects are given to me, that is, a priori, I must presuppose in myself laws of the understanding which are expressed in conceptions a priori. To these conceptions, then, all the objects of experience must necessarily conform” (Pure Reason 12). “[N]othing must be attributed to the objects but what the thinking subject derives from itself” (15). This inspired the British Idealists. Green claimed that “[i]n truth the reality of things is their determination by each other as constituents of one order, a determination which only exists for thought. It is not that there is first the reality of things, and then a theory about it. The reality is the theory” (Green II, 268-69 qtd. in Randall 241). To the relationless empirical world picture, Green juxtaposed an experienced world of “joint action” where logical relations enter in and “nature, or the world of space and time, is conceived as a single, unalterable, all-inclusive system of relations: and these relations are thought relations; they result from the activity of thought” (Sidwick, “Ethics” 21). Green turned against the utilitarian principle as insufficient of accounting for the whole scope of human behavior with its exclusion of abstract ends from it. Humanity, Green claimed, involved purposes which lie beyond sensory experience and it is not merely defined by mechanical responses to sense stimuli.
Epicurean, Pater’s semi-autobiographical novel, while experiencing a decisive for the course of the book epiphany, the protagonist wondered whether “the will [might] itself be an organ of knowledge, of vision,” of a “creative, incorruptible, informing mind” (69). Marius explored the possibility of the entire material world being but a creation of the mind, since

it was easier to conceive of the material fabric of things as but an element in a world of thought - as a thought in a mind, than of mind as an element, or accident, or passing condition in a world of matter, because mind was really nearer to himself: it was an explanation of what was less known by what was known better. The purely material world, that close, impassable prison-wall, seemed just then the unreal thing, to be actually dissolving away all around him: and he felt a quiet hope, a quiet joy dawning faintly, in the dawning of this doctrine upon him as a really credible opinion. (70).

It is interesting to note here that Pater, like Kant, regarded this shift in perspective in terms of “the purely material world,” that “impassable prison-wall,” which is none other than the world of the phenomena along with the limitations that it entailed. In this sense, Pater situated his character’s change in a context that resonated with Kantian overtones. The reference, then, to a “quiet hope,” to a “quiet joy” directly addressed Kant’s dissolution of skepticism and alienation that his vision of the mind as dynamically participating in the construction of meaning brought about. Such an awareness generated a rebirth, a renaissance of its own, it brought to light “a world, wider, perhaps, in its possibilities than all possible fancies concerning it” (91).

The relation between the individual’s point of view and the natural phenomena was also explicitly addressed in the “Conclusion” to the Renaissance. In the first part of the “Conclusion,” as we remember, Pater portrayed the world of nature as captured
by the scientific discourse, where the subject exasperatingly became obsolete.\footnote{In the second part, Pater exemplified, through a variety of philosophical discourses, how the individual lapses into a form of solipsism that eventually renders the object obsolete. In this sense, Pater urges the aesthetic as the reconciliatory path between the two standpoints, which ultimately provides with a point of view that surmounts their shortcomings.}
Pater’s frustration against the annihilation of the subject within the scientific perspective brought to light the fact that, to use George Levine’s words, “nineteenth-century conceptions of selfhood articulate the fundamental alienation implicit in empiricism” (“Knowledge” 369).\footnote{Levine argues that Whewell’s ideas marked a radical break since “the consequence of this emphasis is that the idea of objectivity does not entail radical alienation of mind from nature as it does in the dominant forms of the English empiricist tradition” (“Knowledge”, 389, ft 8). This awareness was also acknowledged by G. H. Lewes’ work. As Ritchie puts it qoting Lewes, “‘We can only understand the Amoeba and the Plype by a light reflected from the study of Man’ […] The attempt to do so will generally mean that some dimly accepted view about the ‘end’ is influencing the observations of the beginning; for, as Lewes reminds us, ‘our closest observation is interpretation.’ Even for the study of origins an examination of the end or most complete state as it exists is not superfluous, and such an examination apart from historical methods, must be analytic, or, in Kant’s phrase, critical” (13-14). Ritchie’s incorporation of the Kantian interpreting mind within a Darwinian discourse, encapsulates the fusion of the inductive and the deductive that Darwin scored, as we have seen in the first chapter, manifesting that Pater’s attempt to reconcile the abstract and the concrete, the subjective and the objective was a coherent and organized attempt that reflected the intellectual shifts of the time.} In his systemization of the scientific discourse as the discourse \textit{par excellence} of the objective, Francis Bacon had decisively implanted a profound distrust of the personal, launching a tradition that was later on closely followed by Locke, Hume, Darwin, Comte, Tyndall, Pearson, Huxley and even Arnold, where “the human sciences are precisely the knowledge of self-alienation, the transformation of self into object,” as Levine puts it (371). This was precisely the awareness that the first part of the “Conclusion” alarmingly manifested. By acknowledging the need for the re-incorporation of the subject within scientific discourse, Pater seemed to echo Whewell, one of the first systematizers of Kantian philosophy in Britain, who employed the German philosopher so as to claim that “true knowledge requires both the interpreting mind, and nature for its subject” (6).\footnote{Edward Caird’s \textit{A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant}, published in 1877, first revealed to English readers “what it was that Kant had to say,” initiating thus, a century almost after its first} A few decades later Edward Caird,\footnote{Edward Caird’s \textit{A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant}, published in 1877, first revealed to English readers “what it was that Kant had to say,” initiating thus, a century almost after its first} who belonged to the second generation of British
idealists, would also appeal to the same argument by claiming that the essential role of Kant’s teaching was

not to cast any, even the slightest, doubt on the reality of the external world, but only to show that a new element must be added to all that we know of it as an external world, namely, its relation to the subject. No doubt, this new element brings important modifications into our previous views of objectivity. For, on the one hand, it absolutely precludes the attempt to explain the spiritual by the material, and, indeed, compels us to conclude that there is no material world which is not also spiritual. And, on the other hand, as the correlation between the self and the not-self is not one-sided, it brings with it also the conviction that there is no spiritual world which is not also material, or does not presuppose a material world. Thus the reality of that which is other than the self-conscious intelligence is seen to rest on the same basis with that of the self-conscious intelligence itself, and the one cannot be denied without the other (qtd. in Watson II 263).

It was precisely this interpretative mind in all its Kantian overtones that Pater found lacking in Arnold, exhibiting his strong adherence to Kant’s innovation. In his “Preface” to the Renaissance, Pater summed up his aesthetic manifesto by stating that “[t]o see the object as in itself it really is, has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever; and in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one’s object as it really is, is to know one’s impression as it really is” (xxi).\footnote{In this Pater was in agreement with the impressionistic painters of the time who used new synthetic chemical pigments with greater brilliance so as to stimulate subjective impressions and objectively capture subjective perception.} Pater’s critical impressionism here tackled Arnold’s renowned statement that the aim of criticism was “[t]o see the object as in itself it really is” (Criticism 9), which originally appeared in “On Translating Homer” (1862) and was later on revisited in “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (1864). Much critical energy has been spent over the debate between Arnold and Pater, yet what has been massively publication, the proliferation of many publications on the first Critique in the period around 1880 (Walsh 723, 726).
overlooked is the centrality of Kant beneath this dispute. Addressing the upheaval generated by his assertion, Arnold clarified his position in the opening paragraph of “The Function of Criticism” by stating:

Many objections have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism, and its importance at the present day. I said: ‘Of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is’. I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, ‘almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires, -criticism’; and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I here assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort (Criticism 9).

Arnold, thus, privileged the traditions of France and Germany for their critical outlook, which, as he considered, England lacked. Arnold’s reference to the Continental tradition of the “critical” perspective as applied to “all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science” implicitly invoked Kant’s critical legacy. Pater, on the other hand, as one of those “rejoinders” who “asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit,”162 was a follower, as we have seen, of Kant’s critical philosophy too. The disagreement between the two critics, then, actually involved the same theoretical source which was eventually directed to different ends. In the name of Continental criticism, Arnold advocated a

162 For Pater, criticism was highly creative. In “Amiel’s ‘Journal Intime,’” Pater claims that “the imaginative criticism, that criticism which is in itself a kind of construction, or creation, as it penetrates, through the given literary or artistic product, into the mental and inner construction of the producer, shaping his work” (Guardian 29).
form of disinterested objectivism, whereas Pater sponsored a form of disinterested subjectivism. Pater upheld a “severe limitation to the concrete” since he knew that the philosophical branch that Arnold referred to strictly denied knowledge of the things-in-themselves, of “the object as in itself it really is.” By counterpoising the notion of the “impression,” Pater was actually evoking the originator of critical philosophy and the shift he scored from the object to the subject, asserting that the subjective point of view was the inevitable shortcut to the objective. Accordingly, Pater, in the manner of Kant’s Copernican Revolution, the true essence of the critical philosophy, regarded the object in terms of the subject: “[w]hat 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? Does it give me pleasure? And if so, what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence?” (Renaissance xxx).

Consequently, Pater responded to Arnold’s suggestion with a subjective, relativistic, introverted discourse that ultimately fused the “creative” with the “critical effort” in the form of impressionistic criticism, which actually originated from the Continental

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163 The rule that Arnold considers English criticism should concern itself with so as to overcome its shortcomings, is “disinterestedness.” “[a]nd how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from practice; by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches; by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas which plenty of people will be sure to attach them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with” (Criticism 20). As such, Arnold’s disinterestedness is aligned with an objective cause, whereas Pater’s disinterestedness, drawing on Kant’s aesthetic exposition, is tightly allied with the subjective, the fundamental bearer of the aesthetic. It is upon Kantian disinterestedness that Pater structures his claim for the autonomy of art, something that Arnold is unwilling to accept.

164 “Pater’s aim in criticism was in fact objective, much more objective than is usually admitted even by his admirers,” as R. Child puts it (“Critic” 1174). Later on she adds: “[h]e believed that we can know nothing outside of our own impressions; but at the same time he believed that criticism should have an objective aim, that of searching for the ‘active principle,’ the ‘formula’ of an artist’s work” (1180). In this sense, Pater’s objectivity is different from Arnold’s. Employing a subjective point of view, Pater seeks to trace the regularities that purposively connect in an artist’s work.

165 Po Fang, in “Style as the Man: The Aesthetics of Self-(Re)construction in Pater, Wilde, and Yeats,” also considers Pater’s emphasis on impression as being parallel to Kant’s Copernican revolution (184).

166 “In this post-Kantian, relativistic world, the integrity of one’s own personal vision had a new meaning and a new status. With a philosophy that located the structures of reality in the human mind and perceptual apparatus, Kant’s Copernican revolution in the epistemology had, among other things, opened the floodgates of introspection,” as McGrath puts it (194).
tradition that Arnold upheld as a rectifying principle against English tradition, parroting thus Arnold’s claims to the core, caricaturing his “disinterested endeaver to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world” as a means of “refusing to remain in the sphere where alone narrow and relative conceptions have any worth and validity” (“Science” 1525).167

Pater actually embodied his theoretical explorations concerning the dynamics of human perception into a literary medium, exhibiting a profound interconnection between content and form.168 Drawing on Pater’s formal performance, O’ Hara terms the critic’s style as “impersonal yet highly subjective” (9).169 O’ Hara’s definition of Pater’s stylistics is perceptively accurate, despite the fact that she does not account for or fully map the theoretical origins of the critic’s medium. As such, I will borrow her classification of Pater’s style, since in my view it encapsulates in an inclusive way Pater’s formal manipulations, by highlighting the Kantian thread in Pater’s thought I have been following so far. As an upshot of Pater’s debt to Kant, this formal paradox involved Pater’s amalgamation into a formal whole of scientific objectivity with a form of introspection; it attended to the fusion of the limitations imposed by the phenomena with the awareness that the phenomenal world could not be disentangled from individual perception, and it brought to light the harmonized relation between

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167 Arnold wished to provide Victorian society with an ethical axis so as to transcend the harmful “side-effect” phenomena of the emerging capitalism: individualism, ignorance, indifference, materialism and fetishism. He was particularly troubled by the Victorian propensity of equating means with ends, of speaking about machines “as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them” (Culture 11). The excessive attribution of value to objects led, he argued, to the transformation of the objective world into “a kind of permanent hallucination,” where “imaginary facts wholly overwhelm real ones” (Culture 16).
168 As Pater puts it, “[t]he organic form is innate: it shapes, as it develops, itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form. Nature, the prime, genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms: each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within, and even such is the appropriate excellence of Shakespeare, himself a nature humanized, a genial understanding, directing self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper even than our consciousness” (Appreciations 39). A close reading of the way Pater’s theoretical considerations are reflected in his writing will take place in the third chapter.
169 As Pater himself, claimed in “On Style,” “[i]f the style be the man, in all the colour and intensity of a veritable apprehension, it will be in a real sense ‘impersonal’” (Appreciations 16).
the subject and the object into a perceptual whole, where the human mind actively participated in the formation of the objective world. Consider, for example, Pater’s celebrated purple prose in his depiction of Mona Lisa that I have already quoted. This infamous passage did not involve the description of the painting itself, of the thing-in-itself as an Arnoldian cultural “touchstone,” but it brought forward the subjective perception of the phenomenon of the painting as the inescapable way it could be “objectively” perceived. Pater’s reading of the painting became a paradigm of the Copernican revolution when it transformed, through its gaze, the painting itself, when it made the object of perception conform to the very given of subjective perception. Indicative of this Copernican twist in Pater’s perspective was J. A. Symonds’ review of the Renaissance in the Academy in March 1873, where the reviewer complained that “the qualities of Mr. Pater’s own temperament strongly modify his perceptions” (Seiler 57), and W. J. Stillman’s in the Nation (October 1873), who stated that: “[m]uch is enfolded and much is told that is admirable in telling, but not so much of the theme as of Mr. Pater himself; of him we obtain a very distinct and pleasing notion in general, but of his nominal subject we hardly know more than before we read his ‘Studies’” (Seiler 82). Despite Pater’s highly subjective tone in his depiction, nevertheless, an impersonal authorial voice was also maintained, which borrowed from scientific objectivity in its highly selective, almost fragmentary analysis of the painting’s details, and in the fact that Pater constantly juxtaposed his subjective impression to the evolutionary axis of the human species, as delivered by the scientific discourses of Darwin and Spencer, as we have seen. In this respect, Pater’s subjective impression reached out of its subjective limits towards an objective cause that could only be subjectively experienced and thus expressed.170 And here, I have to

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170 Such association stems from Pater’s espousal of Kantian purposiveness which interconnects the
acknowledge, O’ Hara’s term is effective again, through the seeming paradox it captures, in highlighting the synthetic character of Pater’s form, his integration of both objectivity and subjectivity, which forms a paradigmatic analogue to Kant’s synthetic a priori statements.

Pater developed this impersonal, yet highly subjective style, this “imaginative sense of fact” (Appreciations 2) and the paradoxical form of “objective” impressionism it entailed, into the literary form of the “imaginary portrait,” which Ed Block Jr. argues that he had chiefly adopted from “St. Beuve’s Portrait Litteraire and then made over with the help of related English models” (759). Situating an imaginary character within a historical context, or reversely employing a historical figure within an imaginary story, Pater systematically blurred the distinctions between history and fiction, as we shall see in the next chapter. Even the early portraits of the historical figures of the Renaissance were not strictly speaking historical representations, since Pater predominantly intuited most of their historical backgrounds, but they could rather be considered as early experimentations with the form of the “imaginary portrait” that was later on fully developed in “The Child in the House” (1878), in Marius the Epicurean (1885), in Imaginary Portraits (1887) and in Plato and Platonism, where he manipulated even the Platonic doctrine in the fashion of a ventriloquist, presenting it as an aestheticist credo. The main mechanism Pater

work of art and natural patterns, as we have seen.

171 Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869) was a major French literary critic. Sainte-Beuve argued that an understanding of an artist necessitates the knowledge of his/her biography. Marcel Proust’s attempt to refute Sainte-Beuve’s claim self-paradoxically resulted in his very autobiographical A la Recherche du Temps Perdu (1913-1927).

172 Thus, S. Colvin in the Pall Mall Gazette (March 1873) claimed that “[t]he book is not one for any beginner to turn to in search of ‘information’” (Seiler 50), and Mrs. Pattison asserts in the Westminster Review (April 1873) that the title of the Renaissance is “misleading” since “[t]he historical element is precisely that which is wanting, and its absence makes the weak place of the book” (Seiler 71).

173 As B. H. Huppe states, Pater’s understanding of Plato was “clouded by Victorian and personal bias” (315). Such “bias” involved Pater’s subjective presentation of the Greek philosopher. Intricately avoiding the fact that Plato banished the poets from his ideal republic, Pater, being strongly predisposed towards the aesthetic as an aesthete that he was, converted the Platonic doctrine into a
employed to fuse history with fiction was basically the subjective discourse of critical impressionism, which eventually realigned and re-created the anthropocentric object of its focus, the individual. As such, beneath Sainte-Beuve’s influence there fundamentally lurked Kant’s legacy, which must have decisively influenced the French critic too. Drawing on Kant’s Copernican legacy, Pater either focused on the understanding of the individual or imposed his own authorial perception upon historical regularities through a literary form that was subjective yet aware of its severe limitations to the concrete. In this respect, Pater formally explored in a post-Kantian world the individual’s “imaginative attempts to structure and naturalize the limits of human knowledge,” to borrow Block’s phrasing (759), where the nature and role of personality were reassessed under the “relativistic” mode. Under this prism, the enigmatic character of the “imaginary portraits” actually involved a form of hybridity which encompassed both the scientific limitation to the concrete and the theory about art. Reading Pater’s analysis, one can hardly imagine that it refers to the Greek philosopher. Not only was Plato an artist for Pater, but primarily an aesthete: “he is the earliest critic of the fine arts. He anticipates the modern notion that art as such has no end but its own perfection, - ‘art for art’s sake’ […] We have seen again that not in theory only, by the large place he assigns to our experiences regarding visible beauty in the formation of his doctrine of ideas, but that in the practical sphere also, this great fact of experience, the reality of beauty, has its importance with him” (268). As an alleged early exponent of aestheticism, Plato’s idealistic system was not only implicitly affiliated with Kant, but it was actually overtly converted by Pater into a primordial allegorical origin of Kantian aesthetics.

174 R. Wellek, in *A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950* argues that Sainte-Beuve combined in his method “literary history, characterization, psychological explanation, impressionistic subjectivism” (337-38). Sainte-Beuve himself utilized the tradition of critical impressionism, which was an upshot of Kantian philosophy. For the relation between Kant and Sainte-Beuve see J. Wilcox’s “The Beginnings of L’Art Pour L’Art”.

175 The "imaginatory portraits are marked by their enigmatic, in-between character.” Bloom states: “Imaginary Portraits, in Pater’s sense, are an almost indescribable genre. Behind them stand the monologues of Browning and of Rossetti, the Imaginary Conversations of Landor, perhaps Sainte-Beuve’s Portraits Contemporains. Like The Renaissance and Appreciations, they are essays or quasi-essays; like “The Child in the House” they are semi-autobiographical […] It may be best to call them what Yeats called his Paterian stories, “Mythologies,” or “Romantic Mythologies” (“Belatedness” 179). Block claims that “[a]s amalgamations and hybridizations of the character study and the essay in cultural history, with the biography and the short story, Pater’s portraits constitute a distinct species within a recognizable kind” (759-60). In this respect, Pater provided a model that was later on developed by Arthur Symons and W. B. Yeats.

176 Pater’s “emphasis on the individual mind is even more a product of nineteenth-century philosophy, so strongly coloured by science” after all, as Child puts it (28). It was precisely through this relativistic undercurrent firmly rooted in the discourses of Darwin and Spencer that the individual was portrayed as “multiple, antagonistic, and anything but continuous in the sense envisioned and portrayed by
subjective perspective, replicating, once again, Kant’s synthetic \textit{a priori} model, where
the world and history could be known and communicated precisely because of the fact
that they were subjectively constructed by the human mind.\footnote{As Block states, quoting Paul Hernadi’s “The Scope and Mood of Literary Works: Towards a Poetics Beyond Genre,” Pater’s portrait essays highlight the individual through a form that fuses “the manageability of the finite with the width and the depth of the infinite” (774). Even though Block does not mention so, this statement invokes the character of the Kantian synthetic a priori judgments.} This Kantian
consideration was, after all, very close to Pater’s Heraclitean emphasis on the way
subjective sense experience can yield knowledge of Logos and its communication,
when set in tune with the universal principles which can render it capable of
surmounting the limitations of solipsism.

\textbf{Empirical Relativity and Idealistic Functionalism}

Kant’s claim that the mind is a shaping force, does not solipsistically render, like
Leibniz, the subject as the sole possessor of meaning through the exercise of reason,
but it rather suggests that meaning is actually produced out of the relation between the
subject and the object, between mind and world. The breakthrough impact of the
Copernican revolution, in fact, consisted precisely in Kant’s shift away from
philosophies of substance towards a system of functional interrelations.\footnote{Kant, like his predecessors (Locke, Hume and Berkeley), distinguishes between the form and the content of intuition. “That which in the phenomenon corresponds to the sensation, I term its matter; but that which effects that the content of the phenomenon can be arranged under certain relations, I call its form” (41). Kant’s exposition of the interrelation between matter and form, and his preoccupation basically with form as the “relation” principle, reveals from this early stage that Kant’s theoretical effort is not one of essence, of substance, but that it actually strives to be structured around functional relations.} Kant’s
“instrumental”\footnote{I am actually using the term here in the way Casey Haskins employs it. Even though Kant sets out by establishing the disinterestedness of aesthetic judgments, their independence from interests referring to sense or reason, by presenting the beautiful as a symbol of the moral, he actually implies an indirect}
underpinned the functional significance of perspective in our understanding of the object of knowledge. Truth was, thus, partially relativized\(^{180}\) since the character of the object was considered as being determined by the way it related to the subject’s point of view, and attention shifted from the static thing in itself towards a dynamic system of interrelations. Caird’s extract, I have just quoted, by highlighting Kant’s contribution to our knowledge of the world in terms of “its relation to the subject” and the German philosopher’s emphasis on the “correlation” between the “spiritual” and the “material” world, brings to the limelight precisely this aspect of the Kantian system. Exemplary of this is also the overall strategy that Kant orchestrated throughout his critiques, staged as a play in three acts, which illustrated the relations between reason, imagination and understanding. Each critique handed the leading role to one of these faculties in its relation to the others; action was generated not through the static properties of the protagonists, but through a sequence of interrelations and mediations that affected them; the sum of their relations constituted Kant’s staging of the epic of the human mind.

source of interest in the beautiful. By regarding the beautiful as a preparation for the moral, Kant actually subjects the aesthetic to a purpose erected by reason, implicitly subverting thus his basic claim about disinterestedness. That’s why Casey Haskins claims that Kant is an “instrumental autonomist” as opposed to a strict autonomist, since “on a strict autonomist view the only standpoint which is relevant or ‘internal’ to the evaluation of works of art as works of art is that of the spectator contemplating their ‘artistic’ properties, an instrumental autonomist view, in contrast, admits other standpoints into such an assessment as well; e.g., standpoints which view works of as instrumental to knowledge or edification” (43). “One standpoint is that of the aesthetically engaged subject (i.e., the spectator or artist). The other is that of someone not so engaged who views the work as something which promotes ‘the culture of the mental powers in the interests of social communication’” (44). Haskins reads Kant’s program in the third Critique as actually promoting beauty as a social benefactor, where beauty is seen as not only preparing us for morality, but also “social communication” through the use of reflective judgments (46), “social cohesion” through the exercise of taste since it provides us with “an increasingly articulated institutional setting, historically speaking, within which we can share what would otherwise be private aspects of our inner lives with others” (46). This way, Haskins accounts for the fact that Kant regards a work of art’s aesthetic value as “inherent,” being “valuable for its own sake and for the sake of some ends beyond itself” (51). It is only because Kant is not very clear in the exposition of his ideas that can explain the fact that he has been widely misread as a strict autonomist (51). Likewise, Siebers argues that in Kant beauty becomes an element by which “the contradictory impulses of individual freedom and social responsibility might be symbolically mediated, thereby making aesthetics indispensable to a democratic conception of political judgment” (32).\(^{180}\) For Kant, we should not forget, knowledge can be objective by legitimately referring to the world but it is shaped by the subject’s point of view. And this was how Kant subverted Hume’s claims.
The concept of functionalism, nevertheless, was also one of the most fundamental constituents of Pater’s system, too. In “Prosper Merimee” (1890), Pater explicitly associated functionalism with “Kant’s criticism of mind,” by considering that Kantian thought entailed an emphasis on “art, passion, science, however, in a somewhat novel attitude towards the practical interests of life” (*Miscellaneous Studies* 1).\(^1\) When considered in terms of the premise of functionalism, the sum of the notions that Pater selectively borrowed from Kant acquires its full meaning and is organized into a coherent system. The view that knowledge can be possible only through a synthetic relation between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, between matter and form, between objectivity and subjectivity, between the concrete and the abstract; the concept of purposiveness as a system of relations that are not grounded on fixed absolutes but that just indicates the “subtly linked conditions” of its constituent parts (*Appreciations* 33), the role of human perception in the shaping of the object, are only but facets of a system that underpins the decisive role of “relations” in the constitution of meaning. The issue of functionalism is also of central importance in Pater’s consideration of “Coleridge,” where the notion is not only invoked through the concept of purposiveness\(^2\) – by which attention is paid to the way a unit functionally.

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1. Merimee himself, a child of the post-Kantian world, was preoccupied, Pater asserts, with “structure, proportion, design, a sort of architectural coherency” (5). “The intellectual charm of literary work so thoroughly designed as Merimee’s,” Pater continues, “depends in part on the sense as you read, hastily perhaps, perhaps in need of patience, that you are dealing with a composition, the full secret of which is only to be attained in the last paragraph, that with the last word in mind you will retrace the steps, more than once (it may be) noting then the minuter structure, also the natural or wrought flowers by the way” (11). It seems that Merimee transposed Kantian’s perspectivism and its emphasis on relations into a style that achieved architectural “coherency” via the relations established between its constituent parts, where meaning was achieved precisely through the sum of these relations.

2. To view something organically, either biologically or aesthetically, means to pay attention to the way it develops. As we have seen, a judgment of taste, by involving any interest or any concept, it cannot be based on a purpose, either subjective or objective (66), but rather it explores the relation, the purposiveness established between the cognitive powers regarding a given presentation; it explores the process that the object undertakes, so as to formally develop into what it was meant to be. It is precisely through the Kantian notion of purposiveness, which McGrath overlooks in his consideration of Pater’s debt to Kant, that Pater is able to ally “art with science” by opposing them “to religion and speculative philosophy because the former two deal with experience in the concrete while the latter deal with abstractions” (McGrath 24). It comes then as no surprise that McGrath solely regards the Kantian
interrelates with its surrounding rather than to substance – but predominantly through
Pater’s emphatic acknowledgment that a philosophical system has to be functionally
valid in order to be espoused.

Attempting to make his point clear and to eventually address Coleridge’s case,
Pater brings in a paradoxical oppositional pair: a Hindoo mystic set against Goethe,
 remarking that the truly speculative temper does not belong to the former who is “lost
to sense, understanding, individuality, but one such as Goethe, to whom every
moment of life brought its contribution of experimental, individual knowledge; by
whom no touch of the world or form, colour, and passion was disregarded”
(Appreciations 33). Goethe, this way, “succeeded” precisely because he was able to
make his theoretical engine function in terms of reality, because he was able,
according to Pater, to connect to reality by treating the sum of its instances as a
purposive formal whole. It is the instrumentality of a system towards the “here and
now” that Pater ultimately poses against Coleridge in his quest for the apprehension
of the absolute “that saddened his mind, and limited the operation of his poetic gift”
(34). In the way Coleridge directed his weltanschauung, he is illustrated as a leader of
lost cases (32), as a thinker who failed to direct his thought to the appropriate ends, as
“of one to whom the external world penetrated only in part” (35), as “one whose
vocation was in the world of imagination” (35), which resulted in him lacking “the
excitement of the literary sense,” in possessing “an excess of seriousness” and

\[\text{limitation of the phenomena as being employed in Pater’s text, failing to account for the intricate and}
\text{highly sophisticated manipulation of Kantian ideas by Pater in his refutation of Coleridgian}
\text{transcendentalism.}
\]

183 This pair is termed paradoxical on the grounds that for an empiricist both a Hindoo mystic and
Goethe stand for a transcendental discourse. Pater, however, along his attempt in the article to
differentiate between a temperate and an extreme form of idealism, actually presents them as opposites.
184 It should be noted here that if Pater’s point was to reject idealism altogether he wouldn’t have
brought up two idealists so as to illustrate his point. Moreover, it becomes evident, through the tight
parallel that Pater establishes between his two ‘rivals’ – “sense”/“experimental”, “understanding”/
“knowledge” and “individuality”/ “individual” – that both philosophers employ the same means but
actually direct it to different ends.
consequently in bearing “the whole weight of the sad reflection” (34). Consequently, Coleridge is not judged in terms of his theoretical system *per se*, but in terms of the ends to which he directed his ideas. In this respect, Pater is introducing an axis of functionalism as regards any system of thought and its supposed relation to life. This was more or less also the message that Pater’s “Conclusion” underpinned:

> [t]he theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us (153).

Pater’s promotion of functionalism, nevertheless, highly resembled J. S. Mill’s utilitarian principles and the consequentialism they entailed, a fact that actually reset Pater’s argument in “Coleridge” within Mill’s empirical framework. By being highly antimetaphysical and oriented towards a successful practice of life, which involved a form of sensationalism, Pater’s employment of functionalism, set against Coleridge’s inflexible transcendentalism, also bore definite empirical overtones. It becomes then evident that in order to support his functionalist critique of Coleridge, Pater drew both from the empirical tradition and the idealist via Plato, “whom Coleridge claims as the first of his spiritual ancestors, Plato, as we remember him, a true humanist, holds his theories lightly, glances with a somewhat blithe and naïve inconsequence from one view to another, not anticipating the burden of importance

185 Pater claims that Coleridge himself would have gained from the relative spirit: “[w]e know how his life has appeared when judged by absolute standards. We see him trying to apprehend the ‘absolute,’ to stereotype forms of faith and philosophy, to attain, as he says, ‘fixed principles’ in politics, morals, and religion, to fix one mode of life as the essence of life, refusing to see the parts as parts only; and all the time his own pathetic history pleads for a more elastic moral philosophy than his, and cries out against every formula less living and flexible than life itself” (*Appreciations* 52).

186 Pater’s attitude towards J. S. Mill, and the relation between Kant and utilitarianism, will be thoroughly examined in the next chapter.

187 As we have seen, Pater’s initial publication was released in the utilitarian *Westminster Review* and it dealt with a topic that Mill had also written about in the very same periodical. After all, Pater’s employment of functionalism and purposiveness was in an affiliation with scientific givens of the time and could be seen as far more liberal in its character than Coleridge’s theocratic, absolutist universe, and thus fitting with the temperament of the *Westminster Review* in which Pater’s article was published.
‘views’ will one day have for men” (Appreciations 34). In this sense, Pater’s functionalism indicated, in its alignment with “the least transcendental parts of Kant,” a structural kinship with empiricism. Highly indicative of this was the fact that whenever Pater employed an idealistic premise, he always interconnected it with relativism as its constituent counterpart. In this sense, the “relative spirit” was not only the means that Pater utilized to anchor down his idealistic detours onto an empirical ground, but it also became the vehicle for indicating a structural kinship between idealistic functionalism and empirical relativism, between the Heraclitean and the Kantian paradigms.

We have seen in the previous chapter that one of the most fundamental premises of British empiricism was, as Deleuze puts it (59), the concept of “relation” as characteristically promoted through Hume’s associationism. By accepting nothing but the presence of a multitude of relations, British associationism, was furthermore tightly allied with the scientific and ethical doctrine of late 19th century relativism, which regarded meaning as being generated through a plethora of relations and, therefore, as multiple rather than fixed. Pater similarly upheld a relativistic ethic that eventually eschewed authoritative absolutes as a means of connecting with cosmic flux by establishing a correspondence between the relentless interplay of natural elements and the associations that derive from sensational units. This

188 For Pater, the “recent metaphysics of Germany” was “a legitimate expansion of the older, classical and native masters of what has been variously called the a priori, or absolute, or spiritual, or Platonic view of things” (Appreciations 40).
189 “Thinking with AND, instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking for IS: empiricism has never had another secret […]. The multitude is no longer an adjective which is still subordinate to the One which divides or the Being which encompasses it. It has become a noun, a multiplicity which constantly inhabits each thing. A multiplicity is never in terms, however many there are, nor in their set or totality. A multiplicity is only in the AND, which does not have the same nature as the elements, the sets or even their relations. While it may come about between just two, it nevertheless sends dualism off course. The AND has a fundamental sobriety, a poverty, an ascesis” (Deleuze 57).
190 “In Greece all things are at once old and new. As, in physical organisms, the actual particles of matter have existed long before in other combinations; and what is really new in a new organism is the new cohering force - the mode of life, - so, in the products of Greek civilization, the actual elements are
intricate web of relations that Pater advanced, nevertheless, by being highly inclusive and by casting a cohesive force upon fragments through a system of interrelations, eventually reached out towards an association with idealistic units as well, abolishing the standardized enmity between the two schools. Having run a full circle, I can now return to the question I have initiated my exploration of Pater’s relation to Kant with. When considered under the prism of idealistic functionalism, Pater’s depiction of Kant as a skeptical empiricist and a relativist reveals its full force. By adhering to the “least transcendental parts of Kant” and by presenting the German philosopher in an empirical light, Pater eventually interconnected empiricism with idealism, encapsulating the forces that decisively informed Victorian thought. Such a paradoxical synthesis was in fact paradigmatically accomplished for the Oxford don along the broad philosophical paradigm of “relation,” which encompassed both idealistic functionalism and empirical associationism.¹⁹¹

The role of “relativity” is of central significance when considering Pater’s fusion of empiricism and idealism, as we shall also see in the third chapter. Failing to account for it, results in a distortion of Pater’s synthetic politics as incoherent and unstable. Quite indicative of this is McGrath’s reading of “Coleridge.” Even though McGrath acknowledges right from the start of his study that both Hume and Kant were preoccupied with “issues of function and epistemology” rather than “issues of substance and ontology” (8), when he comes to examine Pater’s synthesis he claims that

traceable elsewhere by antiquarians who care to trace them; the elements, for instance, of its peculiar national architecture” (Greek Studies 102).

¹⁹¹ Kulenkampff is right in asserting thus that Kant’s notion of “purposiveness without purpose” “corresponds to Humie’s statement that beauty is a certain order or construction of parts” (98). What Kant actually means with this term, as Kulenkampff argues, “is the mere formal structure of integrated wholes. An integrated whole is nothing but a manifold of parts, all of which fit together such that nothing can be added, nor left out, nor changed in its position without destroying the structure that makes it a whole” (98). As Kulenkampff then adds “to perceive beauty thus means to see that and how a given manifold of parts fit together into an integrated whole” (105).
Pater's own conception of relativism in “Coleridge’s Writings” was not systematically developed, for it was based on an unstable fusion of positivism, empiricism, and German idealism. Although he notes that ‘the positive method makes very little account of marks of intelligence in nature,’ whereas German idealism, like Greek philosophy, finds ‘indications of mind everywhere’, Pater was apparently unaware that some of the positivist elements of his own thinking were incompatible with elements he absorbed from the German idealists and with his Humean emphasis on the primacy of sensation (27).

Pater’s conception of relativism is considered as “unstable” on the grounds of an “incompatibility” between idealism and Hume. Taking no notice of the mediatory forms that Pater promotes, of the “least transcendental parts of Kant,” an example of which is actually “relativism,” this paradigmatic “issue of function and epistemology,” McGrath fails to see Pater’s effort to make his fusion cohere. Pater’s “positivism” and “his Humean emphasis on the primacy of sensation” do not contradict the “elements he absorbed from the German idealists” because, as we have seen, Hume’s study of sensation, by promoting the instrumentality of “associations,” led to a preoccupation with relations rather than substances, which was highly akin to idealistic considerations of the role of perspective in the acquisition of meaning and in the way the subject relates to the phenomena. As a matter of fact, Pater utilized this point of convergence between empiricism and idealism as a means of upgrading the scientific project of his time through an addition of romanticism, which was after all

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192 McGrath synoptically regards Pater’s assimilation of neo-Kantianism in his “preference for relations over substance in thought that apparently contravenes Hume’s undermining of such relations as identity and cause and effect” (88). We should not forget here that in his attempt to come up with a theoretical matrix of his own, Pater did not fully accept either Kant, or Hume, but he selectively and inclusively utilized aspects of their doctrines that seemed to him to advance the synthetic model he wanted to erect. Late 19th century aestheticism was, after all, a highly “mobile discourse” (Williams, Transfigured 39) made up of divergent philosophical theories used instrumentally to serve specific purposes, forming a loose theoretical core consisting of interchangeable philosophical concepts or doctrines. This is the reason why we cannot speak of a unified and consistent doctrine throughout Pater’s work, and account for the huge gap between aesthetes themselves, i.e., Pater’s matrix and Wilde’s. In this sense, the aestheticist position appear to be resisting the fixity of static dogmatism by refusing to offer a unified doctrine, and should be judged in terms of their utilization.
the paradigmatic bearer of idealism, its counterbalancing constituent, as we shall see next.

