

VICTORIAN SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON
THE THOUGHT OF
WALTER PATER

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by

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ABSTRACT

British thought during the second half of the nineteenth century was dominated by scientific naturalism: the cult of scientific thought and of a scientifically governed universe seemingly enshrined by Darwin's The Origin of Species (1859), and energetically propagated by writers such as T. H. Huxley, John Tyndall, Herbert Spencer, G. H. Lewes, and Leslie Stephen in both the intellectual reviews and in works intended for a more popular audience. Even at Oxford, the bastion of intellectual conservatism, it seemed by the 1870's that metaphysics and theology had collapsed under the onslaught of these champions of the "scientific method", of relativism and of agnosticism.

Many thinkers, however, were profoundly disquieted by the universe of perpetual flux which was being triumphantly described to them. A universe ruled only by the inexorable determinism of scientific laws without any anthropomorphic principle of order seemed intolerable, although few actually desired a return to the old certainties of Christian orthodoxy. What was required was an intellectual synthesis capable of transcending both Christianity and scientific naturalism.

The essayist Walter Pater (1839-94) was one of the British writers who spent the last decades of the nineteenth century searching for such a synthesis. Pater went up to Oxford shortly after the publication of The Origin of Species and the establishment of scientific naturalism as the new intellectual orthodoxy. His early essays were published in the 1860's and '70's when the cult of science was at the peak of its prestige. Many of them first appeared in the Fortnightly Review which was one of the chief vehicles for the dissemination of scientific naturalism. The predominant characteristics of "Coleridge" (1866) and the "Conclusion" to Studies in the History of the Renaissance (1873) were a sense of flux and of the relative nature of all experience. Pater was one of the few literary figures to publicly welcome the rout of religion and of metaphysics by science.

He was also the friend of leading British Hegelians like James Stirling, Henry Sidgwick and the Master of Balliol, Benjamin Jowett. His later works clearly reflect the growth of British interest in Hegel's philosophy which was taking place from the middle of the 1860's. In common with other British Hegelians of the period Pater saw Hegel's idea of a world-spirit as a possible principle of order beneath the flux of experience and as a way out of the claustrophobic impasse of scientific naturalism. He differed from them in that his motivation in this, as in his earlier affirmation of the principles of scientific naturalism, was the creation of an aesthetic.

Whereas, in earlier works, scientific naturalism provided the means for Pater to assert the autonomy of aesthetic perception with its emancipation from all preconceived orthodoxies, and from Christian morality in particular, Hegel later enabled him to similarly elevate this aesthetic above the contingencies of scientific laws. Pater was closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelites and their championing of art; he was a seminal influence both upon the Aesthetic Movement of the 1880's and upon Wilde, Yeats and the young poets of the 1890's, all of whom looked on him as a leading champion of "art for art's sake".

The study of Pater's work in comparison with that of contemporaries like G. H. Lewes and Leslie Stephen, as well as with his more purely literary and artistic contemporaries, forms an important chapter in the intellectual history of nineteenth-century Britain. This thesis consists of an examination of Pater's work in relation to Victorian scientific naturalism. The first chapter, which suggests various reasons for the primacy of scientific naturalism between 1850 and 1900, is followed by an analysis of the theories on which the cosmology of its proponents was based. Both chapters end by stressing the crucial significance of what Darwin seemed to be saying in The Origin of Species. In the second part of the thesis there is a detailed study of the development of Pater's thought from a relativism conditioned by scientific naturalism in the 1860's to the more complete synthesis he had achieved by the early 1890's. Throughout his life Pater was essentially concerned with asserting the integrity of art in its own

right and its independence of the demands of other disciplines, whether religious or scientific. Although Romantic writers like Wordsworth and Shelley had earlier proclaimed the superiority of the creative powers of the imagination over the rationalizing processes of the intellect, they had not had to contend with what Pater's generation saw as the inexorable triumph of scientific naturalism. The historical significance of Pater is to be found in his attempt to develop an aesthetic by first utilizing and then by transcending scientific naturalism.

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PREFACE

One of the most distinctive features of English intellectual history during the nineteenth century was the attempt made by various thinkers to comprehend the whole of human existence in terms of scientific laws. This attempt represented the culmination of a process which had begun in the seventeenth century with the work of Bacon, Hobbes and Locke. That it reached its climax during the second half of the nineteenth century can be attributed to three principal reasons.

The first of these reasons was the tremendous growth during the previous hundred years of both the application of science to technology, and research and discovery in the natural sciences themselves. The second reason was the growth of the concept of a "science of society". Since the later eighteenth century a wide range of supposedly scientific approaches to the study of man and society had been emerging. These developments in the fields of economics, political theory, and psychology, were primarily associated with the names of Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham and Thomas Malthus. During the first half of the nineteenth century the "scientific method", as it was known, was being utilised by principally German scholars in the field of

theology. German Biblical criticism was becoming known in England during the 1840's as part of the emerging "science" of history. Underlying these intellectual developments was the assumption inherited from eighteenth-century thought that a progressive improvement of the human condition was taking place as a result of the application of scientific, and therefore rational, methods of thinking to the state of man and society. This idea of progress became particularly influential in England in the 1840's as a result of the dissemination of the theories of Auguste Comte's Positive Philosophy by writers such as John Stuart Mill and George Eliot. The third and crucial reason for the impact of scientific thought was the establishment of the theory of biological evolution on a scientific basis in Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species which was published in 1859. Darwin seemed to have finally demolished the traditional "argument from design" by which the hierarchical order of the universe was seen as an exemplum of the benevolent ordering power of a Creator. In one form or another this view of the universe had persisted in European thought since the time of Plato.

During the decades immediately following 1859 an eloquent and distinguished group of writers was engaged in vigorously publicizing Darwin's findings as the crowning proof of a scientifically governed universe. These writers ranged from professional scientists like T. H. Huxley and John Tyndall to men of letters like Leslie Stephen and G. H. Lewes. Their scientism was accompanied by a strongly expressed dislike of all forms of metaphysics and by agnosticism in matters of religion.

The most comprehensive term to describe the exclusively scientific interpretation of existence propagated by this otherwise amorphous and diverse group is "Victorian scientific naturalism". In using this term to characterize their thought I am following the example of Frank Miller Turner in his illuminating work Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England (New Haven and London, 1974).

Although the cult of science was a widespread phenomenon, which permeated various levels of Victorian society, there were many who felt themselves unable to hail the dawning of the scientific millenium with the enthusiastic tones of a Huxley. A universe denuded of all absolutes and entirely determined by the blind and arbitrary processes of scientific laws was intolerable to them. The banishment of metaphysics and theology attempted by the proponents of scientific naturalism caused a crisis in Victorian thought.

The early essays of Walter Pater published during the high-water mark of scientific naturalism in the 1860's and 1870's were an attempt to resolve this crisis. Pater was searching for a means of transcending a universe of impermanence and flux through art and the cultivation of an aesthetic sensibility. Pater was one of the first writers to accept fully the principles of scientific naturalism. Although his work was fully within the Romantic tradition of asserting the creative powers of the imagination against the rational and analytic processes of the

intellect, he was in a different situation from that of Romantics like Wordsworth or Shelley, as he had to contend with a seemingly omnipotent science. He also differed from a contemporary like Matthew Arnold by virtue of his willing acceptance of the intellectual discipline of scientific naturalism without any nostalgic hankerings after past ages of faith and universal order.

Throughout his life, in both early and later essays and in longer works, Pater was essentially concerned with the building of a personal cosmology which would be acceptable both to the needs of his imagination and the demands of his intellect. He was greatly helped in his efforts to create such a synthesis by a revival of English metaphysics due to an interaction of the Darwinian idea of evolution and the Hegelian idea of an ever-developing world-spirit. The growth of the influence of Hegel in England from the middle of the 1860's helped Pater, as it helped increasing numbers of his contemporaries, to formulate a spirit of order and a system of value in the universe capable of transcending the empiricism and relativism of scientific naturalism.

This work is a study of the ideas which made up Victorian scientific naturalism and of the influence of these ideas upon the thought of Walter Pater. It is a study of his thought in relation to certain aspects of the intellectual history of his age. Although its object is historical rather than critical it is not always possible to

separate the thought of a deliberately aesthetic writer like Pater from the means by which his thought is expressed in literary form. As well as using historical studies I have therefore drawn freely on works of a more purely critical emphasis where such works have raised points which seem applicable.

The first part of the thesis consists of an examination of Victorian scientific naturalism. In Chapter One I have suggested various reasons why scientific thought was in the ascendant in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century. Huxley, Stephen and their fellow publicists for the cause of science were riding the crest of a wave of scientific and technological advance and this wave was also associated with social and political progress. The 1860's and early '70's were the heady days of both scientific naturalism and of the Gladstonian Liberal Party. On public platforms, in popular works, and in the intellectual reviews the cause of science against religious and intellectual conservatism was being tirelessly proclaimed with lucidity and wit. Although the proponents of science frequently disagreed among themselves they presented to the public an impressively united front.

Chapter Two attempts an analysis of the principal theories on

which they drew for their public arguments. While few of these thinkers could be described as positivists in the Comtean sense of the word, they all shared the desire to extend positive or scientific methods of thought into all areas of knowledge. The history of the concept of "naturalism" is traced from its seventeenth-century origins through to its usage at the end of the nineteenth century. John Stuart Mill provided the most influential and comprehensive expression of its spirit in his insistence on the universality of scientific laws. This philosophical concept was used to support a model of nature based on three actual scientific theories: Dalton's atomic theory; the law of conservation of energy; and the theory of evolution as exemplified in both the nebular hypothesis in physics and in Darwin's theory of natural selection in biology.

Natural selection, the final and authoritative refutation of the old "argument from design", was the apotheosis of naturalistic thought. It was the culmination of both the seventeenth-century scientific revolution, and of the attempts by various thinkers from the last years of the eighteenth century onwards, to extend the naturalistic approach from the physical sciences, where it had been established by Newton, into other areas of knowledge. The crucial significance of Darwin was that he was the first scientist to be able to construct a theory of existence which stood up without any divine controlling hand. Such order as there was in the universe was entirely the product of chance.

The second part of the thesis concentrates upon the inter-reaction between scientific naturalism and the development of Walter Pater's thought. A short biographical sketch of Pater is followed by a survey of the three principal elements in his intellectual development: aestheticism, scientific naturalism and Hegelian idealism. Scientific naturalism and the Aesthetic Movement both had their roots in eighteenth-century thought: the former in the French philosophers and the latter in Goethe and the German Hellenists. While the elevation of art to the status of a religion by adherents of aestheticism like Pater and Matthew Arnold owed much to the influence of the eighteenth-century Germans and their contemporaries, the English Romantics, an even greater impetus was given to it by the seeming collapse of two earlier reactions to naturalistic thought. Both the Anglo-Catholic theology of the Oxford Movement and the Romantic idea of nature had been trounced by the "scientific method". The need to provide a new philosophy for life in a constantly changing world was even more urgent for Arnold and Pater than it had been for the German Hellenists. Unlike Arnold, Pater was able to look for this new philosophy without any nostalgic hankerings after past orthodoxies. He embraced Darwinian thought with the enthusiasm of a Huxley.

The Origin of Species influenced Pater in two principal ways. It led him, on the one hand, to the strict atomism and celebration of the flux of experience characteristic of his early essays, and, on the other, to an historical relativism which enabled him to see the points

of aesthetic perception which stood out in the flux as contributing to an evolutionary process of intellectual development. His ability to do the latter was chiefly the result of the intermingling of Darwinism and Hegelian philosophy which was taking place in British thought during the 1870's. The biological theory of evolution in nature became associated with Hegel's idea of an ever-developing world-spirit. In the two chapters which follow I have attempted to trace how Pater changed from celebrating the flux of scientific naturalism as an end in itself to seeing it as contributing to the constantly evolving world-spirit which underlay the flux.

PART I

SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM

"The universe, that is, the whole mass of all things that are, is corporeal, that is to say, body and hath the dimensions of magnitude, namely length, breadth, and depth; also every part of the body is likewise body, and hath the like dimensions, and consequently every part of the universe is body, and that which is not body is no part of the universe: and because the universe is all, that which is no part of it is nothing and consequently nowhere."

Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, London, 1651,
(Oxford, 1946), p. 440.

"Science is to me not a mass of disconnected information, but the certainty that there is no change in the universe, no motion of an atom, and no sensation of a consciousness which does not come and go absolutely in accordance with natural laws; the certainty that nothing can exist outside the gigantic mechanism of causes and effects."

Hugo Münsterberg, cited T. E. Hulme,
Further Speculations, Minneapolis,
1955, p. 47.

"The purpose of nature is to make men uniform,
as children of a common mother."

Spinoza, cited A. O. Lovejoy,
The Great Chain of Being, Cambridge,
Massachusetts, 1936, p. 292.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRIMACY OF SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT IN ENGLAND 1850-1900

It is extremely difficult for a person living in the second half of the twentieth century to share the tremendous optimism about the potentialities of science and the scientific method felt by many Victorians. George Bernard Shaw, who was born in 1856, once referred to himself as belonging to the "generation which began life by hoping for more from science than perhaps any generation ever hoped before, and possibly will ever hope again."¹ Science, as G. M. Young has written, had "touched the imagination by its tangible results"² in early Victorian England. These tangible results rapidly and extensively multiplied during Victoria's reign.

Since the seventeenth century, through scientific experiment, scientists had been congratulating themselves upon discovering a perfectly ordered system of nature to aid man, but it was during the hundred years from 1750 to 1850 that a new world based on science was

spectacularly born. The integral part played by scientific technology in the Industrial Revolution was paralleled from the 1790's by an enormous growth of research and discovery in the natural sciences. The publication of Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species in 1859 was but the culmination of a tradition of research aimed to understand the entirety of existence in scientific terms, which had begun with his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin's Zoonomia in 1794 and 1796. Scientific undermining of the Mosaic account of the Creation began with Charles Hutton's Theory of the Earth in 1795 and was continued in Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1830-1833) and Robert Chambers's tremendously influential Vestiges of Creation, published anonymously in 1844.³

The popularizing of scientific theories was still possible during this period; the essential theories of science could be understood by a reasonably educated mid-Victorian layman without any training in advanced mathematics. Science was intimately related to public affairs, from the Public Health campaign in the early years of Victoria's reign to the movement towards more efficient farming after the repeal of the Corn Laws and the problems caused by German industrial competition from the 1870's. Scientists themselves were becoming increasingly professionalized, and with professionalization, came emancipation from the conservative influences of theology and aristocratic patronage. The characteristic eighteenth-century figure of the squire or parson who was an amateur scientist was superseded by the

professional scientist attached to a university or scientific institution. Scientific education increasingly developed. The formation of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1833 was an important step in this direction.

