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Swinburne, Pater, and the Cult of Strange Beauty

Catherine Maxwell

This article explores how Walter Pater's conception of 'strange beauty' is integral to Victorian decadence and is a legacy from his immediate and most influential precursor, the poet and essayist Algernon Charles Swinburne. After tracing the personal connections of these two writers, the article examines the complex literary intersections of their texts with specific reference to 'strange beauty' and concludes with a short summary of its impact on later aesthetic and decadent authors.

In his essay 'Romanticism' (1876), Walter Pater writes:

> It is the addition of strangeness to beauty that constitutes the romantic character in art; and the desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organization, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty that constitutes the romantic temper.[1]

The potent combination of strangeness and beauty is here claimed as the hallmark of romanticism although what Pater describes might equally well be described as a version of decadence, which, emerging out of aestheticism — the late Victorian cult of beauty — becomes specifically the cult of 'strange beauty'. This article explores how Pater's strange beauty is a direct legacy from his immediate and most influential precursor, the poet and essayist Algernon Charles Swinburne. Refined and disseminated by Pater, it is this legacy which will have the greatest impact on his own aesthetic and decadent successors.

Although Pater ultimately declares that 'the romantic character' or 'romantic temper' is not tied to a specific period, he nonetheless shares with Swinburne an understanding of romanticism as intimately shaped by the European literary and artistic movement of that name. My own work has shown the continuing importance of the Romantic movement to late Victorian literary culture with British Romantic poetry an especially influential force. I read the work of Percy Bysshe Shelley as particularly formative for Swinburne and Pater, with Pater undoubtedly responding both to Shelley and the way that Swinburne, his own immediate precursor, mediated him. Essential for Swinburne and Pater stylistically and conceptually is Shelley's 'A Defence of Poetry' (composed 1821, first published 1840) with its striking use of alchemical imagery to describe aesthetic processes.[2]

While evident significant connections between Swinburne and Pater have been discussed before, what follows is a new attempt to detail the intricacies of their personal and literary relationship.[3] Pater never published any assessment of Swinburne, but early on he did acknowledge his indebtedness, and Swinburne's shaping influence is everywhere apparent in Pater's aesthetic prose. Moreover, unlike many of the writers he formally appraised, Pater knew Swinburne personally and for several years they

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[1] Walter H. Pater, 'Romanticism', *Macmillan's Magazine*, November 1876, pp. 64–70 (p. 65). This essay in a slightly revised form becomes the 'Postscript' to Pater's essay collection *Appreciations* (London: Macmillan, 1889).

[2] See Catherine Maxwell, *The Female Sublime from Milton to Swinburne: Bearing Blindness* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 209–10; Catherine Maxwell, *Swinburne* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2006), pp. 91–92; *Second Sight: The Visionary Imagination in Late Victorian Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 82–88; and 'Shelley's Alchemy, Pater's Transformations', in *Legacies of Romanticism: Literature, Culture, Aesthetics*, ed. by Carmen Casaliggi and Paul March-Russell (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 85–100.

[3] For a representative if rather unsympathetic account, see Michael Levey, *The Case of Walter Pater* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), pp. 106–10.

were close associates. I start by tracing the actual contact between the two which has been occluded by Swinburne's own later reluctance to acknowledge the full extent of their early relations and by Pater's own famous reticence. In later life Swinburne would deny that he had any real acquaintance with Pater. Pater's maverick biographer, the often unreliable Thomas Wright, reported in his *Life* that Swinburne had told him 'that he never met Pater, to speak to him, more than twice — once in London and once at Oxford, and that even then only a few words passed'.[4] In fact Swinburne's letter to Wright, written the previous year, states that his relationship with Pater 'was of the very slightest; I should doubt if we ever met more than three or four times'.[5] This makes the number of meetings marginally higher, but evidence puts Swinburne in Pater's company far more often than this suggests. Reconstructing what can only be a partial account of the contact between the two men is a useful preliminary manoeuvre that allows us to appreciate their complex network of affiliation and many mutual interests, as well as paving the way into a larger discussion of their critical contribution to late Victorian literature and, more specifically, to literary decadence.

Edmund Gosse, who knew both men intimately, reports that in 1871 he saw Pater for the first time at a distance dismounting from a hansom cab with Swinburne 'at Gabriel Rossetti's door in Cheyne Walk', this presumably being the sole occasion when, at Swinburne's introduction, Pater visited Rossetti in his studio.[6] Rossetti, a key figure in the genesis of Victorian decadent art, was one of the few contemporary cultural figures that Pater wrote about, being the subject of his introductory essay for a selection of Rossetti's poetry included in T. H. Ward's anthology series, *The English Poets*.[7] Pater described Rossetti to William Sharp as 'the most significant as well as the most fascinating' 'of the six men [...] now living who are certain to be famous in days to come' and 'the greatest man we have among us, in point of influence upon poetry, and perhaps painting'.[8] Nonetheless, it was Swinburne, another of the six, who was by far the greater influence on Pater. As Rossetti's intimate friend, Swinburne was well placed to make the introduction and he was also in attendance when Gosse formally met Pater

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[4] Thomas Wright, *The Life of Walter Pater*, 2 vols (New York: Putnam's Sons; London: Everett, 1907), I, p. xv.

