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## The Functions of Criticism and the Politics of Appreciation

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This article suggests that ‘appreciation’ as defined by Walter Pater is a genre of criticism distinguished from that of Matthew Arnold’s critical practice and theory. I consider how appreciation functions as a critical mode in Pater’s periodical reviews, testing Pater’s resolve in how he manages it in respect to reviews of books on controversial subjects such as religion, aestheticism, and revolution. The article ends with a case study of Pater’s signed review of W. S. Lilly’s critique of the French Revolution in a book published during its centenary in 1889, a review that exemplifies the high stakes of reviewing and Pater’s review at this time, just as *Appreciations* is published. The case study explores how the genre of appreciation meets the challenges of the timing of the review; the site of its publication; and Pater’s relationship to the author, to the editor, and to his own publisher.

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‘Mr. Pater’s studies are strictly appreciations, not depreciations.’<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

When Walter Pater (1839–1894) published his fourth book, *Appreciations*, in 1889, its title was remarked upon by more than one reviewer as an uncommon noun in English and indebted to French or Latin.<sup>2</sup> Its apparent contrast with the focus of the volume on English literature was also noted.<sup>3</sup> In the context of the politics of aestheticism, Pater was *renaming* in mid-career what he had initially called ‘aesthetic criticism’, now defining it, not generally as ‘aesthetic’, but more specifically and additionally as ‘an appreciation’. I shall argue that this is a gloss on the term ‘criticism’, with its more negative connotation that Arnold had rejuvenated twenty-five years earlier.<sup>4</sup> That Pater deployed ‘appreciations’ retrospectively, to cover the contents of *Appreciations* which, timewise, spans the entirety of his publications to date (from 1866 to 1888), lends the new term weight; it can be regarded as a considered overview of the category of criticism, which describes his previous as well as his present work.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anon., ‘Mr. Pater’s “Appreciations”’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 December 1889, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Pater published five books, in multiple editions, in his lifetime: *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), *Imaginary Portraits* (1887), *Appreciations* (1889), and *Plato and Platonism* (1893). Most of the reviews in the contemporary press pause over the title, *Appreciations*, a gauge of its unfamiliarity in English, and its origins in another language. William Watson, reviewing for the *Academy*, notes other examples of Pater opting for ‘strangeness’ of diction in the volume: ‘Appreciations: By Walter Pater’, *Academy*, 21 December 1889, pp. 399–400 (p. 400). Critics in the *Spectator* (‘Mr. Pater’s Essays’, 21 December 1889, pp. 887–88); *Blackwood’s* ([Margaret Oliphant], ‘The Old Saloon’, January 1890, pp. 131–51 (pp. 140–45)), and the *Century Guild Hobby Horse* (Lionel Johnson, ‘A Note, upon Certain Qualities in the Writings of Mr. Pater; as Illustrated by His Recent Book’, January 1890, pp. 36–40), for example, suggest Gallic origins, with the *Spectator* regretting ‘the effort to acclimatise a Gallicism [that] smacks of affectation’ (p. 888). For the claim for Latin (‘in the fine Latin sense of the word’), see Oscar Wilde, ‘Mr. Pater’s Last Volume’, *Speaker*, 22 March 1890, pp. 319–20 (p. 319). Wilde published his review in the new weekly, the *Speaker*, with which he was closely affiliated, after Pater solicited it from him in a letter of 4 January 1890, and after previous critics had claimed the French tenor of Pater’s volume and its title. See *Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. by Larry Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> See Margaret Oliphant in *Blackwood’s*, above, which is clear that the French ground of the book is inappropriate to its English contents: ‘Greek as Mr Pater is in soul, his models of style are all French. This is, we think, a great mistake: [...] each language has an individual genius and rhythm of its own, and that excellence in one cannot be the standard of excellence in another’ (p. 144).

<sup>4</sup> See Arnold’s *Essays in Criticism* (London: Macmillan, 1865). In a pattern Pater followed, Arnold published its lead essay ‘The Function of Criticism at the Present Time’ a few months before the book in November 1864, as ‘The Functions of Criticism at the Present Time’, *National Review*, November 1864, pp. 230–51. For more on the significant relation of the periodical context of the article and Arnold’s emphasis on the project of his book on ‘essays’ and ‘criticism’, see Laurel Brake, ‘Culture Wars? Arnold’s *Essays in Criticism* and the Rise of Journalism 1865–1895’, in *Conflict and Difference in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, ed. by Dinah Birch and Mark Llewellyn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 201–12.

<sup>5</sup> *Appreciations with an Essay on Style* in 1889 was Pater’s only volume of specifically *literary* criticism. Its first edition related primarily to English literature, noteworthy for Pater whose other work was steeped in European and classical writing. Pater constructed *Appreciations* from versions of earlier articles, from his first publication on Coleridge in 1866 to the recent ‘Style’ in 1888. In addition, it included pieces on William Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, Sir Thomas Browne, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare’s English kings, aesthetic poetry, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and a postscript (on Romanticism).