If the tangible achievements of scientists were one reason for the prestige of science in mid-Victorian England, then the association of science and scientific thinking was another equally important reason for this prestige. During the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, the Baconian idea of discovering the laws of nature by empirical observation had been extended to cover the study of human society. The French philosophes taught that the latter could be transformed through the application of intellect to its problems and discrepancies. "Scientific" and "rational" became synonymous in the eighteenth century when English radicals like Tom Paine and William Godwin on the one hand, and Jeremy Bentham and James Mill on the other, looked for a rationalizing of society in accordance with the laws of nature or the principle of utility. The most important development in nineteenth-century intellectual history was "the extension of scientific assumptions and methods from the physical world to the whole life of man."⁴ This in turn was associated with the widely supported belief in the upward progress of man and society as a natural process, a cult which was partly the child of the Romantic idealization of the noble potential in man and partly of the Enlightenment and Whig view of English history as propagated by historians like Thomas Babington Macaulay.⁵

The emerging concept of a "science of society" was chiefly a product of French thought. Thinkers like De Maistre, Saint Simon and Fourier had been prompted into social speculations by the overthrow of old institutions during the French Revolution. The most influential of these fathers of social science in the nineteenth century was Auguste Comte.⁶ He started from Saint Simon's two premises; that political phenomena were as capable of being grouped under scientific laws as any other phenomena; and that the true task of philosophy was the social one of reorganizing moral, religious and political systems.⁷ What distinguished Comte from his contemporaries and made him so tremendously influential in the nineteenth century was his realisation that the social order could not be transformed until

"all the theoretic conceptions that belong to it have been rekindled in a scientific spirit, and maturely gathered up into a systematic whole with the rest of our knowledge."⁸

This "systematic whole" was to be based on his "law of the three stages" - the foundation of his philosophy of history, expounded in his Philosophie Positive published between 1830 and 1842. He believed that Western thought had passed through two necessary stages; the "theological", when society was seen as having a supernatural foundation; and the "metaphysical" when deference to the divine had been replaced by deference to abstract concepts, such as natural right and popular sovereignty. The third necessary stage in social evolution was to be the "scientific" or "positive" stage. The natural sciences had already progressed to the positive stage, but sociology still retained

conceptions from the two earlier ones. The study of society had therefore to be brought into the same homogeneous whole as chemistry and physics.⁹

Comte's essential prerequisite for progress was the synthesis of all knowledge in a scientific spirit. All metaphysical explanations of the nature of things were to be disclaimed as pre-scientific. It was impossible to pass beyond 'phenomena' or the direct derivations of observation and generalisations concerning these observations to a more ultimate reality. Phenomena were to be explained by scientific laws of which they were an instance. Knowledge increased in proportion to its approximation with the forms of explanation which had been achieved in the physical and natural sciences. Philosophy had to be transformed into science. The idea of synthesizing knowledge in accordance with scientific laws was extremely attractive to scientifically minded intellectuals who linked scientific enlightenment with social reform, and who saw religious orthodoxy and institutions as obstacles to progress. English radicalism in both the working class tradition of Tom Paine and in the Philosophic Radical tradition of Jeremy Bentham had contained strong elements of anti-clericalism but many Victorian intellectuals came to reject the basic theological tenets of Christianity on ethical grounds. First-generation Victorian agnostics like George Eliot, F. W. Newman and J. A. Froude prepared in part by the rationalism of the eighteenth-century philosophes, had found that orthodox Christian doctrines like Original Sin and eternal damnation

for sinners were totally incompatible with their melioristic view of man. Scientific developments in geology and biology, and the application of scientific methods to refute the claims of theologians provided indispensable ammunition for an attack on the ethical implications of Christian orthodoxy.¹⁰ Herbert Spencer, for instance, repelled as a young man by Christian worship and practices, emotionally rejected the religion of his childhood long before scientific thinking could have provided him with any justification for so doing.¹¹

In this sense, then, the popularity of science reflected a deeply ingrained need for an explanation of the universe which was more in accord with ethical expectations. John Stuart Mill, who came the nearest of any English thinker to setting out Comte's conclusions in their entirety, published his System of Logic in 1843 with the purpose of providing, in Leslie Stephen's words, "a logical armory for all assailants of established dogmatism."¹² The methods established by Newton were now to be extended to analyze the laws of human behaviour. Evidence of comparable strength and validity to that provided by the natural sciences was to be provided by the new 'scientific' discipline of history. The critical study of primary sources, including the Bible, by means of the Higher Criticism of German writers like Strauss, was adopted by British Historians such as H. T. Buckle and J. R. Seeley, and by scientifically-minded theologians such as the Broad Church authors of the controversial Essays and Reviews (1861).

Mill's System of Logic laid the basis for a "true positivism", according to John Morley, by establishing "at the bottom of men's minds the habit of seeking explanations of all phenomena in experience and building up from the beginning the great positive principle that we can only know phenomena, and can only know them experientially."¹³ Herbert Spencer, in his First Principles (1852), while claiming much of the philosophic domain for science, relegated certain questions to what he called the "Unknowable". Building upon the "Development Hypothesis" of Chambers's Vestiges of Creation, Spencer sought to encompass the behaviour of all phenomena within one all-inclusive principle of movement from the homogeneous through the heterogeneous to the homogeneous again. The keynote of this "Synthetic Philosophy", as he called it, was "survival of the fittest". Spencer's speculations on the operation of an evolutionary process in nature preceded by seven years Darwin's scientific verification of the same process. Adapting Lamarck's theory that all animals instinctively try to adapt themselves to their environment, Spencer argued vigorously that humans inevitably became less and less predatory as they fully adapted themselves to the needs of social life. Progress was "not an accident but a necessity" and it was inevitable that evil and immorality would disappear and man would become perfect.¹⁴

Although evolutionary ideas were thus prevalent well before 1859, the real significance of The Origin of Species was that it scientifically proved the existence of evolution in nature, while

appearing definitively to contradict the traditional metaphysical assumption of an ordered universe. Order there was in Darwin's universe, but it was an order begotten of chance interreactions and variations in the life of species.¹⁵ It was this predominance which chiefly caused the shattering effect of The Origin on the Victorian reading public. And it was precisely this element of chance which gave a firm scientific sanction for a frontal assault on the pretensions of theology and metaphysics. The old eighteenth-century alliance of science and religion, "the argument from design", based on the Newtonian concept of God as a kind of Divine Mechanic, was now completely untenable. Darwin's findings could not disprove God's existence by destroying the old argument that the presence of design in natural processes gave logical proof of the existence of a benevolent supernatural being behind this design. But what they did do was crucially to undermine the only argument in favour of God's existence which had any appeal for those who accepted the positivist doctrine that all knowledge derives from the observation of natural processes. It therefore followed that a positively-minded person should rest content with the characteristic agnostic doctrine that the ultimate reality of God could neither be discounted nor proved.

Over a hundred years before Darwin, David Hume had argued that it was impossible to conclude the existence of a supernatural being from the observation of natural processes, but his arguments had been largely neglected in Britain in favour of the argument from design as

re-formulated in William Paley's Natural Theology (1803). But it was only after reading Darwin that people like T. H. Huxley came to read Hume and to appreciate his arguments.

Huxley, in fact, had the distinction of first using the term "agnostic" in print. This was in his essay on "The Physical Basis of Life" which was published in the Fortnightly Review in 1869. John Morley, the editor of the Fortnightly at that time, later compared the controversy caused by this essay with the stir that "in a political epoch" had been made by Swift's Conduct of the Allies or Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France.

"No article that has appeared in any periodical for a generation back . . . excited so profound a sensation as Huxley's memorable paper."¹⁶

The agnostic position of writers like Huxley and Leslie Stephen was based partly on Darwin and partly on two very important theories expounded by Mill in his System of Logic. The first of these theories was phenomenalism: the idea that man can only have knowledge of phenomena through experience; and the second, his law of causality (the relation of cause and effect). The latter is defined by Webster's Dictionary as

"the familiar truth that invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in nature and some other fact which has preceded it."¹⁷

These two ideas enabled scientific concepts to be applied to any area of intellectual endeavour merely by reducing the subject matter -- whether it were physical nature, mind, art, society or morals -- to phenomena. Any religious belief that could not be sustained by verifiable empirical facts became a legitimate target for the agnostic challenge of writers like Huxley and Stephen. Agnosticism was a means of banishing certain metaphysical remnants in practical scientific research. This was particularly so in psychology where metaphysical terminology like "soul" plagued those who wished to turn the discipline into a positive science. Rather than being a theory of knowledge, agnosticism was a cultural stance. As Frank Miller Turner points out, it was by asserting that man lacked sufficient knowledge to decide whether the universe was material, spiritual, or ruled over by a deity, that the agnostics were able to reject "a culture and cultural values that depended upon answers to such questions." The positivist theory of knowledge combined with the agnostic standpoint towards issues inaccessible to this knowledge "constituted the primary intellectual apology for both the necessity and the adequacy of an entirely secular culture."¹⁸

Looking back on the period which saw the foundation of the positivist Fortnightly Review in 1865, Morley wrote of a "common readiness" in the public mind "to extend an excited welcome to explanation, whether of species or social phenomena, by general laws, at the expense of special providence."¹⁹ Writing on "The Dread and Dislike

of Science" in the Fortnightly in 1878, G. H. Lewes looked to the extension of science into all fields of knowledge, and castigated the opponents of this as obstructing the essential progress of civilization.

"We are slowly beginning to recognize that there may be a science of History, a science of Language, a science of Religion, and in fact, that all knowledge may be systematized on a common Method. The facts of the External Order, which yield a Cosmology, are supplemented by the facts of the Internal Order, which yield a Psychology, and the facts of the Social Order, which yield a Sociology. These are all comprised in Science The Principles which have guided us successfully in the first are to be followed in the others. The three classes of facts are all facts of Experience, so far as they are known, and must all be tested, classified and systematized by the same rules. Those, therefore, who sneer at Science, and would obstruct its diffusion, are sneering against the effort to make all knowledge systematic, and are obstructing the advance of civilization."²⁰

Instead of calling for a purified faith like previous critics of religion, the men of science were saying that ethics were not intrinsically related to religion, that religion itself was a survival of primitive animism, and that a religiously-oriented culture should be replaced by a scientifically-directed culture dominated by scientifically minded men. Vigorously arguing the cause of science and scientific thinking in books, periodicals and on public platforms ranging from university lecture rooms to Mechanics' Institutes, they constituted the most eloquent and influential group on the Victorian intellectual scene in the second half of the century. Their numbers included professional scientists like Huxley, Professor of Biology at

the Royal College of Mines and Darwin's chief apologist; John Tyndall, physicist and superintendant of the Royal Institution; W. K. Clifford, a mathematician at University College, London, and Sir Francis Galton, the eugenicist and statistician. A related coterie comprised the English followers of Comte: John Morley of the Fortnightly, the chief organ for the dissemination of positivist ideas; G. H. Lewes, positivist historian and psychologist; J. S. Mill, the most distinguished British commentator on Comte; and H. T. Buckle, the leading practitioner of the scientific approach to historical studies. Leslie Stephen was pre-eminent amongst men of letters and essayists pleading the cause of science and agnosticism, while on a more popular plane Herbert Spencer was the most renowned exponent of "Synthetic Philosophy" and the "Development Hypothesis".

Combining scientific research, polemical wit, and literary eloquence, they possessed a strong moral commitment to the advance of scientific knowledge which probably owed as much to Thomas Carlyle's call for a new social and intellectual elite, an aristocracy of talent, as it did to the theories of Comte.²¹ They made a firm stand in favour of functional scientific education against religious orthodoxy, received opinion, and classical education. Their purpose was to create a secular climate of opinion that would enable scientists to penetrate the institutions of education, industry, and government in the cause of material progress and the social amelioration of the nation. As Huxley lectured to a group of working men in 1866 "On Improving Natural

Knowledge", it was

"Our highest duty to recognize the advisableness of improving natural knowledge, and so to aid ourselves and our successors in our course toward the noble goal which lies before mankind."²²

Their tremendous zest and ebullience combined with their wide range of interests and contacts enabled them to spread their gospel of the benefits of scientific endeavour to audiences right across the social spectrum. They combined the critical mentality of the eighteenth-century philosophes with the fervour for popular instruction which had inspired working class radicals since the days of Tom Paine, through the Chartist period into the era of Mechanics' Institutes, Owenite Halls of Science, and the publications of popular scientists like Chambers.

Their influence was at its height during the 1870's but its effect was being felt from 1843-4 on when Mill's Logic and Chambers's Vestiges were being published. Between then and 1859, important works by G. H. Lewes, George Eliot and Harriet Martineau came out. The Fifties were, in the famous words of G. M. Young:

"a time of preparation; of deep-seated folding, straining and faulting: old strata and new shifting against each other into fantastic and precarious poises."²³

The forces of the Church of England and Oxford, bastions of intellectual conservatism and religious orthodoxy, remained strong during this decade,

despite the tremendous shock caused by the defection of their greatest intellect, John Henry Newman, to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845.

The 1860's were the crucial decade in the confrontation between agnostic scientific naturalism and religious conservatism. The Origin of Species was followed by the liberal Anglicanism of the author of Essays and Reviews (1861), who argued in favour of an accommodation between theology and science; conservative attacks upon Bishop Colenso, another liberal cleric; and the publication in 1865 of Ecce Homo, J. R. Seeley's humanistic life of Christ. Most significant of all were the Oxford Museum Debate on Darwinism between Huxley and the High Church Bishop Wilberforce in 1861, and the founding of the Fortnightly Review in 1865 to propagate positivist ideas. 1869 saw the founding of the Metaphysical Society, whose members were the most eminent figures of cultural, intellectual, and public life, to consider the bearing of scientific naturalism on morality, society, and the social order. Members included Gladstone, Bagehot, Ruskin, Tennyson, Stephen, F. D. Maurice, Cardinal Manning, Tyndall, Huxley, and Clifford.

From the 1860's also, with the formation of the first Gladstone Ministry and its policies of disestablishing the Irish Church, opening the Universities, and abolishing church rates, the secular cause became specifically associated with a political movement. Before then, as Noel Annan points out, the supporters of religious orthodoxy and intellectual conservatism were weak philosophically, but politically

were far stronger than their critics.²⁴

It was the 1870's which saw the triumph of science and the secularization of large segments of informed opinion. All of the serious periodicals of the Seventies were full of attacks upon the battered corpse of theology. Morley compared the Victorian Reviews, particularly the Fortnightly, as central sources for "the fresh flowing currents of thought and debate," with the Encyclopédie for the eighteenth century and the writings of Port Royal for the seventeenth.²⁵ He quoted A. W. Benn, who in his History of English Rationalism (1906) chose 1877 as the year in which nineteenth-century rationalism reached "its most intense expression." Morley wrote that it was in the latter half of that year that nearly every number of the Fortnightly contained "an attack by some powerful writer, either on theology as a whole, or on some generally accepted article of theological belief."

"Everything that the illuminating explanation of all things on earth and in the heavens above the earth could be stretched to bring within its sphere, was pressed through our ordeal. Evolution was passed on from the laboratory and the study to the parlour, and the eternal riddles that a dozen years before had been proposed and answered, and then in their crudest form, in obscure debating societies and secularist clubs, now lay upon the table with the popular magazines. When all this free-spoken and extremely competent dissent from orthodoxy came to be found in company with ideas on social and political renovation of various sorts, the combination awoke a trifle of discontent in the old hands of the political world."

As an example of this discontent, Morley cited Frederick Harrison's

defence of trades unions which had caused the Fortnightly to be regarded as an "incendiary publication". Some of his own papers on National Education were "thought to indicate a deliberate plot for suppressing the Scriptures" in schools.²⁶ This period during which Mill's Logic became what Leslie Stephen called "a sacred Scripture for Liberal intellectuals"²⁷ was also the era of the agitations of the Reform League, the 1867 Reform Bill, and the emergence of the working-class franchise with an organized proletarian identity. The old working-class atheist and free thinking tradition had absorbed the creed of Secularism as propagated by George Jacob Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh. Secularism, made up from elements of popular science and positivism, had a marked effect on working-class education and opinion and was one of the parents of the Labour Movement. As Beatrice Webb mentions in My Apprenticeship (1926), Halls of Science were springing up in working-class districts in the 1870's and 1880's. She writes of how Bradlaugh, "the fearless exponent of scientific materialism and the 'Fruits of Philosophy', was the most popular demagogue of the hour." Despite the opposition of the Establishment of Church and State he imposed himself on the House of Commons by force of character and widespread popular support, forcing it to abandon the theological test for membership. Webb argues that during this period it looked as if whole sections of the elite of the British proletariat "would be swept, like the corresponding class on the Continent, into a secularist movement."²⁸

Riding the crest of this wave of secularism and science were

the scientific thinkers themselves. Looking back on her youthful friendship with Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, and Galton, Webb wrote:

"For who will deny that the men of science were the leading British intellectuals of that period; that it was they who stood out as men of genius with international reputations; that it was they who were routing the theologians, confounding the mystics, imposing their theories on philosophers, their inventions on capitalists, and their discoveries on medical men; whilst they were at the same time snubbing the artists, ignoring the poets, and even casting doubts on the politicians."

It was, she declared, difficult to understand in the light of the Great War, "the naive belief of the most original and vigorous minds of the 'seventies and 'eighties that it was by science, and by science alone, that all human misery would be ultimately swept away."²⁹

Walter Pater was concerned with the artists who were snubbed and the poets who were ignored by the "men of science". In order to understand how his justification of imaginative thought relates to this scientific tradition, it is necessary to attempt an analysis of the Victorian scientific world-view of the cosmology of the "men of science".