[5] Letter of 7 March 1906, in *The Swinburne Letters*, ed. by Cecil Y. Lang, 6 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959–62), VI: *1890–1909* (1962), p. 199.

[6] Edmund Gosse, 'Walter Pater: A Portrait', in *Critical Kit-Kats* (London: Heinemann, 1896), pp. 241–71 (p. 254). Originally published in the *Contemporary* Review, December 1894, pp. 795–810.

[7] Walter H. Pater, 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti', in *The English Poets*, ed. by Thomas Humphry Ward, 2nd rev. edn, 5 vols (London: Macmillan, 1883), IV: *Wordsworth to Rossetti*, 633–41. This 1883 essay, subsequently revised and extended, later appeared as 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti' in *Appreciations*, pp. 228–42.

[8] William Sharp, 'Some Personal Reminiscences of Walter Pater', *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1894, pp. 801–14 (p. 803). The six men are Tennyson, Browning, Ruskin, Arnold, Rossetti, and Swinburne. In his article Sharp implies his first meeting with Pater took place in 1880 though it is more likely to be 1881 or early 1882.

in 1872 in the studio of William Bell Scott; Gosse recorded that he saw the dandyishly attired Pater emerge from a hansom cab followed by a drunken Swinburne who 'dived forward on to the pavement, descending upon his two hands'.[9] Such meetings suggest a well-established pre-existing relationship between the two writers. Wright claims that Pater 'first met Mr A. C. Swinburne' at a meeting of the Old Mortality, the essay society to which both men had belonged during their respective undergraduate careers at Oxford (I, 209). In his respective *ODNB* entries for both Pater (1895) and Swinburne (1912), Gosse also mentions their meeting through the Old Mortality.[10] Such a meeting would presumably have occurred between 1863 (when Pater was elected as a member) and 1866 (when the society folded) and would have involved Swinburne attending a meeting during a visit to Oxford. After leaving in 1860, Swinburne certainly did make return visits to his alma mater and, as Terry Meyers notes, a letter from Swinburne written around April 1866 on Brasenose College stationery suggests a visit from the poet to Pater.[11] That letter concerns the proofs for *William Blake* (published December 1867 though dated 1868 on the title page), so it is possible that Swinburne might have discussed these with Pater and even shown them to him, a tantalizing thought in that the book clearly has a substantial impact on Pater's own aesthetic formation.

In 1865 Swinburne's family moved from their home on the Isle of Wight to Holmwood, a country house near Henley-on-Thames, South Oxfordshire. Swinburne spent long periods there annually from 1866 onwards, usually recovering from bouts of the alcoholism he incurred while living in London. Once recuperated he could easily visit Oxford, only some twenty-six miles distant and accessible by train. In his portrait of Pater, Gosse writes — with reference to the period around 1869 to 1870 —

> The poet was a not unfrequent visitor in those years to Pater's college rooms. To all young Oxford, then, the name of Mr. Swinburne was an enchantment, and there used to be envious traditions of an upper window in Brasenose Lane thrown open to the summer night, and, welling forth from it, a music of verse which first outsang and then silenced the nightingales, protracting its harmonies until it disconcerted the lark himself at sunrise. ('Walter Pater', p. 254)

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[9] Gosse, 'Walter Pater', p. 254; and 'Confidential Paper', *Swinburne Letters*, ed. by Lang, VI, 242.

[10] Edmund Gosse, 'Pater, Walter Horatio (1839–1894)', *ODNB*, 1895 <https://doi.org/10.1093/odnb/9780192683120.013.21525>; 'Swinburne, Algernon Charles (1837–1909)', *ODNB*, 1912 <https://doi.org/10.1093/odnb/9780192683120.013.36389>.

[11] In his *Ingram Bywater: The Memoir of an Oxford Scholar 1840–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), William Walrond Jackson states that Swinburne, after leaving college, 'frequently revisited Oxford' (p. 14), always calling on Bywater (a close friend of Pater's); *Uncollected Letters of Algernon Charles Swinburne*, ed. by Terry Meyers, 3 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004), I, 60. Pater held a non-clerical fellowship at Brasenose from 1864, taking up residence there in 1865.

In his *Life* of Swinburne, Gosse also observes that while Swinburne was staying with Benjamin Jowett in late May and early June 1871, 'he frequently escaped from Balliol to visit Brasenose, where Walter Pater, with whom he was for a short time intimate, entertained him.'[12]

These sources suggest that by the early 1870s the two men had an amicable relationship based on shared literary, artistic, and cultural interests. Besides Swinburne's recitations, their Oxford meetings must also have included discussion of intellectual points of contact such as Théophile Gautier, whose advocacy of art for art's sake, promoted in his famous preface to his novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), would be a powerful influence on both men's early aestheticist writings. Swinburne influentially used the phrase 'art for art's sake' in his *William Blake* and Pater echoed it in 'Poems by William Morris' published the following year in October 1868.[13] Swinburne also cited the defiantly aestheticist creed of d'Albert, the hero of Gautier's novel — 'the most perfect and exquisite book of modern times' — in his 'Notes on Some Pictures of 1868': 'Je trouve la terre aussi belle que le ciel, and je pense que la correction de la forme est la vertu' ('I find earth as beautiful as heaven and I think that perfection of form is virtue').[14] This is one of his early essays on art that would have a substantial impact on Pater's own formative art criticism.

