Greek Studies and Pater's Delayed Meaning

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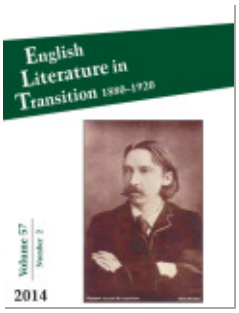

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GREEK STUDIES, brought out by Charles Lancelot Shadwell in January 1895, was the first of Pater's posthumous publications. Quickly assembled, edited and printed within six months of Pater's death, this volume collects essays that had appeared over the course of nearly twenty years, transferring them from periodical to book form and projecting their views of ancient Greece into the altered cultural landscape of the 1890s. These new material and historical contexts laid the essays open to new readings and interpretations. The early reception of *Greek Studies* therefore represents a particularly important episode in the construction of Pater that has come down to us in the twenty-first century, since the essays became the territory over which his colleagues and critics, former allies and enemies, fought to fix his reputation and to establish the meaning and value of Pater's criticism.

Shadwell, an Oxford colleague and future Provost of Oriel College, had been a pupil and then a close friend of Pater for years; he is said to have been the inspiration behind Pater's description of the transparent temperament in "Diaphaneitè"; besides, he is the dedicatee of *The Renaissance* and the author of a partial translation of Dante's *Purgatorio* (1892) for which Pater wrote an introductory essay. As Pater's literary executor, Shadwell was now in charge of Pater's papers, which included several fragments of essays and fiction in various degrees of finish. We know very little of how he went about the delicate process of assembling and publishing these documents because Pater's early biographers, A. C. Benson and Thomas Wright, paid little or no attention to this phase.[1] Shadwell's first act as literary executor was to assemble a series of articles on Greek subjects that Pater had published at several stages of his career, issuing them in the form of one volume, eventually included with no changes in the complete Library Edition in 1910. After *Greek Studies*, readers of Pater were given his essay on Pascal,

nearly finished at the time of Pater's death, in the *Contemporary Review* in February 1895. This was quickly followed in October 1895 by *Miscellaneous Studies*, another collection of reissued published pieces put together by Shadwell, to which the editor added the early unpublished essay "Diaphaneitè"; and then, in October 1896, by *Gaston de Latour*, the novel that Pater had started serialising but decided to interrupt before completion, available for the first time in book form and also edited by Shadwell. The posthumous gathering of Pater's uncollected essays in volume form was completed by the privately printed *Essays from the Guardian*, issued by Thomas B. Mosher in 1897.

Among these posthumous publications, *Greek Studies* occupies a particularly important place. While Shadwell admitted to the lack of a real "unifying principle" in *Miscellaneous Studies*, he presented *Greek Studies* as close to Pater's intention both in shape and organisation.[2] As he noted in his preface to that volume, Pater had intended to gather his essays on Dionysus and Demeter in book form in the late 1870s. That early collection, provisionally entitled *Dionysus and Other Studies*, had already been set up in print when in November 1878 Pater suddenly wrote to Macmillan instructing him to break up the type. In that letter Pater lamented the "many inadequacies" that he came across on revising the proofs and concluded that "it would be a mistake to publish the essays in their present form; some day they may take a better and more complete form."[3] Immediately after Pater's death, Shadwell set about to resurrect this aborted project, working on those very proofs corrected and then discarded by Pater, which Shadwell, as he informs his readers, used as copy-text for his posthumous edition. In his preface to *Greek Studies*, Shadwell is eager to emphasise the notion of fidelity. Redeploying the imagery of transparency that Pater had associated with him many years earlier, he presents his role as that of executor rather than editor in an attempt to erase the trace of his own intervention and thus diminish the distance between reader and author. In actual fact, though, his role was more radical than that. For, while Pater had originally intended the essays on Greek myth to appear side by side works such as "The School of Giorgione" and "Charles Lamb," they were now published together with the imaginary portrait "Hippolytus Veiled" (1889), two essays on Greek sculpture dating from 1880—"The Beginnings of Greek Sculpture" and "The Marbles of Aegina"—and the late "The Age of Athletic Prizemen" (1894), which was published in the *Contemporary Review* shortly before Pater's death.[4]