CHAPTER TWO

THE COSMOLOGY OF VICTORIAN SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM

What impressed the Victorians about the public advocates of science was their single-minded devotion to its advancement, their unanimous conviction that

"in the struggle of life with the facts of existence, Science is a bringer of aid; in the struggle of the soul with the mystery of existence, Science is a bringer of light."¹

They were, in fact, far from being a monolithic group. Their confident, controversial, and sometimes arrogant public tone reflected their zeal for scientific enlightenment; but in private they were more introspective, even self-doubting, and none of them embraced all of the scientific ideas and attitudes with which they were associated in the mind of the public. Morley recalled that in the early days of the Fortnightly:

"People quarrelled for a short season whether we should be labelled Comtist, Positivist, Naturalist. They were conscious of a certain concurrence in

the writers, though it was not easy to define."²

Positivism is hardly suitable as a generic term because few of these thinkers accepted the whole of Comte's system and followed his lead in speculating on the nature of society in the positive stage. The British empirical tradition was perhaps too strong to allow for the advocacy of a system characterized by T. H. Huxley as "Catholicism minus Christianity". Both Spencer and Huxley, two of the most influential proponents of scientific naturalism, strongly objected to their own ideas being labelled as positivist.³ Even those like Frederick Harrison, who professed positivism, never became complete disciples of Comte. In his methodology, J. S. Mill probably came closer to Comte than any other English thinker. According to Morley his object, like that of Comte, was "to extend positive modes of thinking to the master subjects of morals, politics and religion" but, unlike Comte, he refrained from any "premature attempt" to decide what would be the result of this "much needed extension". Mill was content to do as much as possible "to engender the positive spirit and temper."⁴ It was this "positive spirit" rather than any wish to implement Comte's highly systematic and occasionally esoteric schemes for the re-ordering of society which inspired most of Mill's admirers. The most inclusive phrase to describe the world-view of those who sought the extension of the "positive spirit" is "Victorian Scientific Naturalism". For historical reasons, outlined in the first section of this work, this scientific movement was particularly Victorian. "Naturalism" and

"naturalistic" were the terms most frequently used to denote the movement by the close of the nineteenth century.⁵

Although the term "naturalism" was chiefly given currency by A. J. Balfour's The Foundations of Belief (1895), the concept stemmed from the seventeenth century and in particular from Locke's theory of primary qualities which had "emphatically" opposed "what is real to what we make for ourselves - the work of nature to the work of the mind."⁶ Knowledge for Locke was only 'real' when there was "a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things." "The mind begins as a sheet of white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas."⁷ All knowledge was founded on experience. While an object could never be known directly, an observer could know that "the thing as it is in itself" resembled certain primary qualities which could be sensed in it, namely "bulk, figure, numbers, situation and motion."⁸ These primary qualities were contrasted with secondary qualities such as colours, sounds, and tastes which only existed in the perceiver's mind.

This external world of nature could be described through what Bacon called "the opening and laying out of a road for the human understanding direct from the sense, by a course of experiment carefully conducted and built up."⁹ It was a world of matter and motion; Descartes had said "Give me extension and motion and I will construct the universe" and this was decisively summarized by Newton in Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy:

"All energy is reduced to kinetic energy, the energy of motion; all qualitative differences in the world to quantitative differences of the size, shape and speed of particles of matter"¹⁰

The entry under "Naturalism" in the 1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica similarly refers to knowledge being gained through systematic observation of the physical world, a world which can be reduced to "a mechanism describable in terms of matter and motion."¹¹

This entry in the encyclopaedia, written by the Cambridge psychologist and philosopher James Ward, refers to "the use of the term Naturalism in the present day" being mainly determined by "the anti-thesis of natural to spiritual or ideal . . . All our knowledge is confined to the phenomenal." What distinguished the Victorian movement from other philosophies of pure experience or from Kantian or Humean phenomenalism and made it scientifically naturalistic was that "it derived its repudiation of supernaturalism and idealism and its new interpretation of man, nature and society from theories, methods and categories of empirical science rather than from rational analysis."¹² Knowledge acquired through the "scientific method" was the only real knowledge and it was knowledge which became more adequate as it "approximates the forms of explanation which have been achieved by the most advanced sciences."¹³ Naturalistic writers used this idea to enable them to formulate what they considered to be a complete "Weltanschauung" that "separates Nature from God, subordinates Spirit to Matter and sets up an unchangeable law as supreme."¹⁴

The most complete statement of this new Weltanschauung was that given by Mill on what he considered to be the essential nature of positivist philosophy.

We have no knowledge of anything but Phenomena; and our knowledge of phenomena is relative, not absolute. We know not the essence, nor the real mode of production, of any fact, but only its relation to other facts in the way of succession or similitude. These relations are constant; that is, always the same in the same circumstances. The constant resemblances which link phenomena together, and the constant sequences which unite them as antecedent or consequent, are termed their laws. The laws of phenomena are all we know respecting them. Their essential nature and their causes . . . are unknown and inscrutable to us."¹⁵

The only knowledge that was real was thus that which could be quantified in terms of constant and universal laws.

It was this "great conception of universal regular sequence, without partiality and without caprice", reinforced by Mill's law of causality, which George Eliot described in 1865 as "the most potent force at work in the modification of our faith, and of the practical form given to our sentiments." As Eliot pointed out, "it could only grow out of that patient watching of external fact, and that silencing of preconceived notions, which are urged upon the mind by the problems of physical science."¹⁶ Not, as W. R. Grove reminded the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1866, that continuity was anything new. What had happened was that the seventeenth-century concept of universal natural activity had been extended to chemistry,

physics, biology, psychology, medicine, and the emerging science of sociology. As Huxley pointed out, the value of the extension of this principle was "to narrow the range and loosen the force of men's belief in spontaneity, or in changes other than such as arise out of that definite order (of nature) itself."¹⁷

By the 1870's this concept of continuity was being used by the exponents of scientific naturalism to support a model of nature based on three seminal theories of nineteenth-century science. These theories were Dalton's atomic theory, the law of conservation of energy, and evolution.

"All three doctrines are intimately connected, and each is applicable to the whole physical cosmos."¹⁸

Spencer employed the three theories for "the interpretation of all phenomena in terms of Matter, Motion and Force."¹⁹ As F. M. Turner states so concisely:

"Reduced to the common denominators of evolving matter and energy, all natural phenomena could be explained mechanically and interpreted without reference to God, supernatural agencies, or independent mind."²⁰

Dalton's atomic theory of matter provided the primary example of the continuity of physical nature. Tyndall, Huxley and Spencer and the psychologist Alexander Bain, used it to popularize an easily visualized picture of matter composed of small, round, solid, indestructible particles from particular arrangements of which came all the material

manifestations of the physical world.

The law of conservation of energy explained the operation of the mechanism which was portrayed as nature by the atomic theory. By appearing to prove that the mechanism of nature was closed to all external interference because the amount of energy in the universe remained constant throughout all transformations of atoms, it categorically delineated what was naturally possible. Tyndall wrote in 1861:

"The proteus changes, but he is ever the same; and his changes in nature, supposing no miracle to supervene, are the expression, not of spontaneity, but of physical necessity . . . the principle of conservation is - no creation! but infinite conversion."²¹

This had immense significance for contemporaries. As supernatural interference with the course of nature by miracles, spirits, or God would have to involve the introduction of new energy into the universe, it is plausible to argue, as does Turner, that this law was more destructive to the supernatural interpretation of nature than was evolution by natural selection.

Evolution was based on the nebular hypothesis in physics and Darwin's theory of natural selection in biology. Spencer and Tyndall were the chief advocates of the nebular hypothesis. They used it to explain the universe as a continually developing process of matter and energy through time. Spencer defined evolution in First Principles:

"Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion: during which the matter passes from a (relatively) indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a (relatively) definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."²²

In conjunction with continuity, atomism, and the conservation of energy, this theory of physical evolution enabled naturalistic writers to suggest that the human mind was perhaps no more than a manifestation of atoms and energy.

The theory of development ascribed to physical forms by the nebular hypothesis was extended to biological organisms by natural selection. Changes in organic structures could similarly be reduced to rearrangements of matter and energy independent of any supernatural agencies. Darwin himself, of course, disclaimed any anti-religious element in his work. As Morse Peckham points out "Darwinism is a scientific theory about the origins of biological species from pre-existent species (and) the mechanism of that process," and should be distinguished from economic, moral, or psychological theories which claim to be supported by The Origin.²³ In this respect evolution by natural selection was only the final, albeit the authoritative element, in a much broader naturalistic synthesis of man and nature that had been emerging since the late eighteenth century.

The impact usually associated with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer and Tyndall was part of a larger movement which embraced a number of

naturalistic approaches to the earth and to man in utilitarianism, in population theory, in geology, phrenology, psychology, and in theology itself. The utilitarian theories of Bentham, the Mills and their followers involved the application of natural laws to men and morality while Thomas Malthus's Essay on the Principle of Population, as it affects the future improvement of society, with remarks on the speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet and other writers (1798) had called the benevolence of both nature and man into question. Nature was cruel, and vice, war, misery and famine were unavoidable consequences of her laws unless man restrained his sensual appetites. Progress was only to be achieved through painful struggle and thrift. This Malthusian spectre cast a great shadow over the benevolent and harmonious image of nature propagated in William Godwin's Political Justice (1793) and William Paley's Evidences of Christianity (1794) and Natural Theology (1803). Paley was, in fact, the last representative of the eighteenth-century tradition of natural philosophy based on design and harmony which was replaced by scientific naturalism. His ideas inspired the twelve-volume Bridgewater Treatises on the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation (1833-36).

By the 1830's, when the Bridgewater Treatises were being published, the word "science" had largely replaced "natural philosophy" as a designation of the study of nature, while the argument from design itself had been decisively undermined by Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1830-1833) which brought into question divine intervention in

nature through catastrophic upheavals,²⁴ such as those described in Genesis. Chambers's anonymously published Vestiges of Creation (1844) provided the speculative basis for the British debate on evolution, particularly as this developed in the work of Spencer. In the Vestiges, Chambers drew on another naturalistic tradition about man and animals and argued that phrenology demonstrated that the principle of the uniformity of nature should extend to man's mind and brain. This idea was also expounded by the Oxford Professor of Geometry, Baden Powell. The primary source for Victorian phrenology, George Combe's The Constitution of Man, Considered in Relation to External Objects (1828), was selling 2,500 copies a year in 1843, and had sold 100,000 copies by 1900.²⁵

Controversy over the Vestiges was, if anything, more heated than that caused later by Darwin. By 1880 it had sold more than 2,500 copies. Darwin himself made reference to the way that its author's "powerful and brilliant style" had given it "immediately . . . a very wide circulation."

"In my opinion it has done excellent service in this country in calling attention to the subject, in removing prejudices, and in thus preparing the ground for the reception of analogous views."²⁶

Progress in geological science during the first half of the nineteenth century was an essential prologue to the successful formulation of a theory of biological evolution. Since the seventeenth century those physical phenomena which were inexplicable on scientific grounds had

been accounted for by divine intervention. It was therefore inevitable that as the sphere of science expanded, that of theology receded, there being fewer empirical illustrations of God's immediate control over the physical world. The Origin of Species represented the final defeat of an argument which had started to run into difficulties as soon as geologists brought scientific methods to bear upon the development and history of nature.

Although there had been major controversies over Lyell's geology and Chambers's evolutionism, it was Darwin's scientifically reputable argument that came as the weightier blow. His findings were necessarily fatal to the idea of God as craftsman and overseer, as Francis Darwin pointed out in her biography.

"We can no longer argue that, for instance, the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made by an intelligent being, like the hinge of a door by man. There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings, and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows."²⁷

A great chasm seemed to have opened up between God and nature. Darwin introduced the idea that order had been created by mere chance in the world, and the metaphysical significance of this seemed appalling to many Victorians. It was felt that the whole edifice of traditional social, ethical, and theological values was at stake. The natural selection theory was revolutionary in that it was able to stand without any supernatural element. It consequently became the central point in

the debate on the philosophic basis of scientific enquiry which loomed so large in the 1860's and 1870's. It was chiefly thanks to Darwin that in his Presidential Address to the British Association in Belfast in 1874, John Tyndall was able to claim that science had the unrestricted right to investigate all of nature.²⁸

Darwin was one of a chain of thinkers who had extended scientific procedures into fields where they had seemed to be quite inapplicable. Copernicus, Galileo and Newton had destroyed the supposition that the terrestrial and the celestial belonged to different orders of reality, and Harvey and Descartes had shown that mechanical processes were to be found within the human body. Darwin showed that species were no exception to the processes of change characteristic of physical objects, and that man was not as unique as the Bible would have him believe.²⁹

In terms of this study the chief significance of The Origin of Species was that by introducing the idea that chance begets order, it decisively undermined not only Christian theology but the complete metaphysical structure of European thought since the time of Plato. The concept of a Great Chain of Being ascending in an ordered hierarchy from the lowest forms of life through man to God had survived eighteenth-century sceptics like Voltaire, who, while degrading the role of Christ, still accepted the traditional metaphysics of a rational universe. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Great Chain had

become temporalized to include the notion of progress; but the universe was still seen as rational. Natural theologians following Paley, and Romanticists following Wordsworth and Coleridge, had come to see the universe as a symbol of divinity. The anguish caused by Darwin was as much the result of his seeming scientifically to contradict both the rationalist and romanticist world-views, as by his challenge to theology.

PART II

WALTER PATER

"Reason is the enumeration of qualities already known; imagination is the perception of the value of those qualities, both separately and as a whole . . . Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, and the shadow to the substance."

P. B. Shelley, A Defence of Poetry,
London, 1821, (1904), p. 3.

"He wrote of me in that extravagant style he had learnt from Pater."

W. B. Yeats, "The Phases of the Moon",
Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats,
London, 1933, (1950), p. 184.

CHAPTER ONE

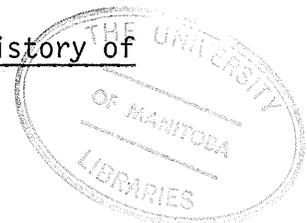
LIFE AND WORKS

Walter Horatio Pater was born in 1839 into an old Catholic family of Dutch extraction, which had come to England in the train of William of Orange.¹ The French portrait-painter Jean-Baptiste Pater was numbered among his ancestors. Although it had been a family tradition for sons to be brought up as Roman Catholics and daughters as Anglicans, Walter's father, a Dr. Richard Pater, left the Church before his marriage, and so Walter and his short-lived elder brother were the first male Paters not to be brought up as Catholics.

At the age of fourteen Walter went to King's School, Canterbury. Shortly before entering Queen's College, Oxford to read Greats he came under the influence of John Ruskin through reading the latter's Modern Painters (1846-60). University vacations were spent with his sisters in Germany where he acquired the sound knowledge of German, and of Hegel in particular, which was later to stand him in good stead.

After graduating in 1862 he took rooms in Oxford High Street and coached private pupils. In the following year he was elected to the Old Mortality, an essay group which flourished in Oxford between 1858 and 1865 and whose ranks at the time Pater joined included the Hegelian philosopher Edward Caird and the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne. A childhood meeting with the great Tractarian John Keble had instilled in Pater the ambition to become an Anglican priest. This ambition persisted, much to the shock of his friends, even after he had lost his Christian faith. As late as 1864 when his interests had become what Edmund Gosse called "mainly philosophical" he considered becoming a Unitarian minister.² These theocratic ambitions were finally abandoned in 1865 when he was elected as a non-clerical fellow of Brasenose, thanks chiefly to his knowledge of German philosophy. As Gosse puts it, "his early visits to Germany led him to value all things German."³

In 1865 he visited Italy for the first time, in the company of his former pupil, C. L. Shadwell, later a fellow and provost of Oriel. Visits to Ravenna, Pisa and Florence were to powerfully colour Pater's intellectual development. His first publication, an essay on Coleridge, appeared in the Westminster Review in 1866, where it was followed by a study of the eighteenth-century German Hellenist Winckelmann in 1867. He became a frequent contributor to the major periodicals of the day, particularly the Fortnightly Review. "Leonardo Da Vinci", the first of the essays which later made up his seminal Studies in the History of



the Renaissance (1873), was published in the Fortnightly in 1869.