Such a positive perspective as Pater's on the job of the critic might be significant for the task of the reviewer and specifically for the complexion of the Paterian book review, which as a genre constitutes a high proportion of his published articles, almost forty per cent.<sup>6</sup> With this problem in mind, I shall a) test the connection of the term with Arnold's alternative; b) examine the spectrum of Pater's 'appreciation' mode of writing in his reviews; and c) scrutinize some reviews by Pater — of controversial fiction and poetry on the one hand, and of a political history on the other — to test the strength of the 'appreciation' model, with its commitment to positivity about works under review. Do such reviews capitulate to 'criticism'? The latter case study — of Pater's signed review of W. S. Lilly's book *A Century of Revolution*, about the French Revolution and its legacy in its centenary year of 1889 — unpeels the politics of reviewing.<sup>7</sup> The review appeared in the December issue of the monthly *Nineteenth Century*, in the same year as *Appreciations*, but just after its publication, a happy accident that additionally captures the force of that moment of 1889, when Pater foregrounds the term 'appreciations'. This aspect of my interrogation is author-centred: it treats the politics of the review in relation to its author and his work, a familiar and conventional approach.

What I had not foreseen was the added dimension of the politics of *reviewing* itself, which in the case of Lilly's book at this time in this periodical proved elaborately complex. Beyond the usual puffing and log-rolling relation between author and reviewer lie the reviewer's and author's relations to the periodical and the periodical's and reviewer's relations with the publisher of the book. Moreover, it is useful, crucial in this case, to locate the timing of the review, its position in the reviewer's own publishing career in terms of its contents/style and with respect to his or her own position in the public sphere, and the market. This dimension of Pater's review goes beyond any single review or reviewer. It opens the question of the status of reviews in the consideration of author-reviewers' work, which editors of recent editions of *Collected Works* have tackled: John Stokes and Mark Turner in their two *Journalism* volumes of the *Collected Works of Oscar Wilde* and Ronald Schuchard in his multivolume critical edition of the *Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* have edited reviews as they would other texts and, in the case of Schuchard, have integrated them into the chronological sequence of texts in the edition, presenting reviews as pieces with similar status to other periodical articles in the trajectory of the author's career.

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<sup>6</sup> For more about the genres of Pater's publications, see Laurel Brake, 'Walter Pater and the New Media: The "Child" in the House', in *Testing New Opinions and Courting New Impressions: New Perspectives on Walter Pater*, ed. by Anne-Florence Gillard-Estrada, Martine Lambert-Charbonnier, and Charlotte Ribeyrol (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 15–36.

<sup>7</sup> W. H. Pater, 'Noticeable Books: 3. *A Century of Revolution*, by W. S. Lilly. Chapman and Hall, 1889', *Nineteenth Century*, December 1889, pp. 992–94.

The ‘appreciation’ as a reviewing genre came into its own in the 1880s, and I want to suggest that its appearance is a response to the changing complexion of the press, as well as a development of Pater’s aesthetic theory mooted between 1867 and 1873 in the period of the gestation of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. Once the repeal of the newspaper taxes on news, advertising, and paper in Britain began to roll out between 1855 and 1861, new generations of the periodical press relinquished pronounced affiliation with one political party or another. New generation monthly magazines such as the *Cornhill Magazine* were committed to entertainment, allegedly devoid of politics; and even *Macmillan’s Magazine*, its more serious rival, though imbued with Christian socialism initially, opened its pages from the start to a more comprehensive breadth of opinion and authors.

Many of the surviving reviews, likewise, relinquished their respective avowed positions quickly. In 1864 the conservative anti-democracy *National Review*, a quarterly, described its decision to halve its frequency as part of its resolve to publish articles less occupied with ephemeral news and politics, and more geared to prose criticism which, ‘above’ its time, would last beyond the moment. The *Fortnightly Review*, which began in 1865 as a supporter of the positivism of Auguste Comte and his ‘religion of humanity’, morphed into a broader liberal journal; and the *Contemporary Review*, having responded in 1866 to the *Fortnightly* with an orientation to Christian theology, eventually relaxed this policy to the point that after a decade a new owner and its editor parted company, to enable the new owner to reclaim the title for ‘religion’. Undeterred however, the original editor honoured the zeitgeist of the time and continued his previous catholic practice in a new review — the *Nineteenth Century* — that flourished by publishing symposia on a broad range of contemporary questions and drew on contributors with opposing views.

In these various ways, mid-nineteenth-century British periodicals turned away from political conflict, such as that typically found in *Blackwood’s* and *Fraser’s* magazines, and the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* reviews in the first half of the century. Titles that retained exhortation as their main mode of discourse, such as the new weekly, the *Saturday Review*, were singled out for disapproval as ‘the Saturday Reviler’ on that basis, as an anomaly in a new age; and its combination of shrill denunciation by editorial dictum and its enforcement of anonymity among its writers created deep resentment in some of its young staff.

The relative political inclusivity of the newer titles had economic ramifications as well: these print journals were unable to optimize potential readership from the structures of political allegiances, which had served formerly as distribution points at meetings, for example, or for subscribers. A wider range of opinion appeared in most

new titles, but as the politics of readers could no longer be taken for granted, authors' positions in articles had to be argued more strenuously. Without the draw of political party, titles could not rely on political loyalties of readers to turn 'naturally' to the organs of their parties, but had to develop new handles: signature being one, and structured rivalry (and breadth of political representation) such as symposia being another. In this format periodicals such as the *Contemporary Review* and the *Nineteenth Century* juxtaposed articles on a common topic written from different political positions, thus potentially maximizing a readership of different political persuasions. In this sense the dominant model of *conflict* between periodicals and titles harboured and developed by the old order of rival political parties altered, in a more nuanced context where other modes of persuasion could and would develop.