Among Pater's collected letters there is only one to Swinburne (9 December 1872), but it is a telling letter in which Pater returns to Swinburne his French verses on Gautier 'with best thanks and apologies for having kept them so long'.[15] As these were manuscript poems destined for a French memorial collection eventually published the following October (1873) and as Pater addresses Swinburne as 'My Dear Swinburne', this letter suggests a relationship of some trust and intimacy, especially as the English poem that accompanies the French verses, the provocative 'Sonnet (with a Copy of *Mademoiselle de Maupin*)', touches on the decadent and sexually daring nature of Gautier's romance in which the hero, much to his perplexity, falls in love with a beautiful youth who is actually a young woman in disguise. Pater remarks that he presumes that he can keep the sonnet written in English, thereby suggesting his admiration for Gautier's racy

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[12] Edmund Gosse, *Life of Algernon Charles Swinburne* (London: Macmillan, 1917), p. 202.

[13] Algernon Charles Swinburne, *William Blake: A Critical Essay* (London: Hotten, 1868), pp. 91, 101. Subsequent references given in the main text as *WB*; Pater, 'Poems by William Morris', *Westminster Review*, October 1868, pp. 300–12 (p. 312). Subsequent references given in the main text as as 'WM'.

[14] William Michael Rossetti and Algernon C. Swinburne, *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition 1868* (London: Hotten, [n.d.]), p. 46; and in Swinburne, 'Notes on Some Pictures of 1868', in *Essays and Studies* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875), pp. 358–80 (p. 375). The translation is my own.

[15] *Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. by Lawrence Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 12. Evans (n. 2) reports that the two French poems sent to Pater are 'Ode' and 'Sonnet'.

novel. (Gosse reported reading Pater's 'curiously marked' copy which he found in Sydney Colvin's library at Trinity College, Cambridge, in November 1885, although in 1875, presumably alarmed by various scandals in his own circle, Pater claimed he no longer owned the novel, insisting to Oscar Browning that he 'should greatly disapprove its being lent to any boy or young man'.[16])

It was possibly Swinburne who introduced Pater to the Jewish homosexual artist Simeon Solomon, now celebrated as one of the leading British decadent painters and noted for the pervasive sexual ambiguity of his themes and figures. In his essay 'A Study of Dionysus' (1876), Pater praised a *Bacchus* by Solomon exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1867, and the two men were clearly friends by 1868 when on 17 June 1868 Pater seems to have accompanied Gerard Manley Hopkins on a visit to Solomon's studio and the Royal Academy, later receiving from Solomon a homoerotic drawing titled 'The Bride, The Bridegroom, and the Friend of the Bridegroom' dated 'June 1868'.[17] Following Solomon's arrest on 11 February 1873 in a London urinal for attempted sodomy, subsequent charge the next day, and ensuing six-week detention, Swinburne spent a fortnight in Oxford in May during which time he spoke about the scandal with Pater, whom he afterwards described to George Powell as 'a great friend of poor Simeon's'.[18] In the resultant homosexual panic, Swinburne, like many others, would speedily drop Solomon as a friend, though Pater was more sympathetic and may possibly have kept up some form of contact. Although Swinburne's own relationship with Pater subsequently cooled, most likely due to his fear of homosexual taint, it is likely that Edmund Gosse kept each man up to date with the other's activities, as in the later 1870s Swinburne was a frequent visitor to his house at Delamere Terrace.[19] From here Gosse's cat Atossa, a gift

[16] See his letter tentatively dated spring or summer 1875, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, p. 16, n. 3. See also Lene Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 114.

[17] Levey, pp. 106, 215. As often noted, in 'A Study of Dionysus', Pater most likely misattributes a bust of Bacchus (oil painting) by Solomon to the RA exhibition of 1868 (rather than 1867). See Walter Pater, *Greek Studies: A Series of Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 37. Subsequent references given as *GS* in the main text. Alternatively, Pater may refer to the three-quarters length watercolour *Bacchus* by Solomon exhibited at the Dudley Gallery in 1868. Both works were created in 1867. The drawing Solomon later gave to Pater, a variation on a subject he had been exploring since 1865, is now in the Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane. See Colin Cruise, *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Merrell, 2005), pp. 134–35, 155; and Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Solomon, Swinburne, Sappho', *Victorian Review*, 34.2 (2008), 103–28 (pp. 113, 115).

[18] Letter to Powell, 6 June 1873, in *Swinburne Letters*, ed. by Lang, II: *1869–1875* (1959), p. 253. Swinburne also mentions discussing Solomon with Ingram Bywater, 'another common friend'. From his published letters, it seems Swinburne went to Oxford on 10 May and stayed till around 25 May.