From 1869 Pater also became associated with the Pre-Raphaelite group of painters and poets and their successors in the Aesthetic Movement. Oscar Wilde, in particular, hailed Pater as one of the founding fathers of aestheticism, and through Wilde, Pater became a potent influence on young poets of the 1890's such as W. B. Yeats. Yeats described in his Autobiographies how Wilde praised The Renaissance during their first meeting:

"It is my golden book; I never travel anywhere without it; but it is the very flower of decadence: the last trumpet should have sounded the moment it was written."⁴

Pater continued to live with his sisters in Oxford during these years of success. Long vacations were spent abroad, usually in France and Germany. His full-length novel Marius the Epicurean, the story of a young Roman in the age of Marcus Aurelius, appeared in 1885. According to Gosse, "Modern humanism has produced no more admirable product than this noble dream of a pursuit through life of the spirit of heavenly beauty."⁵ From 1886 to 1893 Pater lived in Kensington but he returned to Oxford for what was to be the last year of his life. He died in July 1894.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT, SCIENCE AND HEGEL

The Aesthetic Movement was contemporaneous with the high-water mark of scientific naturalism in the eighteen-sixties and 'seventies. The phrase "art for art's sake" had originally been used by the French writer Theophile Gautier in the 1830's. It was first used in England by the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne in his work on William Blake, published in 1868, and achieved the status of a cult as a result of Walter Pater's adoption of it in the "Conclusion" to his highly influential Studies in the History of the Renaissance, which appeared in 1873. It received widespread currency thanks chiefly to the public posturings of the painter James McNeill Whistler and of Oscar Wilde in the 1880's.

As an artistic and literary movement English aestheticism was somewhat amorphous. It can be seen as partly emerging from the escapism and idealized medievalism associated with the painters and poets of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and as developing into the self-proclaimed

"Decadence" of poets of the 1890's, notably Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson and the poet-critic Arthur Symons. Although he rigorously dissociated himself from the idea of "art for art's sake", Matthew Arnold was a seminal influence on its development. As T. S. Eliot put it "the total effect of Arnold's philosophy [was] to set up Culture in the place of Religion."¹ This exaltation of the place of art in life was the chief characteristic of English aestheticism. In part it was a reaction against the constrictions of a Victorian moral code whose historical basis was being progressively undermined by scientific developments. It was, however, equally a reaction against the materialistic determinism of scientists like Huxley and Tyndall. "The more materialistic science becomes", wrote the Pre-Raphaelite painter Edmund Burne-Jones, "the more angels I shall paint."²

In common with the heterodoxy of Victorian Scientific Naturalism, nineteenth-century aestheticism was built on foundations laid by eighteenth-century thinkers. But whereas, for instance, Herbert Spencer had followed the French philosophes in rejecting Christianity on ethical grounds, the chief criteria in the abandonment of Christianity by Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater were aesthetic.³ Arnold and Pater adopted the accents of Winckelmann, Schiller and Goethe, the German "Hellenists" of the late eighteenth century, whose works were attracting considerable attention in England by the 1850's. The German Hellenists had sought for a cosmology or a myth more in keeping with the dignity of man than the Christian, but as their standard they had

appealed to 'beauty' rather than to the 'truth' of the major figures of the Enlightenment.

Writing in the 1790's, Friedrich Schiller had cited the ancient Greeks as examples of perfected humanity, who had blended feeling and thought in a way denied to modern man by the failure of society and religion. His appeal to the Hellenic spirit was echoed seventy years later by Matthew Arnold in Culture and Anarchy (1867). The best art and poetry of the Greeks, Arnold wrote, went beyond Christianity, or indeed any religion in listening to "all the voices of human experience." In working towards the ideal of "a harmonious expansion of all the powers which make the worth of human nature, whether manifested in beauty, in human nature, or in the religious spirit, it formed an essential bulwark in the 'mechanical and external' civilisation of the nineteenth century."⁴ The problem, as Walter Pater saw it, in his essay on Winckelmann published in the same year, was whether this ideal could "be communicated to artistic productions which contained the fulness of the experience of the modern world" and whether it was a viable proposition in "the gaudy, perplexed light of modern life."⁵

Like German Hellenism, the Aesthetic Movement was an attempt to introduce some new source of value into a society which was increasingly becoming aware, in the words of Arnold, that its accumulated inheritance "of institutions, established facts, accredited dogmas, customs, rules" did not bear a significant relation to the needs of the modern world.

Arnold saw the growth of this awareness in the work of Goethe as "the awakening of the modern spirit."⁶ Between the world of Arnold and Pater and that of the German Hellenists there was, however, a crucial difference. In the words of David J. De Laura in his important work Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold and Pater (Austin, Texas and London, 1969): "There hovers over much of Arnold's and Pater's work the intimidating specter (sic) of 'Science', stern, unrelenting, equipped by Huxley and others, with a superseding 'morality' of its own."⁷ De Laura calls "the solidifying orthodoxy of scientific naturalism" an obstacle which seemed to preclude any return to either historic, supernatural Christianity, or to the "natural supernaturalism" of Goethe's contemporaries, the English Romantic poets.⁸

In the 1830's and 1840's, John Henry Newman and his followers in the Oxford Movement had sought to defend the Established Church from the attacks of Utilitarians and Whigs by emphasizing its place in the historic Catholic Tradition and the efficacy of its theology and its sacraments. The Oxford Movement had in turn given birth to the Ritualist Movement which had sought to return to the Church of England all of the beauties of pre-Reformation ceremony. Since Newman's generation, however, John Morley noted in his 1873 review of Pater's The Renaissance "science had come." The ideas of the generation which followed were formed by Mill's Logic and the positivist Grote's History of Greece (1846-56). "The aesthetic spirits were no longer able to find

rest in a system associated with theology," Morley claimed. Then, he went on, came the critic John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelite painters, Swinburne, William Morris "and now lastly a critic like Mr. Pater, all with faces averted from theology." Of Pater he commented on the fact that "a serious writer should thus raise aesthetic interest to the throne lately filled by religion, only shows how void the old theologies have become."⁹

It was also as a result of science that nature could no longer be seen as the Romantic poets had seen it, a symbol of divinity "the emblem of a mind/That feeds upon infinity

" a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form."¹⁰

In Book XIV of The Prelude, Wordsworth had described nature as thus exhibiting to "bodily sense":

" the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty
That higher minds bear with them as their own.
This is the very spirit in which they deal
With the whole compass of the universe."¹¹

The recollections, 'spots of time', as he called them in Book XII of the same work, which Wordsworth most valued, were those which recorded how

"The mind is lord and master - outward sense
The obedient servant of her will."¹²

For Pater, however, "the external problem of culture-balance, unity with

one's self" could no longer be achieved through "any joyful union with the external world: the shadows had grown too long, the light too solemn, for that."¹³

Nature, as perceived by Tennyson in In Memoriam, (according to Huxley, Tennyson was the first poet since Lucretius to have understood the drift of science) and apparently confirmed by Darwin, was "red in tooth and claw."¹⁴ Such a view of nature was not merely the antithesis of Romantic idealization. It went against the whole orientation of European thought since the Renaissance. As A. O. Lovejoy has pointed out, quoting Spinoza, this had been towards making men "the children of a common mother, Nature."¹⁵ The apotheosis of this view in early eighteenth-century England had been expressed by Pope in his Essay on Criticism (1711), where nature was seen as an exemplum of the rational ordering power of God.

"First follow NATURE, and your Judgment frame
By her just Standard, which is still the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and Universal Light,
Life, Force and Beauty, must to all impart,
At once the Source, and End, and Test of Art."¹⁶

Far from seeing nature as representing the most fundamental category of permanence, Tennyson saw it as being itself a part of the temporal process.

"There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands
Like clouds they shape themselves and go."¹⁷

The scientific view that all things, whether material or human, were in constant flux, metamorphosing under the inescapable influence of a variety of complex factors, seemed to make all truths and absolutes relate to a particular moment only. It was the metaphysical implications of this universalization of the spirit of 'laissez-faire' which seemed so appalling to many Victorians. Engels succinctly stated the terms of the dilemma in The Dialectics of Nature (1873-1886):

"Darwin did not know what a bitter satire he wrote on mankind, and especially on his countrymen, when he showed that free competition, the struggle for existence, which the economists celebrate as the highest historical achievement, is the normal state of the animal kingdom."¹⁸

Recalling the spiritual anguish of the 1840's, with the challenges posed by geology on the one hand and positivism on the other, J. A. Froude described how everywhere: "the intellectual lightships had broken from their moorings, and it was then a new and tiring experience."¹⁹ The situation in the 1860's, during Pater's early years at Oxford, was summed up by Arnold:

"There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma, which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve."²⁰

Although Arnold fully accepted what David J. De Laura in the work

already cited calls "the metaphysical enunciations of the Huxleyan dispensation" he deplored the cultural consequences of the abandonment of Christian values which it involved. In an essay of 1864 entitled "The Literary Influence of Academies", he referred to the "baneful notion that there is no such thing as a high, correct standard in intellectual matters; that every one may as well take his own way."²¹ Arnold, defining Culture as "the best that has been known and thought", saw it as a means of restoring a standard.²² Traditional beliefs and institutions were no longer adequate as a basis for ethical conduct so values from imaginative literature had to take their place. The classics of European literature were to be the foundation for the European tradition of ethics and conduct now that its supernatural foundations were gone. Apprehensive of the relativism engendered by scientific naturalism, Arnold continued to look back with deeply felt nostalgia to when

"The sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full . . . "

in 'Dover Beach'. In this poem, which was first published in 1867, Arnold described how all that he could now hear of that sea was "Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar."²³

In common with Arnold, Pater sought to provide a new basis for modern life but he shared none of the latter's nostalgia for a lost age of faith, nor any of his reservations about the new scientific world-view. Instead, he positively welcomed the dissolution of traditional

absolutes into the flux of relativity of knowledge. The flux was celebrated in "The Conclusion" to his essays on The Renaissance, while in the essay "Pico Della Mirandola" in the same volume he referred disparagingly to the medieval cosmology in accents similar to Huxley's. After describing how for Pico in the fifteenth century, the world had been a "limited place, bounded by actual crystal walls, and a material firmament," Pater declared

"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.'"²⁴

The tone of this essay first published in 1871, can be compared with Huxley's, in his On Improving Natural Knowledge (1866):

"The naturalists find man to be no centre of the living world, but one amidst endless modifications of life."²⁵

The confident tones of Pater and Huxley are unmistakably those of men who had fully digested their Darwin. Pater, in fact, went up to Oxford in 1859, the year in which the mechanism of biological evolution became a scientific certainty, and the influence of Darwin underlies all of his work. Darwin's work affected Pater's thought in two principal ways. The Origin of Species had, as Philip Applemen has said, "simultaneously particularised and universalized nineteenth-century

predilections for relativism."²⁶ In Pater's case this led, on the one hand, to his adopting the strict empiricism of Mill's System of Logic in the "Conclusion" to The Renaissance and the essay on "Coleridge" (1866), and on the other to the evolutionary relativism of the "historical method". The latter was a product of Whig, Romantic and scientific ideas of development. It involved the study of all types of social phenomena, institutions, practices and beliefs as the product of a particular environment at a particular point in time. This historicism, by which all things were seen as relative only for a particular society at a particular stage in its evolution was described by Pater in his late work Plato and Platonism (1893).

"In the intellectual world as in the organic world the given product, its normal or abnormal characteristics, are determined, as people say, by the 'environment' . . . To put Plato into his natural place, as a result from antecedent and contemporary movements of Greek speculation, of Greek life generally; such is the proper aim of the historic, that is to say, of the really critical study of him."²⁷

The historical approach was one of the chief ways in which the thought of the nineteenth century differed from that of the previous century. Comte had held that the lack of any historical sense was the chief deficiency of Condorcet and other eighteenth-century precursors of positivism. According to Comte, Condorcet had over-emphasized the superiority of eighteenth-century culture to all past cultures. Condorcet had thus failed to appreciate the contributions of theocracy and medieval feudalism to the historical process out of which

eighteenth-century thought had evolved.²⁸

The seemingly paradoxical way in which, under Darwin's influence, Pater's relativism could take the form of both a sense of impressionistic flux and a historical sense of development and continuity is explained by the intermingling of Darwinism and Hegelian thinking in the 1870's. Evolutionary thinking spread to every branch of knowledge after 1859. The adherents of philosophy, history, the study of nature, and the criticism of art all attempted to claim for themselves the validity of natural science. But at the very time that the influence of evolution was being so extended, evolution itself was being reinterpreted under the influence of Hegel. Pater described this merging of the thought of Darwin and Hegel in Plato and Platonism. "The entire modern theory of 'development'" was the product of "Hegel on the one hand, 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 processes of the eternal mind; and on the other hand of Darwin and Darwinism, for which 'type' itself properly is not, but is only always becoming."²⁹ Hegelian thought was a form of metaphysical idealism, the other main tradition of nineteenth-century philosophic thought besides that of scientific naturalism. Maurice Mandelbaum has described metaphysical idealism as "holding that man has traits which distinguish him as a spiritual being and that these are an expression of the ultimate nature of reality."³⁰ There was a continuing strand of metaphysical idealism in England during the

first half of the nineteenth century. This was chiefly due to the influence of Kant as described in the works of Coleridge, de Quincey and Carlyle. Hegel, however, did not become widely known until the 1850's. Metaphysics, along with religious dogma, were generally in disrepute during Pater's early years at Oxford, while the writings of Comte, Mill and Huxley increased in influence. From 1865, however, Hegelian and metaphysical speculation came to the fore in the universities. The chief cause of this was the 1865 publication of James Stirling's The Secret of Hegel. Stirling's highly influential work was followed by William Wallace's The Logic of Hegel (1874), the first of many English translations. Hegel's thought was disseminated by Benjamin Jowett, the master of Balliol, and Jowett's pupils, the most notable of whom, T. H. Green, led the subsequent Hegelian movement in Oxford. 1876 saw the establishment of Mind, the first journal in English devoted to metaphysical speculation.

There were other signs of a resurgence of metaphysical idealism during these years. The cosmic speculations of In Memoriam (1850) were followed by a revival of interest in William Blake, stimulated by Swinburne's 1868 study. Wordsworth and Coleridge had been praised by Mill himself in his Autobiography (1873). The fame of Carlyle was established in England in 1865 and lasted until his death in 1881. Although he frequently criticized Coleridge's metaphysics, Carlyle was, after the latter, "the most conspicuous anti-Lockist, anti-Benthamist."³¹ Plato was being studied by Jowett alongside Hegel, while Alex Campbell

Fraser's book on the great eighteenth-century idealist Berkeley appeared in 1871.

By 1869, an article in MacMillan's Magazine called "Study and Opinion in Oxford" could describe the university as being divided between two influences: "the one . . . in more or less cordial alliance with Comte's positive philosophy; the other, German critical theology, and the pregnant speculation of Hegel." The first group believed that "science will trace (man's) deepest thought . . . in the network of association to the simple impressions which he is ever receiving from without."³² Metaphysics was for them an illusion; truth was the discovery of verifiable facts for the advancement of man. Their opponents in the second group regarded Hume's empiricism and scepticism as unsound, and were attempting to reconcile philosophy with religion.

Pater was associated with both groups. In the sixties and seventies he was an adherent of the first group and his work shows evidence of many of their prejudices. In the "Conclusion" to The Renaissance he gave his version of the scepticism of David Hume; there is a strong antinomian note in many of his earlier essays. At the same time, however, Pater was a member of a discussion group called "The Old Mortality" whose other members included the Hegelians T. H. Green and Edward Caird, as well as the poet Swinburne. Pater read his essay Diaphanéité to the group in 1864.³³ A metaphysical and occasionally

religious note became more and more prominent in Pater's later work. This idealism reflected a growing reaction in British thought during the 1880's against the atomism and empiricism of scientific naturalism.