The question of the *style* of prose discourse was reinvigorated as a topic, to which two writers in the press addressed themselves, with alternative models: Matthew Arnold, with notions of 'criticism', and Pater, of 'appreciation'. Both gathered their journalism into books, with Arnold's *Essays in Criticism* appearing in 1865 and Pater's *Appreciations* in 1889. But the gap between these two collections is misleading: Pater, the younger critic, was learning his craft as an Oxford University student and young academic from Arnold, as professor of poetry, in the lecture halls and in the journals, as Arnold's articles and book appeared (*Table 1*).

<b>Matthew Arnold 1822–1888</b>	
1857–67	Professor of poetry, Oxford University
1861	<i>On Translating Homer</i> (originally lectures)
29 October 1864	'The Functions of Criticism', lecture, at Oxford as professor of poetry
November 1864	'The Functions of Criticism at the Present Time', <i>National Review</i>
[February] 1865	'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', <i>Essays in Criticism</i>
1867	<i>The Study of Celtic Literature</i> (originally lectures)
1867	<i>New Poems</i>
<b>Walter Pater 1839–1894</b>	
1858–62	Undergraduate at The Queen's College, Oxford
from 1864	(Probationary) fellow at Brasenose College, Oxford
1864?	'Diaphaneite' essay read in <i>Old Mortality</i>
1866–68	'Coleridge's Writings', 'Winckelmann', and 'Poems by William Morris' all published anonymously in <i>Westminster Review</i>
1873	<i>Studies in the History of the Renaissance</i>
1889	<i>Appreciations</i>

Table 1: Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater at Oxford.

By 1868 the young Pater's book reviews were fashioned as appreciations rather than criticism. In 1873, in the preface to his first book, Pater took Arnold on, not through confrontation but by a structure that appears to be *continuation* — quoting Arnold's notion of the task of criticism, only to augment it and displace it with a counter phrasing of his own:

'To see the object as in itself it really is,' has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever; *and in aesthetic criticism the first step* [emphasis added] towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly. [...] What is this song or picture, this engaging personality present in life or in a book, to me? (*Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, p. viii)

Pater smoothly substitutes for Arnold's combativeness a more elegant type of criticism — 'appreciation' — that circumvents ostensible conflict, without ceding a critical stance. By the time Pater compiled *Appreciations*, he could include a range of articles in this genre that had appeared in the press over twenty-three years, the earliest from 1866.

Arnold's first piece in *his* book, 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', was part of the project of the *National Review* — to move journalism from ephemeral invective, saturated in politics and presentism, to the cool climes of disinterested 'criticism' for all time. However, while Arnold counselled critical disengagement and 'sweetness and light' in his piece, in the event his writing could be hortatory, belligerent, and berating. At best, it was a rhetoric of certainty, persuasion, and moral rectitude, not unlike the prose and sentiments of well-written sermons, recommending criticism as a vehicle of high moral values, and national salvation through (high) culture; at worst, the lamentably barbed preface to his book was declamatory and shrill:

Yes, the world will soon be the Philistines'; and then, with every voice not of thunder, silenced, and the whole earth filled and ennobled every morning by the magnificent roaring of the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph*, we shall all yawn in one another's faces with the dimmest, the most unimpeachable gravity. (pp. xii–xiii)

However, by this time in Arnold's career — after the publication of his poetry in the 1850s, his criticism in the early 1860s, and his tenure as professor of poetry at Oxford — his high literary status smoothed the way for publication for *any* of his writing he offered the press. As Arnold delivered and published these lectures in various titles of the new media, Pater was in Oxford, as an undergraduate and in the first years of his Brasenose fellowship. Far from rejecting this style of heightened language and emotion in prose as Arnold counsels, the young Pater embraces it, but denuded of Arnold's

Christian morality, religious language, and national discourse and purpose. Pater's cheeky appropriation of Arnold's famous byword is a timely example of how Pater from early on depersonalizes his critique and how he seems to add his view to Arnold's position rather than to displace it. Pater's responsive model of appreciation *professed* engagement rather than disengagement; at the same time, from 1867, his writing was more emollient, and notably less abrasive than Arnold's with reference to specific texts and to individuals such as Winckelmann, Morris, and Coleridge, the subject of Pater's first more critical, published article. This style, this genre of appreciation, has a politics.

Appreciation, with its oblique and buried critique, served periodical journalists well, obscuring personal opinions and allowing authors to place articles in journals of all or no political persuasions, and to review books of similar diversity without disqualifying themselves through ideological stance. Although 'disinterested' Paterian 'appreciation' was associated historically with aestheticism and signature-informed debate, its discourse was significantly more eclectic politically than other criticism. Moreover, individual periodical titles were far more likely to carry politically neutral work like 'appreciations' or work of a broad political range than in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

### The spectrum of appreciations: different functions, different politics

In practice Pater deployed various *types* of 'appreciation', and I want to identify these and their distinctive politics as generic frameworks. Where he *signs* articles and reviews, he is promulgating their contents in the public sphere; he understands that they will be used to represent his positions in current debate; these pieces keep his ideas and his persona in view and contribute to, and hopefully foster, his reputation. We need to think of authors as placing signed work in a meaningful location, and in an epistemic synchronic moment that potentially involves issues of the day. We may think of Pater as less performative than Wilde, but arguably all of Pater's published work, as much as his mode of dress, are interventions and performative. Signed pieces can also visibly repay earlier puffs by friends of his work with his puffs of *their* work, and his puffs can set