The Last Romantic

Pater’s contribution to the tradition of the individual as hero, along with his debt to the Kantian legacy, converged on a profound form of Romanticism that the Victorian critic assimilated in his theoretical and formal constructions. Kant, as is well known, not only initiated but also theoretically equipped the trend of Romanticism, getting tightly allied with it, and it was precisely in all these Romantic overtones that Pater employed the German philosopher in his system. So, it comes as no surprise when Graham Hough, in his exploration of the prolongation of Romanticism within the later 19th century, considered Pater as one of the “last Romantics,” and Iser, among a variety of other critics, termed him as “ranking among the true discoverers of Greek romanticism” (114). Nonetheless, as it is my contention, Pater was not solely nostalgically clinging to the past, but rather envisioned a certain future, which dynamically encompassed romantic thought and feeling as its basic constituent.

In the “Postscript”193 to Appreciations, Pater focused on a “variation of an old opposition, which may be traced from the very beginning of the formation of European art and literature” (131). This opposition involved the interplay between Classicism and Romanticism as a “continuous and widely working influence” (131), “really at work at all times in art” (133). A closer look, however, at the “Postscript” reveals that Pater actually identified Classicism with the centripetal and Romanticism with the centrifugal. Thus, Classicism, in the manner of the centripetal, signified the

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193Initially called “Romanticism,” this article was published in the November of 1876 in Macmillan’s Magazine, before being included as the “Postscript” to Appreciations (November 1889).
qualities of “measure, purity, temperance” (132), “the comeliness of the old” (137),
of form as “that mere abstract proportion” (132). Romanticism, on the other hand, as an outbreak of the spirit “at times, when in men’s approaches towards art and poetry, curiosity may be noticed to take the lead […] with a deep thirst for intellectual excitement, after a long ennui, or in reaction against the strain of outward, practical things” (134), was essentially characterized by the “curiosity and the love of beauty” (133); it entailed “novelty of both of form and of motive” (137). Under this prism, Pater paradoxically termed Dante, Sophocles and Virgil as Romantics (134). The critic concluded his exploration by concentrating on “our curious, complex, aspiring age” (139) and the need it necessitated to “unite as many diverse elements as possible” (139) in a manner analogous to “that House Beautiful, which the creative minds of all generations – the artists and those who have treated life in the spirit of art – are always building together, for the refreshment of the human spirit, [where] these oppositions cease” (130). Traditional Classicism was, thus, combined with the modernity of Romanticism through an analogy provided by art in an effort to “turn

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194 “The ‘classic’ comes to us out of the cool and quiet of other times; as the measure of what a long experience has shown will at least never displease us” (132).
195 “The charm, therefore, of what is classical, in art or literature, is that of the well-known tale, to which we can, nevertheless, listen over and over again, because it is told so well. To the absolute beauty of its artistic form, is added the accidental, tranquil, charm of familiarity” (132).
196 “It is the addition of strangeness to beauty that constitutes the romantic character in art; and the desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organization, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty, that constitutes the romantic temper. When one’s curiosity is deficient, when one is not eager enough for new impressions, and new pleasures, one is liable to value mere academical proprieties too highly, to be satisfied with worn-out or conventional types, with the insipid ornament of Racine, or the prettiness of that later Greek sculpture, which passed so long for the true Hellenic work” (132).
197 Even the Odyssey is considered more romantic than the Iliad, and “Aeschylus is more romantic than Sophocles” (138).
198 For “[t]o be interesting and really stimulating, to keep us from yawning even, art and literature must follow the subtle movements of that nimbly-shifting Time-Spirit, or Zeit-Geist […] which is always modifying men’s taste, as it modifies their manners and their pleasures” (137).
always with that ever changing spirit, yet to retain the flavour of what was admirably done in past generations” (137). 199

A paradigm of “that House Beautiful” which ultimately combined the “ever changing spirit” with “what was admiringly done in past generations” was, in fact, the Renaissance, which was a thorough exploration and illustration of this suggested synthesis between Classicism and Romanticism. Pater’s appeal to such a harmonious fusion, moreover, implicitly addressed a highly influential contemporary critic, John Ruskin, who, during the 1860s and 1870s, persistently denounced Romantic culture. 200 Ruskin praised the medieval Gothic style as a communal effort that was morally noble by representing a form of religious conduct since it expressed the purity of the Romantic spirit, whereas he condemned classicism and the Renaissance as being morally vacuous in their association with the modern demoralizing ethic of individualistic laissez faire, which articulated a distortion of pure Romanticism.
Pater’s version, on the other hand, of Romanticism as an ever-present cultural trait enabled him to trace its continuous course from antiquity to the Middle Ages, and then from the Renaissance, through its association with Winckelmann, to the 19th century. 201 By insisting on a form of continuity between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Pater ultimately subverted Ruskin’s vision of the Renaissance as a radical break from the Middle Ages. Tracing a Gothic vein in the very heart of the Renaissance, Pater eventually equated Ruskin’s negative Romanticism as exemplified through the individualism of the Renaissance with its positive side as allegedly

199 In this sense, as Bloom correctly asserts, “Pater rather nervously praises his Plato for Classic correctness, for a conservative centripetal impulse against his own Heraclitean Romanticism” (“Belatedness” 188).
200 For an extensive discussion of the relation between Pater and Ruskin, see Kenneth Daley’s The Rescue of Romanticism: Walter Pater and John Ruskin, and Jonathan Loesberg’s Aestheticism and Deconstruction: Pater, Derrida and de Man, pp.27-41, and 54-60.
201 One of the central arguments of Pater’s first book was the significance of the Renaissance for the dissemination of Romanticism in the 19th century.
manifested in the Middle Ages. Accordingly, in the Renaissance, Leonardo’s “formula” was defined as “curiosity and the desire of beauty” (70), which was, as a matter of fact, identical with Pater’s definition of Romanticism in the “Postscript.” By implication, Leonardo was not only one of the most predominant figures of the Renaissance, but he also possessed certain Gothic traits: he interfused “the extremes of beauty and terror” into a “curious beauty” (67), he “blended mere earthly passion with a sort of religious sentimentalism” (69), he had a taste for the “bizarre” (71). The Renaissance, as such, manifested for Pater a profound form of centrifugal Romanticism in its surfacing of individualism, human passion and the senses as an artistic ideal, which was nevertheless harmoniously reconciled with a revival of Classicism, of temperance and order, to which Medieval Christianity also partially partook. The presentation, furthermore, of the Renaissance as decisively significant for the dissemination of Romanticism into the 19th century seriously undermined Ruskin’s association of pure Romanticism with Medievalism. It was precisely to that end that “Winckelmann” was included in the Renaissance.

202 It should be noted here that Pater’s attempt to bring the dark aspect into the Hellenic ideal moved along the fusion between Romanticism and Hellenism established by Goethe.

203 As Loesberg accurately puts it, Pater revised “Ruskin’s history by encompassing the Gothic within the Renaissance. Among other things Ruskin found wanting in the Renaissance were a demand for perfection and a pride in science. To Ruskin, these features defined Leonardo, though his genius protected him from the failings that normally result from these flaws. Pater agrees in attributing to Leonardo precisely these features. But he then shows them as elements of what Ruskin would call Gothicism” (55).

204 Loesberg argues that the central point of disagreement between Pater and Ruskin has to do with Ruskin’s definition of beauty. In the second volume of Modern Painters, Ruskin “disclaims” the term “aesthesis” as fitting to describe the apprehension of beauty since it partially emphasises sense perception by excluding the role of morality (Loesberg 35). Ruskin’s vision of moral beauty thus exposes also his view of science, which comes in sharp contrast with Pater’s espousal of science in his illustration of sense perception: “[f]or Ruskin the coincidence of science and art does not come from art’s role being founded on scientific and philosophic knowledge, as it does in Pater, but rather from the manifestation of scientific accuracy within aesthetic representation. Art, in Ruskin, must found itself upon gratitude for the gift of nature or it becomes an expression of human pride and infidelity” (Loesberg 39), Loesberg claims that “[f]rom Ruskin, Pater drew the insistence upon art’s grounding in perception and thus the continuity between art and science that forms part of the argument of the ‘Conclusion’. But he refused to accept Ruskin’s theological justification of art, a justification that was also a limitation and a problem within Ruskin’s own theory” (40).
Pater’s participation in the Victorian debates about the role of Romanticism in the last part of the 19th century was not, however, solely exhausted in his attack on Ruskin. Pater’s sporadic critique of Arnold’s objective rationalism was also actually organized around Arnold’s subsequent distrust of Romanticism. Arnold turned his back on the Romantic tradition, and instead privileged the moral profundity and nobility of Classical values as the “promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon” (34). In *Essays in Criticism*, published in January 1866, Arnold considered the literature of the first quarter of the 19th century as “premature,” since the Romantics “had their source in a great movement of feeling, not in a great movement of mind” (14); as he stated: “the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety” (13).205 In sharp contrast to Arnold, who believed that the Romantics superficially “didn’t think much,” Pater presented Coleridge, in an article published the same year as Arnold’s book, as a writer who “thought too much,” to employ L. Brake’s successful phrasing (*Pater* 18). Moreover, I would add, by upholding a romantically subjective and creative discourse on the phenomena, deeply rooted in feeling, which was in full accordance with the spirit of Kant’s critical philosophy, and especially its doctrine on art, Pater seemed to indicate that Arnold’s clinging to the noumema through a rationally objective discourse actually exposed a critic who himself “didn’t know enough” of critical philosophy. Arnold’s rationalism manifested the extreme opposite of Romanticism in its privileging of objectivity instead of subjectivity; and it was presented as the other side of the same coin in its one-sidedness.

205 Arnold states about Keats: “Keats as a poet is abundantly and enchantingly sensuous; the question, with some people, will be whether he is anything else” (*Criticism* 282).
Pater, on the contrary, was interested in attaining a form of inclusive balance, which was indicative of his reconciliatory politics. His persistent urging for a fusion between the particular and the general, the centrifugal and the centripetal, the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, Romanticism and Classicism converged precisely to this synthetic vision. And it was to this end that he utilized Kant, for his desired synthesis, which was advocated through the Heraclitean doctrine, was a mediating formula that was ultimately substantiated by the German philosopher. The two paradigms comprised together Pater’s effort to illustrate, by invoking examples from both schools of thought, that their fusion was possible. The synthetic *a priori* judgments of taste not only involved a fusion of all the pre-mentioned oppositional polarities, but also their aesthetic accommodation and settlement, which eventually advanced a disinterested, a purposive, a non-subordinating relation between the two parameters that brought to the foreground individual feeling and perception. Pater’s promotion of Romanticism was not partial (we have seen how he rebuked Coleridge’s rationalistic extremities and hailed Wordsworth’s temperance). The Victorian critic was not willing to unquestioningly resurrect the Romantic ghosts *per se*, but, along the functionalism of the Kantian doctrine, he preferred instrumentally to re-align romanticism with the “modern spirit” as a means of counterbalancing the Enlightenment project that the Victorians – and the critic himself – undertook with a subjective discourse. Scientific relativism and idealistic subjectivism were, thus, tightly aligned. Similarly, by condemning Coleridge and praising Wordsworth, Pater

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206 The Heraclitean medium of the prose-poem standing between poetry and science, the Kantian mediation between the subjective and the objective, the Platonic even balance between the centripetal and the centrifugal, all converged for Pater to the construction of a medium that would incorporate Romanticism within an Enlightenment project, as delivered by Pater’s contemporary science. Pater also utilized Heraclitus to this end, as we saw in the first chapter. The relation between Heraclitus and Kant is going to be explored in the next chapter. What we can say now is that, even though both paradigms encouraged an interplay between opposites, Heraclitus maintained a sense focus, whereas Kant, for Pater, incorporated an aesthetic outlook that Heraclitus obviously lacked.
upheld a non-absolutist form of Romanticism that was actually compatible with “the modern spirit” in its relativity and struggle against outmoded abstractions.

These “least transcendental parts” of German idealism that Pater, either directly or indirectly, repeatedly addressed throughout his work, actually comprised a Romantic undercurrent that the critic, in the manner of Mill, wanted to integrate within his empirical model so as to supplement it with a force he saw lacking. In this respect, the centrifugal vein implicit in the Romantic cult of the individual as hero was suggested as the supplementary counterpart of the Victorian scientific spirit that Pater also fully espoused, as we have seen; the subjective point of view was urged as the balancing counterpart of scientific vision, and was presented as the prerequisite complementing part of his Heraclitean vision of the golden mean. Romanticism, thus, was chiefly employed as the means of infusing the dynamics of the human mind into the passivity engendered by scientific objectivity, of bridging the gap between interpreting subject and scientific fact, of counterbalancing natural necessity with the soothing agency of human imagination, of fusing objective truth with personal meaning. And in this, Pater’s project can be considered as an active contribution to Mill’s suggestion of reconciliation between Enlightenment reason and Romantic feeling.

Heraclitus and Kant: Classicism and Romanticism

Considering the Houghton Library manuscript number 31, McGrath claims that:

Pater apparently had plans for Kant in a third novel that would complete a trilogy along with Marius the Epicurean and Gaston deLatour. According to manuscript notes, the protagonist of this novel was to be a young man coming of age at the beginning of the 19th century. The youth, who would anticipate the spirit of the
century, would be influenced by his early reading of Kant and the adventurous possibilities it opened up for the reconstruction of modern thought. It appears that Kant was to play a role similar to the roles played by Heraclitus for Marius and by Montaigne for Gaston, that is, the role of early skeptical mentor who clears the mind of preconceptions inherited from either childhood or intellectual history. His skepticism would serve as a prelude to the construction of a new, positive vision linking the mind of the protagonist with the latest intellectual revolution (87-88).

Pater’s intention to write a novel where Kant would occupy an analogous position to that of Heraclitus in Marius, as the initiator of the protagonist’s intellectual adventures, casts a new light upon the relation between the two philosophers in Pater’s work.\(^207\) As Pater’s debt to Kant has been systematically overlooked by his critics, the dialectics between the German philosopher and Heraclitus has also been largely ignored. Without jumping to any easy conclusions, I have to admit that, as it appears, there was for the critic a certain affinity between the two thinkers. My claim for this peculiar affinity originates from Pater’s own depiction of the two philosophers, in which there seems to be a structural compatibility between their philosophical systems. If we take into account the fact that both Heraclitus and Kant, despite their efforts to validate knowledge,\(^208\) were considered by Pater to belong to the same skeptical tradition, basically through the relativism of the former and the subjectivism of the latter,\(^209\) the fact that they both insisted on the distinction between the seen and the unseen, phenomena and noumena, that they both shared an epistemological orientation, which in the case of the former was transmuted into the prose poem and for the latter into Romantic poetics, that Kant’s formal purposiveness

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\(^207\) Actually, taking into consideration the semi-autobiographical perspective of Pater’s novels, we can also consider both Heraclitus and Kant as the originators of his own philosophical explorations.

\(^208\) Indicative of this stands the fact that the appeal to go “back to Kant” by the neo-Kantians and K. Popper’s petition to go “back to the pre-Socratics” were both urged as a means of securing the status of human knowledge.

\(^209\) Considering Pater’s “The History of Philosophy,” McGrath states that “for Pater, Heraclitus, Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte and Hegel are all alike in that they all begin with the first sceptical step” (86).
approximated Heraclitus’ notion of the flux, and that they both strove to reconcile the philosophical schools of their time, then my claim seems not that incongruous at all.

In any case, Heraclitus was “neither an idealist nor a realist,” as Zerffi argued in 1877 (I, 130), reflecting the climate within which Pater was establishing this association, just like Kant, who was “neither exclusively empirical nor teleological” (Zerffi “Kant” 76). Moreover, Heraclitus, very much like Kant, proclaimed that, as Kirk puts it, “it is the structure of things, rather than their material, that gives them unity” (107). Such unity, as we have seen, which derived for both thinkers from their conception of reality as a web of interrelations, was for Heraclitus a product of a ceaseless strife between elements; likewise Zerffi, in a highly Heraclitean idiom, claimed that for Kant also history and law attained their aims through “antagonism”: “[w]ars, controversies, passions, and strife, lead to activity, and activity is life. Wars engender peace; controversies truth; covetousness, commercial enterprise; passion virtue; and strife, brotherly love and good-will” (“Kant” 92). In the same manner, law for Kant

has to deal with forces, producing as causes, effects, and these forces must act and react, because a stationary force would be lifeless; the two forces working in antagonism and conflict can but be our moral and intellectual faculties, which in their disturbed balances explain all the phenomena of history (Zerffi, “Kant” 93).

There is yet another implicit relation between the two philosophers. In her excellent study “Kant’s Strange Light,” Orrin N. C. Wang, while considering Kant’s

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210 Zerffi himself in “Kant in His Relation to Modern History” (1876) accordingly stated about the German philosopher: “Kant is neither exclusively empirical nor teleological; he is the creator of an entirely new mode of thinking and studying. All philosophy before Kant was more or less theology. The circle of experience was extremely narrow; and theology bore all before it: none could gainsay it” (“Kant” 76).

211 In the first part of his study of “The Historical Development of Idealism and Realism” (1877), Zerffi also highlighted the fact that Kant placed “as the first analogon of experience” the principle that all change is due to “antagonism” (1 124).
explication of aesthetic ideas in the three examples he provided us with, states that “all three instances noticeably dwell on the articulation of light” (31), which indicates “logos itself” (32). The centrality that reason occupied in Kant’s system is a well-established part of his Enlightenment project;212 Wang’s survey, however, through her insistence on “light” and “logos,” brings to mind Heraclitus’ Logos and the primacy of fire, the awakening of light – an idea that illuminates Pater’s unexpected association. Such association was actually also implicitly acknowledged by Zerffi in 1877, where the Victorian critic, while summing the Greek philosopher’s doctrine, claimed in a Kantian idiom that Heraclitus had set forth “that the universal and divine reason was the criterion of truth; that which was universally believed is certain, for it is borrowed from that common reason which is universal and divine” (I 130).

The dialectics that Pater established between these two philosophical paradigms, which shall be fully explored in the next chapter, was not, however, solely executed on their structural kinship, but it was also indicative of the Oxford don’s attempt to fabricate an expanded philosophical formula. Drawing on the Heraclitean “relativism” and the Kantian “synthetic a priori” pattern, as exemplary reconciliatory models that expressed the need to coalesce oppositional forms,213 Pater appears to have brought them together, due to their seeming compatibility, so as to construct an amplified synthetic paradigm that would eventually surmount the limitations of both

212 As Wang states, there is a sequence of “other solar expressions, attributes, and images of the rational idea” in Kant’s Critique “whose strange, complex inscriptions of light entwine the Enlightenment and Romantic, Anglo-European subject in a very precise way” (35).
213 Heraclitus’ synthetic formula consisted in the reconciliation of the opposites that he promoted. Kant technically achieved his transition from rationalism to empiricism through a series of mediatory and hybrid terms. Indicative of this stood his synthetic a priori statements but also the “empirically real” yet “transcendently ideal” (46) character that permeated most of the terms he coined. In this sense, both space and time, for example, occupy a peculiar half way position between objectivity and subjectivity, since they are “merely a subjective condition of our (human) intuition (which is always sensuous, that is, so far as we are affected by objects), and in itself, independently of the mind or subject, is nothing. Nevertheless, in respect of all phenomena, consequently of all things which come within the sphere of our experience, it is necessarily objective” (50). Pater’s “imaginative reason,” his “generalised form of the concrete,” his “imaginative sense of fact,” his fusion of the centripetal and the centrifugal, precisely involved an equivalent to Heraclitus’ and especially Kant’s synthetic models.
systems. Heraclitus’ model was considered by Pater as a predominantly empirical doctrine that paved the way towards a consideration of the “unseen,” whereas Kant’s system was viewed, quite the contrary, as we have seen, as an idealistic system that engulfed empirical insight in its outlook. The Kantian system was presented as a variation of the Heraclitean endeavor, yet it decisively supplemented the Greek philosopher’s model with an aesthetic orientation that both Heraclitus and his empirical descendants lacked. And it seems to me that it was precisely on the grounds of this systemic affinity that Pater was able to incorporate his Romantic in character aesthetic focus in a phenomenally empirical formula, which constituted the core of his thought.

Accounting for the reasons that had “given rise to the reviving interest in Heraclitus,” G. T. W. Patrick stated in 1888 that “[i]n the confusion arising from the fall of the idealist philosophy in Germany, it was first thought that it would be necessary to return to Kant and secure a new footing; not that any new light was seen emanating from Kant, but error having arisen, it was necessary to trace it to its source” (631). In this tracing, Patrick argued, “our starting point must be from that philosophy which is most free from this whole subjective tendency” (632). The paradigmatic bearer of this “objective” philosophy was Heraclitus: “[h]e is a perfect, by all means the most perfect, illustration of those qualities which are usually supposed to characterize the Greek mind, namely, receptivity, unprejudiced freedom of thought, love of order, and trustful confidence in the unity of man and Nature” (632-33). Greek philosophy, for Patrick, ended “with the triumph of Socrates and the defeat of Heraclitus” that led to the forgetting of “the Greek naturalists,” which “was reserved for the present century to revive and vindicate them” (642). Yet, Patrick concluded that, in this contemporary revival of natural philosophy, “idealism” “meets
some want of human beings,” since its poetry “has been and will still be useful in saving men from the dangers of coarse materialistic thought” (642).

It was precisely in this sense that Pater also brought together Heraclitus and Kant, where the one paradigm surmounted the blind-spots of the other through an organic interrelation. The co-existence of both Heraclitus and Kant as one philosophical unit can be regarded as Pater’s own illustration of the fusion between the centripetal and the centrifugal, of the Classic and the Romantic, of Enlightenment and Romanticism, of tradition and modernity, of the subjective and the objective. The two doctrines brought together, it seems, comprised for the Victorian critic a diachronic philosophical paradigm that promoted a balanced relation between idealism and empiricism, which Pater wanted to familiarize his contemporaries with. This suggestion was formally represented through a literary medium, either in Pater’s novels or his prose-poetry criticism, precisely because Pater wanted formally to underline, through his aesthetic consideration, the role of art in maintaining a free and harmonious relation between these two counterparts. The way Pater persistently and extensively manipulated this philosophical paradigm in his writing comprised, as such, the critic’s response to Mill’s call to bring together the “entirety” of philosophy, yet instead of Bentham and Coleridge, Pater ultimately fused Heraclitus and Kant. The outcome of this synthesis, and the way each system specifically complemented the other, will be the focus of the next chapter, where, through a reading of *Marius the Epicurean*, I shall explore Pater’s formal depiction of this peculiar hybrid, its theoretical and historical implications.
CHAPTER III

PATER’S SYNTHETIC VISION: MARIUS THE EPICUREAN, AND THE “BEATA URBS”

“Beauty and Pain”: The Corrective Revision of Pater’s “Imaginative” Work and “The Child in the House”

The publication in 1873 of the Renaissance, along with the discovery in the February of 1874 of some “compromising” letters written by Pater (Brake, Pater 12), triggered a great amount of controversy regarding the negative influence that the Oxford don’s pagan immoralism might exert on young people. As a result, Pater came under pressure at Oxford, where, since 1865, he had been teaching as a Fellow in Classics at Brasenose College. In 1874, due to Jowett’s manipulations, Pater was passed over for a Proctorship, and in 1877 he withdrew his candidature for the position of Professor of poetry (Small xvi, Brake Pater 12). The critic subsequently omitted the “Conclusion” from the second edition (1877) of the Renaissance, and revised it in the third edition in 1888 by stating in a footnote: “[t]his brief ‘Conclusion’ was omitted in the second edition of this book, as I conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall. On the whole, I have thought It best to reprint it here, with some slight changes which bring it closer to my original meaning” (Renaissance 150). The damage, nevertheless, was already done, having

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1 In 1980, Brake revealed in “Judas and the Window” that it was W. H. Mallock who actually supplied Jowett with Pater’s affectionate letters to an undergraduate of Balliol named William Money Hardinge (48), who in his turn prevented Pater from obtaining his Proctorship in 1874. See also Inman’s “Estrangement and Connection: Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett, and William M. Hardinge” on this matter, and L. Higgins’ “Jowett and Pater: Trafficking in Platonic Wares.”

2 Quite decisive in this regard, as Brake adds, was a homophobic article, “The Greek Spirit in Modern Literature” written by Reverend Richard Tyrwhitt, which appeared in the Contemporary Review and was “aimed at another candidate, J. A. Symonds, who also withdrew” (13).
decisively destroyed his academic career. The extent of Pater’s reputation can be indicated through the fact that he was attacked by the Bishop of Oxford in one of his sermons, and was criticized in a series of articles which appeared in *The Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates’ Journal* in 1877. The critique against Pater, nevertheless, culminated with W. H. Mallock’s serialized novel, *The New Republic* (1877), which appeared in the popular *Belgravia* magazine as a parody of Oxford life in the 1870s.³ There, the critic was caricatured as the self-indulgent “Mr. Rose,” who was constantly rebuked by “Dr. Jenkinson,” the stand-in for Jowett. As I. Small confirms, “[t]he image of Pater that the book offered was quite widespread – particularly in Oxford” (xvi). Here is an extract from Mallock’s illustration of Pater:

‘I rather look upon life as a chamber, which we decorate as we would decorate the chamber of the woman or the youth that we love, the walls of it with symphonies of subdued colour, and filling it with works of fair form, and with flowers, and with strange scents, and with instruments of music. And this can be done now as well – better, rather – than at any former time: since we know that so many of the old aims were false, and so cease to be distracted by them. We have learned the weariness of creeds; and know that for us the grave has no secrets. We have learned that the aim of life is life; and what does successful life consist in? Simply,’ said Mr. Rose, speaking very slowly, and with a soft solemnity, ‘in the consciousness of exquisite living – in the making our own each highest thrill of joy that the moment offers us – be it some touch of colour on the sea or on the mountains, the early dew in the crimson shadows of a rose, the shining of a woman’s limbs in clear water, or – ’

Here unfortunately a sound of ‘Sh’ broke softly from several mouths […]

(Small, *Aesthetes* 171).

Imitating Pater’s diction and tone, Mallock parodied as effeminate the introverted isolation of the “chamber” of thought that the critic promoted in the

³ All the prominent figures of the time appear in it: M. Arnold, Carlyle, Huxley, Ruskin, Tyndall.
“Conclusion,” presenting the Oxford don himself as alienated through the prosaic boredom of his audience. In fact, Mallock’s homophobic illustration crucially contributed to the ruining of Pater’s reputation, ultimately alienating the critic at Oxford. A year after Mallock’s novel, Pater published a short story, which, as it appears, came as a direct response to the parody of *The New Republic* since in it Pater employed the same medium as Mallock, fiction, to revisit his “chamber” of thought metaphor and, despite Mallock’s caricature of “Mr. Rose,” the critic persistently called his protagonist “Florian,” embellishing his story with a thriving plethora of flower images and metaphors, as we shall see.

Published in *Macmillan’s Magazine* in August 1878, “The Child in the House” was Pater’s first “imaginary portrait.” Along with the publication of his essays and reviews, which were, after all, in prose-poetry form and, thus, very close to fiction, this portrait launched an outburst of fiction-writing in the critic’s career (*Marius the Epicurean* in 1885, *Imaginary Portraits* in 1887, and the unfinished *Gaston de Latour* posthumously published in 1896) that was suddenly terminated with his death in 1894. Such an outburst, of course, was undoubtedly related to the attacks that Pater underwent with the publication of the *Renaissance*. As Brake puts it, “Pater’s writing career and his conduct of it might be construed as a trajectory of fight and flight from the cultural and historical ‘moment’ of 1873-4” (*Pater* 1). This correlation between the “historical moment of 1873-4” and Pater’s turn to fiction is manifested through the fact that both “The Child in the House” and *Marius*, Pater’s first specimens of fiction, involved, through indirect - yet firm - allusions, Pater’s apology for the controversy that the “Conclusion” had generated. As Pater himself claimed in a footnote to the third edition of the *Renaissance*, after accounting for the

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4 The “portrait” was later on included in *Miscellaneous Studies*, which was posthumously published in the October of 1895, a year after Pater’s death.

5 As Brake notes this was actually also the first published reference to “imaginary portraits” (*Pater* x).
omission of the “Conclusion” in the second edition, “I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by it” (*Renaissance* 150). At a time, then, when the novel was consolidating its presence throughout Europe as a dominant genre, Pater, it seems, utilized its popular form so as to address a wider audience than the elite circles of scholars that his reviews and essays referred to. Fiction also provided Pater with the means of sublimating the charges urged against him by giving him the opportunity of staging his own victimization⁶ as the plot of an imaginary story, and thus of giving his case heroic dimensions.

The way Pater dramatized in his fiction, and especially in *Marius*, the “revision” of his earlier controversial ideas will be the object of this chapter, where I shall explore the critic’s promoted synthesis of empiricism and idealism in terms of such “correction.” I shall, nevertheless, embark on my analysis with a close reading of the “Child in the House” since, as the author himself admitted in one of his manuscripts, he considered it to be “the germinating, original, source, specimen, of all [his] imaginative work” (qtd. in Shuter, *Rereading* 21). Moreover, as an unsigned review that appeared in the *Nation* in April 1896, noted, the portrait “has a singular interest and value because it sums up all the peculiarities of [Pater’s] style and manner, as well as of his temperament” (Seiler 356). My exploration, thus, of Pater’s first “Imaginary Portrait” will function as a means of introducing certain ideas and techniques that Pater later utilized and developed in *Marius*.

“The Child in the House” is an imaginary portrait of Florian Deleal and the nostalgic remembrance of his childhood. After helping “a poor aged man,” Florian is

⁶ “There is warrant for finding in the tone of Pater’s later work his sadness at being under a cloud of disapproval at Oxford. There was not only the quarrel with Jowett, but his reflection in the obvious caricature of Pater in Mallock’s *New Republic* (1877) where the self-indulgent, aesthetic-religious liberal, Mr. Rose, suffers the displeasure of Dr. Jenkinson” (Young 73).
rewarded for “his pity” with a recollection of his childhood house, which comes to him in the form of a dream (80). As the opening lines of the story inform us:

> [a]s Florian Deleal walked, one hot afternoon, he overtook by the wayside a poor aged man, and, as he seemed weary with the road, helped him on with the burden which he carried, a certain distance. And as the man told his story, it chanced that he named the place, a little place in the neighbourhood of a great city, where Florian had passed his earliest years, but which he had never since seen, and, the story told, went on his journey comforted” (80).

Right from the first lines of this short story, Pater’s favourite doctrine of motion is invoked through the “as” clauses and a sequence of mobile verbs (“walked,” “overtook,” “passed,” “went on”). We are, thus, straightaway introduced to a mobile character and a spatial axis, where the notion of distance is highlighted through the words “walked,” “overtook,” “distance,” “place,” “neighborhood,” “city,” and “journey.” This notion of distance is suggestive of Pater’s shift from his earlier essay form, but it also indicates a change in the author’s mentality through the secular philanthropy that the protagonist, without further ado, displays, which definitely creates a contrast with Pater’s earlier credo of aesthetic isolation and detachment. As such, the issue of distance signals the author’s revisionist mood, the distancing from his earlier doctrine and his wish to shed an objective light on it.

Indicative of Pater’s attempt at objectivity is, moreover, the relation between the narrator and Florian which is established through an intriguing meta-textual technique. Even though the story is narrated from a third-person point of view, which evidently maintains a form of distance between the speaking voice and the leading character, in the third paragraph, a first-person narrator suddenly emerges – “as I

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7 “And that night, like a reward for his pity, a dream of that place came to Florian, a dream which did for him the office of the finer sort of memory, bringing its object to mind with a great clearness, yet, as sometimes happens in dreams, raised a little above itself, and above ordinary retrospect [...]. He awoke with a sigh at the thought of almost thirty years which lay between him and that place, yet with a flutter of pleasure still within him at the fair light, as if it were a smile, upon him” (80).
said,” “the child of whom I am writing” (81), “[s]o the child of whom I am writing” (82), “so I think that the sort of house I have described” (84), “let me note some occasions” (85), “I have remarked how […]” (86) – which is, nevertheless, upheld up to a certain point in the text, and then suddenly gives the lead to the third-person narrative voice again. As C. Williams puts it, “[t]he slippage from third to first person in this narrative creates the effect of specularity, of gathering both Florian and narrator within the figure of a self-reflexive ‘I’” (190).8 This ultimately creates the illusion that the first person is contained within the third, in a manner similar to the “child” that is enclosed in the house, suggesting that Pater is the child in the narrative. Through this technique, Pater was eventually able to indicate himself in the character of Florian but also to preserve a form of distance in his own dramatization, a fact that was replicated in the story via the scene where Florian was objectively observing his own childhood in his dream through a third-person point of view: “[i]n the house and garden of his dream he saw a child moving” (81). Thus, even though the story abounded in autobiographical evidence, as critics tend to agree, Pater managed to fashion a form of ambiguity as a means of objectively depicting himself, where one has the feeling that Florian is and is not Pater.

The notion of distance was also thematically integrated in the story itself through the question of the relation between the subject and the object, “the interrelationship between man and world,” as Iser puts it (22), that the portrait was mainly preoccupied with. Pater introduced this topic though Florian’s dream, which, according to the narrator, “was just the thing needed for the beginning of a certain design [Florian] then had in view, the noting, namely, of some things in the story of his spirit – in that process of brain-building by which we are, each one of us, what we

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8 “The titular ‘child in the house’ seems to refer simultaneously to the young Florian and to an earlier state of the narrator” (Williams 190).
are” (80). Actually, Florian’s dream was the thing that Pater himself needed so as to gradually begin building up a form of philosophic speculation within the main narrative of his story. Contemplating on the “gradual expansion of [his] soul” (81), as it took place within this house, “Florian found that he owed to the place many tones of sentiment afterwards customary with him, certain inward lights under which things most naturally presented themselves to him” (82). Pater, thus, re-invoked the “chamber” of thought metaphor, the target of Mallock’s critique, in order to account for the influence that experience exerted on the shaping of Florian’s character.

Maintaining his focus on this metaphor, through the vantage point of the narrator, Pater generalized by addressing the reader:

[How insignificant, at the moment, seem the influences of the sensible things which are tossed and fall and lie about us, so, or so, in the environment of early childhood. How indelibly, as we afterwards discover, they affect us; with what capricious attractions and associations they figure themselves on the white paper, the smooth wax, of our ingenious souls, as ‘with lead in the rock for ever,’ giving form and feature, and as it were assigned house-room in our memory, to early experience of feeling and thought, which abide with us ever afterwards, thus, and not otherwise. The realities and passions, the rumours of the greater world without, steal in upon us, each by its own little passage-way, through the wall of custom about us; and never afterwards quite detach themselves from this or that accident, or trick, in the mode of their first entrance to us. Our susceptibilities, the discovery of our powers, manifold experiences […] belong to this or the other well-remembered place in the material habitation – that little white room with the window across which the heavy blossoms could beat so peevishly in the wind, with just that particular catch or throb, such a sense of teasing in it, on gusty mornings; and the early habitation thus gradually becomes a sort of material shrine or sanctuary of sentiment; a system of visible symbolism interweaves itself through all our thoughts and passions; and irresistibly, little shapes, voices,
accidents – the angle at which the sun in the morning fell on the pillow – become parts of the great chain wherewith we are bound (82-83).

In this explication of the “chamber” of thought metaphor, Pater strategically employed the first-person plural so as to present it as a given of human constitution. Such explication was systematically delivered, in a manner similar to the Heraclitean framework of the “Conclusion,” through an empiricist discourse, where “sensible things” “affect us” “indelibly” through “associations” by inscribing themselves on the tabula rasa (“the white paper,” “the smooth wax”) of our soul. Pater figures the soul as a “chamber,” where associations give “form and feature” to the “house-room in our memory,” which becomes our “material habitation,” according to Locke’s and Hume’s theory. Implicitly responding, in this way, to Mallock’s crude pragmatism, Pater utilized empiricism as a form of authentication, and ultimately of sublimation, for his “chamber of thought” metaphor, by presenting it through Locke, Hume, and by implication Mill, as the core of the empirical tradition. In this sense, the critic was explicating through a sequence of philosophical allusions the Heraclitean framework he employed in his first book, which eventually enabled him to uphold an exegetic rather than a defeatist tone in his indirect apology to Mallock.

It was not only, nevertheless, the “chamber of thought” metaphor that Pater attributed to the empirical tradition, but also the issue of isolation itself, which Mallock ridiculed in his parody as effeminate. That “little white room,” which was initially presented as being one with experience, soon appeared in the story as “enclosed” and “sealed,” communicating with the “greater world without” solely through its “window,” its “little passage-way,” its “entrance;” it was ultimately depicted as a “sanctuary,” a means of isolating oneself from the “peevish” call of

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9 The notion of “associations” along with the “realities and passions,” the “custom” and “accident” clearly point to a Humean discourse, whereas the tabula rasa imagery denotes Locke.
nature, a means of transcending experience itself, as the religious connotations of the word “sanctuary” suggested (84). Such distancing from experience, according to the narrator, involved the profound “longing for some undivined, entire possession” “of beautiful things” (86-87) that the world of the senses triggered, yet the “chamber of thought” metaphor could not account for. What Pater implied was that the subjectivism and skepticism implicit in the empiricist model of cognition, by presenting reality as a web of associations, which, nevertheless, could not be known themselves, actually enlarged the distance between the subject and the object, eventually rendering the physical world a realm of unfulfilled desire, where “the lust of the eye” (84) turned “the sensible world” into a form of “pressure” (88), and physical beauty into the “tyranny of the senses” (86). As Iser argues, Florian ended up resisting experience because “evidently there are emotions in man that have no equivalent in experience, which therefore have the effect of confusing, tyrannizing and ultimately arousing the desire for escape” (23).