The nebulous character of Pater's work, with its varying degrees of impressionism and historicism reveals the disparate influences of scientific naturalism and metaphysical idealism. What seemed to be inherent contradictions in his work represent what Frederic Harrison termed the "chaos of thought" characteristic of the period.³⁴ The bewilderment experienced by many Victorian intellectuals in the face of the tremendous "free trade" of conflicting ideas was described by John Addington Symonds in a letter to a friend: "The nervous fluids of our brains, instead of being concentrated upon a single thought, are dispersed through a thousand channels."³⁵

Between the publication of Pater's first essays and the appearance of his novel Marius the Epicurean in 1885, British thought had had to assimilate both the positivism, relativism, and agnosticism of scientific naturalism, and the idealism of Hegelian metaphysics. To study Pater's writings is to trace the process of this assimilation.

CHAPTER THREE

SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM AND FLUX

Pater's first years at Oxford were marked by his rebellion against the religious influences of his youth. Besides being friendly with the writers and artists associated with Swinburne, the Pre-Raphaelites and "art of art's sake", he had many agnostics and naturalistic thinkers for friends. John Morley was a frequent visitor to Pater's north Oxford home; many of his early essays were published in the Fortnightly. Conservative Oxford at this time had still not recovered from the loss of its intellectual lodestone after John Henry Newman's defection from the Church of England to that of Rome in 1845. The predominant theological tone in the university was that of the latitudinarianism of Essays and Reviews which subordinated religion to the limits of positive knowledge. The influence of Mill and Comtean positivism spread rapidly through the university during the 1860's and metaphysics were generally out of favour. Tyndall's essay on "Heat as

a Mode of Motion" (1863) and Huxley's "The Physical Basis of Life" (1869) had revealed the possibilities of explaining phenomena in terms of mechanical processes. In an introductory chapter to his Recollections (1921) entitled "Spirit of the Time", Morley referred to there being in the public mind "a common readiness to extend an excited welcome to explanation whether of species or social phenomena by general laws, at the expense of special providence."¹

Pater's writing in the early 1860's was bound to be conditioned by an awareness of science. One writer has described his "life-long attempt" as being "in substance, to save and find some valid sanction for the rewards and fruits of culture on the terms imposed by scientific naturalism."² His defence of culture had, as its cornerstone, an emphasis on the need for the arts to be disciplined by the methods and laws of science.

In his essay on "Style" (1883), Pater described how "that living authority which language needs" lies in its scholars who are able to isolate, with something of the method of an analytic scientist "that very fastidious genius of its own" which every language possesses. These scholars were able to "expand at once and purify its very elements, which must needs change along with the changing thoughts of living people." Ninety years before, Pater wrote in the same essay, Wordsworth had broken through "the poetic associations of a century."³ For the last quarter of a century, English had been "assimilating the phrase-

ology of pictorial art; for half a century the phraseology of the great German metaphysical movement of eighty years ago; in part also the language of mystical theology." Pater saw that its task for the foreseeable future might well be what he called "the naturalization of the vocabulary of science. . . in a liberal naturalization of the ideas of science too." The chief stimulus of good style was "to possess a full, rich complex matter to grapple with." Literary artists had, therefore, to "be well aware of physical science."⁴

This awareness of physical science was manifestly present in Pater's early essays. In Winckelmann which was first published in 1867, he made reference to this "intricacy, the universality of natural law, even in moral order" as being "the chief factor in the thoughts of the modern mind concerning itself."

"For 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."⁵

The "magic web woven through and through us" described by Pater can be compared with "the web and woof of matter and force" referred to by T. H. Huxley in an essay of 1860:

"Harmonious order governing eternally continuous progress - the web and woof of matter and force interweaving by slow degrees without a broken thread, that veil that lies between us and the Infinite - that universe which alone we know and can

know; such is the picture that science draws of the world."⁶

Both Pater and Huxley were writing of the "great conception of universal regular sequence" which was mentioned by George Eliot in an 1865 essay in The Westminster Review, as the most potent intellectual force of the day. This was chiefly based on Mill's law of causality in philosophy and the nebular hypothesis in physics.⁷

In the "Coleridge" essay of 1866, Pater further describes the workings of the "web" of necessity, as revealed by what he calls "the sciences of observation."

"Those sciences reveal types of life evanescent into each other by inexpressible refinements of change."

Because of this, and because "Things pass into their opposites by accumulation of undefinable quantities," growth in these sciences had consisted of a "continual analysis of facts of rough and general observation into groups of facts more precise and minute."

"The faculty for truth is recognised as a power of distinguishing and fixing delicate and fugitive detail . . . the relative spirit has invaded moral philosophy from the ground of the inductive sciences."⁸

This relative spirit was what primarily distinguished modern thought from ancient philosophy and its "absolute" conceptions.

"To the modern spirit nothing is, or can be rightly known, except relatively and under conditions."⁹

In the words of John Stuart Mill, to which I have already referred (p. 31),

"We have no knowledge of anything but Phenomena; and our knowledge of phenomena is relative, not absolute."

As a consequence of this relativism, absolute or transcendental knowledge must be a fanciful illusion. Coleridge's restless scheming to "apprehend the absolute" was "an effort of sickly thought that saddened his mind, and limited the operation of his unique poetic gift."¹⁰

Therefore, according to Pater, there could be no "acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy" as he stressed in the "Conclusion" to his collection of essays on The Renaissance (1873).¹¹ A sense of mobility, of the flux of things, was the essential attribute of products of the intellect.

With reference to Mill's Autobiography in the Fortnightly in 1874, John Morley cited "mobility" as characteristic of the finest minds.

"All minds of the first quality move and grow; they have a susceptibility to many sorts of new impressions, a mobility, a feeling outwards, which makes it impossible for them to remain in the stern fixity of an early implanted set of dogmas, whether philosophic or religious."¹²

Pater's "Conclusion" to The Renaissance was his most celebrated evocation of the flux, not only of things, but of the principles of things. Having originally appeared as part of a review of William Morris's poems in The Westminster Review in October 1868, it was deleted by its author from the second edition of The Renaissance in

1877, on the grounds that its antinomian advocacy of the cultivation of exquisite passions and moments of aesthetic intensity "might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall."¹³ Pater's act of self-censorship was caused by the notoriety given to his words in the "Conclusion" by Oscar Wilde, who had come up to Magdalen College in 1874.¹⁴

The essay was prefaced by a quotation from the Greek of Plato's Phaedrus, which significantly referred to Heraclitus, the pre-Socratic philosopher and first celebrant of the perpetual flux of reality:

"Somewhere Heraclitus says that all things
vanish and nothing remains fixed."¹⁵

Pater then proceeded to describe how this conception of flux had entered into conceptions both of the physical world and of the life of the mind.

"To regard all things and principles of
things as in constant modes or fashions
has more and more become the tendency of
modern thought."¹⁶

Our "whole physical life" was "but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names," with these elements in a "perpetual motion". (Pater's materialism here quite closely associated him with Huxley, Tyndall and Clifford). Our consciousness, "the inward world of thought and feeling", was similarly "a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought . . . of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of

them."¹⁷ "That clear perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image" of the mind; the "solidity" of objects is merely that "with which language invests them."¹⁸

This was Pater's version of the phenomenalism of David Hume, who had seen the self as

"nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement."

The mind was a

"kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations."¹⁹

For Pater, "the whole scope of observation" is similarly restricted, "dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind."

"Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world."²⁰

This sense of isolation in one's own private universe of atomistic impressions in a world of flux was a characteristic experience of Victorian agnostics. Philosophical relativism was very much in the air in the late 1860's when Pater's essay was first published. As

John Passmore has pointed out, it was only after Darwin had been able decisively to demolish the Paleyan argument from design that Hume's philosophy came to be more widely appreciated.²¹ The latter's relativism and scepticism became an important weapon in the ideological armory of Victorian agnosticism. T. H. Huxley, inventor of the term 'agnostic', was to write a book on Hume. His essay on "The Physical Basis of Life" in which the term "agnostic" first appeared, was published in the Fortnightly in 1869, the year after Pater's essay was published in the same journal.²²

In one of the essays published in his An Agnostic's Apology (1893), Leslie Stephen placed a melancholy emphasis on dissolution and isolation in terms similar to those adopted by Pater:

"We know nothing directly except the modifications of our consciousness . . . The basis of the knowledge of the individual is his own current of consciousness, which is transformed into knowledge by reflection . . . Each man's experience is fragmentary, discontinuous, and narrow."²³

In the "Conclusion", Pater likewise described how even the impressions which enter the solitary cell of the individual mind were "infinitely divisible" by "analysis"; they were "in perpetual flight . . . all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it."²⁴

"To such a tremulous wisp constantly reforming itself on the stream to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such

moments gone by, what is real in our life
fines itself down."²⁵

He saw "success in life" as being able to experience fully all of this "passage and dissolution of impressions, images and sensations." Here philosophy, and what Pater calls "speculative culture", could serve the human spirit by rousing and startling it to a life of "constant and eager observation."

"Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight, or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us - for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience but experience itself, is the end."²⁶

The dilemma for the individual was to experience the flux but at the same time to grasp in the moments as they flee by "all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses" and "be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy."²⁷

In the universe of natural laws described by the scientists, everyone was "under sentence but with a sort of indefinite reprieve . . . we have an interval and then our place knows us no more."²⁸ That interval could be expanded by "great passion, art and song" because they provided the best opportunity for "getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time" in order to yield "this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness." The best of these passions were "the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own

sake." Art proposes frankly "to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake."²⁹

This was why, in his most famous words, Pater urged his readers "To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy" of passionate perception.³⁰

"While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment."³¹

The implications of this were also discussed in the essay on "Winckelmann" (1867). The demand of the intellect was "to feel itself alive . . . in the supreme artistic view of life."³² This could only be done in poetry, which Pater defined as "all literary production which attains the power of giving pleasure by its form, as distinct from its matter."³³ (The phenomenalist emphasis on form illustrates the continuing influence of Mill on Pater). It was only in poetry that art could command sufficient resources "to enable it to deal with the conditions of modern life." Modern art had to "rearrange the details of modern life, so to reflect it, that it may satisfy the spirit" by giving it back some sense of freedom "in these bewildering toils" of natural laws.³⁴ Natural laws could never be modified. There could be no nostalgic looking back at the "naive rough sense of freedom" held in the old theistic past. But the entangling network of laws with their "chain of circumstance" could create tragic situations,

such as in the romances of Goethe and Victor Hugo which endow one with "great experiences."³⁵

As Frank Kermode has pointed out, Pater was not merely preaching the creed of art for art's sake, but was rather saying that it is art which is significant in life.³⁶ Art in effect was the only true morality, as it was the only real effector of value in a world of flux to which none of the traditional absolutes were applicable. Pater himself made the point clear in the "Postscript" to Appreciations (1889):

"For the literary art, at all events, the problem just now is, to induce order upon the contorted, proportionless accumulation of our knowledge and experience, our science and history, our hopes and disillusion . . ."³⁷

It was thus a means of creating fixed points, some type of stasis in the flux.

The first step towards achieving this had to be an awareness of the flux. Such an awareness, causing internal human thought to reflect the external movement of phenomena, was the only truth accessible and the only truth necessary to an individual living in the "New Nature" of scientific naturalism. G. H. Lewes defined this truth as "the correspondence between the order of ideas and the order of phenomena, so the one becomes a reflection of the other - the movement of thought following the movement of things."³⁸

In all this the human mind did little more than receive external

impressions from the senses and arrange them according to the laws of association described by eighteenth-century philosophers such as David Hartley and David Hume. Hume was again invoked by Pater in his description in the "Preface" to The Renaissance to show how aesthetic criticism dealt with its objects. All the "primary data" with which the aesthetic critic dealt had to be regarded as:

"powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations, each of a more or less peculiar or unique kind."

This influence would be felt and explained "by analysing and reducing it to its elements." The critic's end would be reached "when he has disengaged that virtue, and noted it, as a chemist notes some natural element."³⁹

G. H. Lewes argued in a contemporary work how there were two approaches - what he called the subjective and the objective - to empirical evidence, Pater's "primary data". With the subjective approach, associated by Lewes with religion, metaphysics and "pre-scientific" thought in general, the direction of truth was determined by thought. Lewes saw this method as committing the fundamental error of attempting "to explain the scheme of the visible from the invisible, deduce the knowable from the unknowable."⁴⁰ This was what Pater had called "a distemper of the eye of the mind" when writing of Coleridge.⁴¹ Lewes opposed this subjective approach with the objective one in which the direction of truth was controlled by things. Whereas the subjective method used inferences which were unverifiable, the objective method

employed "Vigilant Verification." It accepted no inference that could not be verified by observable, empirical facts and that did not correspond to scientific laws, the laws of nature.⁴²

The demands of 'Vigilant Verification' as described by Lewes in 1871 seem to have been anticipated by Pater in the Coleridge essay (1866).

"It is no vague scholastic abstraction that will satisfy the speculative instinct in our modern minds."⁴³

He opened the "Preface" to The Renaissance by stressing the relativity of beauty "like all other qualities presented to human experience." The more abstract the definition of beauty, the more meaningless it became. It had to be defined "in the most concrete terms possible." The aim of the authentic student of aesthetics was "to find not its universal formula, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it." In common with the "products of nature", the objects of aesthetic criticism were "receptacles of so many powers or forces" possessing "so many virtues or qualities." In the manner of an analytic scientist the task of the aesthetic critic was "to distinguish, to analyse, and separate from its adjuncts" the special virtue by which an object produced a "special impression of beauty or pleasure" for him.⁴⁴ Like the scientist writing up the results of an experiment, he was to indicate both the source of the impression and the conditions under which it was experienced.

An earlier work by G. H. Lewes, the two-volume Life of Goethe, published in 1855, had taken Goethe as the first exponent of a "scientific" attitude towards the world. As Anthony Ward has shown, Pater's idea of the analytic spirit in aesthetic criticism was clearly influenced by Lewes's work, particularly the chapter entitled "The Poet as Man of Science."⁴⁵ Lewes had seen Goethe as a man of science because of his scrupulous rejection of the ideal in favour of dealing with the world empirically; looking for the concrete to hold against the vague and the abstract. Goethe was cited by Pater in "Coleridge" as the aesthetic example of "the speculative temper." He was one to whom each instant of existence brought a manifestation of "experimental, individual knowledge." His senses were ever alive to "the world of form, colour and passion."⁴⁶

Lewes referred to how Goethe constantly strove to see Nature directly, "not through the mists of fancy, or through the distortions of prejudice - to look at men and into them, - to apprehend things as they were."⁴⁷ While most poets had described what a thing was like, Goethe had described what it was. In the words quoted by Pater at the start of the "Preface" to The Renaissance, Matthew Arnold had argued in 1861, that the principal orientation of "the intellect of Europe in general" had for "many years" been of this kind:

". . . [an] endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is."⁴⁸

Pater laid a similar emphasis on this type of perception in one of his late works, an introduction to his friend, C. L. Shadwell's translation of Dante's Purgatory.

"Our own delight in it [Dante's minuteness of touch] the welcome we give to minute detail of that kind, uncompromising realists as we needs must be, connects itself with empirical character of our science, our philosophic faith in the concrete, the particular."⁴⁹

Anthony Ward sees this great emphasis on the concrete and particular by Pater and his generation, as going beyond a respect for the strict criteria of positive science. More than that, it represented "an urgent grasping after security" in an age when the traditional certainties were rapidly dissolving. As an illustration of this urgency Ward cites an 1871 passage on the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers written by Benjamin Jowett, the master of Balliol.