[19] Swinburne might subsequently also have learned from Benjamin Jowett, his former Oxford tutor, or another source, the suppressed scandal of Pater's involvement with the undergraduate William Money Hardinge in 1874, a relationship that incurred Jowett's strong disapproval and cost Pater academic promotion. See Billie Andrew Inman, 'Estrangement and Connection: Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett, and William M. Hardinge', in *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 1991), pp. 1–20.

from Pater, corresponded in verse with her sister Pansie in Oxford, confiding her dislike of Swinburne's excessive affection for her.[20] Both Swinburne and Pater were present at a gathering at Delamere Terrace on 13 January 1878 for the formal introduction of Gosse's baby daughter Tessa to literary society.[21] In 1879 the poet moved to Putney with Theodore Watts (later Watts-Dunton) for the sake of his health and adopted a more temperate lifestyle. His relationship with Gosse subsequently waned. However, although he thereafter avoided social gatherings because of his increasing deafness, Swinburne would still have had occasional news of Pater through Watts, still in the thick of the London literary scene and in Pater's company from time to time.[22] There may also have been occasional encounters. In July 1882 Pater showed William Sharp some of his prized autograph manuscripts by famous poets, which included a page of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), a gift which underlines their former intimacy. Pater's casual remark that it 'was given to me as the original, though very likely it is only a copy made by Swinburne. I must find out from him some day' suggests that he thought their meeting still a possibility (Sharp, p. 806).

Regarding Pater, Theodore Watts told William Rothenstein in 1895 that 'Swinburne of course invented him', although he conceded that he was 'a wonderful prose writer, a better one than Swinburne, to my mind.'[23] When Rossetti had first pointed out his evident influence on Pater's Leonardo essay recently published in the *Fortnightly Review*, Swinburne modestly replied (28 November 1869), 'I confess I did fancy a little spice of my style, as you say' (*Swinburne Letters*, II, 58). In April 1873 Swinburne recalled to John Morley that Pater had himself 'once at Oxford' (presumably in 1870 or thereabouts) freely acknowledged the influence. Swinburne had declared his own and Rossetti's admiration of Pater's 'first papers in the *Fortnightly*', and in response Pater told him 'that he considered them owing their inspiration entirely to the example of my own work in the same line' (*Swinburne Letters*, II, 241). Morley, writing to Swinburne just after the publication of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* the previous month, had evidently noticed the similarity, but in his reply, after repeating Pater's declaration of indebtedness, Swinburne adds 'of course no one else would dream of attributing the merit to a study of my style of writing on such matters', suggesting unconvincingly that there was more evidence of Arnold's style in Pater's work than his own.

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[20] Ann Thwaite, *Edmund Gosse: A Literary Landscape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 170. See my essay 'Atossa to Pansie: Walter Pater, Edmund Gosse, and their Cats', *Studies in Walter Pater and Aestheticism*, 7 (2022), 1–27.

[21] See 'The Book of Gosse', p. 7 (entry for 13 January 1878), Cambridge University Library Special Collections.

[22] See, for example, *Selected Letters of Vernon Lee*, ed. by Amanda Gagel (London: Routledge, 2016–), I, 373 (5 July 1882); 555 (4 July 1884); and 557 (11 July 1884).

[23] *Men and Memories: Recollections of William Rothenstein*, 2 vols (London: Faber and Faber, 1931–32), I: *1872–1900* (1931), p. 232.

The publication of *Studies* with the attendant controversy over its 'Conclusion' bestowed on Pater the reputation of a neo-pagan and hedonist. The latent homoeroticism of essays in that collection such as 'Winckelmann' (1867) and 'Leonardo da Vinci' (1869) may have given Swinburne additional cause to dissociate himself. I have suggested that he relinquished to Pater the aesthetic style he had pioneered and which Pater had subsequently taken up and refined, because arguably that style had then become identified with the morally and sexually dubious atmosphere of the latter's work (Maxwell, *Swinburne*, p. 103). Swinburne had already begun to abandon his aesthetic style after publishing his essay on Simeon Solomon in the *Dark Blue* in July 1871, and the events of early 1873 seem likely to have encouraged him to develop a later style that is noticeably more orotund and Johnsonian, more self-consciously 'manly' than the more sensitive nuanced impressionism of his earlier prose.[24]

When it comes to the issue of Swinburne's influence on Pater, it is, of course, especially evident in the articles on Leonardo and Botticelli published in the *Fortnightly* in 1869 and 1870, which, as Pater himself acknowledged, bear the mark of Swinburne's prose, especially his 'Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence' (1868), an essay now recognized for its importance in, among other things, promoting the then still underrated artwork of Botticelli.[25] As mentioned earlier, Pater, influenced by both Swinburne and Swinburne's own precursor Shelley, continues their use of alchemical imagery to describe aesthetic processes. This imagery helps articulate a characteristic 'twofold vision' that unites opposites, bringing together, and synthesizing ideas and images normally regarded as antithetical or incongruous, and thereby creating powerfully mixed atmospheres, moods, and emotions.[26] For Shelley, in a famous passage in his 'Defence', poetry's 'secret alchemy' turns

> all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and adds beauty to that which is most deformed: it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change; it subdues to union under its light yoke all irreconcilable things.[27]

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[24] A. C. Swinburne, 'Simeon Solomon: Notes on his "Vision of Love" and Other Studies', *Dark Blue*, July 1871, pp. 568–77. Subsequent references to this essay given in the main text as 'SS'.