What was, of course, at stake here was the passivity implicit in the empiricist outlook; its sponsorship of the way things are “enforced” upon consciousness (87), its depiction of subjectivity as a “musical instrument” played upon by “things” (87). It is interesting to note that Pater in his illustration of the receptiveness which the empirical model promoted employed a metaphor that Mallock himself had utilized to represent Pater’s passivity when Mr. Rose claimed that

“the aim of culture […] is indeed to make the soul a musical instrument, which may yield music either to itself or to others […]. I would compare the man of culture to an Aeolian harp, which the winds at will play through – a beautiful face, a rainbow, a ruined temple, a death-bed, or a line of poetry, wandering in like a breath of air amongst the chords of his soul, touching note after note into soft music, and at last gently dying away into silence” (Small 171-72).
It is interesting to note here that for Mallock this form of alienation was intertextually associated, through his allusion to the “Aeolian harp,” with Romanticism. This was, nevertheless, precisely the idea that the Heraclitean paradigm served to underline in the Renaissance, where, as we have seen, the critic had illustrated how empirical subjectivism can easily turn into solipsism when not grounded on Logos, the way idealism can easily lapse into transcendentalism when it did not incorporate an empirical compass. Appearing, thus, to comply with Mallock on the issue of alienation, Pater ultimately presented it as a shortcoming of empiricism itself, advantageously turning what was supposed to be his own limitation into a critique of empiricism.

As the narrator suggested, this empirical model resulted in a great deal of pain: from the “windows left ajar unknowingly” there floated into this “enclosed” and “sealed” house “two streams of impressions, the sentiments of beauty and pain” (84). The notion of “beauty” denoted Pater’s early doctrine of beauty and sight, his prior acknowledgment “of the visible, tangible, audible loveliness of things” (84), whereas the notion of “pain” metonymically invoked the “tyrannous” isolation resulting from such “lust of the eye,” but also the pain generated from the attacks that Pater subsequently underwent for it. Accordingly, in the story, it was the notion of pain that prompted Florian’s shift from the empirical formula to another kind of outlook.

Indicative of the nature of Florian’s shift was the unconventional way through which he was exposed to it.

While sitting “in the garden below an open window,” Florian one day “heard people talking, and could not but listen” how a sick woman had felt “one of the dead sitting beside her” (89). Being strategically situated “below a window,” Florian was

10 The “Aeolian harp” metaphor was central in Romanticism, as Coleridge’s famous poem indicates, designating the natural and spontaneous inspiration of poetry without the intervention of rational mediation.
introduced to the metaphysical dimension of things not by the paradigmatic compass of empirical truth, the eyes, but by hearing the sick woman’s words. That same night Florian, being shocked and influenced by the incident, was also visited by a ghost, which became the “new member of the household,” of his “house of thought,” “making the sweet familiar chambers unfriendly and suspect by its uncertain presence” (89). The presence of this ghost eventually marked the “expansion” of Florian’s “soul” (80-81), since his perceptual model was now broadened by being able to account for a wider spectrum of things: for the beauty of the world, but also for its pain, as represented by these “dead people,” who “led a secret, half-fugitive life in their old homes,” “pathetically, as crying, or beating with vain hands at the doors, as the wind came, their cries distinguishable in it as a wilder inner note” (89). Unlike his prior emphasis on sense impression, these new members of Florian’s “house,” “the revenants” (89), eventually reconciled him with the idea of the “chamber of death” (89) by being part of his very own “chamber of thought,” and paved the way for his welcoming of religion: 11

His way of conceiving religion came then to be in effect what it ever afterwards remained – a sacred history indeed, but still more a sacred ideal, a transcendent version of representation, under intenser and more expressive light and shade, of youth, age, tears, joy, rest, sleep, walking – a mirror, towards which men might turn away their eyes from vanity and dullness, and see themselves therein as angels, with their daily meat and drink, even, become a kind of sacred transaction – a complementary strain of burden, applied to our every-day existence, whereby the stray snatches of music in it re-set themselves, and fall into the scheme of some higher and more consistent harmony (90).

11 “To Florian such impressions, these misgivings as to the ultimate tendency of the years, of the relationship between life and death, had been suggested spontaneously in the natural course of his mental growth by a strong innate sense for the soberer tones in things, further strengthened by actual circumstances; and religious sentiment, that system of biblical ideas in which he had been brought up, presented itself to him as a thing that might soften and dignify, and light up as with a ‘lively hope,’ a melancholy already deeply settled in him” (89-90).
The narrator’s explication of Florian’s “way of conceiving religion” resulted in this nine-line sentence, where religious imagery was emphatically evoked (“sacred,” “transcendent,” “light,” “angels,” “higher”), but any reference to a specific religious doctrine was carefully avoided in Pater’s calculated illustration of religion as a “history,” an “ideal,” a “version of representation.” Indicative of this suspicious orchestration was Pater’s strategic manipulation of the length of the sentence, which eventually called attention to itself through its long sequence of adjectives, nouns and secondary clauses, as a means of self-reflexively highlighting Florian’s adherence to religious form, and not to religious meaning, where religious objects were cherished “for their own sakes” (90). In this sense, Florian’s radical conception of Christianity prolonged his emphatic preoccupation with vision (“representation,” “light,” “mirror,” “eyes,” “see”), suggesting that his conversion was only conditional. C. Williams considers Pater’s manipulation here as “an explicitly demythologizing view of religion, through which religion is seen as an elaborate anthropomorphic creation,” where “[t]he ‘mirror’ of religion, in which men might see themselves as angels, has been explicitly envisioned as a projection” (196). Pater managed, in this sense, to depict religion as conforming to the givens of human nature. Achieving a radical shift in perspective, highly reminiscent of Kant’s Copernican revolution, the abounding religious images of Pater’s long sentence, which otherwise could have been

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12 As an unsigned review of the “portrait,” which appeared in the *Spectator* in 28 December 1895, claims: “[t]he style is overloaded and becomes mannerism, and the sentences seem built up and laboured with involved parentheses until there is a distinct sensation to the reader of perpetual strain and even breathlessness in the effort to follow such subtleties of expression” (Seiler 349).

13 Iser differentiates Pater from the “anthropologically oriented philosophy of the nineteenth century” as represented by Feuerbach. As Iser states, “Feuerbach conceived the typical as man’s projection of his actual need. He thus undermined the very substance of religion, whereas Pater in the ‘portrait’ of Florian Deleal attempts to idealize reality through a religious elevation of experience. Unlike Feuerbach, he does not wish to confirm or ordain the sovereignty of man; he wishes only to balance out the evident discrepancy in the relations between man and world. If man, who is shaped by experience, needs the idealizing effect of religion, it is evident that self and reality are in total disharmony, and Pater therefore senses a longing that cannot be satisfied by experience and that drives the self beyond the limitations of the given world” (23-24).
interpreted in conventional terms, were now hostage to the way the author tactically launched his sentence (“[h]is way of conceiving religion”), and were decisively filtered by Florian’s perspective. Florian, thus, occupying the syntactical vantage point of the subject in the microcosm of this long sentence, filled in the absence of any reference to god or transcendental force, rendering, in a Romantic gesture, human perception as divine, and man as god. In this sense, the distance between the subject and the object was abolished, because the subject now appropriated the object and presented it through its own perspective, eventually soothing its “tyranny.” The “house” of thought, which was shaped by experience, became now a force that in itself shaped experience; it became a “church.” Thus, surpassed the givens of conventional religious representation, but it also rose above the very object itself, since, as the narrator admitted, Florian substituted the “actual” for the “typical,” scoring a profound idealization of the real (90), where Florian’s vision became visionary.

14 Florian’s strategic shift of perspective, triggered as a response to the “tyranny of the sensible objects,” signals liberation from this plight through an idealistic consideration, which, considered in the religious context of the sentence, also suggests a form of conception that liberates oneself from the very dogmatic “tyranny” of religion as well.

15 When Pater in the second paragraph describes Florian’s childhood house, he highlights “a noticeable trimness and comely whiteness about everything there – the curtains, the couches, the paint on the walls with which the light and shadow played so delicately,” and a “great poplar in the garden,” which made a sound “in never so slight a stirring of the air, like running water” (81). When the narrator, later on refers to the church, we can see that it is depicted in terms of “whiteness,” of “comeliness,” and of “water”: “[h]e began to love, for their own sakes, church lights, holy days, all that belonged to the comely order of the sanctuary, the secrets of its white linen, and holy vessels, and fonts of pure water; and its hieratic purity and simplicity became the type of something he desired always to have about him in actual life” (90).

16 “Thus a constant substitution of the typical for the actual took place in his thoughts. Angels might be met by the way, under English elm or beech-tree; mere messengers seemed like angels, bound on celestial errands; a deep mysticity brooded over real meetings and partings; marriages were made in heaven; and deaths also, with hands of angels thereupon, to bear soul and body quietly asunder, each to its appointed rest. All the acts and accidents of daily life borrowed a sacred colour and significance; the very colours of things became themselves weighty with meanings like the sacred stuffs of Moses’ tabernacle, full of penitence or peace. Sentiment, congruous in the first instance only with those divine transactions, the deep, effusive unction of the House of Bethany, was assumed as the due attitude for the reception of our every-day existence; and for a time he walked through the world in a sustained, not unpleasurable awe, generated by the habitual recognition, beside every circumstance and event of life, of its celestial correspondent” (90-91).
The idiosyncrasy of Florian’s conversion to religion involved the fact that it simultaneously encompassed both the “actual” and the “typical,” just like Florian’s house of thought, where “inward and outward being woven through and through each other into one inextricable texture – half, tint and trace and accident of homely colour and form, from the wood and the bricks; half, mere soul-stuff, floated thither from who knows how far” (81). I shall fully elaborate on this peculiar form of religious feeling in my consideration of Marius. What I, nevertheless, can say here is that Pater established a tight interconnection between this polar pair, where the empirical construction of Florian’s “house of thought” eventually triggered, through the “tyranny of the senses” it instilled, its own transcendence,17 entailing a form of idealism as its necessary corrective counterpart. Such idealism, in its turn, did not reach the extent of becoming an absolutist transcendental form, since it was firmly contained within an empirical framework.18 Indicative of this empirical orchestration of the ideal was the way Pater utilized the spatial axis. As Shuter argues, the “power of place is […] remarkable” in the story since it is through it that Pater provides us with the recognition that “the story of a spirit can be told only in terms of place,” that the story of a soul can only be told in terms of its “house” (20). Even the notion of pain, the paradigmatic bearer of idealism in this story, was constantly represented through flower imagery: “[i]t was the trick even his pity learned, fastening those who suffered in anywise to his affections by a kind of sensible attachment” (87). Thus, Florian would think of sick Julian “as spoiled in the sweet blossom of his skin like

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17 Religion offers “a kind of idealization of experience, and this idealization of a world to which he feels inescapably tied appears to be necessary if the palpable imbalance between world and man is to be evened out” (Iser 23). “For Florian the actual is replaced by the typical because only the ideal continuity of the typical can make reality bearable” (23).

18 “[I]n his intellectual scheme,” Florian “was led to assign very little to abstract thought, and much to its sensible vehicle or occasion. Such metaphysical speculation did but reinforce what was instinctive in his way of receiving the world, and for him, everywhere, that sensible vehicle or occasion became, perhaps only too surely, the necessary concomitant of any perception of things, real enough to be of any weight or reckoning, in his house of thought” (87).
pale amber” and of “Cecil, early dead, as cut off from the lilies […] and then what comforted him a little was the thought of the turning of the child’s flesh to violets in the turf above him” (87). This interdependence of the empirical and the metaphysical was eventually illustrated in this story as a vicious circle, where the two terms exchanged positions in a cause-and-effect chain, since the one was presented as reciprocally leading to the other in a paradigmatic interplay between complementary forces. This Heraclitean in character cyclical pattern was also replicated in the very structure of the story itself, since its ending, where Florian was reconciled with metaphysics and left his childhood house “in agony of home-sickness” (91), inescapably led to its beginning, where we find the character nostalgically re-visiting his house and its empirical construction.

This causal chain between the “actual” and the “typical,” this “proportion of the sensuous and the ideal elements in human knowledge” was justified by the narrator on the grounds of “the relative parts they bear in it” (87). Pater’s use of the word “relative” as the link between the “sensuous” and the “ideal,” the “actual” and the “typical,” was, of course, not accidental. I have already established in the previous chapters that both Heraclitean empiricism, via relativistic associationism, and Kantian idealism, through its functionalist perspectivism, were coordinated by Pater as complementary doctrines that both emphasized the role of relations in the construction of meaning. The notion of “relation,” thus, became for Pater, as I see it,

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19 Flower imagery actually permeates Florian’s life. We come across “the blossom of an old pear-tree” (81), the “dandelions,” the “Golden-rod, and brown-and-golden Wall-flower,” the “Flors Parietis,” the flowers of “the lime-tree” (82), the “rose-bushes” (83), the “hilacs” (85), “a great red hawthorn” (86), the “violets” (87), the “roses” (87), the “dward rose-bushes” (89), among others. It was certainly this flower preoccupation that led Mallock to call Pater as “Mr. Rose.” And it was certainly Mallock’s critique that led Pater to represent pain through flower imagery.

20 The medium of the Imaginary Portrait ideally provided Pater with the means of illustrating this fusion. As Inman states, “[a]fter abandoning his essay on English literature, Pater’s mode of interrelating general and particular would become the imaginary portrait, the description of an individual who by constitution and culture is representative of a historical type at the crossroads” (1877 5).
the point of convergence between empiricism and idealism, and it was actually this
that enabled the critic, very much like Florian himself, to move from the one
movement to the other. In a similar fashion, it was through empirical “association,”
the very constituent of Florian’s “house of thought,” that the character structured a
form of idealistic humanism, where the “associations” between ideas, evolved into
bonds between human beings, and Florian’s detached house of thought eventually got
secularized: “[t]here were times when he could think of the necessity he was under of
associating all thoughts to touch and sight, as a sympathetic link between himself and
actual, feeling, living objects” (87).21 In this sense, the interplay between the two
philosophical paradigms I have brought to the surface with my exploration so far can
be very revealing of Pater’s peculiar orchestration in this story.

The causal relation established between empiricist shortcomings and idealist
rectification, between idealist shortcomings and empiricist rectification was a strategic
maneuver that eventually annihilated the impression of distance that Pater’s story
initially excited. By presenting idealism as embedded in empiricism, Pater’s
announced distancing from his earlier credo was methodically sabotaged, since what
was understood as radical change was presented as having been there in the first
place. “Mr. Rose” still retained his identity as “Florian,” converted now to
Christianity, but on purely empirical grounds; “beauty” was turned into “pain,”
appreciated, however, solely for its “beauty”; Florian abandoned his isolation, but
nostalgically returned to it. Pater, thus, presented his “change” as no change at all –
certainly as no conformation to his deciers – but as a natural outgrowth of his early
theory, bringing to the surface the fact that the critique against him was a profound
misapprehension of both his credo and his intentions. The medium of fiction that was

21 It is no accident that after Florian’s shift towards an idealistic humanism, the character eventually
abandons his childhood house and enters the world.
employed in this story, with its capacity of generating a plethora of meanings and readings, was strategically utilized by Pater in his apology as a meta-narrative that self-reflexively highlighted this possibility of misreading. Pater upheld as evidence of such misinterpretation the fact that, as this story served to show, there could actually be a form of compatibility between his aesthetic credo and a form of moral vision as expressed by religious belief. This compatibility was in fact structured along the Oxford don’s synthesis of empiricism and idealism that I have analyzed in the two previous chapters through the paradigms of Heraclitus and Kant. The relation between such synthesis and Pater’s promotion of an idiosyncratic form of religious belief was actually the kernel of Marius the Epicurean, where the critic fully developed the ideas contained in “Child in the House.” It is to Marius that I shall now turn so as to have a closer look at the way this synthesis was staged and to what use Pater put it.

Formal Aspects of Marius the Epicurean

“I made enquiry of myself” (Heraclitus, fr. 101)

Three years after the publication of “The Child in the House,” Pater started writing his novel, which was completed in 1884, after a short visit to Rome (1882), and published in 1885, when Pater was forty-five years old (Rosenblatt 245). Twelve long years had passed since the controversial Renaissance and the Oxford don surprised the reading public by publishing a novel. Despite, nevertheless, the fact that Marius was fiction—and, thus, marked a break from the form of Pater’s earlier writing—it appeared to include all the major characteristics and preoccupations that readers were familiar with from Pater’s former articles. The title of the novel, Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas, was, after all, indicative of this, since it seemingly announced
both the paganism (“Epicureanism”) and associationism (“sensations and ideas”) that characterized Pater’s earlier work. This was, however, only a “seeming” continuity, since, as we shall see, it also contained certain aspects that could be translated as evidence of Pater’s rupture from his earlier synthetic doctrine.

Set during the reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, *Marius* was a *Bildungsroman*, in the tradition established by one of Pater’s favourite authors, Goethe, with his *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre* (1795). Pater’s novel was a story of spiritual quest, where we follow young Marius growing into manhood while seeking for some truth among various philosophical systems. Abandoning his hometown, “White Nights,” and its old-fashioned, traditional religion, Marius moved, after his mother’s death, to Pisa, where, under the influence of his friend Flavian, he espoused Cyrenaicism. After Flavian’s death, Marius went to Rome, where he questioned his Cyrenaic ideals and was attracted to Stoicism, which he, in turn, renounced in favour of the Christian ideal that his friend Cornelius stood for. Eventually, Marius sacrificed his life for his Christian friend, and Pater finished his novel in an enigmatic, open-ended way, since when Marius died, he was treated by some villagers like a Christian martyr, even though he had not been officially converted to Christianity.

“In some ways, no story could be simpler, but few could be more complex in effect,” as Levey puts it in his introduction to the novel (7). The “complexity” that Levey refers to predominantly involves the way Pater formally delivered this rather “simple” plot-line through his intricate narrative techniques. If we take, nevertheless, into consideration the fact that ever since the *Renaissance* Pater was consistently promoting a unity between matter and form, then the Oxford don’s sophisticated handling of the form of the his story is only indicative of the fact that its plot might not be that “simple” after all. As a matter of fact, the form of *Marius*, as we shall see,
was actually symptomatic of what was lurking beneath such “simplicity,” of the message Pater wanted to convey. We should not forget here that Marius was Pater’s first and only book that was conceived and executed as a whole, since all his other books were basically collections of lectures, articles, and short stories, or remained unfinished. In this sense, the book was far more organized than Pater’s other works, and this organization chiefly involved the tight correspondence established between its form and content. A closer look at the way Pater technically orchestrated his novel will, therefore, contribute to a fuller understanding of its story.

In order to dramatize Marius’ spiritual quest, Pater steered clear of conventional narrative techniques. Such evasion basically involved the fact that the author employed the conventions of the novel in an unusual way so as to illustrate, as he did in “The Child in the House,” the leading character’s fusion of “sensations and ideas.” Unlike, thus, any other Victorian novel, Marius contained no dialogue, no character interaction, no love scenes, and hardly any action at all, so that Pater would be able to focus on Marius’ introverted thoughts and to highlight the profound isolation of his “house of thought.” Pater technically maintained this focus by keeping secondary characters “at a distance” (Fletcher Pater 32). As Iser notes, “the characters do not establish themselves as real people, but instead gain their outline by being thrown into relief against a luxuriously elaborated background” (129). All secondary characters, therefore, were not fully developed but rather functioned as “abstractions” (Brzenk 223), as “physical embodiments” (Ayers 694) of philosophical

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22 As J. M. Gray noticed in a review of the novel in the Academy (21 March 1885): “with comparatively little action, with hardly any display of the more ordinary human emotions – with, for instance, scarcely a reference in it to sexual love, the book never fails of interest” (Seiler 121).
23 In this sense, Marius was in accordance with Pater’s other leading characters, like Gaston, Florian, Duke Earl, Sebastian and Emerald, which were all introverted.
ideas, as emblems of Marius’ spiritual progress,24 in accordance with the
representational technique that Pater had established in “Diaphaneite” and Plato and
Platonism, as we have seen, where abstract ideas were staged as living persons. Such
a strategy, needless to argue, also facilitated the critic in his depiction of the synthesis
of empiricism and idealism. Flavian, Marius’ teenage friend, was, accordingly, the
“epitome of the whole pagan world, the depth of its corruption, and its perfection of
form” (I, 53), and Marcus Aurelius signified Marius’ rationalistic phase, whereas
Cornelius and Cecilia represented the Christian spirit that the character espoused, as
we shall see.

Pater also dramatized Marius’ consciousness and his philosophical ideas by
resorting to a plethora of external sources, incorporating within his main narrative
extracts, among others, from diaries, poems, philosophical dialogues, sermons, and
soliloquies. This pastiche of divergent discourses was not only indicative of the
critic’s attempt to bring together within the same narrative empirical and idealist
elements, but it also substantiated his synthetic project. Furthermore, Pater’s
intertextual allusions, this parade of divergent discourses, served to objectify Marius’
thoughts and the mental climate of the 2nd century AD.25 Accordingly, Pater included
in Marius extracts from Apuleius’ The Golden Ass along with an extended translation
of the story of Cupid and Psyche, whereas Apuleius himself appeared towards the end
of the book reciting Lucian’s Halcyon. Quotations from Heraclitus, Aristippus, Plato,
Epicurus, Horace, Fronto, Lucian’s Hermotimus, Marcus’ Aurelius’ Meditations,
Eusebius’ Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne, and of the famous anonymous

24 Ayers’ “embodiment” does not actually contradict Brzenk’s “abstractions” for Pater’s use of
character abstracts human characteristics in order to present them as embodiment of philosophical
ideas. We have already seen that the Oxford don in Plato and Platonism linked concrete form to
generalization as a means of “enriching” it (149).

25 “The long sections of translated materials not only delineate the historical personages who appear,
but serve also as a means for conveying the sense of the intellectual and philosophical atmosphere of
the period depicted,” as Brzenk puts it (224).
poem *Pervigilium Veneris*, which Pater attributed to Flavian, were integrated within the main text as micro-narratives that functioned as a means of embodying Marius’ thoughts in terms of discourses that were dominant in the 2nd century AD.26 Thus, Marius’ childhood idealism was not sketched in terms of his actions or his words, but in terms of Platonism; his adolescent skepticism was expressed not through a revolt against a parental figure but rather through Apuleius, Heraclitus and Aristippus; the maturity of his adulthood was illustrated through the character’s fascination with Stoic rationalism, and, later on, Christianity, rather than through his settling down, or, let’s say, his marriage.27

This curious intertextual sketching of Marius’ consciousness was, in fact, highlighted by the text itself when Marius admitted that his life “had been so like the reading of a romance to him” (I, 25). Pater’s multilayered and intertextual depiction of Marius was actually, I believe, a consistent extension of the author’s politics of sentence structure. These intertextual allusions, very much like Pater’s long and well-wrought sentences, which enforce, as we have seen in our analysis of “The Child in the House,” a slow reading on the part of the reader that draws attention to the process of meaning construction, were indicative of Pater’s attempt to underpin the developing procedure of Marius’ spiritual progress and his reconciliatory vision rather than its final outcome. Thus, Pater’s portrayal of human consciousness as a pastiche of different discourses and perspectives, as an amalgamation of divergent fragments anticipated modernist techniques and generated a static effect in the novel, which,

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26 For a detailed account of Pater’s allusion to 2nd century AD works see Brzenk p. 223.
27 Consider, for example, the way Apuleius’ *Golden Book* was also employed as a means of charting Marius’ ideal of “imaginative love:” “[s]o the famous story composed itself in the memory of Marius, with an expression changed in some ways from the original and on the whole graver […] this episode of Cupid and Psyche served to combine many lines of meditation, already familiar to Marius, into the ideal of a perfect imaginative love, centered upon a type of beauty entirely flawless and clean – an ideal which never wholly faded from his thoughts, though he valued it at various times in different degrees” (I, 92). The reader is implicitly urged by the narrator to resort to Apuleius’ story in order to make out what precisely this “ideal” involved.
nevertheless, encapsulated “the historical moment when the unconscious came
painfully to its birth,” as Harold Bloom argues (Ringers 190), foreshadowing the
writings of Forster, Woolf, Joyce, Mann and Proust, among others.29

This multilayered, mosaic-like structure of Pater’s narrative eventually
amounted to a feeling of discursiveness, as many reviewers complained. An unsigned
review in The Times (9 April 1885) stated that

in place of our attention being concentrated on the leading actors in the scene, it is
almost perversely distracted and diverted […] everything written as to all and
each of these is excellent, only we feel that it is sadly out of place. So the whole
of the story, if story it may be called, is made up of a loose series of episodes and
of digressions more or less irrelevant, though we are bound to say that in respect
of many of these digressions the author could hardly help himself when he had
once selected his subject (Seiler 126).

Another unsigned review that appeared on the 18th of March 1885 in the Pall
Mall Gazette also emphasized that the novel “defies classification” and that “[t]here is
a thread of narrative running through it, and certain proper names recur. Yet it has
nothing in common with the usual dreary ‘classical story,’ and indeed can hardly be
called a story at all” (Seiler 117). What eventually held this ramifying narrative
together was the focus on Marius’ consciousness that the authorial voice consistently
maintained. The character of Marius functioned as a magnifying glass through which
the narrator was orchestrating his explorations of divergent philosophical systems that

28 “Marius is the masterpiece of things-in-their-farewell, the great document in English of the historical
moment when the unconscious came painfully to its birth. Where Wordsworth and Keats, followed by
Mill and Arnold, fought imaginatively against excessive self-consciousness, Pater welcomes it, and by
this welcome inaugurates, for writers and readers in English, the decadent phase of Romanticism, in
which, when honest, we still find ourselves” (Bloom Ringers 190). Quite indicative of this affiliation
between aestheticism and psychoanalysis was Freud’s “friendliness” towards Pater, manifested, as
Meisel states, through the fact that in his study of Leonardo (1910), Freud discussed Pater’s essay on
Leonardo “no fewer than four times” (758).

29 As Sudrann puts it, Marius is a typical “psychological novel,” and its method “is that of the ‘interior
monologue’ and the ‘stream of consciousness,’ and its structure is no longer determined by the what-
happens-next demands of chronological narrative” (426).
were eventually attributed to Marius’ quest. Pater employed a third-person omniscient point of view, which, nevertheless, was at certain points hard to disentangle from the protagonist’s perspective, giving repeatedly the impression that what was being expressed was Marius’ own thought when it was not.\textsuperscript{30} Indicative of this identification between the 19\textsuperscript{th}-century narrator and the 2\textsuperscript{nd}-century AD character, were the countless anachronisms that permeated the text, where Marius’ thoughts were repeatedly associated with Dante, Michelet, Bacon, Pascal, Montaigne, Wordsworth, Swift, Goethe, Gautier, and Salvatore Rosa, to name but a few. Likewise, for example, Marius “saw” in the early Christian church of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD Giotto’s and Raphael’s “regenerate type of humanity” (II, 110).\textsuperscript{31}

This implicit identification between narrator and character was also highlighted by the plethora of autobiographical references that the novel contained, a technique that Pater had initially used in “The Child in the House,” as we have already seen.\textsuperscript{32} In her review of Marius (May 1885), Mrs. Ward argued that Pater had developed the thinly-disguised “autobiographical matter” of “The Child in the House” into a “more impersonal, more remote from actual life” form of representation in Marius (Seiler 130). Despite Pater’s “disguise” as Marius, nevertheless, the “autobiographical matter” was still highly exposed, as most Paterian critics agree.\textsuperscript{33} It

\textsuperscript{30} Brzenk argues that “Pater’s use of a controlled third-person point of view, which concentrates upon the thoughts and sensations of a centrally placed leading character, anticipates the single point of view which Henry James perfected as a result of the same desire to give unity to his works of fiction” (225).

\textsuperscript{31} When Marius first entered the Christian church, “he saw, in all its primitive freshness and amid the lively facts of its actual coming into the world, as a reality of experience, that regenerate type of humanity, which centuries later, Giotto and his successors down to the best and purest days of the young Raphael, working under conditions very friendly to the imagination, were to conceive as an artistic ideal” (II, 110).

\textsuperscript{32} Actually, such ambiguity was to a certain extent present in Pater’s non-fiction work, where the Oxford don radically transformed each philosophical doctrine he was dealing with, by adding a personal twist to it and ultimately presenting it as a vehicle for expressing his own views.

\textsuperscript{33} “There is […] an ambiguity to be enjoyed whereby Marius is both and is not Pater,” as Levey puts it (Marius 18). Levey even reaches the point of arguing that “Pater actually charted his own mental progress […] with the use of circumstances directly referring to his own, beginning with those of childhood. And what is not factually true is probably true psychologically. The boyhood of Marius is not to be taken as literally that of Pater, but some of the facts common to both are too striking to be
appears, after all, that Pater was not that interested in totally annihilating his presence from the narrative, but rather in indirectly suggesting it. As an attempt to both reveal and conceal himself, Pater’s partially autobiographical tone actually signaled, as it did in “The Child,” the author’s effort to objectively represent himself by semi-disguising and incorporating himself in the distant background of 2nd-century AD Rome. As Mrs. Ward noted in her review, the readers will detect in the novel a wonderfully delicate and faithful reflection of the workings of a real mind, and that a mind of the nineteenth century, and not of the second. The indirect way in which the mental processes which are the subject of the book are presented to us, is but one more illustration of an English characteristic. As a nation we are not fond of direct ‘confessions.’ All our autobiographical literature, compared to the French or German, has a touch of dryness and reserve. It is in books like ‘Sartor Resartus,’ or ‘The Nemesis of Faith,’ ‘Alton Locke,’ or ‘Marius,’ rather than in the avowed specimens of self-revelation which the time has produced, that the future student of the nineteenth century will have to look for what is deepest, most intimate, and most real in its personal experience. In the case of those natures whose spiritual experience is richest and most original, there is […] a natural tendency to disguise. We want to describe for others the spiritual things which have delighted or admonished ourselves, but we shrink from a too great realism of method. English feeling, at its best and subtlest, has almost always something elusive in it, something which resents a spectator, and only moves at ease when it has succeeded in interposing some light screen or some obvious mask between it and the public (Seiler 131).

Just as the persona of Marius was a pretext for Pater, the overall historical setting of the novel, as Mrs. Ward indicated, also served as a ploy for invoking the 19th century in an objective way. Actually, Pater himself encouraged in the text this dismissed” (18). Fletcher, also, claims that Marius’ childhood religion, the Religion of Numa, is “comparable to the old high-and-dry Anglicanism of Pater’s childhood” (Pater 32).
analogy between Antonine Rome and Victorian England: “[t]hat age and our own have much in common – many difficulties and hopes. Let the reader pardon me if here and there I seem to be passing from Marius to his modern representatives – from Rome, to Paris or London” (II, 14). This “duality of representation” (Levey, Marius 18) obviously involved the existence of certain affinities between England and the Rome of Marcus Aurelius. Both eras represented “two summits of power and civilization sloping downward in decadence,” as Bloom notes (Ringers 188). Fletcher, moreover, adds that “[b]oth were centers of vast empires, both governments were internally stable; both intermittently at war with other races on the frontier. More profoundly, both provided an intellectual climate in which a bewildering number of competing faiths and philosophies were able to flourish” (Fletcher, Pater 31). Dahl also highlights the fact that “the growth in Antonine Rome on the one hand of humanitarian feelings as expressed in orphan schools, hospitals, and the fashionableness of charity implicitly recalls nineteenth-century England; on the other, the cruelty of the Roman amphitheater is explicitly compared to that of modern slave trade and modern religious prosecution” (Dahl 16). Nevertheless, these analogies that Pater established between the two cultures actually involved far more definite relations than these critics assert that actually had to do with the Oxford don’s synthetic vision, but this is an issue that I shall fully explore later on. What I need to emphasize here is that the time and the setting of the novel, very much like its leading character and narrative voice, all comprised different aspects of Pater’s effort to maintain a form of distance as a strategic means of instilling a sense of objectivity in his consideration. Such “distance” implicitly introduced Pater’s rupture from his

34 As Frank. M. Turner has shown, the Victorians established analogies with the classics and especially with the ancient Greeks, rather than the Romans. Pater, nevertheless, in Marius employed various Greek philosophical movements against a Roman setting, since Rome was considered as an analogue of Victorian Britain, as we shall see, and it was easier to address the issue of Christianity.
35 Adams in his turn regards Marius as displaying “the conscience of the Victorian gentleman” (444).
earlier stance as celebrated in the Renaissance. The genre itself that Pater utilized in Marius was indicative of this distancing.

In employing a historical guise, Pater’s first novel was following the dominant tradition of the historical novel, which was established by Scott, Dickens and Thackeray. To be more precise, Marius belonged to a subgenre of historical fiction, which was set during the antiquarian early days of Christianity and indirectly dealt with the religious or philosophical anxieties of the 19th century. By focusing on the 2nd century AD as a period of transition from a pagan to a Christian worldview, Pater was moving along the tradition that Dahl terms the “early Christian novel,” or the “English philosophical-historical novel about antiquity” (2-3),36 which, moreover, also systematically explored, as Pater does in his novel, the relevance of Epicureanism to Christianity.37 In this sense, Marius formally bore a stronger kinship with Charles Kingsley’s Hypatia; or, New Foes with an Old Face (1853), Cardinal Wiseman’s Fabiola; or, The Church of the Catacombs (1854) and Cardinal Newman’s Callista, A Sketch of the Third Century (1856), all of which Margaret Maison considers in


36 As Dahl argues, this subgenre grew out of a series of “seventeenth- and eighteenth- century didactic prose fictions combining instruction about the ancient world, moral precepts, and political or satiric comment on the age in which they were written” (Dahl 2-3). Dahl lists here De la Mothe Fenelon’s Les Aventures de Telemaque (1699), Jean Tarrasson’s Sethos, histoire ou vie tiree des monuments anecdotes de l’ancienne Egypte (1731), Claude-Prospé Joylot de Crébillon’s Lettres Atheniennes (1711), J. J. Barthelemy’s Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grece (1788), Etienne-François de Lantier’s Voyages d’Antenor en Grece et en Asie (1798), Christoph Martin Wieland’s Geschichte des Agathon (1766-1767), The Athenian Letters; or, The Epistolary Correspondance of an Agent of the King of Persia Residing at Athens (1741-1743) by an anonymous group of Englishmen, Cornelia Knight’s Marcus Flaminius; or, A View of the Military, Political, and Social Life of the Romans (1792), Nathaniel Ogle’s Miriamme, A Historical Novel of Palestine (1825), George Croly’s Salathiel (1828), Horace Smith’s Zillah, A Tale of the Holy City (1828) and Tales of the Early Ages (1832), Thomas Grey’s The Vestal (1830), Edward Bulwer’s The Last Days of Pompeii (1834), G. P. R. James’ Attila, A Romance (1837), Willkie Collins’ Antonina; or, The Fall of Rome (1850), G. J. Whyte-Melville’s The Gladiators; A Tale of Rome and Judea (1863), W. H. G. Kingston’s Ben Hur; A Tale of the Christ (1880).

37 Dahl mentions among others, Walter Savage Landor’s Pericles and Aspasia (1836), Lydia Maria Child’s Philothea, A Romance (1836), William Ware’s Zenobia; or, The Fall of Palmyra (1837), Probus; or, Rome in the First Century (1838), Julian; or, Scenes in Judea (1841), Disraeli’s Tancred; or, The New Crusade (1847), John Gibson Lockhart’s Valerius, A Roman Story (1821), Thomas Moore’s The Epicurean (1827), Eliza Buckminster Lee’s Parthenia; or, The Last Days of Paganism (1858).
questions raised by the Oxford movement (117). This kinship was not, however, only formal, for very much like Kingsley, Wiseman and Newman, Pater’s employment of the form of the “early Christian novel” was indicative, as “The Child in the House” also suggested, of his own wish to respond to the question of religion and the way it was related to his synthetic vision, which actually formed the kernel of his novel, as I will set out to prove. Before, nevertheless, examining Pater’s relation to religion in his novel, we need to briefly consider the wider historical background of religious thought in the 19th century, as a means of clarifying the implications of his outlook.