"As to some of the early thinkers, amid the fleetings of sensible objects, ideas alone appeared to be fixed, so to a later generation amid the fluctuation of philosophical opinions, the only fixed points appeared to be outward objects. Any pretence of knowledge which went beyond them implied logical processes, of the correctness of which they had no assurance and which at best were only probable. The mind, tired of wandering, sought to rest on firm ground; when the idols of philosophy and language were stripped off, the perception of outward objects alone remained. . . . we return to the doctrine . . . that the mind is only a succession of momentary perceptions. At this point the modern philosophy of experience forms an alliance with ancient scepticism."⁵⁰

Ruskin interpreted the expression of this kind of perception in nineteenth-century painting, as deriving from the "penetrative" power of the imagination. This was achieved by "intuition and intensity of gauge" which revealed "a more essential truth" than that which was merely seen "at the surface of things."⁵¹ Pater also saw this as a significant component of modern poetry - shown in the following passage from his essay on Wordsworth (1874):

"An intimate consciousness of the expression of natural things, which weighs, listens, penetrates, where the earlier mind passed roughly by."⁵²

A critic's possession of an abstract definition of beauty was of little importance for Pater, compared with his having "a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved by the presence of beautiful objects."⁵³ The possession of such a temperament -- "to know one's impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly" -- was the first step towards knowledge of one's object as it really was.⁵⁴ Then there should follow an analysis of the effect of the object concerned on one's own nature, which would involve the disengaging of its "special impression of beauty or pleasure"; an indication of its source and a description of the circumstances under which it was experienced.⁵⁵

The presence of beauty, "that active principle," was to be found in many forms, and in all ages. The critic's task was to locate its "receptacle," to indicate the special qualities of that which could

be separated from "the commoner elements" of flux and temporality. These studies of the art and poetry of the Italian Renaissance constituted an attempt by Pater to isolate this quality, to analyse and define its characteristics in terms of "the law of their combination" with relation to that "general excitement and enlightening of the human mind."⁵⁶ As Ian Fletcher puts it: "In The Renaissance Pater had been trying to fix the secret individual experiences of a few personalities who in his scheme of values mattered supremely, by attempting to define in them some central quality, some fixed point in the flux."⁵⁷ This fixed point would be that focus where the "greatest number of vital forces" were to be found united "in their purest energy," as Pater termed it in the "Conclusion" to the volume. In Leonardo's work, for instance, the fixed point was the conflict between the analytic curiosity of the scientist and the artist's love of beauty. The Mona Lisa was "the symbol of the modern idea"; her image an example of what Pater described in his essay on "Giorgione" as

"exquisite pauses in time, in which, arrested thus, we seem to be spectators of all the fullness of existence."⁵⁸

These points of stasis in the flux were not, however, merely the providers of rarified sensations, which momentarily liberated the mind from the relentless flow of time. In the words of the "Winckelmann" essay, they represented "so many stages in the gradual education of the human mind."⁵⁹ Nor was Pater's criticism in The Renaissance merely an analysis of unique impressions. These impressions were rather a means of perceiving a process in the development of the human mind. They

provided a means by which Pater was able to demonstrate the continuity of culture, of the manifestations of the artistic spirit, through an analysis of the formulae by which they produced their special effects. Far from being just a celebration of the experience of beauty amidst transiency, The Renaissance was equally a study of the order which art superimposes on transiency.

CHAPTER FOUR

FLUX AND THE WORLD-SPIRIT

In "Winckelmann" Pater described "the aim of a right criticism" as being to place its subject in an intellectual perspective.¹ As he wrote in the "Preface" to The Renaissance, all ages had had artists producing works of excellence. The task of the critic was to perceive where the genius of a particular age had manifested itself.² This point was further elaborated in the review of William Morris's poems published in the Fortnightly in 1868, the year after the original appearance of the "Winckelmann" essay.

"We cannot truly conceive the age; we can conceive the element it has contributed to our culture: we can treat the subjects of the age bringing that into relief."

Such an attitude towards some period of cultural history - in this instance Greece - "aspiring to but never actually reaching its way of conceiving life" was what alone was possible for art.³

Pater was using what John Morley, in an essay published in the Fortnightly the year after the first edition of The Renaissance, called the historical method, which he described as involving:

"The comparison of the forms of an idea or usage, or a belief, at any given time, with the earlier forms from which they were evolved, or the later forms into which they were developed, and the establishment from such a comparison of an ascending or descending order among the facts."⁴

This idea of development was one of the intellectual innovations of Pater's generation. In 1840 Mill had written of how Coleridge and the eighteenth-century Germans "by making the facts and the events of the past have a meaning and an intelligible place in the gradual evolution of humanity" had "at once given history even to the imagination, an interest like romance." The publication of J. H. Newman's Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine in 1846 had been followed two years later by the historian Henry Halford Vaughan's inaugural lecture as professor of modern history at Oxford on the subject of historical evolution while J. R. Green's Short History of the English People (1874) treated the development of English society as the development of a living organism.⁵

Comte had been a primary influence on the development of this new philosophy of history but even before 1870, his ascendancy was being challenged by that of Hegel. A significant passage in E. Abbott and L. Campbell's biography of Benjamin Jowett refers to how the Master of Balliol was able to draw fruitfully on both Comte and Hegel:

"That which always seemed to him (Jowett) most valuable, both in Comte and Hegel, was the historical method which they pursued in different ways and the idea of an orderly evolution of the human mind, which had not been clearly expressed before their time."⁶

It was the merging of the Darwinian idea of evolution with the philosophy of Hegel in the years following the 1865 publication of James Sterling's The Secret of Hegel which provided Pater and several of his contemporaries with the means to transcend the atomism of scientific naturalism. From being merely the description of perpetual flux in nature, Darwinism became a description of the unfolding of the world-spirit. Reinterpreted in terms of Hegelian philosophy, evolution was no longer to be seen as depicting a process of random, mechanical change, but was instead the means by which the world-spirit, what Hegel called "Geist", was evermore completely revealing itself. The flux was itself part of the world-spirit. Hegel seemed to provide a means of reconciling the idea of flux with the longing for security expressed so eloquently by Stirling in his seminal work on Hegel:

"We all live now divorced from Substance, forlorn each of us, isolated to himself - an absolutely abstract unit in a universal, unsympathizing, unparticipant Atomism."⁷

According to Jowett, Darwin had described a universe where survival was the product of a negative process of destruction. Hegel had then been able to incorporate the negative aspect of the natural process into his scheme of the positive side of the process:

"Not-being is the unfolding or determining of being, and is a necessary element in all other things that are."⁸

The struggle for existence was not just confined to the world of animals; in the form of the Hegelian dialectic it also existed in the world of thought. As William Wallace wrote in his Prologomena to the Study of Hegel's Philosophy (1894) "Hegel's doctrine, is after all only another way of stating the maintenance of the fittest."⁹

Pater, who had had to prepare a weekly essay for Jowett in 1861, was, like the master of Balliol, another synthesizer of the thought of Darwin and Hegel.¹⁰ The writer who termed himself in the essay on "Demeter and Persephone" a "student of origins . . . of the earliest stages of art and poetry" had been led by early visits to Germany "to value all things German."¹¹ According to Thomas Wright's biography, Pater had been elected to his fellowship at Brasenose College in 1864 for "his knowledge of German Philosophy."¹² As reflected through the Hegelian lens, the Paterian flux, fleeting though it indubitably was, carried within itself what Pater called in Plato and Platonism "the accumulative capital of humanity."¹³ By "one law of development" nature had evolved various ways of thinking, only subsequently to suppress them. By this method "it had . . . provided 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."¹⁴ The products of the intellect represented "so many stages in the gradual education of the human mind."¹⁵

"This idea of development," Pater wrote when discussing the process by which Demeter and her story embodied themselves gradually in the Greek imagination, was "the illuminating thought which earlier critics lacked."¹⁶ Pater saw that the chief deficiency of the fifteenth-century scholarship of Pico Della Mirandola and his contemporaries when compared with that of the nineteenth century was their lack of "the very rudiments of the historical sense, which by an imaginative act, throws itself back into a world unlike one's own, and estimates every intellectual creation in its connection with the age from which it preceded."

"They had no idea of development of the differences of ages, of the process by which our race has been 'educated'."¹⁷

Pico and his associates had not perceived that every intellectual product had to be judged in the perspective of the time and place in which it had been produced.

The importance of perspective as a means of perceiving the continuity of development was especially emphasized by Pater in his study of Winckelmann. "The aim of a right criticism" of Winckelmann was to place him "in an intellectual perspective, of which Goethe is the foreground." Winckelmann's work was full of the unperplexed serenity of the Hellenic ideal rediscovered during the Renaissance. Although he was not of the modern world "that note of revolt against the eighteenth century, which we detect in Goethe, was struck by Winckelmann." Goethe was later to bring together "the Romantic spirit,

in its adventure, its variety, its profound subjectivity of soul, with Hellenism . . . that marriage of Faust and Helena, of which the art of the nineteenth century is the child."¹⁸

It was superficial to regard the Renaissance as a fashion which had set in at a particular point in time: Pater felt that "the deeper view is that which preserves the identity of European culture." The Renaissance was in a sense "an uninterrupted effort of the middle age" and was "ever taking place."¹⁹ It was on these grounds that Pater made an approving reference in his "Preface" to The Renaissance to the French theory of a Renaissance during the Middle Ages, which sought to establish a continuity between the most characteristic work of the earlier period and the work of the later Renaissance "thus healing that rupture . . . which has so often been exaggerated."²⁰

Each age contributed to the education of the race. The mediaeval spirit "had suffered the human mind to repose itself that when day came it might awake with eyes refreshed to those ancient ideal forms" of the Hellenic world.²¹ The development of the various forms of art had also contributed to the growth of the intellect. They had "corresponded to the development of the thoughts of man concerning humanity to the growing revelation of the mind to itself. Sculpture corresponds to the unperplexed, emphatic outlines of Hellenic humanism; painting to the mystic depth and intricacy of the middle age; music and poetry have their function in the modern world."²²

Individuals expressed in themselves this unfolding of the historical process. The impossibility of escaping from history refuted the atomism of David Hume.

"The composite experience of all the ages is part of each one of us; to deduct from that experience, to obliterate any part of it, to come face to face with the people of a past age, as if the Middle Age, the Renaissance, the eighteenth century had not been, is as impossible as to become a little child or enter again into the womb and be born."²³

The Mona Lisa in Pater's famous passage was a symbol of the idea conceived by "modern philosophy" of "humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life."²⁴ Every individual, as Pater wrote in the essay on Coleridge, was an organ for the reception and transmission of the thought of his age, "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."²⁵ To be really interesting, he pronounced in his "Postscript" to Appreciations, "art and literature must follow the subtle movements of that nimbly-shifting 'Time-Spirit', or 'Zeit-Geist'."²⁶

Those historical figures chosen by Pater in The Renaissance and in his other essays had all embodied the "Time-Spirit" in their work. By means of their possessing a certain type of temperament they had each been capable of fusing the atomistic impressions described in the "Conclusion" into the organic whole of the historical process.²⁷ The characteristics of this temperament, described in the "Preface", were

further elaborated elsewhere. In "Demeter and Persephone" Pater referred to "the more delicately trained eye" that could sense "subtler and more remote ways of personal presence."²⁸ Coleridge had possessed an "appreciation of the intimacy, the almost mystical communion of touch, between nature and man."²⁹ Winckelmann "apprehended the subtlest principles of the Hellenic manner, not through the understanding, but by instinct or touch."³⁰

Pater's friend Bernard Bosanquet wrote of how Hegel had seen "the essential process of nature" as being "the struggle towards the manifestation of life and intelligence." Hegel had insisted that "the stones cry out and exhibit a movement towards life and mind."³¹ The key part played by aesthetic perception and creation in this process was made explicit by Pater in A Study of Dionysus. The Greek imagination expressed in sculpture had given substance, a "material pledge" of what "had but vaguely haunted the fields and groves."³² As depicted in art and poetry, Dionysus was the "projected expression of the ways and dreams" of the ancient Greeks.

Diffused experience could be unified by imagination. The religious imagination of the Greeks had been "a unifying or identifying power, bringing together things naturally asunder . . . welding into something like the identity of a human personality the whole range of man's experiences of a given object, or series of objects."³³ Far from being Hume's passive receiver of external sensations, the mind was

capable of grasping significant moments and fusing them into an organic whole; a "divination" such as that which Leonardo's age had tried to grasp, "seeking in an instant of vision to concentrate a thousand experiences."³⁴ These symbols of what was significant in experience were outstanding in their complexity, in their ability to contain the features of a whole system or world. Dionysus had comprehended, in a single form, for the Greeks "a whole world of thoughts . . . a sacred representation of the whole human experience."³⁵

When Pater later turned to creating imaginary characters, in his novels Marius the Epicurean (1885) and the unfinished Gaston De Latour (1896), or in the essays which comprised Imaginary Portraits (1887) and the posthumously collected Miscellaneous Studies (1895), the characters represented ideal types, incarnations like his historical subjects of the perpetual evolution of culture. In common with the historical studies these "imaginary portraits" all lived, like their chronicler, in ages of change. As Ferris Greenslet wrote in Walter Pater (1903): "He chose by preference the work of fluid, romantic periods of transition forshadowing the complexity of his own time"; ages such as Platonic Greece, Antonine Rome and of course, the Italian Renaissance.³⁶ This concentration on ages of transition was undoubtedly influenced by Comte's conception of "critical" stages of society where the unified control of the culture had been lost. The nineteenth century was seen by both Comte and John Stuart Mill as such a "critical" period because the traditional modes of control -- the Church, the

feudal or autocratic state -- had been challenged but not replaced. In his review of Mill's Autobiography, John Morley quoted the latter's description of how Victorian society was passing through a transitional period "of weak convictions, paralysed intellects, and growing laxity of principle."³⁷

Where Pater chose characters from more stable periods of history it was for one of two reasons. In the cases of Winckelmann, and Rousseau in the "Postscript" to Appreciations, in regard to the eighteenth century, or the "Two Early French Stories" and the Middle Ages, it was because the characters or works concerned contained elements of the next period of cultural history -- nineteenth-century Romanticism and the Renaissance respectively. Alternatively, in the cases of "imaginary portraits" like "Denys L'Auxerrois" or "Apollo in Picardy" the heroes were characters born out of due time, exiles from a previous age and alienated from the ages in which they lived. They were emblems of permanence in a world that had changed.

All of Pater's subjects, whether nominally historical or deliberately fictional, were in a very real sense fragments shored against the flux of scientific naturalism. In his early works he qualified positivism as much as he upheld it as a discipline. His warning of the need to remember the analytic methods and "relative" spirit of "the sciences of observation" given in the "Coleridge" essay in Appreciations, was preceded by an essay on Wordsworth in which he

laid the emphasis on "those pantheistic theories which locate an intelligent soul in material things."³⁸ The suggestion in the 1866 "Coleridge" that scientific naturalism was ousting any form of metaphysics was replaced in "Demeter and Persephone" (originally prepared as two lectures in 1875), by an account of how the two world views had maintained themselves side by side.