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<sup>8</sup> While Pater's 'appreciation' was staged in opposition and as an alternative to Arnold's mode of adversarial criticism in which he attacked critical subjects, current usage of 'appreciation' in A level examination of literature notably *conflates* the two in a description of one task as "critical appreciation" of the unseen passage'. With only a hint of an oxymoron, of the tension between appreciation and criticism in Pater, 'critical appreciation' situates 'critical' ambiguously: as a modifier of the stronger noun 'appreciation' to contextualize the task in 'literary criticism', and with the shadow of a reference to criticism as disinterested scrutiny, short of 'appreciation', possibly negative, even adversarial, and including weaknesses. What survives from Pater's adoption of appreciation into English discourse from the French is a nudge in the British education sector towards analysis of the strengths of a work. In this context the task of "critical appreciation" of the unseen passage' supports the implicit high quality of the texts selected for A level scrutiny. See 'English Literature: Introduction to Close Reading and Approaching Unseen Texts', OCR, November 2014 <<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/182202-close-reading-and-approaching-unseen-texts.pdf>> [accessed 15 November 2022] (p. 4).

up new debts for authors who have not yet written reviews for Pater's forthcoming work. Moreover, his placement of articles and reviews in all manner of titles creates links with periodical editors with whom he wishes to continue to publish; this keeps his name in circulation in the industry; it helps tie editors to his submissions, and to reviewing his publications, through obligation, better than more combative criticism might. This will be dramatically illustrated in the case study.

*Anonymity* shapes another type of Pater's appreciations, and another politics. In choosing anonymity Pater opts for space to write more freely and to test (and perhaps expand) the limits of appreciation. It enables him to extend his reviewing to a cluster of books that he enjoys but with which he would rather not be publicly associated, such as French fiction, regarded by some at the time as both risqué and frivolous. This is a politics that is not, I think, about contempt for the genre of the review but about deploying its greater informality to explore fiction he enjoys and to get paid for it, without having to deal with the flack of disapproval of Mr and Mrs Grundy. Anonymous reviewing also gives Pater greater opportunity to develop his more serious ideas, as in the 'Poems by William Morris' review, or in the Winckelmann article, to argue more strenuously for a controversial position *and to adopt it*, than he normally does in signed work. Anonymous appreciation also permits him to write pieces that *are* puffs, which, were they signed, would be recognized as such. In these cases the anonymous review may benefit the author reviewed, in appearing more disinterested than if it were signed, and protect the reviewer and the periodical from the charge of puffing.

Pater opted for *serial* anonymous reviewing twice in his career: at the beginning when he wrote three review articles for the *Westminster Review* in the 1860s, and in the literary supplement of the *Guardian*, an Anglican weekly newspaper in the late 1880s. Each instance was significant in shaping his work: the early articles in a radical quarterly gave him untrammelled space and occasion to identify himself and his interests — in religious relativism, in homosocial queer culture, and in the aesthetic life — with a radical journal and its readers, without jeopardizing his academic career at its inception. Twenty years later, his stint of nine anonymous articles in the *Guardian* permitted him covertly to align himself with the Anglican community as he did in his private life,<sup>9</sup> while leaving him free publicly to support Roman Catholicism, queer 'new culture', and Hellenism in signed work about that time.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> From late 1885, at home in London and in college, Pater attended worship regularly, in Kensington, the college chapel, and the University Church. F. W. Bussell, who became a close friend of Pater's after he entered Brasenose as a fellow in 1886, was appointed its chaplain in 1891.

<sup>10</sup> See Pater's unsigned review of A. Raffalovich's book of queer poems, 'It is Thyself', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 April 1889, p. 3; and his signed reviews 'Hippolytus Veiled: A Study from Euripides', *Macmillan's Magazine*, August 1889, pp. 294–306, and of Lilly's *A Century of Revolution* in the *Nineteenth Century*.



In construing the politics of aesthetics, gender studies is sometimes located outside the category of politics, as engaged with projects one level down from politics — such as recovery, history, and close reading. In Pater’s aesthetic politics, however, and his ‘appreciations’, gender is not only a matter of our gender politics of interpretation, but his. It saturates his aesthetic politics and his writing. His desire to promulgate and circulate queer culture, and to set it up critically *beside* the extant binary, heterosexual readings of literature and life is a constant element. So, the ‘appreciation’ not only identifies positive qualities to praise, excludes negative ones, and avoids conflict, but it promulgates a queer perspective.

### **Appreciation in the marketplace**

In the last section of this article, I offer two case studies, about Pater’s approaches to controversial literature, and history. Literature first. Towards the end of Pater’s career, he reviewed two such novels, Mary Ward’s *Robert Elsmere* (1888) and Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), which appeared about three years apart. One review was anonymous and the other signed; both are puffs in that Pater has decided to review them at all, and that they are the works of friends, but to one review Pater adds the weight of his name. They help illustrate the scope of an ‘appreciation’. While puffs approve of their subjects overall, they exhibit a range of ‘appreciation’, incorporating strenuous analysis (unsigned) and mild critique (signed). Before the Wilde trials in 1895, the more contentious topic is religion (Ward’s book) rather than gender (Wilde’s novel), and the distribution of anonymity and signature in these reviews reflects that. A similar pattern may be found in a comparison of earlier pieces on the work of two poets, ‘Poems by William Morris’ (unsigned in 1868) and ‘Rossetti’ (signed in 1883); while both were controversial figures at the dates of Pater’s appreciations, the anonymous review is far more expansive and suggestive than the signed introduction.<sup>11</sup>