The result of Shadwell's selection is a volume that reproduces work from different stages of Pater's career. It starts with the distinctly aesthetic and neo-pagan essay on Dionysus, stylistically very close to the impressionistic criticism of *The Renaissance*, and ends with Pater's strange claim in "The Age of Athletic Prizemen," apropos the statue of the Discobolus at Rest, that, because of their artistic achievements, the Greeks "merited Revelation"—an assertion that Pater follows with a quotation from Proverbs 8:30, which provides the last words of the book. Shadwell's chronological arrangement therefore masks another narrative of evolution, intellectual and ethical this time, of Pater's work from a transgressive youthful aestheticism to a mature reconciliation with Christianity: the reader follows Pater's interest as it gradually shifts from the themes of irrationality and darkness that dominate the preclassical Greece of the essay of Dionysus to the light and emotional harmony that mark the onset of the Christian age glimpsed at the end of "The Age of Athletic Prizemen." The result is that in this context the early works lend themselves to being read as the starting point of a personal journey from decadent hedonism to morality.[5] The silent testimony of Shadwell, lifelong close friend of the writer and self-styled unobtrusive editor of his work, lends biographical authority to this way of reading Pater's career and understanding his early work. In this sense *Greek Studies* performs the same function as several early biographical accounts of Pater dating from these years, which try to distance Pater's reputation from his early writings and emphasise how the late, more cautious Pater is allegedly closer to the slippery notion of a "real" Pater, retrospectively seen as having been a closeted moralist all along. This is the same picture of Pater that Vernon Lee was busy painting at this point, both in her private correspondence and publicly in *Renaissance Fancies and Studies* (1895), where she speaks of Pater's "spiritual evolution" away from the sensational aestheticism of the 1870s.[6]

Greek Studies therefore fulfils a double mission of remembering Pater in print—in the two meanings of constructing his memory and gathering his dismembered corpus. This memorial quality is underlined by Shadwell's choice of reproducing in the frontispiece Pater's photographic portrait by Elliott and Fry, the same that would appear in the Library Edition, used here publicly for the first time. All these paratextual choices contribute somewhat to obscure the interpretative work undertaken by the editor, which was influential in shaping Pater's early reception. It is significant, in this sense, that Pater's first posthumous publication should be devoted to his work as classicist.

Pater had, of course, been a professional classical scholar but he had published relatively little in this field, when compared to the extent of his essays on Renaissance and modern subjects: until *Plato and Platonism*, none of his classical essays had been included in any of his collections of criticism. In his foreword to that volume, Pater had described *Plato and Platonism* as "lectures … written for delivery to some young students of philosophy," placing for the first time his published work within the oral and pedagogical context of his professional work at Oxford, emphasising, in other words, his identity as an academic.[7] The book had been well received, perhaps more universally so than any of Pater's volumes to that date. The classical scholar and Plato expert Paul Shorey, for instance, in a signed review praised the book as "the first true and correctly proportioned presentation of Platonism that has been given to the general reader," calling the chapter on the genius of Plato "a more serious contribution to the right understanding of Platonism than tomes of the ponderous analysis in which German science disputes the genuineness of his most characteristic works, or endeavours to trace the evolution of his thought by counting its particles."[8] Shorey was not the only high-profile reviewer who found Pater's study of Plato authoritative without being specialised in a restrictive sense, and his critical method capable of offering a nuanced reconstruction of the Greek world of the fourth century BC.