"Modern science explains the changes of the natural world by the hypothesis of certain unconscious forces; and the sum of these forces, in their combined action, constitutes the scientific conception of nature. But, side by side with this growth of this more mechanical conception, an older and more spiritual, Platonic, philosophy has always maintained itself, a philosophy more of instinct than of the understanding, the mental starting-point of which is not an observed sequence of outward phenomena, but some such feeling as most of us have on the first warmer days in Spring, when we seem to feel the genial processes of nature actually at work; as if just below the mould; and in the hard wood of the trees, there were really circulating some spirit of life, akin to that which makes its energies felt within ourselves. Starting with a hundred instincts such as this, that older un-mechanical, spiritual, or Platonic, philosophy envisages nature rather as the unity of a living spirit or person revealing itself in various degrees to the kindred spirit of the observer, than as a system of mechanical forces."³⁹

This idea of opposing a spiritual to a mechanical philosophy was an increasingly popular hypothesis in English thought after 1870. In his 1871 edition of Berkeley's works, Alex Campbell Fraser invited the reader to "contrast the modern assumption of an absolute Space . . . as well as blind Necessity or Fate . . . with the ancient and more spiritual doctrine of 'anima mundi', that immaterial but unconscious

influence." William Whewell's "Platonic Dialogues for English Readers", published in MacMillan's Magazine in January 1860, referred to how "There are and have been but two Philosophies in the World . . . the one of these refers all Knowledge to Sense . . . makes Matter the original and sees all existence as but Matter whirling through time and assuming changes; the other refers all to Thought, realizes an eternal unseen world of Ideas, makes Mind or Will or Divinity the original."⁴⁰

In his later work Pater moved further away from the idea of flux and gave increasing emphasis to the need for a principle of organization. Anthony Ward quotes from an unpublished manuscript of Pater's in the Houghton Library at Harvard: "If life is to be kept from being a mere grasping, undirected, random grasping, you need a hypothesis - some provisional explanation, which true or not, and certainly not wholly verifiable, may at least throw over that tangle, the (logic) of the reasons within ourselves."⁴¹ In other words the mind was no longer willing to keep "as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world."⁴² The Platonic notion of "anima mundi" which Pater, like Jowett, reinterpreted in the light of Hegel, was one way out of the naturalistic impasse of the "tangle . . . of the reasons within ourselves." The "anima mundi" inspired "the secrets of possession by a higher and more energetic spirit than one's own, the gift of self-revelation, of passing out of oneself through words, tones, gestures."⁴³ Its apprehension involved "a certain mystical apprehension, now almost departed, of unseen powers beyond the material veil of things."⁴⁴

"Behind the veil" was one of the most frequently used expressions in the imagery of Victorian mysticism. One of the Tracts for the Times described things visible and tangible as but "the screen and veil (sic) of invisible things behind them."⁴⁵ In Memoriam reverberated with Tennyson's cry

"What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the Veil, behind the Veil."⁴⁶

There was a marked change of tone from Tennyson's despairing pessimism in the more sanguine note struck by Leslie Stephen in an 1873 essay entitled "Are We Christians?":

"The ordinary mind even whilst confessing its impotence to pierce that veil, refuses to obey the positivist advice to abandon altogether its search for the infinite."⁴⁷

The fact that one of the leading proponents of scientific naturalism was writing in such terms in 1873 is an indication of how the thought of the period was developing away from the bare bones of Mill's empiricism. This movement of thought was present in the way that Pater's Marius the Epicurean was able to see in the Christian Church "the hypothesis of an eternal friend to man, just hidden behind the veil of a mechanical and material order."⁴⁸

Marius the Epicurean was the record of the religious development of a young man living in the time of Marcus Aurelius from the paganism of his early years to a tentative exploration of Christianity. The book was intended as a contribution to the philosophical debates of the

author's own time. In the chapter entitled "Second Thoughts" Pater remarked on how the age of Marius and his own age had "much in common -- many difficulties and hopes." He asked pardon of his readers if he sometimes seemed "to be passing from Marius to his modern representatives - from Rome, to Paris or London."⁴⁹ In a letter to a friend, Pater spoke of his eagerness to complete the novel "as a sort of duty. For you know that I think there is a . . . sort of religious phase possible for the modern mind, the condition of which phase it is the main object of my design to convey."⁵⁰ As Graham Hough puts it: "The religious development of a cultural agnostic in the time of Marcus Aurelius is meant to indicate a possible development for a cultivated agnostic in the time of Queen Victoria."⁵¹

Pater's speculations on the possibility of religious experience can be compared with the efforts of contemporary writers such as Frederic W. H. Myers, Samuel Butler and the philosopher Henry Sidgwick. Like Pater, these writers had rejected Christianity and been profoundly influenced by the concepts of scientific naturalism. But they had been unable to accept the proposition that all valid human experiences and ideals could be subsumed under scientific laws. The narrow dogma of Huxley, Tyndall and Spencer had given birth to a new kind of "honest doubter" who questioned the omniscience of science, just as the earlier fundamentalism of the Evangelicals had spawned the honest doubter in questions of religious belief. Frederic Myers summed up the creed of the agnostic in matters of science in 1893: "There are those who, while

accepting to the full the methods and results of Science, will not yet surrender the ancient hopes of our race."⁵²

They were refusing to surrender the traditional idea of man as a unique being with potential for transcendental knowledge; a being, in short, with spiritual needs and spiritual expectations. As Frank Miller Turner points out, the word "spiritual" in late-nineteenth-century thought usually meant an intellectual framework which was capable of preserving in a non-Christian context the issues previously dealt with by Christianity.⁵³ Turner cites H. V. Routh's description of what the word "spiritual" suggested to men in the second half of the nineteenth century.

"It implies, in the first place, that the speaker has cultivated a system of principles, an edifice of ideas, an ideology, which gives shape and direction to his plexus and nexus of thought. This framework, partly inherited, is cherished because it is congenial to the individual's aspirations; it helps him contemplate humanity as a force capable of growth even to perfection; it suggests forms in which his own vitality can find imaginative self-expression."⁵⁴

Even G. H. Lewes, in a late essay entitled "Spiritualism and Materialism", came to recognise the power of what he called "the spiritualist hypothesis."

"I had gained the conviction that its persistence in the face of advancing science, and its acceptance by minds of great power, was not without justification as a protest against mechanical conception."⁵⁵

Pater was aspiring towards a shaping system of principles when he described the abandonment by Marius of his earlier "cyrenaicism", his ethos of self-cultivation, in favour of a sympathetic awareness of the Christian Church as a visible, spiritual community. Marius died without actually becoming a Christian, but he died in the full realisation of "the great hope, that hope against hope, which . . . had arisen . . . upon the aged world."

"There 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."⁵⁶

Pater saw that while the nineteenth century was not an age of faith, in its religious misgivings it was, when compared with the religious scepticism of the eighteenth century "an age of hope . . . of a development of religious hope or hopefulness." In his preface to Shadwell's translation of Dante's Purgatory he compared this tendency of his age to the development of the doctrine of purgatory by the mediaeval Church. Like the doctrine of Purgatory the nineteenth century was "a world of merciful second thoughts on one side, of fresh opportunities on the other."⁵⁷

Pater's idea of the Church as expressed in Marius was very similar to his idea of the myth in "A Study of Dionysus" or "Demeter and Persephone" or of the Mona Lisa image in the essay on "Leonardo".

"Like the institutions of monasticism, like the Gothic style of architecture, the ritual

system of the church, as we see it in historic retrospect ranks as one of the great necessary products of human mind."⁵⁸

This was the historicism of Comte blended with the High Church doctrine of the "Visible Church," as taught by John Keble in Tracts for the Times, and Pater's fellow contributors to the Guardian newspaper.⁵⁹

John Henry Newman had found Christianity a completion of pagan religion. Similarly, for Pater, the Christian religion had harmonized into a system "many a vagrant voice of human philosophy."⁶⁰ In the chapter in Marius called "Divine Service" Pater fused his earlier ideas of art with his evolved thinking on religion.

"The most highly favoured ages of imaginative art present instances of the summing up of an entire world of complex associations under some single form, like the Zeus of Olympia, or the series of frescoes which commemorate 'The Acts of Saint Francis' at Assisi or like the play of Hamlet or Faust."⁶¹

The dramatic action of the Mass, which was described in that chapter, was the spiritual form of the "instants of vision" alluded to in The Renaissance.

Marius's experience of the Eucharist was the furthest extent of his involvement in Christianity. He died without having been formally admitted to the Church; comforted by its rites but lacking the full inward conviction of a professing Christian. His final position in regard to Christianity would appear to have been Pater's, too. The Church and its rituals represented one of those exquisite passions capable of momentarily releasing the spirit. Its spiritual

potential grouped it with the metaphysical side of the argument which Pater called "the question of the day."⁶² There was a strong suggestion as to Pater's own attitude to this question in his review of Robert Elsmere, Mrs. Humphrey Ward's novel about an Anglican clergyman who left the Church after a personal crisis of faith. "Robert Elsmere", wrote Pater, "was a type of a large class of minds which cannot be sure that the sacred story is true." But while it was "philosophical" and an intellectual duty to recognize one's doubts, "there was also a large class of minds which cannot be sure it is false," and these people "will think those who are quite sure it is false unphilosophical through lack of doubt." The recognition of "that bare concession of possibility" united all varieties of spiritual belief "against the purely negative action of the scientific spirit".⁶³ Pater's position here clearly links him with Myers, Butler, Sidgwick and other late nineteenth-century critics of scientific naturalism.

In common with these writers, the dominant tone in Pater's later work was an attempt to find some synthesis capable of containing both the essentially negative spirit of scientific naturalism and a more affirmative spirit of order in the universe. That lament for the perpetual flux in the "Conclusion" to The Renaissance was revised in Marius during a discussion of the teachings of Heraclitus, the original philosopher of the flux. Continual change represented merely the negative aspect of Heraclitus's doctrine. The positive side of his

doctrine is revealed in his finding in the perpetual flux "a continuance . . . of orderly intelligible relationships, like the harmony of musical notes, wrought out and in through the series of their mutations . . . maintained throughout the changes of the phenomenal world; and this harmony in their mutation and opposition, was, after all, a principle of sanity, of reality, there."⁶⁴

The working out of this "principle of sanity" was described more fully in Plato and Platonism (1893). Plato was represented by Pater as a genius who had been able to blend the conflicting tendencies of the thought of his predecessors into an all-embracing synthesis. The Republic was described as "the spectacle of a powerful, of a sovereign intellect, translating itself, amid a complex group of conditions which can never in the nature of things occur again, at once pliant and resistant to them, into a great literary monument."⁶⁵ Pater announced at the start, that his study was to follow the historical method "under the influences of Hegel and his predominant theory of the ever-changing "Time-Spirit" or 'Zeit-Geist'." Plato was to be put into his "natural place" in relation to the Greek thought which preceded him.⁶⁶

In Plato's scheme of things the Heraclitean doctrine of flux was set against "The Doctrine of Rest", Parmenides's philosophy of the One. The latter was the antithesis of the flux: "perpetual motion is perpetual rest."⁶⁷ Parmenides asserted "the nullity of all that is but phenomenal . . . all was gone that belonged to an outward and concrete

experience." The only real knowledge was "'Pure Being' . . . that colourless, formless, impalpable existence."⁶⁸ Plato was able to effect a compromise between the Heraclitean flux and the abstract doctrine of Parmenides through Pythagoras and "The Doctrine of Number".

"To realize unity in variety, to discover 'cosmos' -- an order that shall satisfy one's reasonable soul -- below and within apparent chaos: is from first to last the continuous purpose of what we call philosophy. Well! Pythagoras seems to have found that unity of principle . . . in the dominion of number everywhere, the proportion, the harmony, the music, into which number as such expands."⁶⁹

As Anthony Ward remarks, a numerical system has the unique ability simultaneously to contain ideas of multiplicity and oneness. He cites the example of the number seven which is "an entity, seven, and at the same time represents seven separate units. Thus it combines unity and variety; by extension it comes to figure the idea of the compromise between rest and motion."⁷⁰

Pater saw music as the art which most adequately conveyed the principle of number because it was "a formal development of purely numerical laws."⁷¹ In "Giorgione" (1877) he had stated that "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music."⁷² In Plato and Platonism he described how the music of which he was writing was that which had formerly been known as the "music of the spheres."

"Now that 'music of the spheres' in its largest sense, its completest orchestration, the harmonious order of the whole universe (cosmos) was what souls had heard of old."⁷³

The clear implication was that when art did approach the condition of music it was creating its own cosmos, an ordered universe containing all the variety of the infinite variations of phenomena.

The synthesis achieved by Pater in Plato and Platonism was his most definitive answer to the question which he had earlier asked in "Winckelmann": "Can art give us back our sense of freedom?"⁷⁴ His consummate merging of the idea of flux and the principle of order was intended to provide a true basis for a harmonious world-view through the medium of art. In the same work he also found the ideal literary form for his age. Whereas in early essays such as "Winckelmann" and "Giorgione" he had maintained that lyrical poetry was the ideal literary form for the modern age, the emphasis in his later work came to rest on prose. Only imaginative prose was sufficiently flexible to deal with the complexity and multiplicity of the nineteenth century.

"That imaginative prose should be the special and opportune art of the modern world results from two important facts about the latter: first, the chaotic variety and complexity of its interests, making the intellectual issue, the really master currents of the present time incalculable - a condition of mind little susceptible of the restraint proper to verse form, so that the most characteristic verse of the nineteenth century has been lawless verse; and secondly, an all pervading naturalism, a curiosity about everything whatever as it really is, involving a certain humility of attitude, cognate to what must, after all, be the less ambitious form of literature. And prose thus asserting itself as the special and privileged artistic faculty of the present day, will be as varied in its excellence as humanity itself reflecting on the facts of its latest experience."⁷⁵

In the literary form of the essay, imaginary prose, as described above in the essay on "Style" (1888) had become "the characteristic literary type of our own time" in the 1893 Plato and Platonism.⁷⁶ It was "the literary form necessary to a mind for which truth itself was but a possibility, realisable not as a general conclusion but rather as the elusive effect of a particular personal experience; to a mind which, noting faithfully those random lights that meet it by the way, must needs content itself with suspension of judgement, at the end of the intellectual journey."⁷⁷ But instead of this "suspension of judgement" condemning the individual to atomised subjectivity the dialectical method of the essay was a means of expressing the complex workings of a world which was itself capable of being perceived as a dialectical process. Unlike any other literary form, the essay, by "the very form it belongs to, is of the organism, of the matter which it embodies."⁷⁸ In embodying the dialectic the essay literally acted out the world-spirit. And by using the dialectical method the essay expressed the process of the intellect; "Just there lies the validity of the method - in a dialogue, an endless dialogue with oneself."⁷⁹

CONCLUSION

Plato and Platonism was Pater's last major work. It represented his most complete formulation of a method whereby experience could be seen as part of an orderly process without that order being achieved at the expense of the empirical character of experience. His aim had been to provide what Matthew Arnold, in a letter to Arthur Hugh Clough, had called "an Idea of the world in order not to be prevailed over by the world's multitudinousness."¹ "An intellectual deliverance," Arnold wrote elsewhere, "is the peculiar demand of those ages which are called modern." The need for such a deliverance had arisen

"because our present age exhibits to the individual man who contemplates it the spectacle of a vast multitude of facts awaiting and inviting his comprehension. The deliverance consists of man's comprehension of his present and past. It begins when our mind begins to enter into possession of those general ideas which are the law of this vast multitude of facts. It is perfect when we have acquired that harmonious acquiescence of mind which we feel in contemplating a grand spectacle that is intelligible to us; when we have lost that impatient irritation of mind which we feel in the

presence of an immense, moving, confused spectacle which while it perpetually excites our curiosity, perpetually baffles our comprehension."²

Pater's attempt to achieve a unity of being such as that described above by Arnold in 1857, associated his work with a particular school of thought in the last quarter of a century. H. Stuart Hughes has described how one facet of European thought during this period was characterized by "a revolt against positivism", by which term he means "the whole tendency to discuss human behaviour in terms of analogies drawn from natural science." In so doing the innovators of this revolt "believed that they were casting off a spiritual yoke that had been placed upon them."³ Pater's later work can be seen as part of what Frank Miller Turner so aptly calls the "English contingent in the widespread late nineteenth-century protest against the pretensions of science to dominate thought and culture."⁴

In addition to those writers mentioned in the previous section, this contingent included authors like Edward Carpenter, George Bernard Shaw, and Havelock Ellis. The cultural dilemma of these writers, as of Pater, was

"that they have outgrown the church as exemplified in Christianity, but who have not therefore been brought to deny the fact that a religious attitude to life is as essential to them as a belief in the authenticity of science. These people have experienced the soul as vividly as the body, the body as vividly as the soul. And the soul has manifested itself to them in ways not to be explained in terms

either of traditional theology or of materialism."⁵

Although this statement was written as part of a portrait of the followers of Jung in the 1920's and 1930's, it perfectly characterizes the intellectual situation of Pater and many of his contemporaries.