The “Age of Religious Revival” and Pater’s “Fourth Phase”

Addressing the widespread dissemination of moralism in all fields of Victorian life that most people still consider as a synonym of Victorianism, T. H. S. Escott declared, during the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897, that “the Victorian age is in fact above all others an age of religious revival” (qtd. in Gilmour 63). The truth is, nevertheless, that, throughout the 19th century, as an institution, the Church of England had undergone a series of radical changes that led to a decisive shrinkage of its rights. From the 1830s to the 1850s the stability of the Church of England was constantly threatened by the dilemmas generated from the attempts to reform its

38 Rosenblatt, moreover, links Marius to Jules Lemaitre’s historical novel, Serenus (1883), which was influenced by Ernest Renan (248-250), whereas DeLaura in “Romola and the Origin of the Paterian View of Life” links Pater’s novel to George Eliot’s Romola.
39 Escott was actually referring, as Gilmour exemplifies, to “the reform of the clergy and organization in the Church of England, its expansion overseas, the increased membership of all the churches; and he could have mentioned the churches built in the previous sixty years, for this was a heroic age of church building and restoration” (63).
40 Decisive in this was Gladstone’s Liberal Government elected in 1869 by “opening teaching fellowships at Oxford to non-Anglicans, shifting control of elementary education from the Church to the state by the 1870 Education Act, removing some of the historic disabilities of Nonconformists, and disestablishing the Irish Church” (Gilmour 102).
structure, from the clash between its Anglican, High-Church and the Evangelical Low-Church wings, from the conversion of prominent Anglicans, like Newman, to Catholicism, and from the conflicts between the established Church and various Nonconformist sects, which was evidence of the fact that “religious life in the 19th century was effectively plural” (Gilmour 68). Then, in the 1860s, there began a relentless “hammering” of traditional faith (Altholz 59), part of which was also Pater’s questioning of Christian validity that I have examined in the first chapter. Such extensive “crises of faith” can be largely attributed to two factors. Firstly, the publication in 1859 of Darwin’s *The Origin of the Species* launched a militant challenging of religious faith by subverting William Paley’s *Natural Theology* (1802), where nature was considered as evidence of God’s design. Darwin’s project was, furthermore, backed up by the triumphant advance of science, which promoted a materialistic account of reality that evidently contradicted the Scriptures, as we have seen in the first chapter. Secondly, a year after Darwin’s book, seven liberal Anglicans, belonging to the so-called Broad Church movement, published the influential *Essays and Reviews* arguing for an affiliation of religion with science and for the application of German Biblical criticism to the Scriptures, which treated the Bible as an ordinary literary text. Surprisingly, most of its contributors were clergymen of the Church of England, which was a dynamic acknowledgement, coming from within the Church, of the need to reform the institution in the face of the radical changes that English society was undergoing. This acknowledgement was also shared by certain eminent laymen, like Matthew Arnold, who accordingly stated in

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41 These terms distinguish the eclectic ritualism of the Anglo-Catholics from the Anglo-Evangelical Puritans.
42 Thomas Arnold, Frederick Dennison Maurice, Benjamin Jowett and Frederick Temple were some prominent members of this liberal ecclesiastical group.
43 Only one of its contributors was a layman, Charles Goodwin. One of the rest, Frederick Temple, later on became Archbishop of Canterbury.
God and the Bible (1875) that “[t]wo things about the Christian tradition must surely be clear to anybody with eyes in his head […] [that] men cannot do without it; the other, that they cannot do with it as it is” (xi).

Eventually, the church adjusted to the call of the times and moderately accommodated the givens of science and historical relativism, despite the stark reactions of High Churchmen and the so-called “Tractarians,” the members of the Oxford movement.44 On the occasion of the Queen’s Jubilee, while considering “The Progress of Religious Thought during the Victorian Reign,” O. J. Simon favorably addressed the changes in “Biblical interpretation and in the relation between science and religion” (345) by stating that

religion (not only Christianity) must be presented upon a different basis from that upon which it was formerly supposed to rest. Tied down to the words of Scripture, and further hampered by an interpretation of it which was only characteristic of the unscientific spirit of the Middle Ages, the permanent truths of religion must necessarily become obscured. It is only part of the evolution of the human mind that at some time or other it should assert its independence and break its bands asunder (341).

The “progress” of religious thought during Victoria’s reign predominantly involved for Simon the fact that the church had actually “enabled religious people to transfer the seat of authority in religious matters from a condition of bibliolatry to one of natural religion,” since “[r]eligion is either of vital consequence to human nature or it is a mere word without any practical meaning” (335). By considering the way religious thought had progressed into “natural religion” and by highlighting its “practical meaning,” Simon was implicitly addressing the most radical and subversive

44 This term signalled a group of Oxford dons, among them Newman, the sons of William Wilberforce, Hurrell Froude, John Keble, E. B. Pusey, who, during the 1830s, strongly reacted against the prospect of Church reform and liberal state intervention in the matters of the Church. Rather, they wanted to recover the Catholic heritage of the Church so as to re-affirm its authority, and they emphasized the mystic character of its ritual as a means of undermining liberal rationalism (Gilmour 76-81).
shift that religion had suffered during the 19th century. This shift had to do with the
fact that the incorporation of science and historical relativism as indication of
“progress” eventually entailed a sweeping rationalization of the metaphysical
substratum of religious thought, where the supernatural character of the Christian
doctrine was forced to be suited or reduced so as to suit these “progressive”
elements.45 This gradually but steadily led to the “separation of the moral sense from
the religious institutions which had once expressed it” (Gilmour 93), since morality
could no longer be contained within the “eroded” metaphysical poles of heaven or
hell. This secularization of moral feeling in its turn gave birth to the ethics of
welfarism and socialism so as to fill the vacancy left by religious commitment.46
Indicative of this “liberation” of morality from the institution of the Church were E.
Renan’s *Vie de Jesus* (1863), J. S. Seeley’s *Ecce Homo* (1865) and *Natural Religion*
(1882), but also Comte’s “Religion of Humanity,” as expounded in his four volumes
of *Systeme de Politique Positive* (1851-1854), where God was replaced by a rational
humanitarian ideal as an anti-metaphysical religious form that was compatible with
the “modern spirit.”

J. S. Mill decisively contributed to the popularization of the “religion of
humanity” in England. In his *Three Essays on Religion* (1874), Mill acknowledged
the psychologically beneficial role of religion in supplying “ideal conceptions grander
and more beautiful than we see realized in the prose of human life” (103),47 yet found

45 Notice, for example, how Simon, considers the supernatural elements of religion as mere “illusion”
or “superstition”: “[t]he great lesson which the present generation has learnt is that whether miracles in
the ordinary sense have ever taken place or have never taken place, the deepest truths of religion and
the permanent principles of ethics are entirely and absolutely independent of the question […] The fact
of disproving a miracle has no other effect than to dispel some fond illusion or to remove a superstition.
This is the greatest achievement in the progress of religious thought which our era has accomplished”
(336).

46 As Bevir puts it, “secularization did not lead people to welfarism and socialism so much as
encourage those who did turn to social reformism to regard such beliefs as a religion” (641).

47 As Mill argues, “so long as human life is insufficient to satisfy human aspirations, so long there will
be a craving for higher things, which finds its most obvious satisfaction in religion. So long as earthly
that belief in the supernatural “cannot be considered to be any longer required” (100).

Mill, thus, replaced religious metaphysics with the “Theism of the imagination and feelings” that even complied with “the skepticism of the understanding” (118) as a “source of elevated emotion and as a principle of duty” (107), so as to promote “a religious devotion to the welfare of our fellow-creatures as an obligatory limit to every selfish aim” (256). As Stanton Coit retrospectively argued in 1906,

[The English Positivists are proud of the historic fact that within twenty-five years after their propaganda began it became a custom among magazine writers and the authors of books to write Humanity with a capital H and to place the words Humanity and God side by side coupled by an ‘and.’ This had not been the custom of any writer until the Positivists educated the leaders of thought to their own sense of the dignity, sublimity and reality of idealized Humanity. To-day we are all so used to group God and Humanity together in our sentiment that we can hardly realize the extreme modernity of this association (424).

Likewise, J. W. Irons, an established Victorian critic, stated in 1878 that the popular saying that “religion is an affair between a man and his God” has been considerably “modified” in those days “not only in England, but in all Europe” (163), since such an affair predominantly involved at the time the relation between men themselves: “[o]ur next transition must and will be ethical. It will be social throughout” (175). Characteristic of the fact that “the Victorian religious revival had made men too moral to be orthodox, too humanitarian to be Christian,” as Altholz puts it (65), was also Mrs. Humphrey Ward’s popular novel, *Robert Elsmere* (1888), where a clergyman renounced the Church and devoted himself to social service. In “the Non-Religion of the Future” (1897), J. M. Guyau the French philosopher and

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life is full of suffering, so long there will be need of consolations, which the hope of heaven affords to the selfish, the love of God to the tender and grateful” (*Religion* 104). After the death of his beloved wife, Harriet Taylor, Mill started recognizing the consolation that religion could provide “in the hope of reunion with those dear to him who have ended their earthly life before him” (*Religion* 120). Actually, as Carr argues, Mill’s disapproval of religion was not so much with “religion per se, but with the social expressions of organized Christianity in XIXth-century England” (481).
poet encapsulated this profound late-19th-century rationalization of religious belief by arguing that “[h]uman beliefs, when they shall have taken their final form in the future will bear no mark of dogmatic and ritualistic religion. They will be simply philosophical” (qtd. in Colvin 80).

Despite such rationalization, nevertheless, one is always reminded of Beatrice Webb’s *My Apprenticeship* (1926), where the Fabian activist, after a lifetime of liberalism and agnosticism, and even though she spoke of the “transference of the emotion of self-sacrificing service from God to man” (153), found herself still enjoying the ritual of prayer. This inability of certain Victorians to disentangle themselves from believing in God was addressed by the emergent at the time movement of British idealism, which utilized the fact that the shift towards humanism evidently entailed a move away from individualism and the principles of classical liberalism that were implicit, among others, in Comte’s “religion of humanity” (Bevir 651-52). Against positivism and scientific orthodoxy, idealism “directly addressed many of the religious anxieties of the time” (Boucher & Vincent 3)\(^{48}\) by providing, as in the case of T. H. Green, a rational basis for belief, which emphasized spiritual rather than economic reform.\(^{49}\) The idealists sponsored the ethic of human brotherhood since they “wanted a spiritual fellowship or religious citizenship, not just an ethic of social duty” (Bevir 654). Welfarism and religious thought were ultimately reconciled by the idealists, as Bevir argues, through the idealist notion of “immanentism,”\(^{50}\) which joined faith with Darwinism and historical criticism “by

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\(^{48}\) As Quinton argues, the rise of British idealism predominantly involved the “ideological need that was being felt with a particular intensity” of defending Christian religion with a form of defence that was “sufficiently respectable to confront the ever more formidable scientific influences that were working to undermine religious belief” (126).

\(^{49}\) Such was the case of T. H. Green and his promotion of Kantian ethics, as we shall see later on.

\(^{50}\) For the idealists, Wenley argues in 1901, looking back on the rise of British idealism, “a worthless god and a godless world are equally irrational, equally impossible. On the contrary, God pervades the universe. Immanence, rather than transcendence, marks the character of the real relationship. Or, the
replacing a transcendent God who acted spontaneously and miraculously with an
immanent God who operated slowly and through earthly processes” (646-47). As
Bevir concludes his intriguing study,

[t]he social reformism of late Victoria and Edwardian Britain owed much,
therefore, to the religious and moral beliefs that flourished following the death of
the Bible. Our immanentists equated welfarism or ethical socialism with the moral
ideal of a spiritual fellowship: their religious beliefs had inspired them to look for
a higher awareness that would lead to communion with God, and now they
equated social reformism with just an awareness of the love and energy of God
(653).

In this sense, idealism also partook in the rationalization of religious
experience by reconciling religion with science, but, more importantly, it managed to
re-position moral feeling within a religious framework. It was precisely this
awareness that made Simon claim, in his consideration of the progress of religious
thought, that “[w]e had to wait for a somewhat advanced period in the present reign
before we reached the time when the Church really broadened out and manifested its
power of surviving and of fructifying under conditions which at the beginning of the
reign would have been imagined to be fatal to it” (334).

Along with the trajectory of nineteenth-century religious thought in England,
Pater’s own attitude to religion throughout his career was diverse and unstable, as if
following, one could remark, the ups-and-downs of the course of Victorian religious
belief itself. As a child, Levey informs us, Pater was characterized by a “sincere, High
Church piety” (Pater 58), and “the idea of becoming a priest was then firmly in his
mind, expressed by dressing-up, giving sermons and acting as a priest” (Levey, Pater

document does not set out with transcendence, but infers it from immanence, making it, in this sense, a
secondary consideration” (476).
51 It is interesting to note here that, according to Patrick, the notion of “the immanence of God in the
world” can be traced back to Heraclitus (634).
In “Walter Pater: A Portrait” (1894) Edmund Gosse, the distinguished art critic and novelist, also argues that Pater’s thoughts as a child “were turned towards the Church:” “[f]rom the time when he first began to think of a future condition, his design was to be a clergyman; never, curiously enough, a priest in the religion of his fathers, but in the Anglican ritual” (798). At the age of thirteen Pater entered the King’s school, Canterbury, Kent, where he gained two school prizes for Ecclesiastical History (Brake, Pater 9). Pater’s education there “was intensely a religious education” based on the ideals of “the Tractarian impulse within Anglicanism” (Brake, Pater 9). In October 1858, however, Pater entered Queen’s College, Oxford, where he came in direct contact with the stormy climate that led to the Essays and Reviews. Benjamin Jowett, one of the contributors of the controversial book, was Pater’s tutor, and, as Levey confirms, for a period Pater “identified himself as a Christian Socialist, under the direct influence of F. D. Maurice” (Pater 84), who also belonged to the Broad Church movement and was a close friend of J. S. Mill (Gilmour 159).

Pater, nevertheless, was gradually indulging a form of agnosticism and he “came to feel that amid all the doctrinal storms shaking Oxford no party was right and

52 Similarly, Gaston de Latour has an “early pronounced preference for the ecclesiastical calling” and is shown in the first chapter as receiving his first step towards priesthood.
54 Pater “loved best to organize a sort of solemn professional game, in which he took the part of a bishop or cardinal” (Gosse 798).
55 E. Gosse claims that Pater’s imaginary portrait “Emerald Uthwart” contains autobiographical information capturing this period of Pater’s life (797).
56 “We know that life in the King’s School, which abutted on to the precincts of the cathedral, was intimately tied to the cathedral building and the rhythms of the Christian calendar and services” (Brake, Pater 9). Scott also asserts that Pater “for many years was unfailing regular in his attendance at the chapel of Brasenose College, being present for both the morning and evening services. And outside Oxford, he sought out such centers of Catholic liturgical life in London as St. Alban’s, Holborn, and St. Austin’s Priority, Walworth” (117).
57 Accounting for the reasons that Pater was attracted to Maurice, Levey states: “[i]t had been due largely to him that Queen’s College in London was founded for the education of women. He had been involved also in the founding of the Working Men’s College, of which he became first principal. He was profoundly concerned with the condition of the London poor, and perhaps the most disturbing aspect of his beliefs for contemporaries lay in his denunciation of any political economy based on selfishness” (84).
none escaped being at least faintly ridiculous” (Levey, *Pater* 73). When in 1862 Pater’s B. A. results were known and he was supposed to be ordained an Anglican Deacon, he was prevented by a letter that his close friend John Rainier McQueen sent to the Bishop of London revealing the fact that he was unfit due to his religious doubts for the position, which eventually made it impossible for Pater to get a position. It was probably this incident, along with the overall liberal climate at Oxford at the time, that was responsible for Pater’s disavowal of Christianity, his “animosity” rather than “wit” (Levey, *Pater* 118), as it became manifested in his early writings, in “Coleridge,” in “Winckelmann” and the Renaissance, among others, where the Oxford don ardently employed scientific relativism so as to discredit Christian absolutism, as we have seen in the previous chapters.58

During the late 1870s, however, there was a major shift in Pater’s attitude to Christianity. It was actually in 1876, with the publication of “Romanticism,” that Pater started mitigating his early hostility towards Christianity, as DeLaura claims, by promoting a reconciliatory formula between Classicism and Romanticism, which eventually welcomed “medieval Christianity, or at least ‘the saints,’ within that ‘harmony of human interests’” (260). This new sensibility was re-affirmed the next year, as we have seen, with “The Child in the House” (1878) – where the semi-autobiographical protagonist “yielded himself easily to religious impressions” and had “a kind of mystical appetite for sacred things” (*Miscellaneous Studies* 90) – and was firmly consolidated in 1885 with *Marius the Epicurean*, which was surprisingly a novel about the necessity of religion. In July 1883, Pater wrote to Violet Paget (the writer Vernon Lee) about his plans for “an Imaginary Portrait of a peculiar type of mind in the times of Marcus Aurelius” as a means of exploring the possibility of

58 Millhauser attributes Pater’s loss of faith “to his philosophical studies” (216).
religious reinstatement: “I regard this present matter as a sort of duty. For you know I think there is a fourth sort of religious phase possible for the modern mind, over and above those presented in your late admirable paper in the *Contemporary*, the condition of which phase it is the main object of my design to convey” (qtd. in Young 79). The article that Pater was referring to was “The Responsibilities of Unbelief” which, as Levey informs us in his introduction to the novel, was “a discussion between three speakers representing respectively Voltairean optimism, aesthetic pessimism and militant, humanitarian atheism” (Levey, *Marius* 16). By suggesting a fourth option, Pater was obviously distancing himself from Paget’s representatives of Enlightenment rationalism, of materialistic aestheticism and of the positivist “religion of humanity.” Accordingly, in his novel this enigmatic “fourth phase” was essentially dramatized, as we shall see, by being measured against the philosophical systems that Marius encountered on his way to it, which also represented, as it is my intention to show, the dominant “phases” of the precarious trajectory of nineteenth-century religious thought that, in fact, involved the fusion of the Enlightenment project of science and Continental idealism that the critic encapsulated with his synthesis of Heraclitus and Kant, as we have seen in the previous chapter. In order, thus, to fully understand what precisely Pater’s religious vision involved, and whether Pater’s “remarkable intellectual transformation” was, as Keefe puts it, an indication that Pater “[l]ike Swinburne, […] grew conservative as he aged” (162), a look at the doctrines that Marius rejected and the way they were related to the philosophical paradigms I have established in the previous chapter is necessary.
Of “Sensations”: Heraclitus, Cyrenaicism and J. S. Mill

In the opening chapter of the novel, entitled “The Religion of Numa,” we are introduced to Marius’ childhood religion, which was an “earlier and simpler patriarchal religion” (I, 3) of “usages and sentiment rather than of facts and beliefs” (I, 4) that “lingered on with little change amid the pastoral life, out of the habits and sentiment of which so much it had grown” (I, 3). This religion had made Marius “something of an idealist” (I, 24), had instilled in him a “mystic enjoyment [...] in the abstinence, the strenuous self control and ascesis” (I, 25). The absence, nevertheless, “from those venerable usages of all definite history and dogmatic interpretation,” as well as “a certain pity [...] for the sacrificial victims and their looks of terror,” which was “a piece of everyday butcher’s work, such as we decorously hide out of sight” had awakened in young Marius “much speculative activity” (I, 9), which eventually distanced him from this traditional form of belief. The novel, therefore, opens with a story of a fall from grace, of loss of faith, which autobiographically suggests Pater’s own relation to religion. As DeLaura claims, Marius’ childhood religion bore “close resemblances” to Christianity since “in its 19th century analogue, the inherited religion becomes the traditional Christianity – abandoned by a sensitive young man of acute aesthetic susceptibilities” (265).

Just like Pater himself, nevertheless, who, after the militant agnosticism of his early writings, returned to his childhood vision of Christianity in his later fiction, and Florian, who never lost his early faith, it was actually this loss of traditional faith that initiated in the novel Marius’ spiritual quest for a possible religious reinstatement. Marius’ pursuit, thus, also became Pater’s vehicle for exploring and ultimately

59 As the narrator admitted in an autobiographical note, “[t]hat first, early, boyish ideal of priesthood, the sense of dedication, survived through all the distractions of the world, and when all thought of such vocation had finally passed from him, as a ministry, in spirit at least, towards a sort of hieratic beauty and order in the conduct of life” (I, 25).
presenting his suggestion for a “religious phase.” Pater utilized to the utmost the historical background of the novel so as to address this proposed religious possibility. It was not only, however, that “the ancient clash between pagan philosophy and early Christianity seemed an ideal analogy to the struggle between intellectual doubt and Christian faith in the 19th century,” as Dahl asserts (5), but rather, as I want to argue, that the historical context of the novel provided Pater with the ideal means of illustrating the way doubt could be reconciled with faith. As such, it is my contention that Pater’s religious position did not involve the clash between agnosticism and faith, but rather the clash between “sensations and ideas” and their paradigmatic reconciliation in early Christianity. This clash was dramatized in the novel through the antagonism between Cyrenaic “sensations” and Stoic “ideas,” which, as we shall see, systematically invoked the 19th-century rivalry between empiricism and idealism. In order, therefore, to decode Pater’s enigmatic suggestion for his contemporaries, we need to explore the way these “sensations and ideas” were related to Marius’, and thus to Pater’s, religious vision.

In accordance with Florian’s mental development in “The Child in the House,” and the ideas expressed in Pater’s own youthful publications, the notion of empiricism also became highly prominent in the first stages of Marius’ spiritual progress. Such empiricism was represented in the novel through the doctrines of two of the most dominant philosophical schools of the Hellenistic age, of Cyrenaicism and Epicureanism that the protagonist espoused during his youth.60 Pater’s long illustration of these philosophical schools formed a solid essayistic narrative on ancient hedonism that was integrated into the plot of the novel. Taking for granted that the full examination of these doctrines is beyond the scope of this study, we shall

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60 Pater establishes an interesting correspondence between the age of his protagonist and the philosophical systems he espouses, but this is a question we shall address in the next section.
merely have a brief look at their predominant characteristics as a means of elucidating Pater’s preoccupation with them.

Founded by Aristippus of Cyrene (c. 428- c.350 BC), a follower of Socrates, Cyrenaicism was the forerunner of Epicureanism that advocated the pursuit of immediate bodily pleasure, of the short-term “kinetic pleasures,” as a moral end; it was what Pater called the “philosophic ideal” of “the μονόχρονος ἡδονή of Aristippus – the pleasure of the ideal present, of the mystic now” (I, 154). Cyrenaicism was later developed by Epicurus of Samos (342-271 BC), who formed various Epicurean communities, the most famous of which was the “Garden,” where females, slaves, outcasts and prostitutes were accepted on equal terms. Epicurus drew on Democritus’ and Leucippus’ conception of the atom as “the one permanent substance underlying the world of change,” as “the form of the substance of all things,” where “the senses alone” lead to the reality that everything is but “atomic combinations” (Raymer 96). The acknowledgment of the recyclable substance of life, Epicurus proclaimed, rendered the metaphysical fear of death vain and dictated a focus on pleasure as a means of leading a happy life. For Epicurus, however, happiness consisted both of the Cyrenaic “kinetic pleasures,” but also of the “static,” spiritual pleasures, which amounted to the total minimization of pain, to “ataraxia” as a means of achieving “eudemonia” and wisdom. By promoting the ethical code of living “unobtrusively” (Raymer 97), Epicurean teaching was eventually criticized for sponsoring a profound retreat from social obligations. Unlike Platonic idealism, furthermore, both Epicureanism and Cyrenaicism emphasized the mortality of the soul, the practicality of philosophical speculation and the role of the senses in perceiving the world, and

61 “‘We assert that Pleasure (ηδονη) is the beginning and end of the happy life’ (τον μακαριος ζην) writes Epicurus” (Raymer quoting Diogenes Laertiou 96).
this was the reason why Pater actually employed the two systems, interchangeably most of the time, as a primordial form of empirical materialism, as we shall see.

It is interesting to note that, according to Pater, the roots of both Cyrenaicism and Epicureanism could be traced back to Heraclitus (I, 127-128, I, 134), whom the critic considered, as I have already established in the first chapter, the originator of empirical thought. The Heraclitean doctrine, in this way, was lurking beneath Pater’s illustration of 4th-century AD empiricism, as it was in his depiction of 19th-century empiricism, solidifying my claim that the ancient philosopher was employed by Pater as a diachronic paradigm of empiricism. In this genealogy of empiricism that Pater established, which has been largely neglected by critics, Heraclitus’ system was developed by Aristippus into “a very subtly practical worldly-wisdom” (I, 135), which prompted “a perpetual, inextinguishable thirst after experience” (I, 136). Cyrenaicism became the doctrine of “the subjectivity of knowledge” (I, 137) since it limited “one’s aspirations after knowledge” to “direct sensation” (I, 138-139). The “practical ethics” of Cyrenaicism inevitably led to a “strict limitation, almost the renunciation, of metaphysical enquiry itself” (I, 140), which the narrator tactically delivered, as in the case of Heraclitus, through a discourse that abounded in Lockean and Humean overtones: “[a]bstract theory was to be valued only just so far as it might serve to clear the tablet of the mind from suppositions no more than half realisable, or wholly visionary, leaving it in flawless evenness of surface to the impressions of an experience, concrete and direct” (I, 141). In its preoccupation with sense perception, such a philosophical stance eventually promoted “a wonderful machinery of observation” (I, 142) that coincided with Marius’ “natural Epicureanism,” his being

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62 “In this way, for Marius, under the guidance of that old master of decorous living, those eternal doubts as to the criteria of truth reduced themselves to a skepticism almost dryly practical, a skepticism which developed the opposition between things as they are and our impressions and thoughts concerning them – the possibility, if an outward world really does exist, of some faultiness in our apprehension of it – the doctrine, in short, of what is termed ‘the subjectivity of knowledge’” (I, 137).
“as but the passive spectator of the world around him” (I, 124), which, along the materialism of Epicurean physics, comprised an organized program illustrated in purely empirical terms. As such, both Cyrenaicism and Epicureanism signaled for Pater what I have termed as the Heraclitean paradigm, which was indicative of the hitherto unexplored “modernization” of Hellenism that Pater scored in the name of Heraclitus.

The disruption of the course of the novel with this extensive “lecture” on the history of ancient Greek philosophy was linked to Marius’ intellectual progress, signaling the philosophical stance of his youth, yet it also served the author in presenting a philosophical background against which his alleged hedonist “Conclusion,” and its “Heracliteanism,” would be addressed, as we shall see. Eventually, Pater would have to account for his earlier controversial ideas so as to prevent them from undermining his religious proposal. In order to fully synchronize his discussion of the ideas contained in the “Conclusion” with the historical context of the novel, Pater established an analogy between ancient and modern hedonism, as the chapter called “New Cyrenaicism” clearly indicated, which facilitated the critic in bringing the historical time of the novel closer to the author’s present, by presenting hedonism as a diachronic discourse; it was actually in this spirit of historical cross-

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63 Throughout the text, the notion of passive receptiveness is constantly identified with Epicureanism (I, 46). Marius, the narrator asserts, from a very early stage, was “essentially but a spectator,” a fact that the narrator considers as foregrounding “an implicit Epicureanism” (I, 46).

64 We can see here that the Victorian concept of protoplasm and the overall creed of scientific materialism implicitly surfaces in Marius through Epicureanism. In his philosophical exposition of Cyrenaicism or Epicureanism, the notion of materialism is not mentioned by name but only implicitly suggested. Wishing to avoid any direct reference that would invoke his early materialism, Pater eventually dissociates materialism from any ideological framework and presents it as being psychologically triggered in Marius through his best friend’s death. The death of Flavian, “came like a final revelation of nothing less than the soul’s extinction” (I, 123), leading Marius to a purely materialistic outlook: “[t]he various pathetic traits of the beloved, suffering, perished body of Flavian, so deeply pondered, had made him a materialist, but with something of the temper of a devotee” (I, 125).

65 At Oxford Pater was teaching on the history of philosophy.
reference that the narrator asserted that “[e]very age of European thought has had its Cyrenaics or Epicureans, under many guises” (I, 144).

This association between Epicureanism and the 19th century was, nevertheless, hardly new since, as we have seen, this philosophical movement was at the time constantly invoked through the genre of the “early Christian novel.” The Oxford don must have also owed something to William Wallace’s *Epicureanism* (1880), where analogies were established between Bentham, Comte and Epicureanism, and J. M. Guyau’s *La Morale d’Epicure, et ses rapports avec les doctrines* (1878), as Rosenblatt suggests (246). Moreover, Bentham’s program itself was widely considered as a revision of Epicurean ethics,66 triggering a series of debates on the role of “modern” hedonism in contemporary periodicals.67 While regarding “The Relation of Greek Philosophy to Modern Thought” (1882), Alfred W. Benn considered Bentham’s empirical skepticism and his Epicurean utilitarianism as “the last conceptions directly inherited from ancient philosophy by modern thought” (251), and stated that “[u]tilitarianism agrees with the ancient hedonism in holding pleasure to be the sole good and pain the sole evil. Its adherents also, for the most part, admit that the desire of the one and the dread of the other are the sole motives to action” (249). In October 1893, C. M. Williams, in “A Phase of Modern Epicureanism,” summed up the intellectual climate of the previous decades by singling out the growth of “modern Epicureanism,” which had “as its central idea, the avoidance of pain” (81), and represented “in this country at least […] the pendulum-recoil of younger thought from the hard system of Puritanism, which later, if it was in the beginning a

66 “Criticized by some of the Christian fathers, Epicureanism vanished from sight about the third century A.D. to reappear, Phoenix-like, in the nineteenth century, in Jeremy Bentham’s ‘greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number’ doctrine,” as Raymer put it (98).

67 Early in the century, Tennyson in “The Lotos-Eaters” (1833) and “The Vision of Sin” (1842) had depicted the dangers of indulging oneself to “pleasure and Epicureanism,” as the poet himself admitted in a note to the latter poem (McLaren 246).
progressive revolt from the license of the times, became in the end an oppressive dogmatism of tradition” (83).

It was precisely this widely-held association that Pater utilized so as to create the allegorical effect of a double historical reference in “New Cyrenaicism.” Mrs. Humphry Ward, in her review of the novel in *Macmillan’s Magazine* (May 1885), was one of the first to notice that “‘Marius’ carries on the train of reflection begun by the ‘Studies,’ and the upshot of the whole so far is a utilitarian or Epicurean theory of morals. For, stripped of its poetical dress, the ethical argument of ‘Marius’ is essentially utilitarian” (Seiler 134). It is my intention here, nevertheless, to show that Pater did not just abstractly allude to this historical commonplace, where Epicurean hedonism was associated with utilitarianism, but that he rather deliberately fabricated a discourse that systematically and specifically invoked J. S. Mill as a solid point of reference throughout his exposition of Epicureanism, and by implication of Heracliteanism. The reasons beneath this apparently innocent orchestration will be fully addressed after my exploration of the way Mill’s ideas were represented in Pater’s text.

In *Utilitarianism*, which was published in 1861, Mill coordinated his utilitarian program with the philosophical paradigms of Epicurus and Bentham: “[t]hose who know anything about the matter are aware that every writer, from Epicurus to Bentham, who maintained the theory of utility, meant by it, not something to be contradistinguished from pleasure, but pleasure itself, together with exemption from pain” (209). Even though Mill differentiated himself from both Epicurus and Bentham, as we shall see, he nonetheless maintained a rigid hedonistic perspective,

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68 *Utilitarianism* initially appeared in serial form in *Frazer’s Magazine* in 1861, and was eventually released as a book in 1863.
which in its essence remained Epicurean. Such hedonism predominantly involved the fact that Mill’s practical ethics advanced a “theory of life” where “pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things […] are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain” (210). In full compliance with his overall empirical program, Mill’s Epicurean utilitarianism was “sanctioned” by an appeal to the senses so as to “prove” the “utility principle” that nothing other than happiness was desirable, which ultimately resulted in him being criticized for sponsoring sensualism. Directly addressing, in the second chapter of the book, the objections raised against utilitarianism, Mill introduced a qualitative distinction concerning pleasure:

there is no known Epicurean theory of life which does no assign to the pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation […]. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact, that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that

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69 As Mill argued, “[t]he creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure” (210).

70 Mill’s empirical outlook is manifested throughout the book through his inductive method: “[t]o find the common attributes of a variety of objects, it is necessary to begin by surveying the objects themselves in the concrete” (241). In the third chapter of the book, moreover, Mill states his highly empirical belief that “the moral feelings are not innate, but acquired” (230). We shall fully address this issue later on. For a discussion of the link between Epicurus and Mill’s empiricism, see Stocks’ “Epicurean Induction” (1925).

71 The third chapter is entitled “Of the Ultimate Sanction of the Principle of Utility,” whereas the fourth, “Of What Sort of Proof the Principle of Utility is Susceptible.” In the third chapter Mill argues that the utility principle involves a sort of moral feeling present in all humans, whereas the fourth, which is the most controversial chapter of the book, Mill “proves” the utility principle by arguing that “if human nature is so constituted as to desire nothing which is not either a part of happiness or a means of happiness, we can have no other proof, and we require no other, that these are the only things desirable. If so, happiness is the sole end of human action, and the promotion of it the test by which to judge all human conduct; from whence it necessarily follows that it must be the criterion of morality, since a part is included in the whole” (237). Mill’s “proof,” which involved the argument that since happiness and general happiness is desirable, then, there is nothing other than happiness desirable, has been subjected to harsh criticism on the grounds that Mill applied evaluative claims by appealing to the senses, as we shall later on see.
while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone (211).

Radically distancing himself from Bentham’s quantitive consideration of pleasure, Mill highlighted the necessity for the incorporation of a qualitative differentiation between pleasures; as he sarcastically put it, “[i]t is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied” (212). Mill’s qualitative distinction, which undoubtedly encompassed the pleasures of spiritual cultivation, was eventually followed by the acknowledgement of the role of education in the development of individual perfection as a means of promoting the *summum bonum* of social welfare.72

Even though Pater was a well-informed scholar, constantly preoccupied with the intellectual debates of the time, of which Mill was definitely a central orchestrator, there is no recorded evidence that he had actually read *Utilitarianism*. There are, nevertheless, many indications that he was familiar with Mill’s work, as his varied textual allusions to Mill by name suggest. Inman confirms that in 1858, during his first term at Queen’s College, Pater attended a course on the history of philosophy delivered by his tutor, William Wolfe Capes,73 entitled “from Heraclitus to Mill” (*Reading 4*). As an undergraduate student, Pater is believed to have “devoured all the

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72 “Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences, but by mere want of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupations to which their position in life has devoted them, and the society into which it has thrown them, are not favourable to keeping that higher capacity in exercise. Men lose their high aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict themselves to inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them, but because they are either the only ones to which they have access, or the only ones which they are any longer capable of enjoying. It may be questioned whether any one who has remained equally susceptible to both classes of pleasures, ever knowingly and calmly preferred the lower” (213). Mill concludes by stating that in contrast to “[t]he present wretched education, and wretched social arrangements” (215), “[u]tilitarianism, therefore, could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of character” (213-214).

73 W. W. Capes was also the one, who, in November 1873, preached a sermon criticizing the Renaissance “with its suspicion of habits and its tendency to analyze subtle impulses and evanescent thrills, and its enthusiasm for Hellenism and the Renaissance,” which, as Levey admits, were “polite words to disguise homosexuality and paganism” (142-143).
serious literature of the period,” including “Carlyle, Ruskin, Browning, J. S. Mill” (Inman, Reading 4). Moreover, later on, when asked by a student what to read for Greats, Pater is said to have replied: “I cannot advise you to read any special books; the great thing is to read authors whole; read Plato whole; read Kant whole; read Mill whole” (qtd. in Shuter, Rereading 82). It is Shuter’s and Inman’s view that Pater was very little indebted to Mill, it seems to me, however, that Pater had a much more definite and stronger relation to Mill than the bibliography indicates. Pater must have been drawn to Mill’s liberal ideas during his youthful radicalism when he was extensively publishing in the philosophically radical Westminster Review. We should not forget that Pater’s initial publication, “Coleridge’s Writings” (1866), involved a topic and an argumentative line similar to Mill’s provocative essay on the Romantic writer, that was published in that very same periodical, as we have seen in the second chapter. It was not only, however, their common liberal backgrounds that ultimately brought Pater closer to Mill, but principally the way their doctrines were critically received and misconstrued as supposedly advancing sensualism. And this was precisely the aspect that Pater utilized in his illustration of Epicureanism by intertextually alluding to Mill, as we shall see.