[25] Pater would shortly bring out two more essays in the *Fortnightly Review*: 'Pico della Mirandula', October 1871, pp. 377–86, and 'The Poetry of Michelangelo', November 1871, pp. 559–70, but it is his first two essays that are most conspicuously influenced by Swinburne. On Swinburne and Botticelli, see Michael Levey, 'Botticelli and Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23 (1960), 291–306 (p. 302); and, more recently, Jonathan K. Nelson, 'The Critic as Artist: Swinburne on Filippino Lippi and Botticelli (1868)', in *Filippino Lippi: Beauty, Invention and Intelligence*, ed. by Paula Nuttall and others (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 10–37.

[26] Swinburne quotes Blake's own description of his vision as 'twofold always' in his *William Blake*, p. 41.

[27] 'A Defence of Poetry', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 480–508 (p. 505).

We can hear this sentiment echo, albeit in a darker tone, in 'Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence' in which Swinburne characterizes the legacy of Andrea del Sarto, Leonardo, and Michelangelo:

> All mysteries of good and evil, all wonders of life and death, lie in their hands or at their feet. They have known the causes of things, and are not too happy. The fatal labour of the world, the clamour and hunger of the open-mouthed all-summoning grave, all fears and hopes of ephemeral men, are indeed made subject to them, and trodden by them underfoot; but the sorrow and strangeness of things are not lessened because to one or two their secret springs have been laid bare and the courses of their tides made known; refluent evil and good, alternate grief and joy, life inextricable from death, change inevitable and insuperable fate.[28]

Swinburne's essay, in which Leonardo is implicitly identified as a supreme Shelleyan 'poet', then helps shape Pater's Leonardo whose *Mona Lisa* is the pre-eminent synthesizing force. The essay also informs the rhythms and cadences of Pater's prose:

> Hers is the head upon which all 'the ends of the world are come,' and the eyelids are a little weary. [...] All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias [...]; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas [...]. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.[29]

(Lady Lisa may also owe a debt to Swinburne's poem 'Cleopatra', published after *Poems and Ballads* in the *Cornhill Magazine* in September 1866 with an illustration by Frederick Sandys. Swinburne's Egyptian queen, a femme fatale of troubling beauty, is also the archetype of archetypes: 'Under those low large lids of hers | She hath the histories of all time'.[30]) Like other figures discussed in *Studies*, Pater's Leonardo represents a blending or combination of qualities, these being 'beauty and terror' (*SR*, p. 59) and 'Curiosity and the desire of beauty' or 'curious beauty' (*SR*, pp. 62, 65). His arresting

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[28] Swinburne, 'Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence', *Essays and Studies*, pp. 314–57 (pp. 317–18). Subsequent references to this edition given as *ES* in the main text.

[29] Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. by Matthew Beaumont (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 70–71. Subsequent references to this edition given as *SR* in the main text.

[30] Algernon Swinburne, 'Cleopatra', *Cornhill Magazine*, September 1866, pp. 331–33 (p. 332). Sandys's design faces p. 331.

image of the severed Medusa head breathing its last in its death agony, an image in which 'the fascination of corruption penetrates in every touch its exquisitely finished beauty' (*SR*, p. 60), represents a primal scene of aesthetic fascination characteristic of decadence.[31] 'Fascination' is a word specifically used to convey the spellbinding effect of snakes on their prey, and the snaky Medusa's head famously stupefied or paralysed the beholder, literally turning him or her to stone, though it might be seen without harm when mirrored in the shield of Perseus. Mediated by artistic beauty through paint or language, the decadent image arrests, disturbs, and hypnotizes yet without real detriment. *Mona Lisa*, arguably seen by Pater as the pendant to the Medusa, also becomes a fascinating embodiment of 'curious beauty':

> It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed? (*SR*, p. 70)

Thus, Pater echoes Swinburne's interest in complex types of beauty with a mixed emotional charge. He will subsequently identify such amalgams as characterizing 'romanticism', but this disturbing 'strange' or 'curious beauty' that absorbs and mesmerizes the gaze and engenders fascination will pervade later decadent literature and art.

As a young man at Oxford Pater had almost certainly read Swinburne's first major piece of criticism, his essay on *Les Fleurs du mal*, the first English review of Baudelaire's poetry published in the *Spectator* in September 1862. In this Swinburne had emphasized Baudelaire's predilection for 'sad and strange things — the weariness of pain and the bitterness of pleasure — the perverse happiness and wayward sorrows of exceptional people'.[32] Already we can see the Swinburnean tendency to mix antithetical categories and dwell on the resultant emotional complexity. Some of this synthesizing derives from Baudelaire himself. However, while Swinburne's and Pater's appreciation of strange or curious beauty is partly indebted to Baudelaire's 'le beau est toujours bizarre' ('The beautiful is always strange', quoted in Østermark-Johansen, p. 130), we can also find

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[31] The Uffizi Medusa, ascribed to Leonardo throughout the nineteenth century, is now thought to be a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century painting by another hand. Pater's translation of the Leonardesque scene is also coloured by what he calls the 'beautiful verses' of Shelley's own poem on the Medusa (*SR*, p. 60), itself a prime example of the 'romantic character'.