In bringing out *Greek Studies*, Shadwell (himself an Oxford man) intended to build on the success of *Plato and Platonism* in order to make sure that Pater's reputation should, first and foremost, be that of a serious scholar. In his preface, he argues that Pater should not be remembered as "a consummate master of style" but rather for "the depth and seriousness of his studies" and points out that the comparatively small size of his *oeuvre* should be taken as proof of the thoroughness of his scholarly research: "That delicacy of insight, that gift of penetrating into the heart of things, that subtleness of interpretation, which with him seems an instinct, is the outcome of hard, patient, conscientious study."[9] In his instructions on how and where to find Pater's real value, Shadwell implicitly attacks an important premise of aesthetic and Decadent writing, which had questioned the traditional dualism between representation and essence, form and content, and had provocatively argued instead that meaning is always located in the style or surface of texts and art objects. Pater's experiments in aesthetic criticism, as defined by him in the "Preface" to *The Renaissance*, were committed to eroding this old binarism, unsettling the hierarchy between analy-

sis and impression, and leading to an experimental fusion of critical and creative idioms. When Shadwell downplays the notion of style as "word-painting" or surface and sets it in antithesis to scholarship and seriousness ("depth"), he aims to distance Pater from the Decadent style, which was of course enjoying its heyday in Britain in the 1890s, when many of its foremost exponents (Oscar Wilde and Arthur Symons among others) openly declared Pater's influence.

The Decadent Style

In the preface to *Greek Studies*, Shadwell tried to settle a controversy over Pater's style that had erupted immediately after the author's death. Several obituary notices in newspapers and magazines used the question of style as a way of assessing Pater's intellectual and moral legacies. An anonymous journalist in the *Times*, for instance, in a piece simmering with half-concealed hostility, disapproves of Pater's foregrounding of manner over matter in his criticism, claiming that "the peculiar style he cultivated … seems more opulent and luscious than is altogether consistent with absolute purity of manner."[10] The deliberate slippage between the literary, ethical and psychosexual visible in this judgement had been a constant in Pater's critical reception since the time of *The Renaissance*. Hostile critics rhetorically opposed Pater's style to abstract notions of purity and wholesomeness; they associated his prose with qualities such as "sweetness" and "delicacy" (both of these words are used by the *Times* reviewer) in order to suggest connotations of Decadence, ornamentation and lack of restraint and manliness. In so doing they argued that Pater's emphasis on form and the outward reveals what is at best an intellectual failure and at worst a downright perversion—a nebulous concept that could include anything from egomania to homosexuality. On the opposite end of the spectrum from the article in the *Times* is an obituary notice by Richard Le Gallienne, who openly celebrates Pater's style, arguing that "the abiding appeal of his writings is in their beauty of form, and that glamour of personal temperament which pervades them. Which is but to say that Mr Pater is to be regarded first and foremost as an artist, essentially a creative writer, choosing, for the most part, to work ostensibly through the medium of criticism."[11] Le Gallienne, a critic who was sympathetic to aesthetic and Decadent culture, rejects the argument that "beauty of form" brings with it either intellectual obfuscation or antisocial values, seeing it instead as the basis for a positive reading of Pater as an "artist." Elsewhere in the same article he even tackles the beleaguered

question of effeminacy, arguing that Pater's lack of manliness should not be read as a stylistic or moral failing.

Le Gallienne and the anonymous critic of the *Times* represent the opposite poles of the divided readership to which Shadwell brought out *Greek Studies*. Going back to the preface, it is possible to see Shadwell trying to rebalance the gendered language of Pater's hostile critics in his rejection of an effeminate-sounding notion of "literary grace" in favour of the masculine-gendered value of "seriousness"—the seriousness of the scholarly conscience which, as Pater had provocatively written in "Style" must of necessity be understood as "the male conscience … under a system of education which still to so large an extent limits real scholarship to men."[12]