In his depiction of Cyrenaicism and of Aristippus, “the philosopher of pleasure,” Pater maintained that “metaphysical formulae” depended on “their actual and ulterior result” (I, 136), promoting, therefore, a form of consequentialism that was highly akin to utilitarianism. In a manner similar to Mill’s Utilitarianism, moreover, the narrator directly addressed the attacks that Marius’ Epicureanism underwent by those people “who jumped to the conclusion that, with the ‘Epicurean stye,’ he was making pleasure – pleasure, as they so poorly conceived it – the sole motive of life”
The issue of misinterpretation that the Epicurean doctrine provoked established a thick web of interrelations that eventually brought together Mill’s utilitarianism, Marius’ Epicureanism, and, by implication, Pater’s own hedonistic doctrine in the Renaissance, as expressed by his Heraclitean point of view. Against such misconception, Marius, very much like Mill, upheld the necessity of “making distinctions,” as he characteristically put it, so as to “cover pleasures so different in quality, in their causes and effects, as the pleasures of wine and love, of art and science, of religious enthusiasm and political enterprise” (I, 151). Through a diction that, as I want to emphasize by bringing to light Pater’s debt to the utilitarian philosopher, abounded in allusions to Mill (“pleasures,” “distinctions,” “quality,” “political enterprise,” etc), Pater defended the true essence of Epicureanism, which he epigrammatically stated as “[n]ot pleasure, but fullness of life and ‘insight’ as conducting to that fullness” (I, 151):

Not pleasure, but a general completeness of life, was the practical ideal to which this anti-metaphysical metaphysic really pointed. And towards such a full or complete life, a life of various yet select sensation, the most direct and effective auxiliary must be, in a word, Insight. Liberty of soul, freedom from all partial and misrepresentative doctrine which does but relieve one element in our experience at the cost of another, freedom from all embarrassment alike of regret for the past and of calculation on the future: this would be but the preliminary to the real business of education – insight, insight through culture, into all that the present moments hold in our trust for us, as we stand so briefly in its presence. From that

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74 It is interesting to note here that the chapter where Pater exploited the history of hedonism was entitled “Animula Vagula,” after a famous Latin poem where the emperor Hadrian (76-138 AD) wondered on his deathbed where his poor “fleeting” soul, being “pale” and “nude,” was heading for, as a means of highlighting Pater’s well-intentioned naivety in exposing his soul in the “Conclusion,” which, nevertheless, resulted in pain and rejection.

75 As Marius argues, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die! – is a proposal, the real import of which differs immensely, according to the natural taste, and the acquired judgment, of the guests who sit at the table. It may express nothing better than the instinct of Dante’s Ciacco, the accomplished glutton, in the mud of the Inferno; or, since on no hypothesis does man ‘live by bread alone,’ may come to be identical with – ‘My meat is to do what is just and kind’ (I, 145).
maxim of *Life as the end of life*, followed, as a practical consequence, the
desirableness of refining all the instruments of inward and outward intuition, of
developing all their capacities, of testing and exercising one’s self in them, till
one’s whole nature became one complex medium of reception, towards the vision
– the ‘beatific vision,’ if we really cared to make it such – of our actual experience
in the world. Not the conveyance of an abstract body of truths or principles,
would be the aim of the right education of one’s self, or of another, but the
conveyance of an art – an art in some degree peculiar to each individual character;
with the modifications, that is, due to its special constitution, and the peculiar
circumstances of its growth, inasmuch as no one of us is ‘like another, all in all’
(I, 142-143).

Pater here in an intriguing way paraphrased his own “Conclusion” by gleaning
its key points (“anti-metaphysical,” “sensation,” “the present moments,” “life as the
end of life,” “testing,” “vision,” “experience,” “individual character,” “art,” the notion
of “freedom” from “abstraction,” etc), and presenting them as Marius’ creed so as to
dramatize a form of distance from his earlier stance. Such distance is, furthermore,
highlighted through the fact that we can actually detect in Pater’s paraphrasing of the
“Conclusion” a slight, yet decisive shift from its initial direction, which has been
largely neglected by critics. I want to call attention to the fact that in place of Pater’s
prior materialism and sensational hedonism, we end up, through a seemingly similar
discourse, with “insight” instead of “vision,” with “completeness” instead of
“pleasure,” with “culture” and “education” instead of “sensation” – in other words,
with an emphasis on quality instead of quantity. Indicative of this qualitative
amendment stood the fact, as I see it, that Pater’s urge to get “as many pulsations as
possible” (*Renaissance* 153) and his overall emphasis on quantified “things”
“moments” (*Renaissance* 153) in the “Conclusion,” was replaced, in this extract, by a
sequence of adjectives in the singular (“pleasure,” “sensation,” “completeness,” “ideal,” “experience”), which, of course, culminated in the triptych “education,” “culture,” “insight.” Pater achieved this shift by strategically incorporating in his presentation of the “Conclusion” a discourse that, in the name of their Epicurean kinship, invoked Mill’s Utilitarianism. Such theoretical affiliation enabled the Oxford don to present Mill’s ideas as his own, and vice versa. Appropriating Mill’s clarifications on the alleged sensualism of utilitarianism, Pater was able to sublimate his supposed immoralism by utilizing Mill as a philosophically validating intertext that cast a qualitative light upon Pater’s own hedonistic doctrine. It should be noted here that Pater wouldn’t have been able to achieve this effect by solely alluding to the overall utilitarian movement.

It was also via Mill that Pater countermined the charges for corrupting youth that were urged against him by upholding an emphasis on “παιδεία,” on “a wide, a complete, education” (I, 147), which was practically absent from the Renaissance, 

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76 In 1874, the Bishop of Oxford, quoting from the Renaissance “complained of the effect of such sceptical teaching on the young” stirring up prejudice against Pater’s profession as a teacher (Levey, Pater 143).

77 It should be noted here that Pater’s illustration of education, which involves a “positive” base, but also the “aesthetic” education of “emotion and sense” (I, 147) as a means of achieving personal “perfection” (I, 148), also draws on Mill’s exposition of the role of a highly combinatory educational scheme, equally incorporating moral, mental, and aesthetic cultivation in terms of personal and social fulfillment [See, Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St. Andrews. (Feb. 1st, 1867)]. We can, furthermore, detect a discourse that invokes Mill’s liberal views on education in Pater’s illustration of the character of Flavian. Pater has actually prepared the ground for his allusion to Mill and for Marius’ absorption of empiricism through Flavian, where the novel gets in close dialogue with the 19th century - with Pater’s present - since Flavian’s depiction recalls the debates about the character, the role and the place of the middle classes, that were so typical of the 19th century. Being “a lad of servile birth” (I, 50), who cultivated “that foppery of words, of choice diction, which was common among the elite spirits of that day” (I, 51) as a means of “asserting, so to term them, the rights of the proletariat of speech” (I, 95), Flavian presents the reader with the story of social ascent through education. Having no land, or title to defend, Flavian remains devoted to the only “sort of patriotic feeling proper, or possible, for one born of slaves,” the rehabilitation of the mother tongue, “then fallen so tarnished and languid” (94). As such, his cause was to recover the status of popular language, “to restore to words their primitive power,” “disentangling later associations,” “reviving or replacing its outworn or tarnished images” (96). Flavian was envisioning social reform through language, implicitly stressing the lower class rights to uphold its sole, so to speak, property that was gradually shrinking through the intrusion of a foreign, an artificial idiom of literary and aristocratic descent. As a typical, self-made middle class man, having no fortune or aristocratic background to lay his claim on, Flavian “believed only in himself” (I, 52) and was exclusively living in the present (I, 54), exhibiting “the spirit of
without, nevertheless, creating the impression that he was contradicting himself, since they both shared the same hedonistic background. Thus, in full accordance with Mill’s “perfectionism,” the cultivation of individual perfection that enabled the flourishing of atomic excellences as a means of ultimately advancing social welfare, the narrator promoted quality, and not quantity, as “the essential function of the perfect,” as a means of achieving the “vision of perfect men and things,” the “world of perfected sensation, intelligence, emotion” (I, 148):

Pitched to a really high and serious key, the precept – Be perfect in regard to what is here and now: the precept of ‘culture,’ as it is called, or of a complete education – might at least save him from the vulgarity and heaviness of a generation, certainly of no general fineness of temper, though with a material well-being abundant enough (I, 145-46).

The allusion to Mill did not only function as a means of sublimating the “corruptive” sensualism of the “Conclusion” and of contextualizing it within the larger cultural framework of 19th century hedonism. The presence of Mill in Pater’s illustration technically facilitated the Oxford don in maintaining a form of distance from his early paganism by implicitly invoking through a sequence of sophisticated associations the Heracliteanism of the Renaissance. Creating the effect of mise en abyme, where Pater became the persona of Marius, who subsequently stood in for Mill, who in his turn signaled Epicurean theory, which had its roots in Heraclitus, the author managed to set the ideas contained in the “Conclusion” in the distant background by framing them within Marius’ 2nd-century AD narrative, which was subsumed by Mill’s 19th-century narrative. Through this double distancing, the narrator constructed the effect of an objective detachment in his presentation of the unbelief, achieved as if at one step” (I, 52). It is no wonder, then, that Marius was initiated to pagan empiricism through Flavian, who, by invoking the ideals of the 19th century philosophical radicals, is presented as “the epitome of the whole pagan world” (I, 53).

78 It should be noted here that Mill’s use of the term “perfectionism” signifies the ideal of individual fulfilment and has nothing to do with the way we use the term today.
“Conclusion,” and implicitly prepared his reader for its revision, which, in its turn, also signaled Pater’s change of perspective in terms of his militant atheism. Pater actually maintained this form of detachment while amending his former radicalism, since, as we shall see next, even the revision of his own doctrine was indirectly executed as a critique of the 19th-century utilitarianism that Mill stood for. We can understand then that Pater’s relation to utilitarianism was far more complex than Mrs. Ward presumed. How could, after all, a doctrine promoting the principle of utility be reconciled with the cult of beauty, its emphasis on the autonomy of art and on aesthetic detachment?

Of “Ideas”: Kantian Idealism, Stoicism and Pater’s “Second Thoughts”

When Marius finished his studies in Pisa, where he also came in contact with Cyrenaicism, he was summoned to Rome so as to become the secretary of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (I, 157). In Rome, Marius was exposed to yet another form of philosophical speculation, Stoicism, through Marcus Aurelius’ administration. In terms of plot, the character’s encounter with Stoicism was decisive for the course of the novel, since it signaled his realization of the blind-spots of hedonism, his subsequent distancing from it, and, eventually his reaching out towards Christianity. As such, the key to understanding the intriguing implications of Marius’ shift lies in Pater’s illustration of Stoicism. By selecting second-century Rome as the setting for his novel, Rosenblatt argues, “Pater was using an idea not unfamiliar to contemporary readers” (Criticism 245). In 1863 Matthew Arnold published “Marcus Aurelius” in
the *Victoria Magazine*, which was also included in 1865 in his *Essays in Criticism*. In this influential essay, Arnold praised the Roman emperor’s morality and found a “modern applicability and living interest” in him (210). Marcus Aurelius “lived and acted in a state of society modern by its essential characteristics, in an epoch akin to our own, in a brilliant centre of civilization,” and, thus, “becomes for us a man like ourselves, a man in all things tempted as we are” (214). W. W. Capes, Pater’s tutor, furthermore, published in 1876 *The Roman Empire of the Second Century*, retaining Arnold’s analogy between Victorian England and the Roman emperor. During the 1870s and 1880s, the comparison between contemporary England and the age of Marcus Aurelius was “very much in the air” (Rosenblatt 245, 247), suggesting that Arnold’s essay was not “the single germ for *Marius*,” as Rosenblatt argues (247). Regardless, nevertheless, of the sources that Pater drew on for his illustration of Marcus Aurelius and Stoicism, what Rosenblatt’s extensive survey leaves unanswered is what precisely this systematic cultural allusion to Stoicism signified for the late Victorians, and in what specific sense Pater employed the philosophical movement in his novel. This is an issue I will set out to clarify by having a closer look at late-19th-century representations of Stoicism.

Stoicism, we are told, was founded in Athens in the 3rd century BC by Zeno and it soon became one of the most dominant philosophical schools of the Hellenistic period (Zerffi II, 306). Despite its widespread predominance, Stoicism was – and actually still is – systematically considered by historians in terms of its relation to the doctrine over which it prevailed, Epicureanism. Like the Epicureans, the Stoics

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*Rosenblatt* states, “[i]n the *Fortnightly Review* for May 1, 1882, Frederick W. H. Myers even felt it necessary to apologize for such a ‘well worn’ subject as Marcus Aurelius” (245-246).

The *Historical Development of Idealism and Realism II* appeared in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* in 1877.
advocated a practical ethical system as an “art of life;”\(^{82}\) in sharp contrast, however, to the Epicurean promotion of hedonism, the Stoics upheld a radically different conception of happiness. Stoic philosophy “exalted Reason as the source of the world’s order, the one ruler and judge of all things, the sole fountain of good to every creature, and especially the sole origin and measure of morality for man” (Pollock 56).\(^{83}\) For the Stoics, the world was considered to be a unified, ordered whole, where “true wisdom and a rightly ordered life consists in submitting to this immanent and transcendent Reason” (Raymer 98),\(^{84}\) to “that Wisdom, that Order of divine Reason ‘reaching from end to end, strongly and sweetly disposing all things,’” as Marius put it in his consideration of the movement (I, 197). Such Logos was eventually defined by the Stoics as the only way to true happiness: “the mind that learns to recognize a fixed order and connexion in the changing appearances of the world also learns to take a certain intellectual pleasure in that order considered in itself, apart from the pleasurable or useful character of its operations in the particular effect” (Pollock 50).

In this sense, the Stoics proclaimed the “the intrinsic valuelessness of pleasure” (Sidwick, “Hedonism” 29),\(^{85}\) asserted that “virtue is the only true happiness, though they denied that virtue is morally preferable because it gives happiness,” and “required virtue to be above all disinterested,” as Pollock puts it (60). For the Stoics, “there was only one way in which the individual could study his private interest without abandoning his position as a social being, and this was to find it exclusively

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\(^{82}\) As Pollock puts it, “the objects of the Stoics were eminently practical; they strongly held that knowledge is for the sake of action, and that the worth of philosophy consists in its power to guide the conduct of life” (49).

\(^{83}\) “Marcus Aurelius and the Stoic Philosophy” appeared in the Mind in the January of 1879.

\(^{84}\) “Stoic and Epicurean: A Post-War Commentary” appeared in Greece & Rome in February 1939. Even though this article was published much later than the period I am dealing with, it actually refers to an intellectual climate inherited from the Victorians.

\(^{85}\) “Hedonism and the Ultimate Good” appeared in the Mind in January 1877.
in the practice of virtue” (Benn 259). This notion of “disinterested” virtue was, thus, the major point of divergence between Epicureanism and Stoicism, as the late-19th-century critics I have quoted so far emphatically stressed.

Reason, in the hands of the Stoics, became a means of moral discipline, a means of abstaining from passion and of becoming indifferent towards anything that might distract them from the “true” essence of things. “Reason, the judgment-forming power, could in [Aurelius’] view, over-ride passion and sensibility generally,” as Watt notes (203). Similarly, in Aurelius’ dictum that “[t]he world and the thinker upon it, are consumed like a flame,’ […] ’therefore I will turn away my eyes from vanity; renounce; withdraw myself alike from all affections’” (I, 201), Marius detected a profound form of “asceticism” (I, 191). This Stoic form of moral discipline was eventually regarded as evidence of a “will to righteousness” (Raymer 99): “[t]he inner man is self-swayed, makes itself just what it wills to be, makes all that happens seem to itself what it wills” (Watt 202). “The Stoics,” as Zerffi puts it, “taught that all our actions were the direct manifestation of our will; which will, in its turn, is the purest, innermost essence of every man, the efflux of necessity and Divine Providence, pervading the universe in its smallest particles” (II, 306-307). The concept of free will was actually the cornerstone of the Stoic world-picture. It was precisely this “kingly prerogative of the mind, its dominion over circumstance, its inherent liberty” that Marius found appealing in Stoicism:

86 “The Relation of Greek Philosophy to Modern Thought II.” appeared in the Mind in the April of 1882.
87 As Pollock puts it, “in strengthening the mind against the common temptations of the world, and the deliberate cultivation of Adiaphoria, the attitude of pure indifference towards the whole contents of the neutral field ‘between virtue and vice,’ was recommended as a point of moral discipline” (Pollock 65).
89 “[A]bove all, the will to righteousness matters. We must not, as Matthew Arnold observed, confuse machinery of life with values […] no act is in itself praise worthy or vicious, then, unless we take the will or intention into account. This viewpoint has exercised a certain amount of influence on modern legal practice, through the Roman jurists” (Raymer 99).
‘It is in thy power to think as thou wilt: The essence of things is in thy thoughts about them: All is opinion, conception: No man can be hindered by another: What is outside thy circle of thought is nothing at all to it; hold to this, and you are safe: One thing is needful – to live close to the divine genius within thee, and minister thereto worthily.’ And the first point in this true ministry, this culture, was to maintain one’s soul in a condition of indifference and calm. How continually had public claims, the claims of other persons, with their rough angularities of character, broken in upon him, the shepherd of the flock. But after all he had at least this privilege he could not part with, of thinking as he would; and it was well, now and then, by a conscious effort of will, to indulge it for a while, under systematic direction. The duty of thus making discreet, systematic use of the power of imaginative vision for purposes of spiritual culture, ‘since the soul takes colour from its fantasies,’ is a point he has frequently insisted on (II, 38).

If, however, we substitute in these varied late-19th-century explorations of the ancient philosophical movement the term “idealism” for “Stoicism,” we end up with a purely idealistic program, or, at the least, with a doctrine that was sketched in chiefly idealistic terms. Otto Pfleiderer in 1896, after considering Mill’s “Cyrenaic” hedonism (462), turned to the “idealistic moralists of ancient and modern times (Plato, the Stoics, etc)” and to Kant, whom he regarded as “the classical representative of idealistic morality” (463). Kantian ethics, very much like Stoicism, grounded morality on reason, emphasized the role of an ascetic will, establishing thus an absolute

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90 Even though most of the critics I have quoted highlight the fact that the Stoics shared with the Epicureans a materialistic conception of reality, based on their physics, all of the critics end up by highlighting their “idealism.” Pollock claims that Stoicism “exalted Reason as the source of the world order, the one ruler and judge of all things, the sole fountain of good to every creature, and especially the sole origin and measure of morality for man. And at the same time it was frankly, nay grossly materialist; no whit less so than the rival school of Epicurus, and probably more so than any modern school has been. The Stoics asserted in set terms that nothing really exists but matter, and that the soul is material” (Pollock 56). Epicurus was “counteracted by the Stoics, who despite their professed idealism, were the most prominent materialists in physical science” (Zerffi I, 304).

91 “All moral concepts have their seat and origin in reason completely a priori, and indeed in the most ordinary human reason just as much as in the most highly speculative: they cannot be abstracted from any empirical, and therefore merely contingent, knowledge” (Groundwork 85).

92 Kant claims in the first chapter of his Groundwork: “[p]ower, wealth, honour, even health and that complete well-being and contentment with one’s state which by the name of ‘happiness,’ produce
form of duty where human actions were, unlike utilitarianism, considered in terms of
a concept of virtue rather than their consequences. Likewise, the Stoic notions of the
“kingly” dominion of mind, of transcendental reason, of absolute duty, of free will,
the conception of the world as “a product of reason,” the “anthropomorphic, or rather
anthropocentric” moral formula of Stoicism (Pollock 53) and its primordial form of
“teleology,” eventually made the Victorians consider the Stoics “greater idealists than
either Plato or the commentators of Ecclesiastes” (Zerffi II, 306). Benn claimed that
moral idealism was “demonstrably of Greek origin, and found its most elaborate […]
expression in Stoicism” (247-248). Pater repeatedly in Marius linked Marcus Aurelius
to Plato (I, 200, II, 57), and presented, as I have already established, the Stoic
maxim of the autonomous will through an explicitly Kantian discourse in “The Will
as Vision” chapter.

Taking a closer look at the historical context, we shall see that such pervasive
allusion to Stoicism, and by implication idealism, was not accidental but rather
symptomatic of the intellectual climate of the last quarter of the 19th century, a climate
that, as we shall see, Pater fascinatingly reflected in his novel. In the 1870s and 1880s,

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93 “A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes – because of its fitness for
attaining some proposed end; it is good through its willing alone – that is good in itself. Considered in
itself it is to be esteemed beyond comparison as far higher than anything it could ever bring about
merely in order to favour some inclination or, if you like, the sum total of inclinations” (Groundwork
64).
94 Zerffi promotes a similar view: “the Stoics paved the way to anthropomorphism, teleology, and
optimism, for the fundamental idea of their philosophy was a mighty pantheistic conception” (I, 306).
95 “The Historical Development of Idealism and Realism II” appeared in Transactions of the Royal
Historical Society in 1877.
96 “Throughout, he could trace something of a humour into which Stoicism at all times tends to fall, the
tendency to cry, Abase yourselves! There was here the almost inhuman impassibility of one who had
thought too closely on the paradoxical aspect of the love of posthumous fame. With the ascetic pride
which lurks under all Platonism, resultant from its opposition of the seen to the unseen, as falsehood to
truth – the imperial Stoic, like his true descendant, the hermit of the middle age, was ready, in no
friendly humour, to mock, there in its narrow bed, the corpse which had made so much of itself in life”
(I, 200-01).
positivism “converged with naturalism; either in the Spencerian position that biological evolution could explain all aspects of human activity, in the materialist view that knowledge was confined to material phenomena alone; or in the Comtean conviction that every branch of human inquiry was a science” (Den Otter 53). The scientific discourse had penetrated the cultural imaginary to the extent of even solidifying itself as the prevalent ethical code; the utilitarian program, with its emphasis on empirical “facts,” was paradigmatic of this profound shift. In 1884, in his introduction to *Prolegomena to Ethics*, T. H. Green, a leading British idealist, attacked hedonist doctrines old and new as “anachronistic,” maintaining that Kant’s and Hegel’s systems carried new hope for the modern spirit. Green, furthermore, stated that “[t]he questions raised for us by the Moral Philosophy, which in England we have inherited, are such as to invite a physical treatment,” and since the moralist’s “chief business” is “to distinguish the nature and organs of the pleasures and pains,” ethics will become “a science of health, and the true moralist will be the physiologist who, making the human physique his specialty, takes a sufficiently wide view of his subject” (§ 2). A year later, in 1885, while also attacking the utilitarian ethics, Rashdall ironically claimed that

the time will come when the present craze for extracting ethical theory from a study of the habits of mollusca and crustacean will be seen to have been as much the passing fashion of an age of biological discovery as Locke’s speculation as to the possibility of solving moral problems by the aid of Algebra was the passing aberration of a great intellect dazzled by the brilliant vista of possible

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97 As Wenley argued in 1901, the “alliance” between “the Liberal party and English associationism (in ethics, utilitarianism) resulted, so far as philosophical principles were concerned, in the domination of the eighteenth-century mechanical view of things spiritual, which, by the way, the Anglo-Saxon folk retain in large part to this good hour, as we cannot too often call to mind” (453).
98 Green, as Randall puts it, was actually the “major 19th century critic of the reigning Utilitarian philosophy represented by Mill and those he had influenced” (217).
99 Green had initially stated this conviction in 1874-5 in his introduction to the publication of Hume’s *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary* (II, 370-1).
achievement opened out to his generation by the mathematical discoveries of Newton (203-204).

Reactions against the attempt to make “Ethics a department of Biology” (Rashdall 204) or economics and against the omni-colonizing sway of scientific materialism, were gradually gaining impetus in England. This form of protest was, for its most part, ideologically sanctioned by the movement of British idealism, which was at the time steadily rising to prominence. The systematic appeal to Continental philosophy, which under the aegis of Kant called for a moral system cleared from empirical elements (Groundwork 57-58), marked a “coherent and attractive alternative to conventional utilitarianism and naturalism” (Boucher & Vincent 3), and it was precisely in this sense that idealism was then considered as a historical analogue of Stoicism in its fight against Epicurean hedonism. The antagonism between Epicureanism and Stoicism was meant to invoke, in an allegorical form, the contemporary rivalry between “emotion” and “thought” (Zerffi III, 131), the conflict between “tradition” and “progress” (C. M. Williams 83), the disagreement between empiricism and idealism that was so characteristic of the time. Such a historical parable, needless to mention, optimistically anticipated the prevalence of idealism, the way Stoicism eventually overcame Epicureanism.

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100 Even in 1829, Carlyle upheld an early idealistic discourse against the fact that “[n]ot the external and the physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also,” pointing towards the extent that science had deeply penetrated the 19th-century imaginary threatening even to mechanize human thought (65). Actually, this critique against mechanization can be traced back to Romanticism. As Lowy puts it, “[t]he central feature of industrial (bourgeois) civilization that Romanticism criticizes is not the exploitation of the workers or social inequality […] it is the quantification of life, i. e. the total domination of (quantitive) exchange value, of the cold calculation of price and profit, and of the laws of the market, over the whole social fabric” (892).

101 As Quinton puts it, the rise of British idealism responded to “the need for a politics of social responsibility to set against the triumphant laissez-faire, of political altruism to counter the idea that uninhibited competition between self-interested individuals was the indispensable engine of human progress” (127).

102 This tendency is actually manifest even nowadays. In his introduction to the Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, H. J. Patton, its translator, states about Kantian ethics: “its message was never more needed than it is at present, when a somewhat arid empiricism is the prevailing fashion in philosophy” (vii).
Even Matthew Arnold’s illustration of Marcus Aurelius in his influential article, despite the fact that it was not sketched in idealistic terms, was right from the start urged against J. S. Mill’s ethics, and, thus, Arnold implicitly upheld Stoic “idealism” against utilitarianism. Arnold embarked on his exploration of the Roman Emperor by referring to Mill’s remark that, compared to paganism Christianity “falls far below the best morality of the ancients,” since it appears to be “negative rather than positive, passive rather than active” (*Criticism* 207).\(^{103}\) This set the tone of Arnold’s article in the sense that morality, as argued, was in need of some “fixed principles of action, fixed rules of conduct” to save it from being abandoned to passion, “to give it happiness by establishing it in the practice of virtue” (207). Thus, Marcus Aurelius became for Arnold emblematic of an individual who, despite his material prosperity and immense power, remained subservient, in a self-disciplined manner, to a fixed moral precept. And it was precisely here that Marcus Aurelius’ role for the modern spirit lay, according to Arnold. For in an age like Arnold’s, when traditional values were melting and nothing remained fixed, when religious belief was declining in the face of material prosperity or technological progress, when universal values were being systematically undermined by relativistic doctrines and militant individualism, the Roman emperor nostalgically invoked a threatened order. It was not, after all, accidental that, concluding his elaboration of Marcus Aurelius, Arnold emphatically re-stressed the beneficial paradigm that the Roman philosopher set for “those ages most especially that walk by sight, not by faith, but yet have no open vision” (229), implicitly referring again to Mill, with whom he had started his article, and his agnostic and empirically inductive doctrine of “sight” that excluded visionary belief.

\(^{103}\) “Mr. Mill says, in his book on Liberty, that ‘Christian morality is in great part merely a protest against paganism; its ideal is negative rather than positive, passive rather than active.’ He says, that, in certain most important respects, ‘it falls far below the best morality of the ancients’” (207).
It was more or less in these terms that Pater also dramatized the difference between Cyrenaic Epicureanism and Stoicism in *Marius*. Echoing the 19th century critiques of utilitarianism as a movement that turned its back on traditional ethics, Pater represented the Cyrenaic shortcomings as an uncompromising disruption of established moral codes. After being exposed to Stoicism, Marius felt that his Cyrenaicism went against “the claims of that eager, concentrated, impassioned realization of experience, against those of the received morality” (I, 149); he came to believe that his hedonist model could be “somewhat antinomian, when […] confronted with the traditional and popular morality” (I, 149-150), and that it “might misdirect or retard him in his efforts towards a complete, many-sided existence; or distort the revelations of the experience of life; or curtail his natural liberty of heart and mind” (II, 6). Eventually, Marius realized that in their “repellent attitude” towards tradition, the Cyrenaics “had been but faulty economists” unable to account for the “whole” (II, 22). By emphasizing the fact that Cyrenaicism “had been a theory, avowedly, of loss and gain (so to call it) of an economy,” Pater was explicitly pointing towards the paradigmatic 19th century political economists, the utilitarians, and their conversion of ethics into economics, in a fashion that was reminiscent of Green’s “Popular Philosophy in its Relation to Life,” where the idealist philosopher argued that the “moral sense” of Hume and Bentham’s doctrines, “however construed, could account for nothing beyond distaste at an observed predominance of unsympathetic over generous passions, or regret for a mistaken calculation of the balance between possible pains and pleasures (*Works*, III,121).

Complying, furthermore, with Green’s depiction of hedonism as “anachronistic,” Pater methodically presented this Cyrenaic disruption from

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104 “If, therefore, it missed something in the commerce of life, which some other theory or practice was able to include, if it made a needless sacrifice, then it must be, in a manner, inconsistent with itself, and lack theoretic completeness” (II, 15).
traditional ethics as “the characteristic philosophy of youth, ardent, but narrow in its survey – sincere, but apt to become one-sided, or even fanatical” (II, 15). Cyrenaicism for Pater, was typical of the “young” (II, 19), of “almost every youthful soul,” but also of “the youth of European thought” (II, 15), in this analogy that the Oxford don established between the span of man’s life and the historical development of human thought, which was also an indirect way of accounting for the hedonism of the “Conclusion” by attributing it to “youthfulness.” Even though, nevertheless, such “youthfulness” was to some extent justifiable as an inevitable part of human nature and history, it eventually ended up becoming a form of anachronism and “archaism” that had to be abandoned so as to give its place to a “riper” vision of things:

For it is by its exclusiveness, and by negation rather than positively, that such theories fail to satisfy us permanently, and what they really need for their correction, is the complementary influence of some greater system, in which they may find their due place. That Strum und Drang of the spirit, as it has been called, that ardent and special apprehension of half-truths, in the enthusiastic, and as it were ‘prophetic’ advocacy of which, devotion to truth, in the case of the young – apprehending but one point at a time in the great circumference – most usually embodies itself, is leveled down, safely enough, afterwards, as in history so in the individual, by the weakness and mere weariness, as well as by the maturer wisdom, of our nature (II, 19).\(^\text{105}\)

This “corrective,” “maturer wisdom” that Pater ascribed to Stoicism involved not only the surmounting of the conceit of the young in their relation to the past, but

\(^{105}\) It is interesting to note here that Frank Chapman Sharp, in *The Philosophical Review* of May 1896, expressed a, more or less, similar argument while referring to utilitarianism. Sharp claimed that Bentham’s treatment of ethics “consists mainly in the dogmatic statement of his own opinions and the characterization of all others as meaningless and absurd. This kind of philosophizing can appear convincing only to one who, through the influence of temperament, strengthened perhaps, as in this instance, by early education, is already in sympathy with its conclusions. This was the case with Mill. The happiness of the race appealed to his broad altruism as an end worthy of his highest devotion. Hence whatever was inimical to this, either in the conduct of himself, or others, necessarily met with disapproval; whatever promised to contribute to this end he viewed with satisfaction. The one class of actions was accordingly for him good; the other bad” (281).
also the overall self-centeredness that Cyrenaicism stood for. Accordingly, after coming in contact with Stoicism, Marius gradually acknowledged that his Cyrenaicism was “one of those subjective and partial ideals, based on vivid, because limited, apprehension of the truth of one aspect of experience” (II, 15), which involved a certain amount of “vulgar egotism” (II, 20). Marius’ contact with Stoicism “had set him on a review – on a review of the isolating narrowness, in particular, of his own theoretic scheme” (II, 14). By illustrating Stoicism as a means of counterbalancing Epicurean “egoism” and its “narrow selfishness” (C. M. Williams 86), Pater was implicitly addressing the 19th century idealist critiques urged against utilitarian self-interest. Even Henry Sidwick, the utilitarian, when reviewing in 1879 Guyau’s La Morale d’Epicure, acknowledged that “Epicureanism” was “egoistic in form” (583); actually, Sidwick had already attempted to resolve this implicitly admitted utilitarian shortcoming with his The Methods of Ethics (1874), of which Barratt claimed in Mind (April of 1877): “the Ethical value of Utilitarianism of whatever kind can only be as a method of Egoism. Similarly we might say that the Political or Social value of Egoism is only as a material of Utilitarianism, just as the Ethical value of Health is as a material of Egoism” (185). Green also attacked hedonist systems of experience as partially promoting self-interest rather than mutualism, by limiting the individual’s scope of interests solely to pleasure, seeking and disregarding the ideal of self-realization; hence “Green’s Stoicism,” according to Rashdall (208).

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107 The attack on Utilitarian egoism was actually initiated by a Frenchman, Guyau who argued that “an ethical system founded on facts cannot present to the individual as a primary motive of action the good or the happiness of society, for the reason that the happiness of society is in opposition to the happiness of the individual” (Carrel 457).
108 “Such a delusion may be possible, but we are not to suppose that it takes place because many persons, through a mistaken analysis of their inner experience, affirm that they have no idea of well-being but as a succession of pleasures. The demand for an abiding self-satisfaction has led to an
Pater, in this sense, like many of his contemporaries, employed Stoic “idealism” as a means of offsetting “the mischievous tendencies of materialism and pantheism, and their incompatibility with a high moral ideal,” that “[w]e hear a good deal nowadays,” as Pollock asserted in 1879 (57). A look here at the way the 19th century opponents of hedonism upheld the supremacy of Stoicism, is quite suggestive of this “high moral ideal” that Pater also seemed to espouse in Marius. The late Victorians extensively allegorized on the Stoic idea of cosmopolitanism,\textsuperscript{109} the substitution of Aristotle’s conception of man as a “πολιτικὸν ζωὸν,” with the “κοινωνικὸν” (Pollock 62), which was sponsored against hedonist egoism and materialism, so as to invoke a form of humanism: “[t]he idea of humanity is essentially Stoic; to work for the good of humanity was a Stoic precept; and to sacrifice one’s own pleasure for that higher good is a virtue which would have satisfied the most rigorous demands of a Cleanthes, an Epictetus, or an Aurelius” (Benn 249). Similarly, Marius admitted, while comparing Cyrenaicism to Aurelius’ “marvel, of equity – of charity”:

There was much in the philosophy of Aurelius – much consideration of mankind at large, of great bodies, aggregates and generalities, after the Stoic manner – which, on a nature less rich than his, might have acted as an inducement to care for people in inverse proportion to their nearness to him. That has sometimes been the result of the Stoic cosmopolitanism. Aurelius […] had brought all the ordering of life in which some permanent provision is made, better or worse, for the satisfaction of those interests which are not interests in the procuring of pleasure, but which may be described most generally as interests in the development of our faculties, and in the like development of those for whom we care” (Prolegomena to Ethics, § 234). In this sense Green echoed Kant who claimed: “if I had to choose between the concept of moral sense and that of perfection in general […] I should decide for the latter; for this, since it at least withdraws the settlement of this question from sensibility and brings it before the court of pure reason, even although it there gets no decision, does still preserve unfalsified for more precise determination the indeterminate Idea (of a good will in itself)” (Groundwork 124).

\textsuperscript{109} In a language that seems to self-reflexively echo the 19th century climate, Pollock attributes Stoic cosmopolitanism to the “social and political circumstances of the time, and in particular to the decay of local independence, and therewith of the old Greek patriotism, coinciding with a great enlargement of commerce and intercourse between different parts of the world” (52).
quickness of his intelligence, and long years of observation, to bear on the
conditions of social intercourse. He had early determined ‘not to make business an
excuse to decline the offices of humanity – not to pretend to be too much
occupied with important affairs to concede what life with others may hourly
demand;’ (I, 217).

It was this Stoic idea of “humanity,” along with Aurelius’ emphasis on the role
of human will, that, accordingly, led Marius to a vision of an ideal community.
Marius’ epiphany, where he realized that “will” might be “an organ of knowledge, of
vision” (II, 65), was, thus, followed by the idea of “[c]ompanionship” (II, 67): “[i]t
was like the break of day over some vast prospect with the ‘new city,’ as it were some
celestial New Rome, in the midst of it” (II, 70). Marius’ vision of this ideal “city,”
which anticipated the Christian community that he later joined, actually invoked the
idealistic argument as expressed by Kant that a “good will” and a moral life lead to a
“kingdom of ends,” the “systematic union of different rational beings under common
laws” (Groundwork 111). In this sense, through the allegorical guise of Stoicism,
Pater dramatized the profound social turn that began, according to Leighton, in the
late 1870s and led, via the spread of idealism and the Reform Act of 1884, towards
the dissemination of collectivism and welfarism (231).110 This was a time when the
early laissez faire individualistic mentality was overshadowed by a consideration of
the role and the fate of the social tissue as a whole. This was a time which “finds us
all, to the dismay of the old-fashioned individualist, thinking in communities,” as the
Fabian Sidney Webb stated (qtd. in Leighton 233); or as Mackenzie argued in 1895:
“in an age like ours, in which social claims are paramount, it is the egoistic side that
can most easily be set aside” (274).

110 Parry argues that this social turn started much earlier, in the 1860’s with “the People’s William,”
Gladstone, who had gradually developed a discourse of moralized collectivism deeply infiltrated with
the Christian spirit. As Parry puts it, Gladstone “was the man most responsible for developing the myth
of the ‘people’ as a moral force, sharing essentially Christian sentiments, bound together in a spiritual
campaign against injustice” (252).
Indicative of this 19th century appeal to “Stoic” duty and absolute moral law as a means of surmounting the limitations of individual pleasure seeking, was also the prevalence at Oxford, from 1870 to 1940, of the “formal philosophy of duty,” which was firmly based on Green’s Kantianism, as Jenks confirms (484-85).\textsuperscript{111} Idealism, thus, very much like Stoicism had brought “something distinctively Semitic to Athens – a sense of sin, of duty and obedience to a moral order independent of man” (Raymer 98),\textsuperscript{112} which drew attention to “the rigid bounds set by duty and natural law […] [and] laid emphasis upon harmony with general principles derived from without” (C. M. Williams 80). This cultural shift was encapsulated in Marius through the protagonist’s acknowledgement that a re-connection with traditional morals “involved, certainly, some curtailment of his liberty, in concession to the actual manner, the distinctions, the enactments of that great crowd of admirable spirits, who have elected so, and not otherwise, in their conduct of life, and are not here to give one, so to term it, an ‘indulgence’” (II, 27). Such acknowledgement, actually, marked Marius’ acceptance of a moral system of obligations and duties like Kant’s, which defined duty as “the necessity to act out of reverence for the law” (\textit{Groundwork} 72)\textsuperscript{113} and which claimed that the moral worth of an action “does not depend on the result expected from it, and so too does not depend on any principle of action that needs to borrow its motive from this expected result” (\textit{Groundwork} 73). Accordingly, Marius realized that a “general principle” was required “over and above such practical

\textsuperscript{111} The “Oxford philosophy of duty” was launched by Green himself, who was Professor of Moral Philosophy 1878-82 (485) and it prevailed at Oxford rather than “Hegelianism or utilitarianism” until the 1940s (486).