[32] Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'Charles Baudelaire: Les Fleurs du Mal', *Spectator*, 6 September 1862, pp. 998–1000 (p. 999).

a similar sentiment adumbrated in Shelley who saw poetry as adding 'beauty to that which is most deformed' and who in his art criticism is also moved by a mixed aesthetic charge such as the combination of beauty and pathos —

> the joy and poetry of sorrow, making grief beautiful, and giving it that nameless feeling which, from the imperfection of language, we call pain, but which is not all pain, through a feeling which makes not only its possessor, but the spectator of it, prefer it to what is called pleasure, in which all is not pleasure.[33]

Thus, for Swinburne, who in his 'Old Masters' article had also praised Leonardo's 'Fair strange faces of women' (*ES*, p. 316), beauty is far from simple, possessing, as he expresses it in his 1871 essay on Simeon Solomon, 'a manifold and multiform nature'. What he there calls 'the mystery of beauty' (SS, p. 568) is found where loveliness is blended with, or infused by another, often poignant or disturbing emotion or quality — strangeness, melancholy, sorrow, suffering, cruelty, passion — to give it a complex charge that moves or unsettles the beholder, just as in 'Notes on Some Pictures of 1868' he had acknowledged that 'Beauty may be strange, quaint, terrible, may play with pain as with pleasure, handle a horror till she leave it a delight' (*ES*, p. 379).

Apropos Baudelairean 'strange beauty', it is also worth pointing out the impress of Swinburne's 'Ave atque Vale', his elegy to Charles Baudelaire published in the *Fortnightly Review* in January 1868, on Pater's 'Poems by William Morris', published in the *Westminster Review* of October 1868. The epigraph to 'Ave atque Vale' is taken from Baudelaire's poem 'The great-hearted servant of whom you were so jealous' in *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857). The poem exhorts its auditors to honour the grave of the dead with flowers: 'we really ought to be taking her some flowers. | The dead, ah, the poor dead, have their great griefs'.[34] An important symbol in poetic elegy, the flowers in Swinburne's poem resonate with Baudelaire's own poetic 'Flowers of Evil'. The opening of 'Ave atque Vale' addresses the dead Baudelaire, questioning him as to the kind of flowers with which the speaker (Swinburne), his brother poet, is to honour him. This is something of a rhetorical question because the speaker later acknowledges Baudelaire as the 'gardener of strange flowers'.[35] 'Ave atque Vale' thus almost certainly helps generate the 'strange flowers' of Pater's 'Poems by William

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[33] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Remarks on Some of the Statues in the Gallery of Florence', in *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments*, ed. by Mrs. [Mary] Shelley, 2 vols (London: Moxon, 1840), II, 263–74 (p. 267).

[34] 'The Great-Hearted Servant', in *Baudelaire: The Complete Verse*, trans. by Francis Scarfe (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1986), p. 197.

[35] Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'Ave atque Vale', in *Poems and Ballads: Second Series* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1878), pp. 71–83 (p. 75).

Morris', the second part of which will become the famous 'Conclusion' to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*:

> While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange flowers and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. (WM, p. 311; *SR*, p. 120)

Baudelaire had used the phrase 'd'étranges fleurs' in his poem 'The Death of Lovers' from *Les Fleurs du mal*, but the near example of 'Ave atque Vale', laden with its description of mysterious blooms and featuring Baudelaire as the 'gardener of strange flowers', must have been a strong inducement for Pater.[36]

Swinburne's investment in an aesthetic that unsettles or disconcerts is captured in his frequent use of the word 'strange', a word that occurs thirty-six times in *Poems and Ballads* (1866), adding distinctive colour to key poems such as 'Laus Veneris', 'Anactoria', 'Hermaphroditus', and 'Fragoletta' which disturb norms of gender, love, desire, and desirability. In 'Hermaphroditus' the question addressed to the hermaphrodite statue — 'To what strange end hath some strange god made fair | The double blossom of two fruitless flowers?'[37] — also perhaps echoes in Pater's 'Leonardo da Vinci' in which the painter is another 'gardener of strange flowers', producing gender-ambiguous images: 'Out of the secret places of a unique temperament he brought strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown' (*SR*, p. 66). 'Strange' then occurs six times in 'Ave atque Vale', a poem begun in 1867. It occurs sixty-one times (or seventy-one times including 'strangely', 'stranger', and 'strangest') in Swinburne's book-length study *William Blake*, mostly completed by 1866, but which he continued to work on till February 1867. Published just before 'Ave atque Vale' in December 1867, it is another work which arguably had a considerable impact on Pater. 'Strange' occurs twice in a footnote that commemorates Baudelaire (*WB*, p. 91), while Blake and his verse are frequently described as 'strange' as if proleptically channelling the French poet. Also evoking Baudelairean 'strange flowers', Swinburne writes of Blake's 'Mental Traveller': 'Passionate and perverse emotion touches all things with some fervent colour of its own, mixes into all water and all wine some savour of the dubious honey gathered from its foreign flowers' (*WB*, p. 179). As well as recycling Swinburne's

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[36] 'The Death of Lovers', in *Baudelaire: The Complete Verse*, p. 235.