Looking at the early reception of the volume in the periodical press, it is again striking how many critics hang their judgement on the question of style. The classicist Campbell Dodgson, for instance, future keeper of prints and drawings at the British Museum, compares the experience of reading the essays to Ulysses listening to the song of the Sirens in the *Odyssey*, using a classical myth to convey the idea that Pater's writing makes dangerous reading: this image presents Pater's prose as an alluring but destructive influence and significantly, again, as feminised and noxious specifically to men. For Dodgson, Pater is too much of a "poet" to be a good scholar. In terms of method, impressionism gets in the way of scholarship, since Pater's imagination creates "round every bare idea or fact a multitude of colours and sounds, a whole sensible world in which henceforth it dwells, for us as for him."[13] Pater's vision of antiquity is no more than a simulacrum for this reviewer, who misreads Pater's deliberate use of allusion as a technique of delusion and deception. Writing in the *Illustrated London News*, Andrew Lang also attacks Pater's impressionism, speaking of his Greece as a "dream"—an image that suggests darkness rather than enlightenment, and in which private desires have usurped the territory of empiricism and objectivity. Lang finds Pater's style affected and decorative, comparing the experience of reading the volume with being "in a gallery almost hieratic in its stately repose, rather chill, full of good things, but not very interesting, somehow."[14] He argues that anthropology should take the place of archaeology in the study of antiquity and uses his knowledge of primitive religion and ritual to fault Pater for his scholarship, pointing out omissions of important facts and objecting to his disregard for comparative mythology. For Lang, the study of myth is a science. Pater's effort to create a space for the knowledge of

Greece outside of academic and scientific institutions is viewed as a type of dilettantism that threatens the progress of the modern culture of specialisation.

New Contexts

Not all critics, though, found Pater's style regressive or inimical to scholarship. Several praised Pater's work for its attempt to build bridges across the increasingly large divide that separated the specialist from the educated general reader. One of these was the classical scholar F. G. Kenyon, who, in his review of *Greek Studies*, echoes Shadwell's portrait of Pater as a "conscientious artist and thinker."[15] In his endorsement of Shadwell's editorial labour, though, Keynon points to another important question regarding Pater's style, its suitability to the different material contexts of periodical publishing and book form:

> There was something incongruous in finding, amid the usual miscellaneous assemblage of ephemeral articles in a monthly magazine, a delicate study of a Greek myth, in the refined and thoughtful style which was characteristic of all Pater's work. Readers are apt to skim a magazine article; and to skim an essay of Pater's is to miss all its charm and most of its thought. Now that these writings are gathered from their heterogeneous surroundings, it is possible to read them more deliberately, and to enjoy them more thoroughly.[16]

Keynon finds that there is something fundamentally oxymoronic ("incongruous") in the juxtaposition of the form of Pater's essays and the medium of journalism, which had provided the original home for the essays in *Greek Studies*. The book is more resistant to "skimming"—that is, superficial reading—and therefore provides a more fitting medium for the complex edifices of Pater's syntax and allusive imagery. The magazine, on the other hand, prevents deep reading. The hastiness of periodical production and consumption is at odds with Pater's laboured, painful method of composition (described, for instance, by Gerald Monsman in the introduction to his edition of *Gaston de Latour*) and the attentiveness required to read him.[17] What Keynon does not consider is that Pater's self-consciously literary style can be seen to work in calculated antithesis to the utilitarian prose promoted by the steep rise of the periodical press. Like Swinburne and his French models Gautier and Baudelaire, albeit in a characteristically more indirect way, Pater engaged in a systematic critique of the periodical press undertaken from within—a deeply ambivalent gesture that places Pater both inside and outside the Victorian culture of periodical publishing.