\textsuperscript{112} As Zerffi states: “[t]he Romans, notwithstanding the practical part which they played in the historical development of humanity, were exclusively idealistic, and their idealism may serve to explain the rough and coarse realism that obtained such hold on the their minds in counter-action to their idealism. Their very state was founded on a mere abstraction; their laws were framed \textit{a priori}” (312).

\textsuperscript{113} “I am subject to the law of the intelligible world – that is, to the reason which contains this law in the Idea of freedom, and so to the autonomy of the will – and therefore I must look on the laws of the intelligible world as imperatives for me and on the actions which conform to this principle as duties” (\textit{Groundwork} 136).
rectitude, thus determined by natural affection or self-love or fear” that was not based on “his own free election,” but rather on a “deference, an ‘assent,’ entire, habitual, unconscious, to custom – to the actual habit or fashion of others, from whom he could not endue to break away” (II, 9).\(^{114}\) Cyrenaicism was thus replaced by “the clearest, the fullest, the weightiest principle of moral action; a principle under which one might subsume men’s most strenuous efforts after righteousness” (II, 9). As Mrs. Humphry Ward put it in her review of the novel in May 1885, Marius’ early distrust of moral absolutes became in this way “obedience to this same morality as desirable […] because practically obedience is a source of pleasure and quickened faculty to the individual” (Seiler 134). Without realizing the full implications of her statement, Mrs. Ward was actually one of the first to observe that Marius passed from the consequentialism of utilitarianism to a deontologist point of view, as exposed by Kant, where pleasure of duty was cherished for its own sake. This was actually a fact that Franklin E. Court also implicitly confirmed, by stating that “Marius’ life is virtuous, therefore, because he recognizes the task before him – an eager and constant pursuit of truth ever devoid of any definite hope of realization” (554).

It becomes then evident that in a manner similar to his contemporaries, Pater in *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) systematically took advantage of the historical antagonism between Stoicism and Epicureanism so as to allegorically dramatize the 19\(^{th}\) century ideological conflict between idealism and utilitarian empiricism, through

\(^{114}\) “Ο κόσμος οσανεί πόλες εστίν - the world is as it were a commonwealth, a city: and there are observances, customs, usages, actually current in it, things our friends and companions will expect of us, as the condition of our living there with them at all, as really their peers or fellow-citizens. Those observances were, indeed, the creation of a visible or invisible aristocracy in it, whose actual manners, whose preferences from of old, become now a weighty tradition as to the way in which things should or should not be done, are like a music, to which the intercourse of life proceeds – such a music as no one who had once caught its harmonies would willingly jar. In this way, the becoming, as in Greek – το πρέπον: or τα ηθη, mores, manners, as both Greeks and Romans said, would indeed be a comprehensive term for duty. Righteousness would be, in the words of ‘Cesar’ himself, of the philosophic Aurelius, but a ‘following of the reasonable will of the oldest, the most venerable, of cities, of polities – of the royal, the law-giving element, therein – forasmuch as we are citizens also in the supreme city on high, of which all other cities beside are but as single habitations’” (II, 9-10).
the philosophical influences and conflicts that Marius was experiencing. Marius’ spiritual transition from his care-free Cyrenaic “egotism” to the Stoic “curtailments” of humanistic duty, actually closely followed the philosophical shifts of Pater’s own time, presenting us, as I have already noted, with a profound “autobiography of the Zeitgeist.”

115 This transition, furthermore, functioned as a means of signaling Marius’ adulthood, his “maturity,” without resorting to conventional narrative modes of representation, preparing, thus, the ground in a philosophical level for the character’s espousal of Christianity, since, through his contact with Stoicism, Marius came to acknowledge about the Cyrenaics and, by implication, the utilitarians, echoing Arnold, that “[a] little more of such ‘walking by faith,’ a little more of such not unreasonable ‘assent,’ and they might have profited by a hundred services to their culture” (II, 24).

116 Marius “hardly knew how strong that old religious sense of responsibility, the conscience, as we call it, still was within him – a body of inward impressions, as real as those so highly valued outward ones – to offend against which, brought with it a strange feeling of disloyalty, as to a person” (I, 156).

Stoic and Idealist Shortcomings

Marius’ initial attraction to Marcus Aurelius was soon replaced by disillusionment and disappointment. In a manner similar to the author’s treatment of Cyrenaicism, therefore, Pater’s presentation of Stoicism was closely followed in the novel by its critique, establishing a pattern of quest and frustration that gives the impression of progress in this highly static novel of philosophical speculation. What eventually triggered this shift was the same principle that had also distanced Marius from

115 Pater’s sketching of Rome in terms of a modern, a 19th century cosmopolitan city, where “fashionable people were busy shopping,” “the frizzled heads” were then “a la mode” (I, 175), and its people amused with a “chronique scandaleuse” (I, 176), elicits a historical displacement that will allow the writer to establish a connection between his consideration of the historical figure of Marcus Aurelius and the narrator’s present.

116 Marius “hardly knew how strong that old religious sense of responsibility, the conscience, as we call it, still was within him – a body of inward impressions, as real as those so highly valued outward ones – to offend against which, brought with it a strange feeling of disloyalty, as to a person” (I, 156).
Cyrenaicism: the inability of both philosophical systems to fully encompass traditional morality and belief. Despite, nevertheless, their incompatibility with traditional religion, Pater, in his critique of Stoicism, established, as we shall see, a peculiar form of relation between the two philosophical systems that eventually anticipated his religious formula for the “modern spirit,” and which was indicative of his synthetic politics.

Marius’ distancing from Stoicism was triggered by a sequence of blind-spots that he gradually discerned in the Stoic model. What primarily displeased Marius was the profound sadness and melancholy implicit in Aurelius’ stance (II, 48). Marius noted that “the cloud of some reserved internal sorrow, passing from time to time into an expression of fatigue and effort, of loneliness amid the shouting multitude, might have been detected there by the mere observant” (I, 191). Such sadness was eventually attributed to the emperor’s thoughtfulness, to “his contemplations,” which, Marius felt, “had made him of a sad heart, inducing in him that melancholy” (II, 51). By highlighting Aurelius’ sadness, Pater seemed to comply with Arnold’s influential illustration of the Roman emperor, where, as Arnold stated, “[i]t is impossible to rise from reading Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius without a sense of constraint and melancholy, without feeling that the burden laid upon man is wellnigh greater than he can bear” (Criticism 208).117 Such compliance with Arnold, which, as we shall see, was actually maintained throughout Pater’s critique of Stoicism, was indicative of the

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117 Rosenblatt argues that Pater’s image of Marcus Aurelius was closer to Ernest Renan’s illustration of the Roman emperor as exemplified in Marc-Aurele et la Fin du Monde Antique (1881), and the lecture he delivered in Oxford on the Stoic philosopher in 1880, rather than to Arnold’s: “[b]oth Renan and Pater, for example, stress the emperor’s reluctant acquiescence in certain pagan cruelties and superstitions; Pater echoes Renan’s description of Aurelius’ impassive conduct – writing or reading, with averted eyes – during the cruel shows in the amphitheatre. And both reproach him for his lack of joy in the things of his life, his contempt for the body” (253-54). De Laura on the other hand, regards Arnold’s critique of Aurelius’ melancholy a crucial and dominant aspect of the essay (266-69).
Oxford don’s implicit distancing from his youthful ideas, and it furthermore signaled his shift in terms of religion.

The fact that Aurelius was so deeply involved in his contemplations contributed not only to his sadness but also to his typical “detachment” (II, 36), which was, after all, a principal characteristic of Stoic philosophy. Marius soon realized that this form of Stoic detachment, closely related to “Inactivity,” had in the long run resulted in “a somber resignation,” which even “amounted to a tolerance of evil” (II, 51). Following the emperor to the arena to watch the traditional spectacle that Aurelius “nobly” provided for “the amusement of his people” (I, 236), in which “mere cruelty to animals, their useless suffering and death, formed the main point of interest” (I, 238), Marius was taken aback by the emperor’s “apathy” and “indifference” to the brutality of the shows. Considering the emperor’s proclaimed “righteousness” and “piety” (I, 237), Marius could not help wondering in that “great slaughter-house” (I, 240), how “[c]ould there be Cosmos, that wonderful, reasonable order in him, and nothing but disorder in the world without?” (II, 39), invoking an issue that Arnold also addressed in his article, Aurelius’ “ineffectuality.” This “ineffectuality” also marked a deviation from the Heraclitean

118 “In such wise had Aurelius come to the condition of philosophic detachment he had affected as a boy, hardly persuaded to wear warm clothing, or to sleep in more luxurious manner than on the bare floor” (II, 36).
119 Aurelius sat “impassibly through all the hours […] For the most part indeed, the emperor had actually averted his eyes from the show, reading, or writing on matters of public business, but had seemed, after all, indifferent” (I, 240).
120 “To its grim acts of blood-shedding a kind of sacrificial character still belonged in the view of certain religious casuists, tending conveniently to soothe the humane sensibilities of so pious an emperor as Aurelius, who, in his fraternal complacency, had consented to preside over the shows” (I, 237).
121 “The word ineffectual again rises to one’s mind; Marcus Aurelius saved his own soul by his righteousness, and he could do no more. Happy they who can do this! But still happier, who can do more!” (Criticism 220). See also p. 219. Pater also considered as part of Aurelius’ ineffectuality his inability to teach virtuousness to his son and the strict prosecution of the Christians that took place under his administration. These “ineffectualities” were indirectly overlooked by Arnold through the justification that it was based on a ‘mist of prejudices,’ a “misrepresentation,” of the Christian doctrine as politically subversive, “anti-civil and anti-social” (219), morally abominable, and ultimately atheistic (217).
principle of Logos and the link it established between the individual and “Cosmos.” The emperor’s compliance to such cruelty, his inability to sense evil, eventually cast an ironic light over his alleged humanism: “[h]ow temperate, how tranquillizing! what humanity!” (I, 229), leading Marius to the conclusion that “it was a sentiment of mediocrity, though of a mediocrity for once golden” (I, 229).

It was precisely because of this “mediocre” humanism that the emperor could not – despite his “gracious charities” (II, 40) – bring about his inward order upon the “disorder” of the real world (II, 39). Unlike Heraclitus, or Plato, who had been able to “articulate, to see, at least in thought his ideal city,” Marcus Aurelius “had been unable to track his way about it” (II, 40). Thus, Aurelius’ “vision of a reasonable, a divine order, not in nature, but in the condition of human affairs - that unseen Celestial City, Uranopolis, Callipolis, Urbs Beata” (II, 39), could not be realized (II, 40), but it only functioned as a means of preparing the ground for what was to come, for Christianity. The Roman emperor “had but divined, by a kind of generosity of spirit, the void place, which another experience than his must fill” (II, 40). Just like Arnold, then, who contrasted Aurelius’ “ineffectual” melancholy to the “joyful emotion” of Christian religious practice (Criticism 208), Pater utilized the Stoic emperor’s mediocrity as a means of foreshadowing the full attainment of Aurelius’ humanitarian potentials through Christianity.

Taking a closer look at Pater’s illustration of Aurelius’ shortcomings (his sadness, detachment, apathy, indifference, and ineffectuality), we shall see that they all actually converged for Marius to the Stoic philosopher’s contempt for the body:

122 Unlike Stoic melancholy, Christianity has “insisted on the necessity of an inspiration, a joyful emotion, to make moral action perfect” (Criticism 208). Arnold argues that “[t]he paramount virtue of religion is, that is has lighted up morality, that it has supplied the emotion and inspiration needful for carrying the sage along the narrow way perfectly, for carrying the ordinary man along it at all” (Criticism 208).
The nostrils and mouth seemed capable almost of peevishness; and Marius noted in them, as in the hands, and in the spare body generally, what was new to his experience – something of asceticism, as we say, of a bodily gymnastic, by which, although it told pleasantly in the clear blue humours of the eye, the flesh had scarcely been an equal gainer with the spirit. It was hardly the expression of ‘the healthy mind in the healthy body,’ but rather of a sacrifice of the body to the soul, its needs and aspirations, that Marius seemed to divine in this assiduous student of the Greek sages – a sacrifice, in truth, far beyond the demands of their very saddest philosophy of life (I, 191).

Such “sacrifice of the body to the soul” was tightly linked to Aurelius’ “inhumanities,” because it eventually signaled a replacement of the “heart” by the “intellect” (I, 241). Pater was implying that emotional engagement was much preferable than a cold-hearted reason, that empirical vision and feeling provided better moral criteria than the Stoic “intellectual abstraction” (II, 12). In this sense, he established a tight correlation between the order in “nature” and the order in “the conditions of human affairs” (II, 39), suggesting in a Heraclitean idiom that an ethical order can only be reached through the senses. As Marius, “the humble follower of the bodily eye” (I, 241), acknowledged in the arena scene: “[w]hat was needed was the heart that would make it impossible to witness all this; and the future would be with the forces that could beget a heart like that” (I, 242-243). This “heart,” Marius suggested, could have prevented Aurelius from “compromising or confusing” the “fierce opposition of real good and real evil” (I, 241). And it was eventually this “heart” that also marked the “permanent point of difference” between Marius and the emperor, and rendered Aurelius “inferior now and for ever on the question of righteousness” (I, 241).

Aurelius’ lack of “heart” was also manifested in the “modernization” of religion that he had scored, which came as a result of the fact that the emperor “had
succeeded in more than healing the old feud between philosophy and religion, displaying himself, in singular combination, as at one the most zealous of philosophers and the most devout of polytheists, and lending himself, with an air of conviction, to all the pageantries of public worship” (I, 182). “[P]hilosophy was upon the throne” (II, 3) through Aurelius’ attempts to convert his people to “philosophic faith” (I, 183), which assumed, as Marius noted, “much of what we conceive to be the religious character” (I, 183). Such “religious character”, nevertheless, as Marius soon realized, was only superficial:

> [t]he ideas of Stoicism, so precious to Marcus Aurelius, ideas of large generalization, have sometimes induced in those over whose intellects they have had real power, a coldness of heart […]. Those vasty conceptions of the later Greek philosophy had in them, in truth, the germ of a sort of austerely opinionative ‘natural theology,’ and how often has that led to religious dryness – a hard contempt of everything in religion, which touches the senses, or charms the fancy, or really concerns the affections (II, 41-42).

Aurelius’ “ideas of large generalization” resulted into a form of “religious dryness,” since the emperor had rationalized religion by extracting from it everything that touched “the senses” or concerned “the affections;” he had, in other words, substituted the “heart” with the “mind,” he had, in Arnold’s terms, replaced “the emotion of religious joy” with “stringent practicalness” (Criticism 221). It was in this sense that “Roman religion, as Marius knew it, had, indeed, been always something to be done, rather than something to be thought, or believed, or loved” (I, 181).

Considering this “practicalness,” this “religious dryness,” this form of “natural theology,” Knoepflmacher claims that Marcus Aurelius’ Stoicism allowed Pater to “scrutinize the contemporary ‘religions of Humanity’ of Victorian agnosticism” (142).

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123 “It had even cultivated the habit, the power, of ‘spiritual direction;’ the troubled soul making recourse in its hour of destitution, or amid the distractions of the world, to this or that director – philosopho suo – who could really best understand it” (I, 183).
The truth is that Pater, preparing the reader for his religious suggestion, was implicitly invoking the 19th century debates on the rationalization and secularization of religious feeling.124 Yet, Pater’s focus in his consideration of Stoicism was not on Victorian agnosticism, on the positivist impact of the “creed of science” on religion, but rather, as I see it, on the rationalizing effect that idealistic speculation exerted on religious thought. Pater’s consideration of the relation between scientific materialism and agnosticism was, after all, as we have seen, performed through his exploration of Cyrenaic utilitarianism and its “religion of Humanity.” Through Stoicism, which was Pater’s historical analogue of idealism, the Oxford don was actually “scrutinizing” the rationalizing effect that idealism exerted on religion and ethics in general.

In his article, “Is Morality Without Religion Possible and Desirable?,” published in the Philosophical Review (1896), Otto Pfleiderer portrayed Kant as the paradigmatic “representative” of the idealist moralists, among which he also listed the Stoics, as we have seen (463). In a manner similar to Pater’s illustration of Marcus Aurelius, who “could discern a death’s-head everywhere” (I, 201), Pfleiderer argued that Kantian, and, by implication, idealistic morality “must necessarily result in a pessimistic submission to things as they are” (463).125 Such “pessimism” essentially involved Kant’s

absolute opposition between the law-giving reason, which he regarded as purely formal thought, and the natural desires of man, from which all the content of action was derived. Hence morality became a perpetual and fruitless conflict, and required an individual to deny all his inclinations and obey duty for duty’s sake,

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124 Likewise, Benn proclaimed in 1882 that he rationalization of religious feeling could be raced back to Stoicism, which he linked to “that intimate association of naturalism with theology which meets us again in the philosophy of the last century” (248).
125 Pfleiderer also reminds us of Pater’s arena scene when he claims that “there are beings stoical enough to cling undismayed to duty for duty’s sake, though they have no good feeling towards their fellow-men, and may even regard them with open and avowed contempt” (466).
without any prospect of realizing an end of any value, or of attaining the Good in any way (Pfleiderer 463).126

In “The Futility of the Kantian Doctrine of Ethics” (1899), F. A. Henry also claimed that, through Kant’s opposition between “the sensibilities and practical reason, or the rational will,” the German philosopher had cut up “the spiritual organism into separate independent pieces, destroying with its unity its life” by excluding “[t]he element of feeling” because he considered it to be “contingent and variable” (86).127 Similarly, while referring to Green’s reading of Kantian morality, Sidwick addressed the “stoical contempt for attendant pleasures and pains” (177) as expressed in the idealist contrast between “moral good” and “the impulse of the animal soul” (“Ethics” 174).128 An ethical model that systematically overlooked the body was bound to end up in unhappiness; as F. A. Henry argued, “[n]o system which begins and ends with duty, whose one principle is imperative obligation, and its one virtue unquestioning obedience, can get further than that” (84). The conception of Kantian ethics as “pessimistic” was actually widely-held in the intellectual forums of Pater’s time. This view basically involved the fact that in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), and in his other major publications on ethics,129 Kant had established the supreme principle of morality on *a priori* grounds (*Groundwork*

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126 By introducing “a religious postulate,” where “happiness was connected with virtue as its reward,” Kant was able to partly avoid this pessimism, Pfleiderer argues, generating, nevertheless, serious “inconsistencies” in this ethical program (463). Post Kantian idealistic morality, through Fichte, Schiller, Herder, Jacobi, and Schleiermacher, eventually “resulted in the establishment of a religious morality, which, though it might be at variance with the beliefs of the church, was in all essential points in harmony with Christian ethics” (464).

127 Kant stated that duty “is in no way based on feelings, impulses, and inclinations” (*Groundwork* 113). Moreover, Kant claims that “[u]nmixed with the alien element of added empirical inducements, the pure thought of duty, and in general of the moral law, has by way of reason alone […] an influence on the human heart so much more powerful than all the further impulses capable of being called up from the field of experience that in the consciousness of its own dignity reason despises these impulsions and is able gradually to become their master. In place of this, a mixed moral philosophy, compounded of impulsions from feeling and inclination and at the same time of rational concepts, must make the mind waver between motives which can be brought under no single principle and which can guide us only by mere accident to the good, but very often also to the evil” (84-85).

128 Henry Sidwick’s “Green’s Ethics” was published in *Mind* (April 1884).

129 *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797).
and claimed that an action was morally good only if it was done for the sake of duty (*Groundwork* 68-71), notoriously excluding from the sphere of morality “sensuous impulse.”\(^{131}\) In his effort to institute an absolute, objective and universal moral imperative, Kant’s definition of moral law was, therefore, purely formal.\(^{132}\) As a result, he was, and as a matter of fact still is, criticized for being too abstract.\(^{133}\)

Law, then, confronts the activity of will with its imperative command, - but to do what? What does it command? […] A practical universal law, we are told, is such in form only, apart from matter […] Kant says of [moral law] that it is purely rational; it would seem more exact to say that it is purely abstract […]. As the criterion of an act of duty, the principle of universality, taken as purely formal or empty, seems, to say the least, unhelpful (Henry 74).\(^{134}\)

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\(^{130}\) Kant states in the Preface to the *Groundwork*, “the ground of obligation must be looked for, not in the nature of man nor in the circumstances of the world in which he is placed, but solely a priori in the concepts of pure reason; and that every other precept based on principles of mere experience – and even a precept that may in a certain sense be considered universal, so far as it rests in its slightest part, perhaps only in its motive, on empirical grounds – can indeed be called a practical rule, but never a moral law” (58).

\(^{131}\) “The will is free, he says, in that it is independent of any agency foreign to itself, - or in that it is free. By any foreign agency, however, Kant means the emotions and desires; the will is free from the determinism of sensuous impulse” (Henry 78). And he later on adds that Kant “assumes that the feelings, owing to their instability, are incapable of any such fixed relations as involve universal principles, and so his purely rational science of ethics, which is to be cleared of everything empirical, excludes them from the realm of moral activity” (Henry 85).

\(^{132}\) Consider for example Kant’s definition of moral maxims. Even when he refers to their content, he provides no specific directions: “[a]ll maxims have, in short: 1. a form, which consists in their universality; and in this respect the formula of the moral imperative is expressed thus: ‘Maxims must be chosen as if they had to hold as universal laws of nature;’ 2. a matter – that is, an end; and in this respect the formula says: ‘A rational being, as by his very nature an end and consequently an end in himself, must serve for every maxim as a condition limiting all merely relative and arbitrary ends;’ 3. a complete determination of all maxims by the following formula, namely: ‘All maxims as proceeding from our own making of law ought to harmonize with a possible kingdom of ends as a kingdom of nature’ (*Groundwork* 115). Even a brief look at Kant’s maxims reveals that they are totally stripped of any empirical reference: “[d]uty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law” (*Groundwork* 72), or “I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law” (74) or, “[a]ct as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature” (97), etc.

\(^{133}\) As Wempe states, “the notorious problem of Kantian ethics is that it concentrated all attention on the disposition from which a moral act should be accomplished in order to qualify as properly moral, so that its contents are completely resolved in the definition” (133).

\(^{134}\) Henry, later on, again addresses Kantian abstraction in a more sarcastic tone: “[i]t is true that now and again he emerges from his shadow-land of unreal abstractions and touches the realm of the actual, but here he does not find himself at home, and he soon returns to the more congenial habitat” (Henry 79).
The eclipse of the “heart” or the body from idealistic, and Kantian, ethics subsequently rendered it “a purely rational science” (Henry 73). Such rationalism was also evident in the idealist conception of religion, where “we arrive at a mathematical conviction of the existence of God” (Zerffi “Kant” 85), since religion for the idealists was nothing but “logical thought concerning God,” ultimately depriving it of its “vitality” (Colvin 81). Henry, in a manner similar to Arnold and Pater, juxtaposed this “Stoic” deprivation of “vitality” to the Christian discourse of emotion, which “went direct to the heart of man” (85).

It was precisely this rationalizing effect of Stoic and, by implication, of idealist thought in terms of religious feeling that Marius wanted to counterbalance through his emphasis on the body and the heart. Having run a full circle, Marius’ privileging of the “heart” as a means of offsetting “thought” marked, thus, an implicit retreat to his former Cyrenaic preoccupation with sense perception and the concrete:

135 Pater’s illustration of the Stoic replacement of religion by philosophy actually encapsulated the fact that “far more potent than any modern theorist as a source of idealist social thought was classical Greek philosophy, above all the philosophy of Plato,” where the idealists found in Plato “not simply a system of logic and epistemology, but a series of clues, principles and practical nostrums with which to approach the problems of mass, urban, class-biased, industrial and imperial civilization” (J. Harris 127). The idealists found the Platonic doctrine extremely instrumental on the grounds that, as Harris argues, they were attracted by his vision of society as an “organic spiritual community,” the Platonic ethical role of self cultivation instead of materialistic quest in the advancement of social good, and the Platonic emphasis on justice as the basis of the state” (Harris 128).

136 With Kant “metaphysics were turned into an experimental science” (Zerffi “Kant” 87). “Metaphysics were developed by Kant’s inquiries into a study to make ourselves acquainted with the limitation of human reason” (Zerffi “Kant” 88).

137 “Martineau’s definition of religion as ‘belief in an Ever-living God, that is, a Divine Mind and Will ruling the universe’ is likewise too limited to include many of the phenomena that are usually classed as religious” (Colvin 81).

138 In “Immanuel Kant in his Relation to Modern History,” which was published in the Transactions of the Royal Historical Society in 1876, Zerffi provides a brief account of the rationalizing effect that Kantian ethics exerted on religion: “[i]n the mighty circle of religion, we have to bear three points in view. (1.) If all faith in a supernatural world be based on morals (ethic action), religion cannot have any other essential and real object than a purely moral one; all elements that do not foster pure morality will be secondary, strange, indifferent, or even dangerous. Religion, in fact, with Kant, becomes pure ethics. (2.) Ethics are not based on a strictly scientific cognition, or theoretical conviction, but on moral actions and practical necessity. Not theoretical assumptions, but practical reason, becomes thus the basis of religious faith. (3.) Granting this, it follows that our practical reason is independent of mere theological assertions that it discards, as will and moral force, all such boundaries as are erected by speculation, and drives us to conform to laws which must be common to the whole of humanity” (Zerffi “Kant” 89-90).

139 “Kant’s study of the Scripture must have been superficial” (Henry 83).
“[t]rust the eye: Strive to be right always in regard to the concrete experience: Beware of falsifying your impressions” (I, 242-243), which was delivered in a diction highly reminiscent of the “Conclusion” and its Heraclitean emphasis on the senses. Indicative of this “return” to Cyrenaicism was also Marius’ application of a utilitarian form of evaluation on Stoicism, where Marcus Aurelius was eventually judged in terms of the consequences of his acts, rather than his humanitarian intentions. This reintroduction of a measured form of empirical Cyrenaicism as a means of overcoming the blind-spots of Stoic humanism and idealism, was eventually indicative of the religious formula that Pater wanted to suggest to his contemporaries and it anticipated the synthetic character of his proposed “fourth phase,” which brought together, as we shall see next, the philosophical paradigms of Heraclitus and Kant.

“Eye” and “Duty”: The Synthetic Paradigm of Early Christianity

After rejecting both Cyrenaicism and Stoicism, Marius was gradually drawn to Christianity, where he eventually reached the climax of his spiritual quest. Such climax, as it is my intention to show, was dramatized in the text through the reconciliation between Cyrenaicism and Stoicism that Pater represented Christianity as having scored. Under this prism, I will consider Pater’s portrayal of Christianity as an extension of the Oxford don’s synthetic model of the Heraclitean and the Kantian paradigms that I have so far explored. Actually, Pater’s synthetic vision in Marius was the author’s most developed, elaborate and ambitious resolution of his synthetic

140 The illustration of the synthetic character of Christianity was part of Pater’s fascination with the Heraclitean interplay between oppositional forces, the Platonic fusion of the concrete and the abstract, the Kantian establishment of imaginative reason and the synthetic a priori statements, the Hegelian synthesis of thesis and antithesis, the Darwinian preoccupation with hybridism, of Pater’s own fusing ideal of the centripetal and the centrifugal.
explorations, signaling his theoretical maturity. The fact that Pater promoted Marius’ image of Christianity as a “religious phase” possible for the modern spirit, as the modus vivendi par excellence for his contemporaries, was indicative of this critical self-assurance and of the significance that he attributed to it.

After Flavian, who introduced Marius to the pagan world, the protagonist of the novel became a close friend of Cornelius, an enigmatic Roman soldier of a “peculiar character” (II, 92), who secretly harbored Christian belief. Returning one day to Rome from a visit to a country-house, Cornelius decided to reveal to Marius “the hidden source from which the beauty and strength of a nature, so persistently fresh in the midst of a somewhat jaded world, might be derived” (II, 92). Being exhausted from the long journey, Cornelius led Marius to a villa outside Rome, which was “wholly concealed from passengers along the road” (II, 95), and which belonged to a “wealthy Roman matron” (II, 105), Cecilia. It was in the garden of this house, through a “hollow cavern or crypt,” the “family burial-place of the Cecilii” (II, 98) that Marius’ first contact with the early Christian communities of the catacombs actually took place. Marius was deeply impressed by this new experience, but what really attracted his attention was the way that early form of Christianity had harmoniously incorporated pagan elements so as “to express the prevailing sentiment of the place” (II, 103-104). The owner of the house, Cecilia, with her “antique severity” and “temperate beauty,” brought to Marius’ mind “reminiscences of the serious and virile character of the best female statuary of Greece” (II, 105).

Architectonically, this Christian catacomb consisted “almost exclusively of the remains of older art” (II, 95), of “fragments of older architecture” (II, 96), where the marble was taken “from older pagan tombs – the inscription sometimes a palimpsest, the new epitaph being woven into the faded letters of an earlier one” (II, 99),
revealing the fact that the Christians “were bent less on the destruction of the old pagan temples than on their conversion to a new and higher use; and, with much beautiful furniture ready to hand, they became Christian sanctuaries” (II, 124). This attitude of the Christians, Marius noted, was even reflected on their “liturgical spirit,” which comprised “both pagan and Jewish elements of ritual” (II, 124).

Such amalgamation the narrator attributed to the method of the church, which was “moderation, the divine moderation of Christ himself” (II, 124). Christianity “had adopted many of the graces of pagan feeling and pagan custom; as being indeed a living creature, taking up, transforming, accommodating still more closely to the human heart what of right belonged to it” (II, 125), “[t]hings new and old seemed to be coming as if out of some goodly treasure-house, the brain full of science, the heart rich with various sentiment, possessing withal this surprising healthfulness, this reality of heart” (II, 111). According to Marius, the integration of “pagan fragments” into the Christian body had resulted into its superiority since it had established a dialectics between these fragments by bringing them together into a single form, where they reciprocally complimented the shortcomings of one another:

- Some transforming spirit was at work to harmonize contrasts, to deepen expression – a spirit which, in its dealing with the elements of ancient life, was guided by a wonderful tact of selection, exclusion, juxtaposition, begetting thereby a unique effect of freshness, a grave yet wholesome beauty, because the world of sense, the whole outward world was understood to set forth the veritable unction and royalty of a certain priesthood and kingship of the soul within, among the prerogatives of which was a delightful sense of freedom (II, 116).

It is interesting to note here that Pater employed a discourse that abounded in evolutionary overtones (“living creature,” “transforming,” “accommodating,” “selection,” “the world of the senses,” “the inward world,” etc) so as to represent the
Christian conception of the immanence of God. I want to highlight here the fact that this was achieved through a Heraclitean idiom that harmonized “contrasts,” revealing Pater’s compliance with Patrick, who claimed that the idea of “immanence of God in the world” could be traced back to the Greek philosopher (634). Thus, it was through a Heraclitean point of view that Pater ultimately brought together Green’s idealist conception of “immanentism” and Darwinism in order to depict Christianity as an advanced, synthetic formula in the course of human intellect. The “transforming spirit” of Christianity was presented as having fused Stoicism and Cyrenaicism, scoring a “unique effect of freshness” by establishing a Heraclitean interplay between empiricist and idealist elements.

Accordingly, against “the imperial philosopher’s so heavy burden of unrelieved melancholy” (II, 115), Christianity upheld a Cyrenaic sort of “singular cheerfulness” (I, 97), a “wonderful sort of happiness” (II, 96), which made Marius realize that “[t]he tables […] were turned: the prize of a cheerful temper on a candid survey of life was no longer with the pagan world” (II, 123). In contrast to Stoicism, Christianity was “not alien” to “old mother earth” (II, 119), promoting, like Cyrenaicism, a profound respect and “hope” for the body. In its “humanity, or even its humanism, in its generous hopes for man, its common sense and alacrity of cheerful service, its sympathy with all creatures, its appreciation of beauty and

141 Christianity “issued in a certain debonair grace, and a certain mystic attractiveness, a courtesy, which made Marius doubt whether that famed Greek ‘blitheness,’ or gaiety, or grace, in the handling of life, had been, after all, an unrivalled success” (II, 111).
142 The Christians, Marius noted, “had adopted the practice of burial from some peculiar feeling of hope they entertained concerning the body; a feeling which, in no irreverent curiosity, he would fain have penetrated. The complete and irreparable disappearance of the dead in the funeral fire, so crushing to the spirits, as he for one had found it, had long since induced in him a preference for that other mode of settlement to the last sleep, as having something about it more home-like and hopeful, at least in outward seeming” (II, 100). As Marius acknowledged, “there was here a veritable consecration, hopeful and animating, of the earth’s gifts, of old dead and dark matter itself, now in some way redeemed at last, of all that we can touch or see, in the midst of a jaded world that had lost the true sense of such things, and in strong contrast to the wise emperor’s renunciant and impassive attitude towards them” (II, 137).
daylight” (II, 115), Christianity, this way, fully realized Aurelius’ “mediocre” humanism (II, 112). On the other hand, despite the fact that Christianity was tightly linked to the “outward world,” it was not confined to it like Cyrenaicism, but it maintained a sense of moral “freedom,” of moral “autonomy,” to employ Kant’s term, since morality was not regulated by the outcome of its ends, but it was purely grounded on the Stoic concept of the will and its power to “select,” “exclude” and “juxtapose;” it was grounded on freedom itself. Against Cyrenaic “immaturity” and superficiality, therefore, the Christians upheld a Stoic form of “deeper wisdom” by considering their ideal not “as a means to some problematic end,” but as “an end in itself – a kind of music, all-sufficing to the duly trained ear, even as it died out on the air” (II, 219). Marius actually observed in the Christian absorption of paganism “not so much new matter as a new spirit, moulding, informing, with a new intention, any observances not witnessed for the first time to-day” (II, 137), which was analogous to the Stoic conception of the all-encompassing principle of Logos that permeated and

143 “But what pagan charity was doing tardily, and as if with the painful calculation of old age, the church was doing, almost without thinking about it, with all the liberal enterprise of youth, because it was her very being thus to do. ‘You fail to realize your own good intentions,’ she seems to say, to pagan virtue, pagan kindness. She identified herself with those intentions and advanced them with an unparalleled freedom and largeness” (II, 113).

144 One of the basic premises of Kant’s moral program, and in fact of most idealist ethical schemes, is that in order to be moral, one must possess an autonomous good will. According to the idealists, then, it is through morality that humans can experience their freedom. If morality is not autonomous, then it means that it will be based outside the limits of will, and thus will not be objective. And this brings us to a stark conflict with Mill’s system, which prioritizes ends and not self imposed obligations, and can be rendered in Kant’s terms as “heteronomous,” in the sense that the individual holds no autonomous moral status. In Mill’s system all value is extrinsic, it is always considered as a means only, never as an end. As Kant puts it, “[i]f the will seeks the law that is to determine it anywhere else than in the fitness of its maxims for its own making of universal law – if therefore in going beyond itself it seeks this law in the character of any of its objects – the result is always heteronomy. In that case the will does not give itself the law, but the object does so in virtue of its relation to the will […]. Thus, for example, the reason why I ought to promote the happiness of others is not because the realisation of their happiness is of consequence to myself […] but solely because a maxim which excludes this cannot also be present in one and the same volition as a universal law” (Groundwork 121). Such “heteronomy” Kant considers to take place when man is “under the laws of nature,” but when man is “independent of nature” and is grounded “in reason alone,” then he can be considered “autonomous […] when we think of ourselves as free, we transfer ourselves into the intelligible world as members and recognize the autonomy of the will together with its consequence - morality” (Groundwork 135).
organized everything.\textsuperscript{145} In accordance, finally, to the Stoics, the Christians counterbalanced Cyrenaic “egotism” by sponsoring a system of obligations and “responsibilities” (II, 108) upon which their humanistic ideal was firmly grounded.\textsuperscript{146}

It came then as no surprise that “[a] nature like that of Marius, composed, in about equal parts, of instincts almost physical, and of slowly accumulated intellectual judgments” (II, 75), was deeply attracted to the Christian paradigm, which basically represented for him an ideal where “there was no forced opposition between the soul and the body, the world and the spirit” (II, 121). By bringing together Cyrenaic “joy” and Stoic “humanism,” Cyrenaic “feeling” and Stoic “custom,” Cyrenaic “pleasure” and Stoic “virtue” (II, 158), by mediating between the “soul” and the “body,” the “brain” and the “heart,” the empirical world of the “senses” and the idealistic “kingship of the soul,” Christianity provided Marius with a unique synthetic paradigm which ideally bridged the gap between these polar divisions by fusing the basic premises of what Pater considered as the Heraclitean and the Kantian paradigms.