The soul had manifested itself to Pater in the form of art. During the 1830's the Tractarian movement under the leadership of Newman, Pusey and Keble had attempted to resist the "march of mind and railways," the advance of Utilitarian and Whig reformers, by rebuilding the Church of England as a bastion of Catholic orthodoxy. The Pre-Raphaelites and aesthetes of the second half of the nineteenth century had to fight the same spirit, during its triumphant period of scientific ascendancy, in the name not of theology but of beauty and style. It was the artistic values of life that Pater, in common with Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, tried to preserve from the encroachments of science. Referring to what was by 1873 "a numerous sect among cultivated people" who followed Pater's advice in The Renaissance to bring "the aesthetic element closely and vividly round daily life," John Morley wrote:

This more recent (than the Tractarians) pagan movement is . . . (like) the Oxford Movement . . . equally a protest against the mechanical and graceless formalism of the modern era, equally an attempt to find a substitute for a narrow popular creed in a return upon the older manifestations of the human spirit, and

equally a craving for something harmonious and beautiful about the bare lines of daily living."⁶

Morse Peckham has remarked on the way all ideas were for Pater "instruments of adaption by which we adjust ourselves to the world." This applied equally whether the ideas concerned were metaphysical, theological, or moral. Art was the most successful of these "adapational illusions" because it gave "the highest value to the disconnected moments of the personality as they appear."⁷ Milton Millhauser also stresses Pater's use of art as a defence against a real world determined by naturalistic ideas. Pater's aestheticism expressed his longing for an ideal which the universe of Spencer and Huxley could not satisfy. It offered a possibility "for permanence, for certainty, behind the dance of shadows amid which we move; for, at the very least, an ordered and reasonable manner of life, related somehow both to the soul's needs and to the truth."⁸

But art was not merely a defensive wall built up against scientific naturalism. The chief tendency of Pater's thought was the metamorphosis of aesthetic experience into a new kind of religion. In one sense this was the Romantic emphasis on the creative vision of the imagination, writ large. As high priests of the cult of the imagination, however, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley had not been faced with the seemingly omnipotent spectre of scientific naturalism, while Tennyson and Matthew Arnold, although forced to acknowledge science, had never

willingly accepted its ideas. Pater's most distinctive attribute was his wish to assimilate all of the various manifestations of the spirit of his own age, as well as the spirit of past ages into his thought. Despite a personal timidity or reticence he showed himself in his work to be unwilling to sacrifice any of the variety of the external or the intellectual world. Pater's words on the scholarship of Pico della Mirandola are perhaps the aptest characterization of his own work:

"With its strange web of imagery, its quaint conceits, its unexpected combinations and subtle moralizing, it is an element in the local colour of a great age. It illustrates also the faith of that age in all oracles, its desire to hear all voices, its generous belief that nothing which had ever interested the human mind could wholly lose its vitality."⁹

NOTES

Chapter 1 THE PRIMACY OF SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT IN ENGLAND
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2. G. M. Young, Victorian England: Portrait of an Age, London, 1936, (1953), p. 7.
3. See Robert M. Young, "The Impact of Darwin on Contemporary Thought", The Victorian Crisis of Faith, (Ed.), A. Symondson, London, 1970; C. C. Gillispie, Genesis and Geology, A Study in the Relations of Scientific Thought, Natural Theology and Social Opinion in Britain 1790-1850, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951, pp. 20, 29, 44, 217-220.
4. Walter F. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, New Haven, 1957, p. 33.

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5. See Houghton, pp. 27-53 and the essays by John Bowle and Basil Willey, G. M. Trevelyan, and E. L. Woodward in Harman Grisewood (Ed.) Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians, New York, London, 1949, (New York, 1966). Also J. B. Bury, The Idea of Progress, London, 1920; G. P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century, London 1913, (1952); Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History, London, 1931, (1963).
6. Cited John Morley, Recollections: Works of Lord Morley, Vol. 1, London, 1921, p. 67.
7. See Morley, "Auguste Comte", in Critical Miscellanies, Vol. 3, London 1886, pp. 337-342.
8. Ibid., p. 337.

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9. In the words of the English positivist G. H. Lewes: "All human knowledge was now capable of being treated as a homogenous and organic whole, one spirit, one method, and one aim presiding over each department."
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11. Sidney Eisen, "Frederic Harrison and Herbert Spencer: Embattled Unbelievers", Victorian Studies, 12, 1968-9, p. 38.
12. Cited Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies, London, 1949, (1964), p. 161.
13. John Morley, "Mr. Mill's Autobiography", Critical Miscellanies, Vol. 3, London, 1886, p. 73.
14. Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, London, 1851, p. 65.
15. See Noel Annan Leslie Stephen: His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time, London, 1951, pp. 162-165.
Also Morse Peckham, "Darwinism and Darwinisticism" and John Passmore, "Darwin's Impact on British Metaphysics," Victorian Studies, 3, 1959.
16. Morley, Recollections, p. 81.
17. Webster's Third New International Dictionary, London, 1961, p. 356.
18. Frank Miller Turner, Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England, New Haven, 1974, pp. 21-22.
19. Ibid., p. 13.
20. Fortnightly Review, 23, 1878, p. 809.
21. See Frank Miller Turner, "Victorian Scientific Naturalism and Carlyle", Victorian Studies, 18, 1974-5, pp. 330-343.
22. T. H. Huxley, Collected Essays, 9 vol., London, 1894, Vol. 1, Methods and Results, p. 41.
23. Cited Annan, Leslie Stephen, p. 156.
24. Ibid., p. 157.

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26. Ibid., p. 81.
27. Cited Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies, p. 161.
28. Beatrice Webb, My Apprenticeship, London 1926, p. 131.
29. Ibid., pp. 130-131.
See also the Preface to G. B. Shaw, Back to Methusalem, London, 1921.

Part I, Chapter 2 THE COSMOLOGY OF BRITISH SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM

1. G. H. Lewes, "Dread and Dislike of Science", Fortnightly, 23, 1878, p. 805.
2. Morley, Recollections, p. 81.
3. See Maurice Mandelbaum, History, Man and Reason: A Study in Nineteenth Century Thought, Baltimore, 1971, p. 15. Mandelbaum uses the terms "systematic positivism" to characterize the thought of Comte, and "critical positivism" for that of Spencer and Huxley.
4. Morley "Mr. Mill's Autobiography", Critical Miscellanies, p. 74.
5. See F. M. Turner, Between Science and Religion, pp. 10-17, especially p. 11, note 8.
6. James Ward, "Naturalism", Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition, Vol. XIX, Cambridge, 1911, p. 274.
7. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, London 1690, (1961), Bk. IV, Ch. 4, p. 167; Bk. II, Ch. 1, Section 2, p. 77.
8. Cited Leonard M. Trawick (Ed.), Backgrounds to Romanticism English Philosophical Prose of the Eighteenth Century, Bloomington and London, 1967, p. xiii.
9. Francis Bacon Novum Organum, London 1620, cited Gillispie Genesis and Geology, p. 4.
10. Citations from John Herman Randall Jr., The Making of The Modern World, New York, 1954, p. 242.
11. Ward, Encyclopaedia Britannica, p. 274.
12. Between Science and Religion, p. 12.
See also the essays by Noel Annan and J. Bronowski in Harman

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Grisewood (Ed.), Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians.

13. Mandelbaum, p. 11.
14. James Ward in Gifford Lectures, delivered at Aberdeen, 1896-8, cited Between Science and Religion, p. 15.
15. John Stuart Mill, Auguste Comte and Positivism, London, 1865, p. 6.
16. "The Influence of Rationalism: Lecky's History." Essays and Leaves from a Notebook, London, 1883, p. 187. The essay originally appeared in the Fortnightly in 1865.
17. Collected Essays, Vol. 1, Methods and Results, London, 1894, p. 39.
18. Ibid., "The Progress of Science", Vol. 1, p. 66.
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20. Between Science and Religion, p. 24. I am particularly indebted to pp. 24-28 of Turner's book for this discussion of atomism, energy, and evolution, and scientific naturalism.
21. John Tyndall, "Reflections on Prayer and Natural Law", Fragments of Science, Vol. 2, London, 1871, (1879), p. 4.
22. First Principles, p. 367.
In a note to this page, Spencer refers to the need to qualify this definition of the "law of evolution" by inserting "relatively" where I have indicated with brackets.
On the nebular hypothesis, see Sir Robert Stawell Ball, "Nebular Theory", Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XIX, Cambridge, 1911, pp. 333-335.
23. Morse Peckham, "Darwinism & Darwinisticism", p. 32.
24. See Gillispie, p. 29.
25. See Leslie Stephen "George Combe", Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. 11, London, 1887, (1908 reissue; Vol. 4), p. 884.
26. Figures from Robert M. Young's essay in The Victorian Crisis of Faith, p. 16. Darwin citation from An Historical Sketch in the preface to The Origin of Species, London 1859, (6th ed., 1888), p. xix.
27. Francis Darwin, Life of Charles Darwin, Vol. 1, London, 1887, (New York, 1888), pp. 278-279.

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28. John Tyndall, Address Delivered Before the British Association assembled at Belfast, London 1874.
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Robert M. Young, "The Historiographic and Ideological Contexts of the Nineteenth Century Debate on Man's Place in Nature", Changing Perspectives in the History of Science: Essays in Honour of Joseph Needham, Ed. R. M. Young and M. Teich, London 1973, p. 428.
Young cites Marx:
"For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones."
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PART II

Chapter I LIFE AND WORKS

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3. Ibid.
See also Thomas Wright, The Life of Walter Pater, London, 1907, Vol. 1, p. 211.
4. W. B. Yeats, Autobiographies, London, 1955, p. 130.
5. Gosse, p. 459.

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Chapter 2 THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT, SCIENCE AND HEGEL

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3. See above, pp. 14-15.
4. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, (Ed.) R. H. Super, Ann Arbor, 1965, pp. 93-5, 100.
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For "Natural Supernaturalism" see M. H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature, London, 1971.
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11. Ibid., p. 477, lns. 88-92.
12. The Prelude, Book XII, p. 437, lns. 208, 222-223.
13. The Renaissance, p. 228.
14. Huxley cited G. Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution, London, 1959, p. 188.
Tennyson quoted from "In Memoriam", The Poems of Tennyson, London, 1969, p. 912, LVI, ln. 15.

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See also Morse Peckham, "Browning and Romanticism", Robert Browning (Writers and their Background), (Ed.) Isobel Armstrong, London, 1974.
17. "In Memoriam" The Poems of Tennyson, London, 1969, p. 973, CXXIII, Ins. 1-8. "In Memoriam" was first published in 1850.
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19. Cited Gertrude Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution, London, 1959, p. 329.
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21. "The Literary Influence of Academies", Lectures and Essays in Criticism, p. 243.
22. "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time", Ibid., p. 282.
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27. Plato and Platonism, London, 1893, (1910), pp. 10-11.
Maurice Mandelbaum defines historicism as "the belief that an adequate understanding of the nature of any phenomenon and an adequate assessment of its value are to be gained through considering it in terms of the place which it occupied and the role which it played within a process of development."
History, Man and Reason, p. 42.
28. Cited by Mandelbaum, p. 165.

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30. Mandelbaum, p. 6.
31. David Masson, Recent British Philosophy, London, 1865, (1867), p. 71.
32. MacMillan's Magazine, 21, 1869, p. 190.
33. See Ferris Greenslet, Walter Pater, New York, 1903, p. 21, and Thomas Wright, The Life of Walter Pater, London, 1907, Vol. 1, p. 209.
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34. Frederic Harrison, "On the Supposed Necessity of some Metaphysical Problems", Fortnightly Review, 12, 1872, p. 517.
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6. Cited De Laura, Hebrew and Hellene, p. 175, n. 13.
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8. Appreciations, London, 1889, (1910), pp. 66-67.
9. Ibid., p. 66.
10. Appreciations, pp. 68-69.
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12. "Mr. Mill's Autobiography", Critical Miscellanies, Vol. 3, London, 1886, p. 56.
13. The Renaissance, p. 233, n. 1.
14. See above, p. 43, n. 4.
15. Cited J. Uglow (Ed.), Walter Pater Essays on Literature and Art, London, 1973, p. 2.
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18. Ibid., p. 234, 235.
19. A Treatise of Human Nature, London, 1739, (1886), Vol. 1, p. 534.
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21. "Darwin's Impact on British Metaphysics", Victorian Studies, 1959-60, p. 44.
22. See above, pp. 18-19, n. 16-18.
23. "What is Materialism?", An Agnostic's Apology and other Essays, London, 1893, pp. 135-136.
24. The Renaissance, p. 235.
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27. Ibid.
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29. Ibid., pp. 238-239.
30. Ibid., p. 236.
31. Ibid., p. 237.
32. Ibid., p. 229.
33. Ibid., p. 230.

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34. Ibid., p. 232.
35. Ibid., pp. 231-232.
36. Frank Kermode, Romantic Image, London, 1957, (1966), p. 20.
37. Appreciations, p. 260.
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See also John Passmore, One Hundred Years of Philosophy, London, 1957, pp. 11-44.
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Trawick Backgrounds to Romanticism, p. xiii.
The Renaissance, pp. viii-ix, x.
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ibid., Vol. 1, pp. xxxix-xl.
41. Appreciations, p. 73.
42. History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte, pp. xxxix-xli.
43. Appreciations, p. 68.
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46. Appreciations, p. 68.
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48. Matthew Arnold, "On Translating Homer", Lectures and Essays in Criticism, (Ed.) R. H. Super, Ann Arbor, 1962, p. 258.
49. Introduction to C. L. Shadwell's translation of Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy: Purgatory, London, 1892-1899, Vol. 1. p. xviii.
50. Benjamin Jowett, "Introduction", The Dialogues of Plato: Theatetus, Vol. IV, Oxford, 1871, (1875), pp. 268-9.
51. John Ruskin, "Of Imagination Penetrative", Modern Painters, Vol. 2, London, 1846-60, (3rd. Edn. 1851), Part III, Section 2, pp. 182-183.

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58. The Renaissance, p. 34.
59. Ibid., p. 226.
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Chapter 4 FLUX AND THE WORLD-SPIRIT

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2. Ibid., p. x.
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4. "On Compromise", Fortnightly, 15, 1874, p. 434.
See also pp. 52-54 above.
5. John Stuart Mill, review of the Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (Ed.) Henry Nelson Coleridge, 4 vol., London, 1836-39, in The London and Westminster Review, 33, 1839-40, p. 278; J. M. Rigg, "Henry Halford Vaughan", Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. LVIII, London, 1899, p. 167.
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8. "Introduction", The Dialogues of Plato: The Sophist, Vol. IV, p. 384.

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(b) the world-process, which, in his view, is but the thought-process on its objective side, and develops similarly by a continuous unification of opposites."

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13. Plato and Platonism, p. 159.
14. Appreciations, p. 65.
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26. Ibid., p. 256.
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28. Greek Studies, pp. 119-120.
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32. Greek Studies, p. 36.
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37. John Morley, "Mr. Mill's Autobiography", Critical Miscellanies, Vol. 3, London, 1886, p. 80.
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See also Ward, pp. 59-66. Ward dates the manuscript between 1880 and 1885 when Pater was writing Marius the Epicurean.
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56. Marius, Vol. II, p. 221.
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George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, "A Treatise of the Perpetuall Visibilitie and Succession of the True Church in all Ages", London, 1624;
John Henry Newman and others, "The Visible Church", Tracts for the Times, No. 11, Vol. 1, and Vol. 6, No. 90, Article XIX, London, 1834-41.
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69. Ibid., p. 52.
70. Ward, p. 185.
71. Plato and Platonism, p. 52.
72. The Renaissance, p. 135.
73. Plato and Platonism, p. 70.
74. See The Renaissance, p. 231.
75. Appreciations, London, 1889, (1910), p. 11.
76. Plato and Platonism, p. 174.
77. Ibid., pp. 175-6.
78. Ibid., p. 176.

CONCLUSION

1. The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough, (Ed.) H. F. Lowry, London and New York, 1932, p. 97.
2. "On the Modern Element in Literature", On the Classical Tradition, (Ed.) R. H. Super, Ann Arbor, 1960, pp. 19-20. Arnold's essay was first published in 1857.
3. H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society: The Re-Orientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930, New York, 1958, (London 1974), p. 37.
4. Turner, p. 5.

NOTES (Cont/d.) Part II, Conclusion

5. Cary F. Baynes, Translator's Preface, in C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, tr. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes, London, 1933, p. viii.
6. "Mr. Pater's Essays", Fortnightly, 13, 1873, pp. 475-6.
7. "Darwinism and Darwinisticism", Victorian Studies, 3, 1959, p. 39.
8. Milton Millhauser, "Walter Pater and the Flux", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 11, 1952-53, p. 217.
Cf. Susan Gliserman on Tennyson and the scientific works he read whilst writing In Memoriam:
"In the 1820's and after in England, new discoveries in science had to be assimilated into the emotional as well as the intellectual structures with which the members of a certain segment of Victorian society understood external reality and their place in it."
Susan Gliserman, "Early Victorian Science Writers and Tennyson's In Memoriam: A Study in Cultural Exchange", Victorian Studies, 18, 1975.
9. The Renaissance, p. 35.

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