Laurel Brake has studied closely the traffic between periodical and book publishing in relation to *Greek Studies*, detailing how Pater negotiated the sometimes antagonistic discourses of journalism and literature with their implied aesthetic and socioeconomic differences.[18] As she points out in a different context, the translation from the ephemerality of the periodical essay to the more permanent form of the book causes a shift in authorship "to a context which foregrounds the individual; the discourse of the book is now that of art, the collected work, with its emphasis on individual performance, genius, memorability."[19] One of the consequences of this shift is that the author is more exposed to public censorship, so that periodical publication allowed authors like Pater a different kind of freedom—the freedom of anonymity in some instances of course, but also, in the case of signed essays, the freedom to take more risks, as the individual voice of the author is at once strengthened by the support of multiple authorship and, paradoxically, diluted within the plurality of subjects and styles that are contained in any single journal issue. In the case of Pater, this is borne out by the fact that in revising the essays in *The Renaissance* from periodical to book form, he consistently moved towards caution. And, while "The Poems of William Morris" attracted no public condemnation in its original (anonymous) form as a journal article in the pages of the *Westminster Review*, it was the ground for vicious *ad hominem* attacks when it was republished in partial and toned-down form as the "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*. The publication of *Greek Studies* thus increased the visibility and impact of Pater's essays on myth and archaeology that were otherwise consigned to the status of ephemerality at this stage. Whether the collection has coherence or whether it embodies Pater's authorial intention (these were the two most pressing points to Shadwell), it certainly reestablished Pater's ownership of his essays, digging them out of the accumulated layers of Victorian periodical production in which they had lain buried, in some cases, for almost twenty years.

The risk of reissuing the essays unmodified in 1895 was that the study of Greek antiquity had undergone substantive changes in the intervening decades, and therefore Pater's interventions could now seem dated to experts. This is what happened in the review by Lang, where Pater's essays on myth are criticised in the light of developments that had largely taken place after their publication, in particular the systematic application of anthropology to the study of ancient religion. Lang's attack seems particularly unfair, especially as Pater had in fact

been one of the first professional classicists to pioneer the use of archaeology and comparative mythology at a time in which these scientific approaches were looked upon with scepticism by most of his colleagues, at least in Oxford. Traditional classicists had favoured philological, literary and historical approaches to the study of antiquity, which did not challenge the stable concept of Greek classicism inherited from Winckelmann and Romantic Hellenism. Pater, on the other hand, had systematically questioned the very notion of classicism by delving into the archaic, unclassical pasts of Greece, relying on material culture rather than literature, and basing his analyses on fragmented archaeological evidence rather than polished Hellenistic artworks favoured by Winckelmann and his school.

We get a sense of how ahead of their time Pater's myth essays were in the 1870s if we briefly consider Jane Ellen Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, a book published in 1903 which is widely regarded as operating a paradigm shift within classical studies. Here Harrison argues that the understanding of ritual is the necessary first step to a true understanding of Greek myth and religion, and for this reason the book constitutes one of the foundational texts of the so-called myth and ritual school. *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* begins by overturning Ruskin's statement that "there is no dread in [the Greeks'] hearts; pensiveness, amazement, often deepest grief and desolation, but terror never";[20] it goes on to analyse the differences between Olympian and Chthonian religions and to offer a systematic examination of a series of ancient rites. Harrison wants to debunk the idea of a serene, stable Hellenism: "Beneath this splendid surface lies a stratum of religious conceptions, ideas of evil, of purification, of atonement, ignored or suppressed by Homer."[21] The advent of classicism proper should be understood as an act of erasure. Therefore, pursuing the archaeological metaphor, Harrison digs into this repressed substratum in order to get to the mystery cults, which hold the key to the darkness and brutality of pre-Olympian Greece. This is the same path that Pater had followed almost thirty years earlier—albeit, admittedly, without Harrison's scientific systematising: refuting the standard view of classicism as a moment of maturity and perfection, he had sought to go back to the buried origins of Greek culture which he, like Harrison, found in primitive religion and especially in the chthonic cults of irrationality and suffering connected with the worship of Dionysus.