Indicative of this profound balance implicit in the early church was Marius’ acknowledgement that Christianity appealed “to the eye, to the visual faculty of the mind,” yet, “what was thus visible,” also “constituted a moral or spiritual influence, of a somewhat exigent and controlling character, added anew to life, a new element therein, with which, consistently with his own chosen maxim, he must make terms” (II, 106-107).

\textsuperscript{145} As we have seen, Marius, being influenced by Stoicism, had already acknowledged the presence of this highly idealistic organizing principle in “The Will as Vision” chapter: “[m]ight not this entire material world, the very scene around him, the immemorial rocks, the firm marble, the olive-gardens, the falling water, be themselves but reflections in, or a creation of, that one indefectible mind, wherein he too became conscious, for an hour, a day, for so many years?” (II, 69).

\textsuperscript{146} The view of Christianity as a synthesis between Epicureanism and Stoicism had been also expressed in 1882 by Benn: “[w]ith Christianity, there came a certain inversion of parts. The external universe again became subjected to narrow limitations, and the \textit{flammantia mania mundi} beyond which Epicurus had dared to penetrate, were raised up once more and guarded by new terrors as an impassable barrier to thought. but infinity took refuge within the soul; and, while in this life a sterner self-control than even that of Stoicism was enjoined, perspectives of illimitable delight in another were disclosed” (234).
Actually, Marius’ fascination with the fusing politics of early Christianity, with its synthesis of the “eye” and “duty,” held the key to Pater’s promotion of an ethical program suitable for the “modern spirit.” The undercurrent of the numerous analogies that Pater was establishing throughout the novel between 2nd century AD Rome and Victorian England, served precisely to this end. In this respect, Pater’s historical illustration of the way early Christian “moderation” had overcome the polarization inherited from the pagan world, functioned as a constructive parable implicitly addressed to his contemporaries. Fittingly narrated through a Christian idiom, Pater’s parable sponsored the constitution of a moral hybrid, of a synthetic moral formula that would be able to fully respond to the Victorian ethical anxieties, by selectively combining empiricist and idealist ethics along the paradigm of the early Christian reconciliation. Upholding the example of 2nd century AD Christianity, Pater was envisioning, thus, a correction of the weak utilitarian link between pleasure and morality through the incorporation of a binding form of duty that, in the spirit of Kant’s “Categorical Imperative,” would have to be intrinsically followed at all costs as an end-in-itself rather than extrinsically as in the utilitarian scheme. On the other hand, through the early Christian sanctioning of corporeality, Pater was suggesting a means of rectifying idealist abstractness via the integration of the

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147 It should be noted here that Zerffi in “The Historical Development of Idealism and Realism III” (1878) regarded the reconciliatory force of Christianity in more or less similar terms: “[t]he ancients began philosophy with the axiom, ‘man, know thyself,’ which the scholastics changed into ‘man, have faith;’ whilst modern philosophy begins in a true Christian spirit of universalism and reconciliation to say, ‘man, know thyself and outward nature, and have faith in the eternal laws that rule the real as well as the ideal world.’ The ancients had ‘earth,’ the Middle Ages ‘heaven and hell,’ continually before their eyes, whilst the modern philosophers embrace man, heaven, and earth in their scientific combination and universality” (154).

148 Drawing on Pater’s manuscripts, McGrath argues, that Pater dismissed the concept of the categorical imperative as “arbitrary and groundless” (81). It was precisely because he considered the principal Kantian notion thus, that Pater saw it fitting to fuse it with an empirical notion, as a paradigmatically legitimate source of inductive ethics. By grounding it on the notion of sympathy, it appears that Pater actually transformed it into a principle complying with his overall philosophical standpoint.
paradigmatic bearer of empiricist ethics, the notion of “sympathy,” which was recommended as a concrete compass to social harmony. In the name of early Christianity, in this way, Pater was arguing for a “real ideal” that would bring together the notions of “permanence” and “compassion” (II, 182); the Oxford don was advocating a moral algorithm that would actually position the immediacy and humane character of moral feeling as the appropriate content to idealist rational form. The idealist counterpart of Pater’s suggestion, in fact, involved an absolute sort of justice, which, as Acton maintains, is “the rational part of morality” (64) necessitating “the notions of equality, proportion, non-arbitrariness, and […] impartiality” (65), so as to prevent its content, sympathy, from leading to malevolence through self-interest.

Accordingly, whereas the empirical axis of emotion was in Marius’ Cyrenaic youth linked to a form of “egotism,” under the influence of the Stoic elements of Christianity, it became the means of social identification and improvement; it became the bearer of absolute, of “eternal” human rights: there have been occasions, certainly, when I have felt that if others cared for me as I cared for them, it would be, not so much a consolation, as an equivalent, for

149 Following the traditions of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Burke (Morrow 62) Hume developed the notion of sympathy by defining it in Treatise of Human Nature (1739) as “that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own” (qtd. in Morrow 61). According to Hume, sympathy becomes the empirical means through which the experience and the communication of the feelings of other people is possible. Such experience is delivered, for Hume, through an associationist process: “[b]ecause of our similarity as human beings I easily form the idea of [my fellowman’s] sentiments, and through the strong association of my own consciousness with this idea, the idea of his pleasure becomes eventually an impression of my own pleasure” (Morrow 65); hence Hume’s assertion that “the minds of men are mirrors to one another” (qtd. in Wand 276). The notion of sympathy was also crucial to Mill’s utilitarian ethics, as we shall see.

150 As Acton argues in his discussion of “The Ethical Importance of Sympathy” (1955), “a certain amount of sympathy is required if anyone is even to notice that someone else is in need of help, for, it might be said, it is under the stimulus of fellow-feeling that an objective or contemplative attitude towards others is transformed into a sensitive awareness of ways in which they may be helped or harmed and have a moral claim upon our services” (62). Acton almost echoes Pater when he says: “[o]rdinary needs involve bodies, and helping involves such physical interventions as lifting, holding or speaking. I do not think, therefore, that we have much idea of what it would be for purely rational beings without bodies to help or hinder one another” (63).

151 Mill “cannot make anything of a ‘natural’ right – a right existing independently of questions of utility,” as Skorupski puts (18). It was this shortcoming that Pater actually wished to counterbalance through the incorporation of Stoicism within Cyrenaicism.
what one has lost up of one’s accounts: a touching of that absolute ground amid all the changes of phenomena, such as our philosophers have of late confessed themselves quite unable to discover. In the mere clinging of human creatures to each other, nay! in one’s own solitary self-pity, amid the effects even of what might appear irredeemable loss, I seem to touch the eternal. Something in that pitiful contact, something new and true, fact or apprehension of fact, is educed, which, on a review of all the perplexities of life, satisfies our moral sense, and removes that appearance of unkindness in the soul of things themselves, and assures us that not everything has been in vain (II, 184).

Pater synoptically dramatized this hybrid moral formula through Marius’ death. When Marius and Cornelius got arrested by some Roman soldiers who were persecuting Christians,152 Marius bribed the guards and managed to set his friend free (II, 212).153 Being sick, weary and depressed, Marius was in due course left by the soldiers under the care of certain country people (II, 216). Eventually, he succumbed to his physical exhaustion and passed away. The villagers looking after him administered sacraments and gave him a Christian burial, mistaking him for a martyr.154 What is of interest to us here is that Marius actually sacrificed his life so as to save Cornelius because he considered his friend to be “a depositary” of the “new

152 The widespread “plague” that was terrorizing 2nd century AD Italians, gave birth to an outbreak “of cruel superstition,” where the people considered that “the old gods were wroth at the presence of this new enemy among them” (II, 210). While, one day, Marius, along with Cornelius and some other Christians, were at prayer before the tomb of a martyr, an earthquake took place, and “a long-smouldering suspicion leapt precipitately into well-defined purpose” (II, 211), leading a crowd of locals to violently turn against the Christians, killing some, while holding the rest prisoners, “reserved for the action of the law” (II, 212).
153 Believing that Cornelius was to be the husband of Cecilia, Marius “had taken upon himself all the heavy risk of the position in which Cornelius had then been – the long and wearisome delays of judgment, which were possible; the danger and wretchedness of a long journey in this manner; possibly the danger of death” (II, 213).
154 “The people around his bed were praying fervently – Abi! Abi! Anima Christiana! In the moments of his extreme helplessness their mystic bread had been placed, had descended like a snow-flake from the sky, between his lips. Gentle fingers had applied to hands and feet, to all those passage-ways of the senses, through which the world had come and gone for him, now so dim and obstructed, a medicinable oil. It was the same people who, in the grey, austere evening of that day, took up his remains, and buried them secretly, with their accustomed prayers; but with joy also, holding his death, according to their generous view in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom; and martyrdom, as the church had always said, a kind of sacrament with plenary grace” (II, 224).
hope [that] had sprung up in the world” (II, 209). Cornelius signified the
“hopefulness” of “the coming world” (II, 210), and it was this idea that determinedly
comforted Marius on his deathbed:

[t]here had been a permanent protest established in the world, a plea, a perpetual
after-thought, which humanity henceforth would ever possess in reserve, against
any wholly mechanical and disheartening theory of itself and its conditions. That
was a thought which relieved for him the iron outline of the horizon about him,
touching it as if with soft light from beyond; filling the shadowy, hollow places to
which he was on his way with the warmth of definite affections; confirming also
certain considerations by which he seemed to link himself to the generations to
come in the world he was leaving. Yes! through the survival of their children,
happy parents are able to think calmly, and with a very practical affection, of a
world in which they are to have no direct share; planting with a cheerful good-
humour, the acorns they carry about with them, that their grand-children may be
shaded from the sun by the broad oak-trees of the future. That is nature’s way of
easing death to us. It was thus too, surprised, delighted, that Marius, under the
power of that new hope among men, could think of the generations to come after
him (II, 221-22).

Marius the Epicurean, thus, altruistically sacrificed his life following the
dictates of a self-imposed duty towards social welfare, towards humanity. Such duty
was willingly accepted by Marius as a moral absolute that could not be negotiated,
displaying, according to Kant’s ethics, a profound form of morality in the sense that
Marius acted disinterestedly as a free, and thus moral agent.155 This moral imperative,
evertheless, that led to Marius’ death was not presented by Pater as an abstractly
cold and strict form of rationalism, but, quite the contrary, as a “protest” against a

155 It is interesting to note here that according to Kant a morally good will leads to the community of
the “Kingdom of Ends.” Similarly, in Marius, while on his deathbed, the protagonist feels part of an
ideal community through the villagers who were taking care of him: “in the deep isolation of spirit
which was now creeping upon Marius, the faces of these people, casually visible, took a strange hold
on his affections; the link of general brotherhood, the feeling of human kinship, asserting itself most
strongly when it was about to be severed for ever” (II, 217).
“wholly mechanical and disheartening theory,” since it was firmly grounded on the
“warmth of definite affections;” it was based on a melodic form of organic continuity,
where the senses actively participated in it, as suggested by the “light” of Heraclitean
Logos. For Marius, the “links,” the “associations,” as Hume would have put it,
between humans that constituted the idea of humanity were actually generated
through the “very practical affection” of sympathy in all its Heraclitean overtones.¹⁵⁶
Pater’s ethical humanism as manifested through Marius’ death, thus, involved a
reconciliation of the “heart” and the “mind,” it encompassed the Stoic-idealist
humanitarian rationale that was, nevertheless, fully realized through the Cyrenaic-
empirical employment of the axis of the heart, and the bodily discourse it stood for;
and it was this, according to Pater, that constituted the Christian spirit of Marius’
sacrifice. As Mrs. Humphrey Ward noted in A Writer’s Recollections about Pater’s
preoccupation with Christianity in the later stages of his career, the Oxford don “never
returned to Christianity in the orthodox or intellectual sense. But his heart returned to
it” (qtd. in Vogeler 289).

It becomes then clear that Pater’s illustration of the synthetic force of
Christianity invoked, through a sequence of intricate interrelations, the fusion of
Heraclitean empiricism and Kantian idealism, which was the Oxford don’s ultimate
philosophical goal. My exposition of what these paradigms involved for the critic
systematically brings to light, from a hitherto neglected perspective, his organized
strategy of employing these philosophical models as a means not of suggesting their
differences, but rather of highlighting the possibility of their convergence. By failing
to account for the significance of these paradigms in Pater’s work, his synthetic vision
inevitably appears contradictory, fragmented and cut-off from its intellectual

¹⁵⁶ In Marius’ privileging of “sympathy” we can detect the critic’s affiliation with Arnold. As DeLaura
argues, “the sympathy that Arnold places at the center both of his religiously conceived culture and his
enlightened religion is the crown of Pater’s new-found Christianity in Marius” (271).
background, since, as it must be clear by now, Pater’s sophisticated synthesis was not only structured along these models, which summed in a suggestive way the intellectual climate of the time, but it also comprised the thrust of Pater’s contribution to the anxieties and debates of the time.

The synthesis between empiricism and idealism that Pater promoted in terms of ethics in his novel was, in this sense, not new, but part of the intellectual atmosphere. In fact, it was Mill, who first suggested “the possibility [...] of a reconciliation of Utilitarianism and Intuitionism through the principle of benevolence,” of sympathy, as James Seth argued, referring to Mill’s definition of “altruistic duty” (480). In *Utilitarianism* Mill claimed that in terms of moral feeling “the intuitive ethics” could actually “coincide with the utilitarian” (230), since “[i]n the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility” (218). Mill’s claim, thus, indicated that “the transition from the classical utilitarian position to the idealist view is not as abrupt as might be suggested by their juxtaposition” (Wempe 185). In this sense, Mill can be seen as occupying the middle ground between “Bentham and other classical representatives of utilitarianism, on the one hand, and idealist social theory, on the other” (Wempe 186). Mill’s paradigm, as Ben Wempe argues, was actually followed by Green and the idealists, who, very much like Marius, promoted “a kind of synthesis of Kantian ethics and the theory of moral sentiments as was defended, characteristically, by eighteenth century British

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157 “If there be anything innate in the matter [of moral feeling], I see no reason why the feeling which is innate should not be that of regard to the pleasures and pains of the others. If there is any principle of morals which is intuitively obligatory, I should say it must be that. If so, the intuitive ethics would coincide with the utilitarian, and there would be no further quarrel between them. Even as it is, the intuitive moralists, though they believe that there are other intuitive moral obligations, do already believe this to be one; for they unanimously hold that a large portion of morality turns upon the consideration due to the interests of our fellow creatures. Therefore, if the belief in the transcendental origin of moral obligation gives any additional efficacy to the internal sanction, it appears to me that the utilitarian principle has already the benefit of it” (230).

158 “To do as ‘one’ would be done by, and to love ‘one’s’ neighbour as ‘oneself,’ constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality,” Mill adds (*Utilitarianism* 218).
moralists” (134). Likewise, Leslie Stephens, in *The Science of Ethics*, Bosanquet’s *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, and most of Bradley’s work incorporated the empirical notion of sympathy in their idealist ethics, whereas Sidwick integrated certain idealist premises in his utilitarian program, based on Mill’s reconciliatory remark, as Seth confirmed (480). It was precisely this reconciliatory shift in the intellectual climate that Pater’s moral formula in *Marius* encapsulated, since through the notion of sympathy, Pater was allied to the empiricist tradition, which was represented by the Heraclitean paradigm, as I have brought to light with my exposition in the first chapter, but also “Schopenhauer” and to “idealists like Green and Bosanquet,” as Young very laconically put it (47), without bothering, however, to clarify how this “alliance” was specifically related to Pater’s text. In order to understand Pater’s specific contribution to this reconciliatory climate, a closer look at the way in which the critic brought together this form of “alliance” with religion is necessary.

“Visible Symbolism” and “Unseen Moralities”: Beauty as the Symbol of Morality

Marius’ death puzzled Pater’s critics, who were, on the whole, unconvinced by his approach to Christianity. T. S. Eliot strongly argued that Marius never reached a

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159 Wempe considers, moreover, a point of convergence between Mill and Green, their almost similar ideas of state interference and the intrinsic value of liberty (186).

160 Actually, for Pater both Mill and Kant were regarded as synthetic paradigms, as we have seen in the previous chapters. Mill came up with a measured form of empiricism, which incorporated within its enlightenment project the Romanticism of Coleridge and Goethe after his famous crisis in 1826, and Kant structured his idealistic program by establishing it on empirical grounds.

161 Young claims that in order to grasp the full force of Marius’ privileging of sympathy, one should turn to these two books (92-93).

162 Dahl lists as sole exceptions to this rule David DeLaura, David A. Downess and Richmond Crinkley (14).
full “conversion” (356), and Fleishman regarded Marius’ death as “a surrender to reason” (175). Fletcher considered Marius’ sacrifice as ironic because the moment “Marius the spectator had become Marius the actor” he was led to “self-destruction” (27), whereas Knoepflmacher believed that Marius “parodies, rather than re-enacts, the myth of the self-sacrificing God common to the religions of Christ and Apollo” (221). Actually, Marius’ Christianity was also skeptically received by reviewers when the novel was initially published. William Sharp in 1885 asserted that Pater failed to successfully establish a “transition” between paganism and Christianity, eventually dying an agnostic (Seiler 115). Julia Wedgwood in the *Contemporary Review* (May 1885) admitted that “we are left somewhat puzzled as to the impression meant to be conveyed of Christianity, which the hero does not embrace,” since Marius “stood aloof from the faith that impressed his imagination” (Seiler 143), whereas G. E. Woodberry declared in September 1885 that “[a] sense of failure, or rather of incompleteness, oppresses one when he lays down the volumes,” due to Pater’s inability to justify the way “the appreciation of beauty” was related to “God” (Seiler 150). An unsigned review in the *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* in May 1885 complained that Marius was attracted to Christianity “always through his aesthetic consciousness,” and that he eventually died “an unreclaimed epicurean:” “[w]e are not led to think, however, that Marius would ever have left the old gods, formally, or even have stood the torments of the persecutors” (Seiler 141). Mrs. Humphry Ward

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164 Bloom also argued that “Pater earns the structural irony of the novel’s concluding pages,” since “as a still-pagan Marius dies a sanctified Christian death” (Ringers 192).
165 As Woodberry noted, “[e]ven granting that the success Marius is said to have achieved – one is never quite sure that he did – by that exquisite appreciation of beauty and impassioned contemplation of its ideal forms, was, in fact, his, yet of what worth was it – what did it mean to either God or man?” (Seiler 150).
summed the reviewers’ attitude to the novel in the *Macmillan’s Magazine* (May 1885) by stating that

Mr. Pater, it will be observed, still speaks of morals as it were in terms of aesthetics. His hero advances, or partially advances, from the aesthetic to the ethical standpoint, not because of any ‘conventional first principles’ on which morals may depend for their sanction, but because of the enriched experience, the ‘quickened sympathies’ which are to be gained from the advance. Practically, the same motive power is at work in the second stage as in the first. But as the sphere of its operation enlarges, it tends to coalesce and join hands with other powers, starting from very different bases. The worship of beauty, carried far enough, tends to transform itself into a passion moral in essence and in aim (Seiler 133).

It seems that Pater’s novel was massively interpreted as a retreat to the Epicurean ideals of his controversial “Conclusion,” rather than a form of promotion of religious necessity, since the Oxford don’s insistence on the incorporation of an aesthetic or an empirical axis within his consideration of Christianity appeared to be for the critics highly incompatible. The truth is, nevertheless, that this was clearly not Pater’s intention, since in March 1885, he replied to Sharp’s remarks on the “ethical drift” of *Marius* by claiming: “I *did* mean it to be more anti-Epicurean than it has struck as being. In one way however I am glad that you have mistaken me a little on this point, as I had some fears that I might seem to be pleading for a formal thesis, or ‘parti pris’” (qtd. in Seiler 114). This inconsistency between Pater’s intention and the way the novel was ultimately received, actually holds, as it is my intention to argue, the key to the full understanding of *Marius* and its synthetic vision. As Vogeler puts it, “[t]o reconcile Pater’s statements about his purpose in writing the novel with the story it tells is […] the obvious task of the critic” (287). I would like here to propose a reading that, I consider, significantly clarifies and justifies this tension between the Epicureanism that the critics have detected in the novel and the author’s intended
“anti-Epicureanism.” If we assume that Pater somehow linked the aesthetic to the moral, then, both the author’s intention and the reaction of his critics would be fully accounted for; they would be “reconciled.” It is my contention to argue here that Pater utilized the Kantian paradigm of beauty as a symbol of the moral in *Marius* so as to come up with an “anti-Epicurean” link between aesthetics and ethics that was, nevertheless, based, according to Kant’s model, on solid aesthetic grounds, which eventually led his critics to misjudge Pater’s intention as “Epicurean.” As I have shown in the second chapter, the Oxford don was deeply indebted to Kantian theory in terms of aesthetics. It appears that Pater in his novel utilized the German philosopher’s moral vision implicit in his theory of beauty, as well.

In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant established a sequence of analogies between beauty and morality, which comprised the most crucial and complex parameter of his overall system. As we have seen in the second chapter, theoretical knowledge for Kant involved the production of determinate concepts that yield knowledge. According to Kant, judgments concerning beauty and morality, nevertheless, cannot be based on determinate concepts since they do not generate knowledge, but they rather contain indeterminate concepts. It is actually the presence of these indeterminate concepts that renders judgments of taste “valid for everyone, because (though each person’s judgment is singular and directly accompanies his intuition) the basis that determines the judgment lies, perhaps, in the concept of what may be considered the supersensible substrate of humanity” (*Judgment* 213). In this sense, there appears to be for Kant a structural similarity between judgments of practical reason and judgments of taste, since when we make a subjective statement about the beautiful we also request the “assent” of the others as if it was a moral duty: “[n]ow I maintain that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good; and only because we
refer the beautiful to the morally good (we all do so naturally and require all others to
do so, as a duty) does our liking for it include a claim to everyone else’s assent”
(Judgment 228).166

This structural similarity between beauty and morality is, furthermore,
highlighted through the fact that the free play that imagination aesthetically celebrates
in its liberation from the determinate concepts of cognition, highly resembles the free-
willed action of moral law, “our supersensible ability to legislate for our faculties and
make real moral choices, which are decisions to follow a law we set for ourselves”
(Crawford 140), since morality for Kant is “the term we use for reason’s practical
legislation governed by the concept of freedom” (Judgment 10).167 To be more
specific, according to Kant, the pleasure that the subject enjoys when triggered by
natural or artistic form is generated through the fact that the mind self reflexively
contemplates on its own ability to construct organized wholes that exceed the limits of
sense perception, where the world appears to be compatible with our mind, the forms
of nature appear to be purposive for our understanding.168 Thus, in art it becomes
possible “to think of nature as being such that the lawfulness in its form will

166 The transition from the sensible to the supersensible, Kant argues, maintains the force of an analogy.
“All intuitions supplied for a priori concepts are either schemata or symbols,” imagination then
schematizes directly and reason symbolizes indirectly, since it “applies the concept to the object of a
sensible intuition, and then it applies the mere rule by which it reflects on that intuition to an entirely
different object, of which the former object is only the symbol” (227). This way, an object of intuition
may generate the reflection of an “entirely different concept, to which perhaps no intuition can ever
directly correspond” (228). Since no intuition matches up to it, this new concept is an idea and Kant
manages to establish the indirect presence of ideas, of the supersensible in the realm of intuition, which
leads him to claim that “the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good” (228). Ideas, since they cannot
be known empirically are supersensible, just like moral ideas and aesthetic judgments are analogous to
moral judgments since both of them rely on a supersensible substrate. Furthermore, “a beautiful object
is a sensible particular which can be taken to symbolize something like morality to which no sensible
intuition is adequate just because there are these analogies between judgments upon the two objects”
(Guyer 16). Beauty then is regarded as an indirect representation of morality, as a sensible counterpart
that indeterminately invokes the supersensible.

167 “[T]aste enables us, as it were, to make the transition from sensible charm to a habitual moral
interest without making too violent a leap; for taste presents the imagination as admitting, even in its
freedom, of determination that is purposive for the understanding, and it teaches us to like even objects
of sense freely, even apart from sensible charm” (Judgment 230).

168 As Kant argues, in order to be pleased by nature or artistic beauty, both of them must possess a
harmonious purposiveness, an order, an economy of reason permeating them, which reflects our own
faculty of reason, our inner sense of morality.
harmonize with at least the possibility of [achieving] the purposes that we are to achieve in nature according to laws of freedom” (Judgment 15). In this sense, free imagination becomes for Kant the symbol of free will and the concept that beauty symbolizes is that of our capacity for morality itself, the capacity for a moral rather than sensuous determination of the will. The pleasure we take in the beautiful, because it involves elevation above the merely sensuous, represents the elevation above determination by the pleasures of the senses that is a condition of the possibility of morality (Guyer 18).

Kant’s notion of the artistic genius, of the authentic originator of artistic rules, completes this intricate link between beauty and morality by highlighting the role of sense perception in moral contemplation. The genius has the ability to express what Kant calls “aesthetic ideas,” “a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it” (Judgment 182). The aesthetic idea, for Kant, eventually produces “the sensible counterpart” of a rational idea, its palpable symbol, “since it is a sensible representation of that for which no concept is or can be adequate, whereas a rational idea is a concept of that for which no sensible representation is or can be adequate” (Crawford 120). Aesthetic ideas, in other words, are able to symbolically indicate what cannot be defined or cognized by understanding and to ultimately communicate these amorphous feelings through reflective judgments.

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169 As Dusing puts it, “[t]hus, the aesthetic judgment enables the transition from what is theoretically indeterminate to what is determined practically as freedom, viz. the intelligible substrate in us. It represents this intelligible substrate namely as spontaneous mental faculty, which is determinable and, to be sure, determinable as freedom by means of practical reason” (90).
170 The aesthetic ideas that the genius produces and that science is unable to define through its logic, but yet is universally communicable, Kant calls it Geist.
171 Feelings are communicable because there is a subjective accordance of the faculties without the mediation of a determinate concept, and this accordance is valid for everyone, it forms a common
Thus, according to Kant, the aesthetic leads to the contemplation of the supersensible, since the indeterminate concept of reflective judgments is able to connect with the indeterminate, the supersensible substratum of nature, ultimately bridging practical and theoretical reason. What is important for our consideration here is that Kant’s model does not only illustrate beauty as the symbol of morality, but it also presents beauty as being implicitly conductive to morality. As Haskins argues, Kant’s project in the third *Critique* promotes beauty as a social benefactor, it advances “the culture of the mental powers in the interests of social communication” through the use of reflective judgments (44), it sponsors “social cohesion” through the exercise of taste, since it provides us with “an increasingly articulated institutional setting, historically speaking, within which we can share what would otherwise be private aspects of our inner lives with others” (46).\(^{172}\) It was precisely this aspect of Kantian theory that the Romantics drew on so as to associate “truth” with “beauty,” where aesthetic perception was employed as a moral instrument in the writings, among others, of Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth and De Quincey (Abrams *Mirror* 332).

To return to Pater, one of the “last Romantics,” as Hough calls him, what really disturbed and confused the Oxford don’s critics was the fact that Marius approached Christian morality “as it were in terms of aesthetics.” Undeniably, Cornelius’ “kind of outwardly embodied conscience” (I, 233), fundamentally exerted a “charm, rather physical” (I, 234) on Marius. Moreover, Marius’ first contact with the early Christian church appealed predominantly to “the unchangeable law of his temperament, to the eye, to the visual faculty of mind” (II, 106), making the character

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\(^{172}\) This is how Haskins accounts for the fact that Kant regards the aesthetic value of a work of art as “inherent,” as being “valuable for its own sake and for the sake of some ends beyond itself” (51).
note, in the spirit of an art critic, that he detected there “a new and singular expressiveness, an air of grave thought, of an intellectual purpose, in itself, aesthetically, very seductive” (II 96). Similarly, in Cecilia’s house Marius found the “intelligent seriousness about life” being “translated” “as if in designed congruity with his favourite precepts of the power of physical vision, into an actual picture” (II, 96-97). It was ultimately this aesthetic guise of Christianity that triggered Marius’ interest in it, in the manner that Pater himself grounded his preference for Romeo-Catholic ritual on its “aesthetic charm” and “outward comeliness” (II 123).173

This fascination that both Marius and Pater felt for the aesthetic guise of Christianity was, nevertheless, neither cut off from its moral scheme, nor incongruous with it. As Shuter confirms, Pater argued in a manuscript entitled “Aesthetic Life” that

it might be possible to find in the aesthetic perspective a ‘truer guide’ to duties towards others than might be thought. The last pages of the manuscript consist of little more than a rough sketch, but they make it clear that Pater was prepared to propose that art itself supplies the ‘very figures’ of the two aims of morals, temperance and charity or unselfishness, and that though the aesthetic life might seem the ‘rival or the makeshift of Christianity,’ it remains in fact in ‘intimate contact’ with a religion that has ‘boldly owned’ the ‘materialism’ there is in human nature itself (Rereading 46).

Likewise, throughout Marius, Pater systematically related beauty to morality. This interconnection became nowhere more obvious than in the third chapter of the novel, where, as Jerome Bump argues, we have “[t]he dominance of Pater’s seminal, visual models of language” (189). Leaving his hometown for the first time in his life,  

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173 DeLaura is right in asserting that Pater’s favorable presentation of the Catholic church is probably indebted to Arnold’s “Irish Catholicism and British Liberalism,” published in the Fortnightly in July 1878, where Arnold juxtaposes the aesthetic and imaginative charm of Catholicism over Protestantism (283).
young Marius went to visit Aesculapius’ temple. There, through a dream he had, the character “caught the lesson” of a “precept” that he would follow throughout his life, which involved “a diligent promotion of the capacity of the eye, inasmuch as in the eye would lie for him the determining influence of life: he was of the number of those who, in the words of a poet who came long after, must be ‘made perfect by the love of visible beauty’” (I, 31-32).174 Situating Marius’ epiphany in the temple of Aesculapius, whose “chief source” of “knowledge of healing had been observation of the remedies resorted to by animals labouring under disease or pain” (I, 39), Pater underscored that Marius’ “new formula” of observation (I, 33) was “an influence morally salutary” (I, 41).175 In accordance with Kant, thus, Pater promoted the role of aesthetic and sense perception in moral reception. As the narrator emphatically stressed before the character’s death, Marius always set “revelation, vision, the discovery of a vision, the seeing of a perfect humanity, in a perfect world” above the “having, or even the doing, of anything” (II, 218). It was this disinterestedness, this purity of his motives – Marius’ abstention from the “having” or the “doing” – that established, as the narrator maintained, a moral convergence between the “saint” and the “Cyrenaic lover of beauty” (II, 20), between moral vision and aesthetic vision.176

174 The narrator defines this theory as “[η] ἀπορροή του κόλλους,” and claims that this “discourse was conceived from the point of view of a theory that Marius found afterwards in Plato’s Phaedrus, which supposes men’s spirits susceptible to certain influences, diffused, after the manner of streams or currents, by fair things or persons visibly present […] into the air around them, acting, in the case of some peculiar natures, like potent material essences, and conforming the seer to themselves as with some cunning physical necessity” (I, 32). Such theory is later on also linked to Plato’s Charmides (I, 34).

175 All this served, as he understood afterwards in retrospect, at once to strengthen and to purify a certain vein of character in him. Developing the ideal, pre-existent there, of a religious beauty, associated for the future with the exquisite splendour of the temple of Aesculapius, as it dawned upon him on that morning of his first visit – it developed that ideal in connexion with a vivid sense of the value of mental and bodily sanity. And this recognition of the beauty, even for the aesthetic sense, of mere bodily health, now acquired, operated afterwards as an influence morally salutary, countering the less desirable or hazardous tendencies of some phases of thought, through which he was to pass” (I, 41).

176 The narrator acknowledged that “[t]he saint, and the Cyrenaic lover of beauty, it may be thought, would at least understand each other better than either would understand the mere man of the world. Carry their respective positions a point further, shift the terms a little, and they might actually touch”
In this sense, the disinterested feeling of aesthetic experience was, very much like Kant’s model, turned into the bearer of disinterestedness in terms of human action. Marius’ preoccupation with the visual and the beautiful was thus tightly linked to a moral “purpose”: “throughout the elaborate and lifelong education of his receptive powers, he had ever kept in view the purpose of preparing himself towards possible further revelation some day – towards some ampler vision” (II, 219-220). This was, actually, Pater’s indirect reply to those who were skeptically wondering whether Marius’ “new vision” might, “like the malignant beauty of pagan Medusa, be exclusive of any admiring gaze upon anything but itself” (II, 108). It becomes then clear that Marius’ conception of “religious beauty” (I, 41) was no sterile endorsement of an aestheticist cult of beauty, the turning of beauty into religion, as Mrs. Ward complained, but rather the employment of “beauty” as a form of moral “influence,” since Marius was regarding the cultivation of his “receptive powers” as a means of achieving “perfection,” the “vision” of a “new city” (I, 32), something “higher” than himself (II, 220).\footnote{177} It was, in other words, Marius’ conception of beauty as an earthly sign of the moral that resulted in the training of his aesthetic perception. By presenting beauty as having a moral reference, Pater was eventually complying with the Kantian in origin Romantic tradition of beauty as the symbol of the moral. As the narrator emphasized in a highly Kantian idiom, the experience Marius had in the Aesculapius temple “always returned to him” as a “weighty sanction […] in almost visible symbolism (an outward imagery identifying itself with unseen moralities)” (I, (II, 20). It should be noted here that by emphasizing Marius’ preoccupation with the “seeing” rather than the “having” or the “doing,” Pater was indirectly employing a Kantian argumentation so as to substantiate Marius’ morality, since for Kant a moral being was defined in terms of its liberation from interests and desires as an end in itself.\footnote{177} Conversely, it was also repulsion for ugliness that triggered Marius’ moral visions. It was the ugliness and cruelty of the arena scene that led Marius to the realization of Stoic shortcomings. Moreover, when, as a child, Marius came across two snakes breeding, which was “like a peep into the lower side of the real world” (I, 23), he reached the conclusion that what was “repugnant to the eye disturbed his peace,” unlike “beautiful aspects and imageries” (I, 24). It was actually the beauty of the natural scenery that constantly triggered the realization of a moral flaw in Marius.
34). Even the “pious, systematic commemoration of the dead” that Marius witnessed in the Christian “refusal to forget or finally desert the helpless, had ever counted with Marius as the central exponent or symbol of all natural duty” (II, 101).

This link established between “visible symbolism” and “unseen moralities” was, nevertheless, also a Heraclitean in essence conception. We have seen in the first chapter that the Greek philosopher was amongst the first who employed sense perception as a means of getting in contact with the unseen, with Logos, since “the world’s real constitution […] has a tendency to conceal itself” (fr. 123). By arguing that the ascetic training of sense perception could pave the way towards the “real constitution of things,” and, thus, awaken the individual to cosmic Logos, Heraclitus was ultimately presenting the visual as bearing a symbolic relation to the moral, as well.\(^\text{178}\) This compatibility that Pater achieved between the Heraclitean and the Kantian paradigms in the name of the moral role that the senses signified for the early Christians was actually indicative of Pater’s illustration of the fusion that Christianity scored between Cyrenaicism and Stoicism, and the historical continuity it maintained with prior ethical forms,\(^\text{179}\) but it also signaled, as we shall see, an organized attempt to highlight the importance that Pater assigned to the symbolic function of the visual, which ultimately synthesized the two philosophical paradigms.

In regarding Marius’ transition from an aesthetic to a moral standpoint, thus, the symbol occupies a key position. This was actually why, as I see it, Pater strategically employed highly sophisticated meta-narrative techniques in order to welcome a symbolic reading of the Christian part of his novel. Very early in the narrative, Pater presented Marius and Flavian, “half-buried in a heap of dry corn, in

\(^{178}\) The role of Heraclitus in Pater’s emphasis on symbolism will be fully addressed in the next section.

\(^{179}\) As Patrick put it in 1888, “[i]n Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, philosophy underwent a change more radical than any other in its history, a change that was ultimately to revolutionize all thought, and through its influence on Christian theology, to enter as a large determining element into all western civilization. Heraclitus is the representative of what philosophy was before that change” (635).
an old granary,” “lounging together over a book” (I, 55), Apuleius’ *Golden Book*. While reading, the two friends looked around, realizing: “[h]ow like a picture! and it was precisely the scene described in what they were reading” (I, 55). Gerald Monsman has correctly pointed out that in this scene “the text is clearly depicting the process of its own making and of its being read” (*Pater* 52). By presenting his protagonist in the place of a reader, Pater was self-reflexively dramatizing the reading of his own text through a *mise en abime* effect, where the act of reading of Pater’s novel appears to be mirrored in Marius’ reading of Apuleius’ book. This scene eventually generates a meta-narrative that suggests, as Bump puts it, “how the larger narrative should be read” (191).\(^{180}\) In my view, however, Pater’s long reiteration of Apuleius’ story of “Cupid and Psyche,” which occupies the whole of the fifth chapter, specifically functions as a “manual” for the deciphering of Marius’ “conversion” to Christianity.