The last case study of the genre is Pater’s review of a controversial book on an equally problematic topic — the French Revolution on its centenary in 1889. Pater’s review of W. S. Lilly’s highly charged work on the revolution and its legacies in the *Nineteenth Century* illustrates the appreciation at its most limited, and under a plethora of cramping conditions, despite which this short appreciation connives to function splendidly. As a comparator, I note Pater’s publication of ‘Style’ in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1888 and in his volume of *Appreciations with an Essay on Style* that followed shortly after, as an

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<sup>11</sup> Anon., ‘Robert Elsmere’ [Communicated], *Guardian*, 28 March 1888, pp. 468–69; Walter Pater, ‘A Novel by Mr Oscar Wilde’, *Bookman*, November 1891, pp. 59–60; Anon., ‘Poems by William Morris’, *Westminster Review*, October 1868, pp. 300–12; Walter H. Pater, ‘Dante Gabriel Rossetti’, in *The English Poets: Selections*, ed. by Thomas Humphry Ward, 2nd edn, rev., 4 vols (London: Macmillan, 1890), IV: *Wordsworth to Rossetti*, 633–41.

example of his use of another tactic for treating contentious material appreciatively — expansion, and the ratcheting up of a ‘review’ to a different level, that of a generic piece.<sup>12</sup> While Pater initially referred to ‘Style’ as ‘an essay on Flaubert’ in a letter to J. S. Verschoyle, the deputy editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, to which he was hoping to submit it, ‘Style’ subsumes treatment of the divisive figure of Flaubert and his work into a larger argument.<sup>13</sup> How then *do* the politics of appreciation function with controversial texts, such as those by Pater, on Morris, Rossetti, Flaubert, and Lilly, and with respect to Pater’s relations with the periodical context in which he is publishing?

### Case studies

Comparison of the two puffs of Ward and Wilde noted above is informative: Pater *requested* both titles for review of his respective editors, and his engagement with them shines through. If the editor of the new journal the *Bookman* was pleased to have Pater’s contribution on Wilde signed, to build the cultural capital of his new venture, and on such a newsworthy topic as Wilde’s novel, the editor of the *Guardian* was so worried about the nature of Ward’s book and of Pater’s review for his Church paper, that he formally distanced it from the paper’s platform with the descriptor ‘communicated’, despite its anonymity.<sup>14</sup> A feature of the review crucial to Pater, anonymity, was the condition of all his reviews in this Church paper, to keep *his* reputation and freedom to think and write where he pleased; it was also crucial to the editor, who preferred not to have Pater’s name, a byword for eclecticism and relativism, attached publicly to his paper.

With respect to puffing, while Pater’s association with the Wards and Wilde was familiar to his friends by the late 1880s, publicly it was only known or alleged among a small portion of the readers of the reviews, the larger community of aesthetes, and the queer community. Although few of these alert readers probably knew the extent of Pater’s involvement with Wilde’s novel — that Pater/the reviewer was one of Wilde’s advisors in revising and extending the periodical version for book publication — the puffing element *was* undeniably visible to readers in the signed piece through the signature, including Wilde himself, and his and Pater’s literary peers. Such readers of the *Guardian*, however, were unlikely to spot Pater’s anonymous review of *Robert Elsmere* as the work of a friend of Ward’s, despite elements of Pater’s distinctive style. But the *Guardian*’s editor, D.

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<sup>12</sup> Walter Pater, ‘Style’, *Fortnightly Review*, December 1888, pp. 728–43.

<sup>13</sup> Autograph letter from Walter Pater, dated 20 February [1888], referring to ‘my promised essay on Flaubert’. This letter, in the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, UCLA, was brought to my attention by Professor Marysa Demoor, University of Ghent.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Communicated’ indicates that the piece was offered by an external correspondent to the editor, rather than a piece commissioned by the editor and endorsed by the Anglican weekly. Pater’s actual relation to the *Guardian* at this time was that of a regular anonymous reviewer. None of his other reviews carried this qualification.

C. Lathbury, a former colleague of Pater's and Humphry Ward's from the university, would certainly have known that Humphry Ward had been a student of Pater's and then a colleague at Brasenose, that Clara Pater had worked with Mary Ward ('Mrs Humphry Ward') on higher education classes for Oxford ladies, that the two families had frequently socialized as neighbours on Bradmore Road in Oxford, and that Humphry Ward was now a fellow journalist, as the art critic of *The Times*.<sup>15</sup> So, the review of *Robert Elsmere* was an undoubted puff, despite its anonymity, which allowed the reviewer to write it privately, as part of a continuing dialogue with Mary Ward about faith and doubt, and allowed the editor to publish it and extend the tolerances of his paper.<sup>16</sup>

These two reviews of *Robert Elsmere* and *Dorian Gray* treat issues of edgy controversy — religious doubt and the aesthetic life — and exhibit more critical probing and personal exposure than some other appreciations at this period, such as Pater's signed appreciation of Lilly. While the anonymous review of Ward's novel is more searching than the Wilde review, as one might expect from the conditions of anonymity, the signed review of *Dorian Gray* is still significantly more critical than the review of Lilly's book. A spectrum of 'appreciation' is discernible.

The review of Lilly's *A Century of Revolution* appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* in December 1889. It is a very short review, hedged to a significant degree by a variety of political factors that make the text of Pater's appreciation very tricky indeed. Once the conditions operating on this overdetermined review, which appears innocuous on first examination, are understood, Pater's wily conduct of his task is skilful, amusing, and unexpected as well as informative.

Lilly's book blatantly courted controversy in 1889, both because of its journalistic topicality, the centenary of the French Revolution, and its tone of vehement disapproval of the revolution and its legacy in Britain and France, countries used by its English author to denounce French democracy and the culture that accompanies it in France, and to praise the Germanic constitutional monarchy and the individualism it supports in Britain.