The 1890s opened with the publication of the first edition of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and ended with the first German edition of Freud's

Interpretation of Dreams (1899). This decade also saw the onset of a large-scale English reception of Nietzsche. In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche had, like Pater and now Harrison, rebelled against the view of the Greeks as cheerful children of humanity, pointing to the suffering, sorrow and darkness that are central, but often lie hidden, in the core of Greek classicism. Now Havelock Ellis in his influential articles on Nietzsche in the *Savoy* (1896) described him as one of the most powerful and revolutionary thinkers of the century, singling out his revisionary understanding of Greece as one of his major contributions to intellectual history. Pater's essays on myth, especially his treatment of Dionysus, found a natural home in this new cultural context. Like Nietzsche and then Freud, Pater studies myth in order to suggest that human behaviour is rooted in nonrational forces and that what we term civilisation is a struggle against these forces. In pre-Freudian days, Pater struggles to find a language to speak about irrationality and the unconscious. But in linking the unconscious of primitive religion to poetic expression, he comes close to arguing that the origins of modern poetry and art, like those of ancient myth, can be found in unconscious desires and drives. All this proto-psychoanalytic and proto-modernist content of the essays was ready to emerge for readers now, giving them an odd but powerful delayed meaning.

Reading in Gaol

Jane Harrison, as the cursory glance at *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* suggests, may have been an unrecorded reader of *Greek Studies*. This is not the case with Oscar Wilde, whose reading of *Greek Studies* is tragically well documented. Wilde was sentenced in May 1895, just a few months after the publication of *Greek Studies*. During his time in prison, his book allowance was limited and strictly monitored. In July 1895 he received a copy of *The Renaissance*; in September of that year he obtained *Greek Studies*, *Appreciations* and *Imaginary Portraits*; in July 1896 he asked for *Miscellaneous Studies* but, strangely, his request was denied by the Governor; finally he received *Gaston de Latour* in December 1896.[22] Wilde had of course been a reader of Pater ever since his undergraduate days and this record shows that even in Reading Gaol he was keen to reread Pater and to follow the development of his posthumous publications. It is tempting to speculate that of all Pater's writings it was now *Greek Studies* that spoke to Wilde most directly.

De Profundis provides evidence for this speculation. Wilde's letter to Alfred Douglas repeatedly echoes and alludes to Pater's essays on myth, whose language and imagery seem to have haunted Wilde at this stage. It is as though Wilde were drawn to Pater's explorations of the darkness and irrationality of the preclassical world to try and make sense of his own experience in prison, attracted perhaps by the proto-psychoanalytic quality noted above. For, like the essays on Demeter and Dionysus, *De Profundis* plunges into the hidden recesses of the individual mind in order to launch a critique of civilisation rooted in a frank acknowledgement of the existence of conflicting impulses of desire and destruction. As Wilde writes in a passage that closely echoes Pater's description of the transformative energy of the Dionysian principle, his autobiography tells of "sweet things changed to bitterness and of bitter things that may be turned to joy."[23] Indeed, Wilde portrays himself throughout as a Dionysian figure: drawing on the connection between ancient tragedy and Dionysian cult, Wilde represents his own biography in tragic terms, as caught in a mythic cycle of death and rebirth. For Wilde, who imagined his postprison self as a "revenant," prison is a state of death-in-life:[24] Reading Gaol is like a mythic journey into the underworld or, like one of those dark locations of the ancient mystery cults, it is the setting of a painful rite of initiation into the hidden truth of the human condition. As he writes to Douglas, "we who live in prison, and in whose lives there is no event but sorrow, have to measure time by throbs of pain, and the record of bitter moments.… Suffering—curious as it may sound to you—is the means by which we exist, because it is the only means by which we become conscious of existing; and the remembrance of suffering in the past is necessary to us as the warrant, the evidence, of our continued identity."[25] In Wilde's new tragic understanding of life, suffering and sorrow are bound to the very roots of identity and perception well beyond the confines of the prison underworld. Throughout the letter, sorrow is the main currency of humanity for Wilde. It is the lack of sympathy with sorrow that dehumanises Douglas; and it is his newfound understanding of the cosmic powers of sorrow that gives Wilde the authority to write his prison autobiography.