[37] Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'Hermaphroditus', in *Poems and Ballads & Atalanta in Calydon*, ed. by Kenneth Haynes (London: Penguin, 2000), pp. 65–67 (p. 66). Subsequent references given in the main text as *PB1*.

unusual phrase 'dubious honey' in his later imaginary portrait 'Emerald Uthwart' (1892), subsequently collected in *Miscellaneous Studies* (1895), Pater would use the word 'strange' or 'strangest' fourteen times in 'Poems by William Morris', and 'strange' or 'strangely' twenty-two times in 'Leonardo da Vinci' published the following year, in which he starts to formulate the aesthetic of 'strangeness and beauty' that comes to full flower in 'Romanticism' (1876).[38]

Famously, after 1873, Pater would delete the phrase 'strange flowers' from his 'Conclusion', most likely to deflect any link with Baudelaire, although, of course, it also obscures any indebtedness to 'Ave atque Vale'. In revising 'Poems by William Morris' into the 'Conclusion', Pater also left out another key Swinburnean image of 'strange beauty'. The classical Greek poet Sappho had iconic status for Swinburne and in stanza 2 of 'Ave atque Vale', he alluded to the legend of her death-leap into the sea, imagining her body decomposing at the mercy of the currents: 'The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear her | Hither and thither' (*Poems and Ballads: Second Series*, p. 72). In 'William Morris' Pater wrote of the desolate thoughts wrought by the idea of one's own dissolution: 'They bring the image of one washed out beyond the bar in a sea at ebb, losing even his personality, as the elements of which he is composed pass into new combinations' (WM, p. 311). This passage conjures other similar Swinburnean images of watery dissolution like that found in 'The Triumph of Time' (*PB1*, pp. 29–41) where the speaker says to the sea:

> I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
> Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
> My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
> I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside. (*PB1*, p. 37)

Moreover, when praising Morris's treatment of the Syrens' songs in *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), Pater also gives the strong impression of reprising the conclusion of Swinburne's 'Sapphics' in which, 'when winds are assuaged at sunset, | Lulled at the dewfall, | By the grey sea-side', Sappho's spectral Lesbian followers chant her immortal verses. In a poem that replicates the Sapphic stanza and contains many Sapphic quotations, Swinburne's 'Ghosts of outcast women return lamenting | [...] | [...] singing | Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven' to bridge the gap between past and present just as Morris's Syrens, 'those singing women of the sea', apparently do for Pater: 'Then literally like an echo from the Greek world, heard across so great a

[38] Walter Pater, 'Emerald Uthwart', in *Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1895), pp. 198–250 (p. 231).

distance only as through miraculous calm, subdued in colour and cadence, the ghosts of passionate song, come those matchless lyrics.'[39]

Another archetypal image of hypnotic 'strange beauty' is the hermaphrodite, an established figure for the 'alchemical marriage' of opposites and a figure that in classical sculptural form fascinated many writers including Shelley, Gautier, Swinburne, and Pater. Swinburne acknowledges Shelley and Gautier as precursors, implying that sources such as Shelley's 'The Witch of Atlas' and 'Lines Connected with Epipsychidion' and Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* and poem 'Contralto' from his É*maux et camées* (1852), helped inspire his own 'Hermaphroditus'.[40] Like Gautier's texts, Swinburne's sonnet sequence published in *Poems and Ballads* in July 1866 alludes to the famous antique statue in the Louvre in its appended note *Au Musée du Louvre, Mars 1863* (*PB1*, pp. 65–67). Pater's 'Winckelmann', which appeared in January 1867, specifically references 'the perfect blending of male and female beauty in the Hermaphrodite of the Louvre' (*SR*, p. 110), thereby obliquely signalling both Gautier's texts and Swinburne's recent poem.

Both Swinburne and Pater use other images of androgynous 'strange beauty' to explore sexual ambiguity and the complexity of erotic attraction. 'Fragoletta' (*PB1*, pp. 67–72), the partner poem to 'Hermaphroditus', takes its title from a French novel by Henri de Latouche (1829), which also features a hermaphrodite. Swinburne's poem presents an androgynous or hermaphroditic being of 'ambiguous blood': 'O mysterious flower | O double rose of Love's' (*PB1*, p. 68). Pater had evidently absorbed this poem which he quotes in his 'A Study of Dionysus' when glossing Solomon's androgynous *Bacchus*, referred to as the work of 'a young Hebrew painter'.[41] For Pater, Solomon's *Bacchus* is the god of 'the bitterness of wine, "of things too sweet"; the sea-water of the Lesbian grape become somewhat brackish in the cup' (*GS*, p. 37). Alluding to Swinburne's line — 'O bitterness of things too sweet', itself a reference to Sappho's famous characterization of love as 'bittersweet' — this is one of Pater's rare direct quotations from Swinburne.[42] (Swinburne had also used the phrase 'bitter sweetness' (SS, p. 571) in relation to Solomon's designs.) Elizabeth Prettejohn suggests that Pater's allusion is 'an understated rebuke' to the poet for his repudiation of Solomon, while both she and Stefano Evangelista comment on the intricate intertextuality of this allusion which entwines Pater, Swinburne, Solomon, and their interest in same-sex love and

[39] 'Sapphics', in *PB1*, pp. 163–65 (p. 165); WM, p. 307.