Thus, W. S. Lilly's *A Century of Revolution* is close to the model of the partisan and critical 'Saturday Reviler', which was still flourishing in 1889. Matthew Arnold, no advocate of democracy, had died the year before the book appeared, but there are many

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<sup>15</sup> For more about the Wards, and Walter and Clara Pater's interaction with them, see the entries in the ODNB: 'Clara Pater', 'Walter Pater', and 'Mary Augusta Ward'; the Wikipedia entry for the 'Association for the Education of Women'; and John Sutherland, *Mrs. Humphry Ward: Eminent Victorian, Pre-Eminent Edwardian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

<sup>16</sup> Mary Ward reviewed *Marius* robustly and stringently in the house magazine of its publisher; her literary and theological commentary was a tribute to the integrity of both the reviewer and the publishing firm. It is arguable that *Marius* itself and Ward's work on her review prompted her decision to begin *Robert Elsmere*. It is this review with which Pater's *Guardian* review of *Robert Elsmere* is in dialogue. See M. A. W. [Mrs Humphry Ward], 'Marius the Epicurean', *Macmillan's Magazine*, June 1885, pp. 132–39.

and good examples in the reviews of Lilly's title like the model of criticism Arnold outlines in his 1865 preface to *Essays in Criticism*, and his critique of democracy in the United States and France that followed in the 1870s and 1880s. Why would Pater choose to write appreciatively of Lilly's volume?

When I devised this consideration of the Lilly review, there were several elements pertaining to the subject of the review of which I was ignorant — about Lilly himself and his book. This was mainly because I started with a single reviewer, Pater, whose review I had read in isolation as part of the author's *oeuvre*, and as part of editorial work on the review for an edition of the *Collected Works* of Pater.

When I examined this review synchronically, as part of a cluster of reviews of this book, I learned a good deal about it, its author, and the reviews not evident in Pater's piece in the *Nineteenth Century*: the book was not only controversial in its subject, but in its treatment:

Substance of the Revolutionary dogma: that complete freedom, or rather lawlessness, is the natural condition of man; that all men are born and continue equal in rights; that civil society is an artificial state resting upon a contract between those sovereign units, whereby the native independence of each is surrendered, and an absolute power over each is vested in the body politic; that human nature is good, and that the evil in the world is the result of bad education and bad institutions; that man, uncorrupted by civilisation, is essentially reasonable; and that the will of the sovereign units, dwelling in any territory under the social contract, that is of the majority of them, expressed by their delegates, is the supreme law.<sup>17</sup>

There are in the modern world two types of Democracy; the Revolutionary type, faithfully represented by [...] France, which is moulded by an abstract idea, and that a false one: which, in the name of a spurious equality assassinates liberty and depersonalises man: [...] which is essentially chaotic, [...] which has no sense of any law superior to popular wilfulness. (p. xxi)

And there is the German type of Democracy, temperate, rational, regulated, the product of that natural process of 'persistence in mobility,' which is the law of the social organism as of the physical; a Democracy recognising the differences naturally springing from individuality, allowing full room for the free play of indefinitely varying personalities, and so constructive and progressive; [...] at once the outcome and the subject of law. (p. xxii)

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<sup>17</sup> William Samuel Lilly, *A Century of Revolution* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1889), p. viii.

Reviewers had to contend with both its provocative subject and its treatment. Many objected to its militant style and tone, but far fewer objected to its approach to the revolution and its legacy. Pater’s ‘appreciation’ was not anomalous in its approval; and although each review had its own backstory to the position it adopted, the reviews have a common factor: the influence of the press, the cultural industry they were in, and in which their reviews were produced. In combination, *these factors tend to mute conflict*, and to foster a range of more positive outcomes — unreserved approval, praise with some reservations, and appreciations.

It transpires that much of Lilly’s substantial book had appeared *as articles* prior to book publication, and that readers, reviewers, and editors had a good idea of what to expect (*Table 2*). Like some of Arnold’s and Pater’s books, *A Century of Revolution* was a collection from the journals, exemplifying a characteristic interdependence in the print industry in nineteenth-century Britain between the periodical and the book, even in the case of non-fictional prose. This has systemic implications for the reviews, whether unsigned or signed. As the tenor of Lilly’s position — his ardour and his politics — was familiar to many, some reviewers and editors prepared to review it from positions reflecting their special interests, including how a periodical that had carried these articles could best manage the task of reviewing it (*Table 3*).

<i>Dublin Review</i>	April 1884 and January 1887 (on John Morley)
<i>Fortnightly Review</i>	1885 (4 issues), 1886 (5), 1887 (3), 1888 (1), 1889 (2)
<i>Contemporary Review</i>	1880–89 (8 articles by Lilly, a regular contributor on topics related to French history, including ‘Principles of ’89’ on the revolution)
<i>Academy</i>	2 letters from Lilly in 1886
<i>Quarterly Review</i>	1878 (2), 1879, 1882, 1889

Table 2: Range of periodicals publishing Lilly 1878–89.