Wilde clearly takes inspiration from *Greek Studies* when he writes that Demeter and Dionysus, and not the Olympian gods, were the "most deeply suggestive figures of Greek mythology."[26] Pater had turned to these cults to show the importance, for Greek religion and culture, of what, after Goethe and Carlyle, he called "the worship of

sorrow."[27] *De Profundis* repeats the same turn from the Olympian to the Chthonian that Pater had performed in his essays, this time in the form of a biographical narrative. Wilde gives up the doctrine of "beauty"—that is, formal perfection and exteriority—that had been so central to his preprison understanding of art and claims instead that sorrow "is the ultimate type both in life and art."[28] Sorrow brings about the ultimate reconciliation of inward and outward matter, content and form, to which all art constantly aspires. Sorrow, Wilde claims, is truth in art. It is following this logic that Wilde now wants to amend one of the aphorisms of his former Olympian phase: where he used to conclude his lecture "The English Renaissance of Art" suggesting to his audience that "the secret of life is in art,"[29] he now writes to Douglas that "the secret of life is suffering."[30] Sorrow is an epistemology and a key to the mysteries of the world: "he who can look at the loveliness of the world and share its sorrow, and realise something of the wonder of both, is in immediate contact with divine things, and has got as near to God's secret as any one can get."[31]

In *De Profundis*, Wilde is strongly attracted to the figure of Christ as the supreme image of "the Man of Sorrows"[32] and as embodying a sort of mythic archetype of his own story. But, like Pater's, Wilde's Christ is closer to Greek paganism than to the conventional image of nineteenth-century theology. The worship of Christ is understood as an evolved form of the Chthonic religion of Dionysus. Similarly, it would be a mistake to read Wilde's search for redemption as following a conventional Christian path. For Wilde, and this is what removes him from the Christian view, the forces that shape history and determine the individual's place in it are fundamentally unjust and amoral. His redemption is therefore only imaginable on an aesthetic rather than ethical level: "while to propose to be a better man is a piece of unscientific cant, to have become a *deeper* man is the privilege of those who have suffered. And such I think I have become."[33] The distinction between "better" and "deeper" that Wilde makes here is crucial. On the one hand it is a powerful occurrence of the metaphor of depth picked by Robbie Ross when he titled the letter *De Profundis*. On the other, it shows Wilde's firm refusal to view homosexuality as immoral or criminal, that is, to succumb to the system that wanted to humiliate him. The imagery of depth that informs *De Profundis*—another posthumous work, edited and brought out by a faithful literary executor—translates onto the autobiographical plane the evocative fusion of archaeological and psychological excavation that Pater had performed in *Greek Studies*.

(Re)reading the myth essays in gaol, Wilde formulates a Chthonian or deep reading of his own life.

De Profundis stands as one of the most important documents of the historical impact of Shadwell's edition of *Greek Studies*. It reactivated some of Pater's most challenging writings, significantly the essays on myth, which were otherwise becoming materially and culturally remote to readers and writers in the 1890s. Shadwell's collection of Pater's Greek essays poses several important problems for students of Pater, foremost the problem of intentionality, imperfectly solved by Shadwell's attempt to eclipse his editorial role. But, unlike the other posthumously collected volumes of Pater's works, *Greek Studies* has had and continues to have a cultural impact as a unified if not altogether coherent body of work. In order to formulate a fuller understanding of the position of the Greek essays within Pater's corpus, it is important to take account of their double impact on Victorian culture: their diffuse networks of influence as they appeared in the periodical press from the 1870s for nearly twenty years, and their delayed meaning in the new atmosphere of cultural radicalism and literary experimentation that characterised the 1890s.

Notes

1. A. C. Benson, *Walter Pater* (London: Macmillan, 1906); Thomas Wright, *The Life of Walter Pater*, 2 vols. (London: Everett & Co., 1907). Indeed Wright accepts *Greek Studies* as an organic part of Pater's oeuvre, without addressing the problem of authority (II: 1–9).

2. See Shadwell's prefaces to the two volumes in the Library Edition.

3. Walter Pater, *Letters of Walter Pater*, Lawrence Evans, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 34. For more on the aborted volume, see Laurel Brake, *Walter Pater* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1994), 38–39; and Stefano Evangelista, *British Aestheticism and Ancient Greece: Hellenism, Reception, Gods in Exile* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 42–45.