Apuleius’ “Cupid and Psyche”\(^{181}\) was a variation of an older Greek myth about a young girl named Psyche, whose exceptional beauty offended Venus. The goddess, thus, sent her mischievous son, Cupid, to ridicule Psyche by making her fall in love with the ugliest of men. Cupid, nevertheless, accidentally pricked himself with his arrows and fell in love with the young girl, whom he married on condition that she would never see his face. When curious Psyche, urged by her jealous sisters, had a look at his face, she immediately fell in love with Cupid, but he angrily fled. After many years and ordeals, Psyche was finally granted immortality by the gods and being re-united with Cupid, she gave birth to their daughter, “Voluptas” (I, 91).

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\(^{180}\)Bump adds three more instances where Pater dramatizes the reading of his own text: “the Halcyon legend, the story of Cupid and Psyche, and the recitation of the Gospel” (191).

\(^{181}\)The story of Cupid and Psyche came from Apuleius’ *Metamorphoseon Libri XI*. It is interesting to note here that this myth was a common theme in Pre-Raphaelite painting and in the literature of the last part of the 19th century. The story was retold, among others, by William Morris in *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-1870), by Robert Bridges in *Eros and Psyche: A Narrative Poem in Twelve Measures* (1885) and by Josephine Preston Peabody in *Old Greek Folk Stories Told Anew* (1897).
story, which the narrator himself termed as an “allegory” (I, 61), eventually resulted for Marius into the realization of “the ideal of a perfect imaginative love, centered upon a type of beauty entirely flawless and clean” (I, 92). Being situated long before Marius’ encounter with Cornelius, Apuleius’ story, as an allegory of the ideal of Christian love (Bump 192-193, Fletcher 35), foreshadowed the protagonist’s later attraction to Christianity. Likewise, as a meta-narrative on the act of reading, the story expressly addressed the interpretation of the Christian part of the novel, rather than suggesting how the novel should be read as a whole. Just like Apuleius’ Psyche, who employed the face of her child so as to “apprehend” the face of his father that she had never seen before, just like Marius, who realized, after having read Psyche’s adventures, that the “body” could be interpreted as a “visible” indication, as a sign of the soul or spirit in things” (I, 93), the reader was indirectly urged by the author to regard the material and aesthetic semblance of Christianity in the novel as a symbol of a “celestial” order, as a means of approaching what cannot be grasped by the eyes. This way, Marius’ response to Apuleius’ story set a paradigm of reading, encouraging the Heraclitean pursuit of “the hiddeness of perfect things” (I, 93) through the symbolic consideration of Christian beauty.

Pater also implicitly promoted a symbolic reading of Christianity through the scene where Marius first encountered Cornelius. On his way to his first visit to Rome, Marius met Cornelius, and the two young men continued on their journey together.

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182 The tale of Cupid and Psyche was “full of brilliant, life-like situations, speciosa locis, and abounding in lovely visible imagery […] yet full also of a gentle idealism, so that you might take it, if you choose, for an allegory” (I, 61).

183 As the narrator notes, after having read the story of Cupid and Psyche, Marius was fascinated by “[t]he hiddeness of perfect things: a shrinking mysticism, a sentiment of diffidence like that expressed in Psyche’s so tremulous hope concerning the child to be born of the husband she had never yet seen – in the face of this little child, at the least, shall I apprehend thine” – in hoc saltem parvulo cognoscam faciem tuam” (I, 93).

184 After having read the story, “[t]he human body in its beauty, as the highest potency of all the beauty of material objects, seemed to [Marius] just then to be matter no longer, but, having taken celestial fire, to assert itself as indeed the true, though visible, soul or spirit in things” (I, 93).
When the road took them through an arid land, the “outlines” of the landscape seemed to Marius to be “associated, by some perhaps fantastic affinity, with a peculiar trait of severity, beyond his guesses as to the secret of it, which mingled with the blitheness of his new companion” (I, 169). Marius soon realized that “what was earnest, or even austere, in the landscape they had traversed together, seemed to have been waiting for the passage of this figure to interpret or inform it” (I, 169). Cornelius represented for Marius a force that held the key to the “secrets” of the landscape. Scrupulously employing, nevertheless, a form of diction that was self-reflexively denoting the act of reading itself, Pater was also presenting Cornelius, the symbolic bearer of Christianity in the novel, as a “figure” that could “interpret” the “passage,” and ultimately “inform” the reader. In this sense, the author was indirectly dramatizing, as a paradigm for his reader, the way a symbolic reading could ultimately unlock the secret of his focus on the aesthetic aspect of Christian background.

Pater’s emphasis on the symbol, nevertheless, did not only function as a means of invoking a moral order that was symbolically suggested by Christian beauty, but it also contributed, as it is my contention to show next, to adding a metaphysical aspect on Pater’s suggestion for a “religious phase possible for the modern spirit,” ultimately bringing to the surface the well coded metaphysical content of his synthetic vision.

“Religious Beauty”: The Metaphysics of Aesthetics

Pater’s focus on the symbolic culminatingly prevailed in the last parts of the novel, replacing the author’s earlier allegorical preoccupation with Cyrenaicism and Stoicism. This transition from an allegorical to a symbolic mode of representation was actually symptomatic, as it is my objective to argue here, of Pater’s attempt to
incorporate a metaphysical dimension in his religious suggestion for the “modern spirit” that would eventually complete his proposition and set it apart from the agnostic “religions of Humanity.” By accommodating both modes of representation into his novel, Pater was dramatizing their difference as a means of highlighting his suggestion, implicitly aligning himself with the long 19th century tradition of the privileging of the symbol, as we shall see.

Before turning, nevertheless, to the 19th century tradition of symbolism, it is interesting to note here that it was Heraclitus first who utilized in his philosophical system the force of the symbol in a manner actually very similar to the 19th century exponents of the symbolic, bringing to light yet another point of convergence between the Greek philosopher and Romantic poetics that Pater implicitly promoted in the name of early Christianity. For Heraclitus, the world of the seen bore a symbolic relation to the realm of the unseen, a conviction that rendered his thought “obscure,” as Patrick claimed, since it “could not be enunciated in exact terms, but could only be suggested by such words as fire, time, etc., and so he labored on with one new symbol after another, vainly trying to express himself” (566). The natural elements of fire, air, water, etc., that the Greek philosopher employed as symbols ultimately designated a unity with the unseen workings of Logos. This was precisely why Lassalle, following Hegel, interpreted Heraclitus’ “Absolute […] as the unity of being and non-being” (Patrick 563). It was actually in this unity that Heraclitus favoured that we can trace some of the fundamental principles of the Stoics like “their abrogation of the antithesis of mind and matter and their return to pre-Socratic monism,” and “their conception of Nature as larger than man and his complete subjection to it, and finally their doctrine of the future conflagration of the world, later an influential factor of Christianity” (Patrick 633). By promoting the symbol as suggesting a unity between
the seen and the mystic, Heraclitus ultimately entered “the sphere of religion” (Patrick 568). Such conformity with religious thought was even manifested through his style, which, like “[t]he lord whose oracle is in Delphi neither indicates clearly nor conceals but gives a sign” (fr. 93). Accordingly, Pfleiderer considered Heraclitus’ thought as originating from the Greek Mysteries and his system “religious and metaphysical” (qtd. in Patrick 600). For Pfleiderer, Patrick asserts,

[t]he Heraclitic fire is real fire as opposed to the logical symbol of Lassalle, but not the strictly sensible fire that burns and crackles, as Teichmüller supposes. It is rather a less definite conception, which is taken now as fire, now as warmth, warm air or vapour. It is the concrete form or intuitional correlate of the metaphysical notion of life (604).185

In the late 18th century we encounter a similar treatment of the symbol. Schelling and Goethe methodically elaborated on a distinction between allegory and the symbol (Wellek, Romantic 17); following the paradigm of the two German thinkers,186 the majority of the Romantics utilized this distinction so as to privilege the symbol at the expense of allegory (Wellek Romantic 2).187 As a reaction against Enlightenment rationalism,188 this Romantic preference was grounded on the rich suggestiveness implicit in the symbol and its power of signifying a union between the particular and the general, unlike allegory, where the particular simply invoked the general; “[a]llegory appears as dryly rational and dogmatic in its reference to a meaning that it does not itself constitute, whereas the symbol is founded upon an

185 Summing Pfleiderer, Patrick states, [t]he senses, though they do not give us the whole truth, yet furnish the sufficient data that are to be interpreted by the light of reason. The errors of the masses do not arise from trusting the senses, for the latter give not a false, but a partial account. Their error lies in missing the spiritual band which unites the manifold of sense into the higher unity, an error distinctive of the popular polytheism as against the religion of the Mysteries (601).

186 Wellek claims that Kant, Goethe and Schiller were chiefly responsible for this privileging of the symbol (2), whereas De Man traces the origin of the idea of “a unity between incarnate and ideal beauty” in Goethe, Schiller, and Schelling (189).

187 As De Man puts it, “in the latter half of the eighteenth century […] the word ‘symbol’ tends to supplant other denominations for figural language, including that of ‘allegory’” (188).

188 “[A]llegory appears as the product of the age of Enlightenment and is vulnerable to the reproach of excessive rationality,” as De Man asserts (189).
intimate unity between the image that rises up before the senses and the supersensory totality that the image suggests,” as De Man put it 1969 in “The Rhetoric of Temporality” (189). It was basically this “appeal to the infinity of a totality,” this power of designating a “unity” with the “supersensory,” with the “transcendental” (192), with the mystic that constituted “the main attraction of the symbol as opposed to allegory” for the Romantics (De Man 188). This metaphysical undercurrent implicit in the notion of the symbol was also highlighted by Kant in the *Critique of Judgment*, where the German philosopher not only employed the symbol as a means of linking beauty to morality, but also as a means of “cognizing” God:

> if a mere way of presenting [something] may ever be called cognition (which I think is permissible if this cognition is a principle not for determining the object theoretically, as to what it is in itself, but for determining it practically, as to what the idea of the object ought to become for us and for our purposive employment of it), then all our cognition of God is merely symbolic. Whoever regards it as schematic – while including in it the properties of understanding, will, etc., whose objective reality is proved only in worldly beings – falls into anthropomorphism, just as anyone who omits everything intuitive falls into deism, which allows us to cognize nothing whatsoever, not even from a practical point of view (228).

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189 “This appeal to the infinity of a totality constitutes the main attraction of the symbol as opposed to allegory, a sign that refers to one specific meaning and thus exhausts its suggestive potentials once it has been deciphered” (De Man 188). Accordingly, Schlegel drew from Schelling the phrase “beauty is the infinite represented finitely” and modified it into “beauty is the symbolic representation of the infinite” (qtd. in Wellek, *Romantic* 43).

190 “[A]ll intuitions supplied for a priori concepts are either schemata or symbols. Schemata contain direct, symbols indirect, exhibition of the concept. Schematic exhibition is demonstrative. Symbolic exhibition uses an analogy (for which we use empirical intuitions as well), in which judgment performs a double function: it applies the concept to the object of a sensible intuition; and then it applies the mere rule by which it reflects on that intuition to an entirely different object, of which the former object is only a symbol” (*Judgment* 227).

191 Siebers argues that revolutionized the tradition of the symbol as a “symbol of reflection,” “sometimes dispensing with the physicality of the symbol and extending its definition to include language and metaphors. Here perception translates into reflection, rather than he opposite, for each object becomes an end in itself, a symbol of autonomy, which nevertheless makes demands on the subject,” which involves the fact that the “otherness” of the object is acknowledged (46).
Likewise, Coleridge, Goethe’s contemporary, and the main introducer of German thought in Britain, in *The Statesman’s Manual* (1816) argued for a symbolic reading of the Bible, since the symbol\(^{192}\)
is characterized by a transluence of the special [i.e., of the species] in the individual, or of the general [i.e., of the genus] in the special, or of the universal in the general; above all by the transluence of the eternal through and in the temporal. It always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that unity of which it is the representative. [Allegories] are but empty echoes which the fancy arbitrarily associates with apparitions of matter (qtd. in Abrams, *Glossary* 207-208).\(^{193}\)

This long tradition of privileging the symbol due to its metaphysical compatibility was continued in the later 19\(^{th}\) century through Ruskin and his theory of “Typical Beauty,” “the beauty of a graduated typological symbolism,” as Chai calls it (2),\(^{194}\) where Ruskin’s “type” explicitly recalled the “transluence” that “Coleridge had ascribed to the symbol, or the ‘dome of many-coloured glass’ that Shelley equates in *Adonais* with life, which ‘stains the white radiance of Eternity’” (Chai 3).\(^{195}\) Even

\(^{192}\) “Symbol is the device by which idea is presented. Symbol in Coleridge is contrasted with allegory, in the same way that imagination is contrasted with fancy, the organic with the mechanical. […] in contrast, allegory is a translation of abstract notions into picture language” (Wellek 174).

\(^{193}\) De Man argues that Coleridge had carried “the spiritualization of the symbol […] so far that the moment of material existence by which it was originally defined has now become altogether unimportant” (192).

\(^{194}\) In the second volume of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin differentiates between “Typical Beauty” and “Vital Beauty.” As Chai puts it, “Typical Beauty” differs from “Vital Beauty,” since, “[w]hereas Typical Beauty represents the external aspect, so to speak, of a plant or animal, its Vital Beauty is its internal aspect” (7). According to Ruskin, “the fact of our deriving pleasure from whatever is a type orsemblance of divine attributes […] is the most glorious of all that can be demonstrated of human nature […] it seems a promise of a communion ultimately deep, close, and conscious, with the Being whose darkened manifestations we here feebly and unthinkingly delight in […]. May we not see in these visionary pleasures, lightly as we too often regard them, cause for thankfulness, ground for hope, anchor for faith, more than in all the other manifold gifts and guidances, wherewith God crowns the years, and hedges the paths of men?” (qtd. in Chai 2-3).

\(^{195}\) In *The Stones of Venice* Ruskin applies a symbolic reading to religious architecture, where the Basilica of St. Mark in Venice is interpreted as the “concrete expression not only of a faith but of a relation between the external, visible world and various spiritual presences that exemplifies Ruskin’s own idea of the symbolism of human life. Such symbolism transfigures our whole existence by endowing it with something of a sacred aura, a sense of the sacramental nature of both natural objects and the transactions that make up this existence. In so doing, it reveals the implicit aestheticism of our lives, the possibility of perceiving within them an element of beauty through a theophanic
though in the Renaissance Pater was radically opposed to Ruskin, as we have seen earlier, in *Marius* he employed the symbol in a way that marked an alignment with him, decisively contributing, thus, to the prolongation of this long Romantic tradition.

Pater’s “Romanticism” becomes evident through the way he utilized in *Marius* this 19th century distinction in order to dramatize the differences between pagan philosophical systems and Christianity. Exhibiting a profound consistency between matter and form, Pater depicted the rationalizing effect that both Cyrenaicism and Stoicism exerted on religious belief through an equally rationalizing and “abstract”\(^{196}\) representational mode, allegory, where the Victorian “religion of humanity” and the late 19th century idealist rationalism were, as we have seen, implicitly invoked. It was through this “allegorizing gaze” that Marius’ distancing from Cyrenaicism and Stoicism was formally expressed, which, as Benjamin puts it, was the paradigmatic “gaze of the alienated man,” of the “flaneur,” who stood at the margin observing and seeking “an asylum in the crowd” (170). Eventually, Marius found his “asylum” in Christian companionship, which provided him, moreover, with a sanctuary that could salvage what had eclipsed from rationalist representation. In accordance with the consistency established between matter and form in his allegorical illustration of rationalism, Pater depicted the synthetic vision of early Christianity, its ability to reconcile, to “unite,” the senses with the supersensible, through a symbolic mode of representation, which highlighted the fact that Christian beauty suggested a metaphysical order.

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As Coleridge puts it, “an allegory is but a translation of abstract notions into a picture-language, which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses” (qtd. in Abrams, *Glossary* 207).
Pater’s employment of the symbol in his illustration of Christianity served, nevertheless, to express yet another form of consistency as well. Just like Kant, who upheld the symbolic cognition of God as a means of surmounting both “anthropomorphism” and “deism,” Pater’s symbolic portrayal of the “mystic attractiveness” of Christianity (II, 111) functioned as a way of indicating, through an “analogy,” the presence of the supernatural without having to resort to either transcendental or rationalizing means, or even a “formal thesis.” This was actually the reason why Pater illustrated Christianity in terms of the symbol rather than a transcendental kind of metaphysics or a rational form of ethics, like Kant’s second Critique. As such, Pater maintained his emphasis “on symbolism and ritual rather than on abstract morality or metaphysics” (Fletcher 24), which was indicative of his effort, through the use of the symbol, not to “prejudge” or to “state,” like the rest of the authors of the “early Christian novel,” his judgment, but to “embody” it (Dahl 20). The Oxford don was, thus, able, without contradicting the premises of his earlier work, to create a mystic atmosphere, to suggest a metaphysical presence by solely maintaining his focus on the aesthetic. It was in this sense that Pater presented

197 The symbolic was also employed by Heraclitus as a means of overcoming the limitations of anthropomorphism. As Patrick puts it, “Heraclitus did what some modern philosophers have been blamed for doing – he put his new thoughts into old religious formulas. But it was more justifiable in the case of the Ephesian. He did so, not to present a semblance of orthodoxy, but to try to make his idea intelligible. In fact, Heraclitus, no less than Xenophanes, was a fearless, outspoken enemy of the popular anthropomorphisms. ‘This world, the same for all,’ he says, ‘neither any of the gods nor any man has made, but it always was, and is, and shall be, an ever living fire, kindled and quenched according to law’ (fr. 20)” (619).
198 Kant argues that “symbolic hypotheses” “express concepts not by means of a direct intuition but only according to an analogy with one, i.e., a transfer of our reflection on an object of intuition to an entirely different concept, to which perhaps no intuition can ever directly correspond” (Judgment 228).
199 As Goethe argues, “[s]ymbolism transforms the phenomenon into idea, the idea into an image, and in such a way that the idea remains always infinitely active and unapproachable in the image, and even if expressed in all languages, still would remain inexpressible” (qtd. in Abrams, Glossary, 208).
200 As Hafley also argues, “[b]ecause Christianity exists as a symbol for the life of love, Marius’ concept of it is almost purely Symboliste” (107).
201 This was precisely Pater’s contribution to the genre. According to Dahl, “there is no blatant preaching or moralizing, no pedantic antiquarianism, no over-obvious Gothicism, no lustful priest pursuing a Christian maiden’s honor, no foolish melodrama […] no bathos or sentimentality. He has stripped from the traditional antiquarian philosophic novel those elements that most date it and make it objectionable in modern eyes” (18).
Cornelius’ Christianity through a symbolic discourse, where the aesthetic glamour of
the Roman soldier was meant to invoke something beyond the scope of Marius’
optical perception: “every object of [Cornelius’] knightly array had seemed to be but
sign or symbol of some other thing far beyond it” (I, 233), making Marius wonder “of
what possible intellectual formula could this mystic Cornelius be the sensible
exponent” (I, 234). Likewise, Christian ritual was for Marius “like a half-opened
book,” which was suggesting in a “mystic sense” an “efficacious” power: “the entire
ceremonial process, like the place in which it was enacted, was weighty with
symbolic significance, it seemed to express a single leading motive” (II, 135). Even
the companionship that Marius experienced in the Christian community was a symbol
of the “divine companion” (II, 70), of the “Ideal to which the Old Testament gives the
name of Creator, which for the philosophers of Greece is the Eternal Reason, and in
the New Testament the Father of Men” (II, 68). And it was precisely this Christian
identification with the “divine companion,” with this mystic ideal\(^{202}\) that eventually
surmounted the limitations of Stoic humanism, giving rise to the complete fulfillment
of man’s sympathetic potentials.

Mrs. Ward was then obviously mistaken in claiming that Marius’ ethical
standpoint was not sanctioned by any “conventional first principles,” and McGrath
was misguided in arguing that “[t]here is no commitment on the part of Marius, or
Pater, to belief in the substance or absolute value of the [Christian] system” (147).
Both critics seem to have misinterpreted the absence of any direct reference to the
metaphysical as Pater’s lack of belief, when the author was simply dramatizing the

\(^{202}\) As Marius noted, “the resultant sense of companionship, of a person beside him, evoked the faculty
of conscience – of conscience, as of old and when he had been at his best, in the form, not of fear, nor
of self-reproach even, but of a certain lively gratitude” (71). DeLaura claims that Pater was influenced
in this by Arnold’s “St. Paul and Protestantism,” where Arnold associates the notion of sympathy with
“Paul’s ‘mystical conception of identifying oneself with Christ and thus with Christ’s idea of the
solidarity of men’” (271).
impossibility of representing the supernatural, which for the Oxford don could only be symbolically indicated through art. By failing to notice Pater’s systematic emphasis on Marius’ symbolic transition to Christianity both Mrs. Ward and McGrath overlooked the way Pater addressed the Heraclitean and Romantic tradition of symbolic representation so as to denote, through the use of symbol, a unity with the unseen, and thus they unsurprisingly resulted in a “schematic,” to employ Kant’s term, reading of the novel, which lost track of its subtle metaphysical dimension. As a result, both critics misconstrued Pater’s depiction of Christianity as a rationalized, an almost utilitarian version of the “religion of humanity” that was lacking in metaphysical content.203 Pater, however, had openly rejected this rational form of belief that could not encompass the mystical through his critiques both of the Cyrenaic “religion of humanity” and the Stoic substitution of religion by philosophy, as we have seen.204 Such critique was ultimately substantiated by Heraclitus’ symbolic interplay between the seen and the unseen, and Kant’s promotion of the symbolic relation between beauty and morality.

Pater’s emphasis on the role of the mystic, through his compliance with the Kantian formula of beauty as the symbol of morality, actually added a crucial parameter to his exploration of the centrality of art that resolutely completed his aestheticist project. We have seen in the first chapter of this presentation that Pater upheld, through the Heraclitean paradigm, aesthetic form and perception as an ideal means of encapsulating the givens of scientific relativism and of formally reflecting

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203 McGrath argues that “the rapprochement with Christianity in Marius is less a new element in Pater’s thinking than an expansion of his earlier position, for Marius’s approach to Christianity is conducted in the same functional manner that characterizes his (and Pater’s) earlier attitude toward philosophy and art” (145). He considers that, despite its “careful rewording, Marius nevertheless maintains essentially the same pragmatic orientation of the ‘Conclusion’ towards all forms of speculative culture”: “[t]he main differences are the modulated tone, the depth of the discussion, and the detailed extension of his position beyond philosophy and art to a form of Christian humanism” (142).

204 By presenting Pater’s illustration of Christianity as a non-absolute functionalist system, McGrath seems to be contradicting his main thesis about the synthetic politics of the Oxford don, for he actually results in a more or less utilitarian account of religious belief.
the image of reality as a system of interrelations. Aesthetic form was, in its turn, also employed by Pater, as we have seen in the second chapter, as the paradigmatic vehicle for the expression of the dynamic participation of mind in causal relations, where, taking the lead from Kant, the Oxford don remodeled the premises of scientific relativism and empirical associationism into a form of idealistic functionalism. Drawing, eventually, on the Romantic and the Heraclitean tradition, Pater utilized the symbol as a means of achieving “unity” with the supersensible through the establishment of “analogies” and “correspondences,” so as to furthermore, promote aesthetic vision as the main road leading to the envisioning of the supernatural. Pater, thus, did not only promote aesthetic perception as the most suitable way of relating to the various facets of the modern world, but also as the form that paradigmatically held together this chain of relations established between elements in the physical world (science), between the physical world and human mind (morality), and lastly between physical world, human mind, and the supersensible (religion). Considering this, we could claim that by situating aesthetic perception in the privileged position of the climax of Marius as the point of convergence between the seen and the unseen, between Cyrenaic sense preoccupation, Stoic rationalism and Christian mysticism, Pater was highly reminiscent of the way Kant had bridged the realms of nature (1st Critique) and moral freedom (2nd Critique) through the analogies that art established between them (3rd Critique). It was actually in this sense that Pater managed to “wipe out the agonizing differences between the aesthetic, the ethical and the

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205 Baudelaire argued, while accounting for his symbolism, that “[e]verything, form, movement, number, color, perfume, in the spiritual as in the natural world, is significative, reciprocal, converse, correspondent” (qtd. in Abrams, Glossary 209). The aspect, in other words, that Pater utilized in the symbol was its power of proliferating relations, which was ultimately an extension of his earlier preoccupation with scientific relativism, empirical associationism and idealist functionalism.  
206 We have seen in the second chapter that Pater was in this embedded to Kant, who basically endowed the aesthetic with this mediatory character, by arguing for the synthetic a priori nature of judgments of taste, which brought together the subjective and the objective. We have to note here that Heraclitus too assigned to sense perception the role of mediating between the seen and the unseen.
religious spheres of human life, so that the aesthetic - propped up by the other two - may play its desired role of earthly fulfillment,” as Iser put it, without, however, detecting the Kantian origin of Pater’s manipulation (148).

This “earthly fulfillment” involved the synthetic force that Pater assigned to aesthetic perception and was, thus, in full accordance with the Oxford don’s larger agenda of promoting a reconciliation between Heraclitus and Kant, between “sensations” and “ideas,” between the concrete and the abstract, the real and the ideal, the “eye” and “duty,” the empirical and the mystic, the “actual” and the “typical,” to borrow the author’s own phrasing from “The Child in the House.”207 What, nevertheless, Pater seemed to add in Marius was the awareness that this “fulfillment” could only take place if it encompassed the mystic as well. This was precisely what the Heraclitean and the Kantian paradigms served to underscore drawing on both schools of thought. As the Oxford don stated in “Prosper Merimee” (1890), some years after the publication of his novel, “the empirical study of facts, the empirical science of nature and man,” which survived “all dead metaphysical philosophies” (3), and “Kant’s criticism of the mind, its pretensions to pass beyond the limits of individual experience,” which was “the last word concerning an unseen world” (1), had resulted into “ennui,” “disillusionment” and an interest in “artificial stimulus” (1):

[man] has lost that sense of large proportion in things, that all-embracing prospect of life as a whole (from end to end of time and space, it had seemed), the utmost expanse of which was afforded from a cathedral tower of the Middle Age: by the church of the thirteenth century, that is to say, with its consequent aptitude for the co-ordination of human effort. Deprived of that exhilarating yet pacific outlook, imprisoned now into the narrow cell of its own subjective experience, the action of a powerful nature will be intense, but exclusive and peculiar. It will come to

207 As Marius admitted, “[m]ust not all that remained of life be but a search for the equivalent of that Ideal, among so-called actual things – a gathering together of every trace or token of it, which his actual experience might present?” (II, 72).
art, or science, to the experience of life itself, not as to portions of human nature’s
daily food, but as to something that must be, by the circumstances of the case,
exceptional; almost as men turn in despair to gambling or narcotics, and in a little
while the narcotic, the game of chance or skill, is valued for its own sake. The
vocation of the artist, of the student of life or books, will be realized with
something – say! of fanaticism, as an end in itself, unrelated, unassociated. The
science he turns to will be the science of crudest fact; the passion extravagant, a
passionate love of passion, varied through all the exotic phases of French fiction
as inaugurated by Balzac; the art exaggerated, in matter or form, or both, as in
Hugo or Baudelaire” (Miscellaneous Studies 1-2).

In stripping the world of the “unseen,” modern empiricism and rationalism
led to the extinction of religious belief, where a “humanity as alien as the animals”
and an “exaggerated,” an “extravagant” artistic form had arisen (Miscellaneous
Studies 9). The “religious beauty” of the church, on the other hand, by interfusing “the
science of the crudest fact” with “the large proportion in things,” could function as a
depository of the mystical that had eclipsed from the rationalist world, endowing the
visible world with a sense of “strangeness,” with a sacred aura. According to Patrick,
this was also the shortcoming of Western philosophy after Socrates that Heraclitean
symbolism could surmount: “[t]he man who could learn nothing from the fields and
trees […], who spent all his time in the Agora conversing with other men about virtue,
and who never seemed to realize that there was a world above the heads and under the
feet of men, was not likely to understand the book of Heraclitus” (635).

The symbolism of “religious beauty,” furthermore, signaled for Pater the
sanctification, and, thus, the rejuvenation, of the senses through their participation in
the conception of the abstract or the mystical; that’s why after Marius’s death,
“[g]entle fingers had applied to hands and feet, to all those old passage-ways of the
senses, through which the world had come and gone for him, now so dim and
obstructed, a medicinable oil” (II, 224). It was precisely this consecration of the sense-apparatus that Pater’s emphatic preoccupation with the symbolic dimension of the aesthetic guise of early Christianity underscored. Such consecration was promoted as a Heraclitean balance between body and mind that would paradigmatically counterbalance the disrespect of outward beauty and the disproportionate emphasis on moral beauty, which marked western philosophy after Socrates, as Patrick noted (637-38). In its turn, this rebirth of the senses within a religious framework was upheld by Pater as a means of preventing religious feeling itself from lapsing into rationalism or transcendentalism, since, in its power of undermining rationalist fixations, “religious beauty” was presented as decisively contributing to the alignment of human perception with the dictates of a world in “flux.” Such flux was paradigmatically encapsulated for Pater by the implicitness of the symbol and its power of suggesting rather than imposing meaning like the Heraclitean oracle of Delphi. In this sense, *Marius the Epicurean* can be read as an allegory of the significance of the symbol for the modern spirit in its ability to proliferate correspondences and reconciliations, bringing together Heraclitean associationism and Kantian functionalism.

In terms of religion, nevertheless, Pater’s suggestion for “a religious phase possible for the modern spirit” generally invoked a non High Church form of Roman-Catholicism and the rejection of Protestantism, by laying emphasis on the necessity of the symbolic function of the aesthetic. This emphasis on the symbol was actually more than indicative of Pater’s compliance with the Broad Church movement and the spirit of the *Reviews and Essays*, which promoted the symbolic reading of the Bible and the renovation of the Church, rather than Mrs. Ward and McGrath’s utilitarian

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208 In this again Pater seems to be complying with Ruskin: “I am not afraid of the word; still less of the thing. You have heard many outcries against sensation lately; but, I tell you, it is not less sensation we want, but more. The ennobling difference between one man and another, - between one animal and another, - is precisely this, that one feels more than another […] we are only human in so far as we are sensitive, and our honour is precisely in proportion to our passion” (qtd. in Chai 4).
version of “the religion of humanity,” which was devoid of any metaphysical content. This religious phase, moreover, did not only fully comply with Pater’s lifelong working of a formula that could encompass both the finite and the abstract, both flux and secured values, both Heraclitus and Kant, but it was, in fact, its extension and highly indicative of its “divine moderation,” indeed.
Conclusion

T. S. Eliot was one of those critics who regarded *Marius the Epicurean* a pagan rather than a Christian novel. In “Arnold and Pater,” he argued that *Marius* marked “one of the phases of the fluctuating relations between religion and culture in England since the reformation” (438), and termed Pater’s thought a continuation of “Arnold’s religious campaign […] to divorce Religion from thought” (434) and to replace “Religion” with “Culture” (436).¹ As he stated,

> [t]he true importance of the book, I think, is as a document of the one moment in the history of thought and sensibility in the nineteenth century. The dissolution of thought in that age, the isolation of art, philosophy, religion, ethics and literature, is interrupted by various chimerical attempts to effect imperfect syntheses. Religion became morals, religion became art, religion became science or philosophy; various blundering attempts were made at alliances between various branches of thought. Each half-prophet believed that he had the whole truth. The alliances were as detrimental all round as the separations. The right practice of ‘art for art’s sake’ was the devotion of Flaubert or Henry James; Pater is not with these men, but rather with Carlyle and Ruskin and Arnold, if some distance below them. *Marius* is significant chiefly as a reminder that the religion of Carlyle or that of Ruskin or that of Arnold or that of Tennyson or that of Browning, is not enough. It represents, and Pater represents more positively than Coleridge of whom he wrote the words, ‘that inexhaustible discontent, languor, and homesickness […] the chords of which ring all through our modern literature (442-43).

Eventually, for Eliot, Pater’s “imperfect syntheses” were also reflected in the form of *Marius*. The novel, he claimed, was not worthy of influencing “a single first-

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¹ “The total effect of Arnold’s philosophy is to set up Culture in the place of Religion, and to leave Religion to be laid waste by the anarchy of feeling. And Culture is a term which each man not only may interpret as he pleases, but must indeed interpret as he can. So the gospel of Pater follows naturally upon the prophecy of Arnold” (436). As Eliot later on states, “[t]he degradation of philosophy and religion, skillfully initiated by Arnold, is competently continued by Pater” (437). Eliot even reaches the point of arguing that “‘Art for art’s sake’ is the offspring of Arnold’s Culture; and we can hardly venture to say that it is even a pervasion of Arnold’s doctrine, considering how very vague and ambitious that doctrine is” (439).
rate mind of a later generation” (442) due to its “incoherence,” since “its method is a number of fresh starts; its content is a hodge-podge of the learning of the classical don, the impressions of the sensitive holiday visitor to Italy, and a prolonged flirtation with the liturgy” (440-441). Eliot’s reproachful critique of Pater, which was evidently based on moral rather than artistic criteria, as his emphatic preoccupation with the role of “religion” reveals, was in due course disproved by history, since the “classical don” turned out to have actually influenced the “first rate minds” of writers like Wilde, Yeats, Joyce and Woolf, among others, which was, after all, indicative of the fact that, as McGrath puts it,

> [i]n his endeavor Pater succeeded admirably, for he provided his successors in the British aestheticist tradition, including many of the early Modernists, with a model for an aesthetic sensibility and an intellectual temper that addressed the needs of serious artists confronted with the revolutionary developments of post-Kantian thought, developments that had substantially altered the perception and understanding of experience (232).

In my view, nevertheless, Pater’s significance consisted neither in the way his “imperfect syntheses” affected religious thought, nor in the influence that he ultimately exerted on later generations, but rather in the way he systematically blurred established distinctions with his theoretical detours. At a time when specialization in all facets of life was gradually becoming the norm, Pater was philosophizing without being a philosopher, he was criticizing art, being no art critic; he was writing on morality, being no moralist. It was precisely this “in-between” position that the Oxford don intentionally occupied as a “half-prophet,” which deeply disturbed Eliot, but which, nonetheless, renders Pater so interesting. Pater’s whole work was devotedly dedicated to the exploration of this interval and its “half truths,” where a sequence of divergent discourses, from history, philosophy, science, art criticism,
literary theory, fiction, poetry, and autobiography were methodically utilized for its mapping. From his first publication to the last, Pater experimented with different perspectives and standpoints so as to frame, to zoom in on and explore this special moment when opposites merge into one another, giving birth to new forms. Pater’s obsession with periods of transition, with Plato’s time, with Antonine Rome, with the Renaissance, with the 19th century, among others, was indicative of this attempt to capture and scrutinize, but also to dramatize how synthesis was engendered. The aesthetic perspective eventually enabled Pater to transfigure such synthesis in visual terms, to avoid the fixity of conclusions as a means of formally reflecting the procedure of dialectical interplay, and to finally underscore its diachronic vitality in the form of a work of art. Pater’s work, therefore, coherently comprised one single effort, the exploration of the point of convergence between body and soul, mind and nature, subject and object, flux and stasis, matter and form, art and science, tradition and progress, as paradigmatically encapsulated in the dialectics that the Oxford don established between the empiricism of Heraclitus and the idealism of Kant, as we have seen.

In this sense, Pater’s work was not part of an attempt to deflate the status of the church, as Eliot claimed, but rather distinctively complied with the organized late 19th century expedition of charting the “unknown” territories that scientific advance, the historization of human culture, and the expansion of the British Empire² had brought to the surface. Pater’s persistent allusions to historical origins, to the evolutionary discourse, to the unconscious, to a series of scientific discoveries, to a plethora of foreign writers and cultures, was, actually, indicative of the framework within which his own project was moving. This framework involved the extensive

² We should not forget that “the last 40 years of the century saw the annexation of vast areas of land in Africa, the Far East, and the Pacific” (Harvie & Matthew 118).
explorations carried out at the time, among others, by Darwin into the history of life, by Tyndall and Huxley in physics and biology, by Andrew Lang in anthropology, by Freud, later, in psychology. Pater’s own contribution to this late-19th-century expedition consisted in the mapping of the new relations that such a pervasive cultural shift entailed for individual experience. It becomes, then, clear that the formula that Pater upheld as the appropriate compass to the call of the times, his construction of a form of generality that could be reconciled with the concrete, was, after all, a part of the way the late-19th-century finite worldview had to come to terms with the abstractions and deductions that the new science and the long history of mankind necessitated. And this was precisely the 19th-century sensibility that Pater’s work marked as a document in the history of thought, when the growth of science led to the hybridization and expansion of human perception as a “chimerical,” yet inevitable, means of responding to the “mystic now” of modernity. It was eventually this “mystic,” this “unknown” part of the “new” that Pater’s thought also hailed as a vital prerequisite for a successful art of life before the eclipse of Romanticism in the 20th century.

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3 For the relation between Pater and Lang, see R. Crawford’s “Pater’s Renaissance, Andrew Lang, and Anthropological Romanticism” (1986).
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