July 1889	<i>Glasgow Herald</i> , <i>Scotsman</i> , <i>Morning Post</i>
August 1889	<i>Lancashire Evening Post</i> , <i>Athenaeum</i> , <i>John Bull</i>
September 1889	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (2), Alfred Benn, <b><i>Academy</i></b> , <i>Spectator</i> , <i>Globe</i>
October 1889	<b><i>Dublin Review</i></b> , <i>Saturday Review</i> , <i>Scot’s Observer</i>
November 1889	W. H. Mallock, <b><i>Fortnightly Review</i></b>
December 1889	Walter H. Pater, <b><i>Nineteenth Century</i></b>
February 1890	<i>Dublin Weekly Nation</i>
August 1890	A.B.C [F. R. Statham (?)], <i>Merry England</i>
Reviews are anonymous unless otherwise stated. Titles in bold had published chapters of the book previously.	

Table 3: Reviews of *A Century of Revolution*. The book was advertised in early July 1889 and published mid-July (14 July was the centenary of the French Revolution).

The *Fortnightly Review* had a particular set of problems with publishing a review of Lilly's book. Not only did the *Fortnightly* publish the highest number of the book's texts in article form, the book itself was published by Chapman and Hall, publisher of the periodical. So, the task of reviewing it in the *Fortnightly* involved a review of a book published by the periodical's publisher, and written by one of its own contributors, who had trailed the book in the *Review* by publishing parts of it. What did this liberal periodical do? It employed a reviewer sympathetic to Lilly, who embedded his review in an article that was presented as a piece on a larger question, of 'Science and the Revolution'. Using Lilly's chapter on this topic, W. H. Mallock in his article echoes Lilly's attack on John Morley and other Liberals, but without associating the attack with Lilly or his book. So, Mallock's piece maintains its identity as an article and not a review.

Other periodical editors who habitually published the prolific Lilly, though not as deeply implicated as the *Fortnightly*, devised other strategies. The location of Pater's *Nineteenth Century* review in its 'Noticeable Books' format, whereby short reviews 1–5 are stacked end to end, is its editor's strategy to limit the damage to one of his contributors and reviewers; and his employment of Pater to write an *appreciation* rather than criticism is another (Fig. 1).<sup>18</sup>

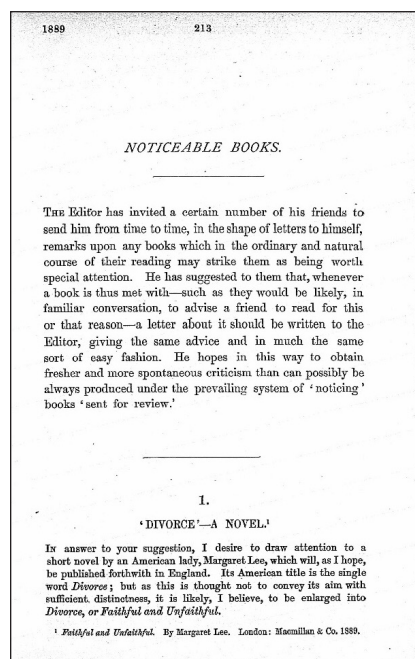


Fig. 1: 'Noticeable Books', *Nineteenth Century*, February 1889. © ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

<sup>18</sup> Lilly published four articles in the *Nineteenth Century* between May 1882 and September 1889 and two contributions to 'Noticeable Books' in February and August 1889; seven articles and eight 'Notices' followed in the 1890s.

In the first airing of ‘Noticeable Books’ the editor of the *Nineteenth Century* explains its rationale, which rests the selection of books to review on ‘certain [...] friends’ of the editor rather than making the journal the distributor of reviews to reviewers, to whom the literary editor would *assign* titles deemed suitable for review by the specific journal. More informal reviews are invited ‘in the shape of letters to himself [the editor]’, with ‘remarks upon any books which in the ordinary and natural course of their reading may strike them’, in order ‘to obtain fresher and more spontaneous criticism than can possibly be always produced’ by ““noticing” books “sent for review””.<sup>19</sup> The editor’s pains to focus on the systemic process by which reviews are ordinarily obtained, and to link it with the quality and style of what is normally produced, are germane to the complex matrix of conditions of the production of the reviews of Lilly’s book, from which Pater’s review is hereby allegedly exempt.

So, some of the reviews that praised Lilly’s book, or reviewed it on balance favourably, may have appeared in the many periodicals that were compromised by their regular employment of Lilly, its prodigious author, or affiliation with him. Reviews that appear in journals to which he was a frequent contributor tend to mute criticism of it; there is a preponderance of appreciations, or downright favourable reviews, or neutral and descriptive reviews. They are an example of how the system of reviewing contributes to the broader tolerances of the non-party-political new generation of periodicals post-1860. Conflict is avoided, even in respect to a highly controversial book.

The intensive association of the *Fortnightly Review* with Lilly’s virulent critique of France and French culture is surprising. Initially modelled on the French fortnightly feuilleton, *Revue des deux mondes*, the *Fortnightly* was and is normally considered a progressive journal. But the case of Lilly reminds us not to rely on generalizations about periodical titles, and to remember how commonly periodicals’ politics mutate imperceptibly. It requires us to look more closely at the tenor of contents in *this* period of its history, and how the editorial regime worked. Although its nominal editor Frank Harris was young, energetic, and straight from editing a London evening daily, he had an active editorial assistant, J. S. Verschoyle, who was an Anglican clergyman and, like Lilly, a committed anti-vivisectionist, as Lilly shows in his book. Verschoyle was known routinely to commission articles for the *Fortnightly* as well as ‘assist’, and to keep a leash on Harris for the proprietor of the periodical, Frederic Chapman of Chapman and Hall. Chapman was a man known to be conservative, who probably endorsed Lilly’s attacks on the French Revolution, its legacies, and French democracy, some of which had appeared in his periodical. So, although Frank Harris, the editor, was a libertine,

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<sup>19</sup> ‘Noticeable Books’, *Nineteenth Century*, February 1889, p. 213.

the *Fortnightly Review* continued for the remaining five years of Harris's editorship to publish Lilly, as well as the occasional piece by Pater and his ilk, resulting in an unremitting ideological heterogeneity that largely kept Pater away from its pages, unlike his adherence to them in the 1870s.