4. Arthur Symons claims that in 1889 Pater was planning another Greek volume that never came to light, which would then represent another precedent for Shadwell's *Greek Studies*. *Studies of Greek Remains*, as it was to be called according to Symons, was presumably intended to collect the archaeological essays Pater had been publishing in the 1880s and, again according to Symons, "the studies of Platonism not yet written." Arthur Symons, "Walter Pater," *Figures of Several Centuries* (London: Constable, 1916), 331.

5. Margot K. Louis also notes that Shadwell's additions "somewhat blunted the impact of the essays on the chthonic gods" with their transgressive Swinburnean influences. See Margot K. Louis, *Persephone Rises, 1860–1927: Mythography, Gender, and the Creation of a New Spirituality* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 18.

6. Vernon Lee, *Renaissance Fancies and Studies* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1895), 255.

7. Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, in *The New Library Edition of the Works of Walter Pater*, 10 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1910), VI: 1.

8. Paul Shorey, signed review in the *Dial*, 14 (1 April 1893). The quotations are taken from R. M. Seiler, *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1980), 256 and 260. For ease of consultation, all the following references to reviews of Pater's work are taken from Seiler whenever possible. For another endorsement of *Plato and Platonism* by a respected classicist, see Lewis Campbell's signed review in the *Classical Review*, 7 (1893), 263–66, reprinted in Seiler, 270–77.

9. C. L. Shadwell, "Preface" to *Greek Studies*, in *The New Library Edition of the Works of Walter Pater*, VII: 4.

10. Obituary in *The Times*, 31 July 1894; in Seiler, *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, 278.

11. Richard Le Gallienne, Obituary Notice; in Seiler, *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, 281.

12. Walter Pater, *Appreciations, With an Essay on Style*, in *The New Library Edition of the Works of Walter Pater*, V: 12.

13. Campbell Dodgson, review of *Greek Studies*, *The Academy*, 47:1193 (16 March 1895), 299.

14. Andrew Lang, signed review, *Illustrated London News*, 9 March 1895; in Seiler, *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, 332.

15. F. G. Kenyon, unsigned review, *Athenaeum*, 23 February 1895; in Seiler, *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, 328.

16. Ibid.

17. Pater, *Gaston de Latour: The Revised Text*, Gerald Monsman, ed. (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1995), xx–xxv.

18. Laurel Brake, *Print in Transition, 1850–1910: Studies in Media and Book History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 248–67.

19. Laurel Brake, "Discourses of Journalism: 'Arnold and Pater' Again—and Wilde," in *Pater in the 1990s*, Laurel Brake and Ian Small, eds. (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1991), 46.

20. Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 1.

21. Ibid., vi.

22. This information is taken from *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*, Rupert Hart-Davis, ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), 399, 405, 416.

23. Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis: "Epistola: In carcere et Vinculis,"* Ian Small, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 37. Compare Pater, *Greek Studies*, VII: 42, where in a densely allusive passage he reminds readers of Simeon Solomon, Swinburne and Sappho. For a more detailed reading of this passage, see Stefano Evangelista, "A Revolting Mistake: Walter Pater's Iconography of Dionysus," *Victorian Review*, 34.2 (Fall 2008), 209.

24. See Wilde, letter to Robbie Ross from Reading Gaol, November 1896. *Letters of Oscar Wilde*, 413.

25. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 51.

26. Ibid., 115.

27. Pater, *Greek Studies*, VII: 110.

28. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 105.

29. Oscar Wilde, "The English Renaissance of Art," a lecture first delivered in New York in January 1882, reprinted in *The Collected Works of Oscar Wilde*, Robert Ross, ed., 15 vols. (London: Routledge / Thoemmes Press, 1993), XIV: 277.

30. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 106.

31. Ibid., 126.

32. Ibid., 115.

33. Ibid., 126.