Other periodical titles decided to review this book for other reasons: through ideological sympathy, because its author was an active and vocal conservative, and/or because it was written by a Catholic. Some Irish papers reviewed it, but also the English Catholic journal edited by the Meynells, *Merry England*.<sup>20</sup> Unlike the force of *personal* networks that deliver loyalty, some ideologically oriented reviews are among the most argumentative, critical, and disapproving. That Lilly was writing at this time as a Catholic public intellectual also attracts individual critics to his work, like Pater (*Table 4*).

1885: Lilly collects and edits selected articles by Cardinal Manning, published by religious publishers Burns and Oates.
September 1890: Lilly's tribute in the <i>Fortnightly Review</i> to John Henry Newman on his death, an account that includes letters from Newman to Lilly.
2 September 1890, <i>Pall Mall Gazette</i> : An article about a series of letters in the <i>Pall Mall Gazette</i> from Lilly refuting calumny about Newman in the <i>St James's Gazette</i> .

*Table 4:* Lilly as a Catholic public intellectual in the 1880s and 1890s.

Let us turn from the periodicals that publish the reviews and the author to the reviewers. The Catholic point of view of Lilly and his book are factors on which Pater's review and those of others hinge, although some of these reviews appear in secular periodicals. For Pater, at the basic level, this review required canny handling: how was he to deal with both the book's unremitting attack on liberalism and John Morley who had employed himself (and Swinburne) at the liberal *Fortnightly* (the review needs to be negative); *and* that its author was a Catholic, and a friend of the Catholic convert and priest John Henry Newman, factors that commanded Pater's approval (the review should be positive).

As a reviewer, Pater had other problems that stemmed from his position in the press. He had published 'Style', one of his most important articles in the *Fortnightly Review* in December 1888, a year before his Lilly review, *and* he followed it with a study of Giordano Bruno in the *Fortnightly* of August 1889, just four months before his review of Lilly's book appeared in the December *Nineteenth Century*. Pater was a fellow contributor to the *Fortnightly* like Lilly. Moreover, Lilly was a contributor to the *Nineteenth Century*, a problem Pater shared with the *Nineteenth Century* editor who commissioned the review,

<sup>20</sup> *Merry England* (1883–95) was a shilling monthly founded by Alice and Wilfred Meynell to promulgate the 'enthusiasm of the Christian faith' from a Roman Catholic perspective.



an editor who was probably quite keen to ensure that the review of his contributor was, if not favourable, not unbridled negativity either. These factors suggest a positive review was necessary. Even more inhibiting and culturally formative, Pater's own book, *Appreciations*, was published by Macmillan on 15 November 1889, a fortnight before his signed review of Lilly appeared. So, Pater himself was critically vulnerable, awaiting as he was reviews of his own book in the *Fortnightly*, the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Westminster Review*, the *Academy*, the *Athenaeum*, the *Spectator*, etc., most of which materialized in December, the same month in which Pater's review of Lilly appeared. As for the *Nineteenth Century*, it waited a decent interval before it reviewed Pater's *Appreciations* in April 1890.

In these circumstances of the compromised reviewer and the compromised periodical in which the review appeared (neither was independent), the advantages of 'appreciation' as a review genre are clear. If Pater manages to craft a review which construes overwhelmingly positive qualities of the book to discuss, he outs himself, if not Lilly, bravely as a friend of Catholicism and Newman. It is *this* commitment to Catholicism at this late period of his life that we can place beside his other equally articulated adherence to Hellenism, French literature, and to Anglicanism.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, this review of Lilly exemplifies Pater at his most oblique and wily: he underlays the carpet of appreciation with a resilient layer of critique, and manages to enlist Lilly for the revolution in a sinuous (and triumphant) last sentence, by occluding his substitution of Lilly's German model for the hated French:

Mr. Lilly's judgments are not seldom as compact, as aphoristic, as these; and, if only by way of a variation of routine, in this age of foregone conclusions, it is a pleasure to see gifts and accomplishments such as his in service, not as a mere matter of course, on the side of [German] Revolution. (p. 994)

In a variety of ways, then, the politics of 'appreciation' suit Pater's inclusive tolerance, even taste, for entertaining a range of reviews, without ruling out many that interest him. The mode of appreciation serves him in the political matrix of the contemporary world of letters, in which it enables him to keep doors open between himself and his fellow authors, as well as editors, publishers, and a wide range of the press; and to disseminate his queer perspectives and politics.

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the diverse interests of Pater's later work, with his contributions to the Anglican *Guardian* (1886–90); his publication of his Taylorian lecture on Prosper Mérimée in the *Fortnightly Review*, December 1890, pp. 852–64; the appearance of *Plato and Platonism* in February 1893; his publication of 'Apollo in Picardy' in the Decadent issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in November 1893, pp. 949–57; and his last pieces, on the architecture of French churches at Amiens and Vézelay: 'Some Great Churches of France: I. Notre-Dame D'Amiens', and 'Some Great Churches of France: II. Vézelay', *Nineteenth Century*, March 1894, pp. 481–88, and June 1894, pp. 963–70.