[40] Maxwell, *Female Sublime*, pp. 200–13; Østermark-Johansen, pp. 116–19; Swinburne, 'Notes on Poems and Reviews', in *PB1*, pp. 403–18 (pp. 412, 417, n. 29).

[41] Both of Solomon's 1867 images of Bacchus have androgynous qualities but Pater most likely refers to the oil painting of the bust.

[42] Catherine Maxwell, 'Swinburne and Sappho', *Notes and Queries*, 48 (2001), 155–58 (pp. 156–57).

gender and sexual ambiguity through figures like Sappho and Dionysus whom Pater in his later essay on Euripides' *Bacchae* (1889) calls 'a woman-like god'.[43] Swinburne had celebrated Sappho in *Poems and Ballads*, Solomon had painted and drawn her, and, according to Thomas Wright, Pater too, was fascinated by Sappho and, before his death, had notes in hand for an essay on her (Wright, II, 116, 128). Swinburne's Sappho has that complex mixed bittersweet charge of 'strange beauty', she and her verse embodying 'the perverse happiness and wayward sorrows of exceptional people'. As Evangelista points out (p. 208), Pater's androgynous Dionysus/Bacchus also has that hauntingly pleasurable melancholic quality too, most likely reinforced by Swinburne's own allusion to Solomon's painting in his 1871 essay on the artist which declares that Solomon's 'fair forms of godhead and manhood' are troubled by a new modern self-consciousness:

> Their lips have tasted a new savour in the wine of life, one strange and alien to the vintage of old [...]. There is a questioning wonder in their faces, a fine joy and a faint sorrow, a trouble as of water stirred, a delight as of thirst appeased. (SS, p. 569)

Although Swinburne's 'Old Masters' essay focuses predominantly on female beauty, he mentions a number of portrayals of beautiful young men as well as a depiction by Giorgione of a face, 'boy's or girl's, having in it the delicious doubt of ungrown beauty'. In a teasing allusion to Latouche's novel and his own poem (only truly legible to knowing readers like Pater), he adds 'we may give it the typical strawberry flower (*Fragoletta*) and leave it to the Loves' (*ES*, p. 346). He also notes 'a youth of that exquisite Venetian beauty which in all these Venetian painters lifts male and female together on an equal level of loveliness' (*ES*, p. 346). A pervasive gender ambiguity is more pronounced in Pater's subsequent 'Leonardo da Vinci' where we encounter the artist's depiction of a 'face of doubtful sex' and his 'Saint John the Baptist' with his 'delicate brown flesh and woman's hair' (*SR*, pp. 65, 67). That ambiguity even shadows the imagery of the severed Medusa head (an 'it' not a 'she'), and the portrayal of *Mona Lisa*, not only Leonardo's 'ideal lady', but also 'a diver in deep seas', a quasi 'vampire', and the self-reflecting 'creature of his thought' (*SR*, p. 70). Very likely responding to Pater's 'Leonardo', Swinburne's essay on Solomon emphasizes the ambiguous androgynous sexuality of his subjects:

> Many of these, as the figure bearing the eucharist of love, have a supersexual beauty, in which the lineaments of woman and of man seem blended as the lines of sky and landscape melt in burning mist of heat and light. (SS, p. 574)

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[43] Prettejohn, p. 125, n. 19, and p. 109; Stefano Evangelista, 'A Revolting Mistake: Walter Pater's Iconography of Dionysus', *Victorian Review*, 34.2 (2008), 201–18 (p. 209); Pater, 'The Bacchanals of Euripides', *GS*, pp. 49–78 (p. 53).

This essay is more explicit in its connotations of same-sex desire than other prose pieces by Swinburne, although arguably his larger purpose was to press the generalized atmosphere of sexual strangeness into the service of an overarching sadomasochism. This was a subject he was far more interested in than Solomon who was understandably concerned that this provocative aspect of his friend's review might do him harm.[44]

As Evangelista implies, the dialogue between Swinburne and Pater continues in 'A Study of Dionysus' where 'Pater also wonders whether the "modernity"' of Solomon's *Bacchus*, its melancholy self-consciousness, 'could legitimately be called Greek' (Evangelista, p. 208). Pater concludes that it could, drawing our attention to Dionysus Zagreus, the darker side of the double-natured Dionysus, but also implicitly drawing on his own larger sense of a less serene and idealized Hellenism that he had identified in the early 'Winckelmann'. There, contrasting with the 'unbroken daylight', the dominant Apollonian view of Hellenic culture, he finds an undercurrent of contemplative 'pagan sadness', specifically realized in the 'sad Chthonian deities' such as Demeter and Persephone to whom he will return later in his career (*SR*, pp. 101, 100). His 'Demeter and Persephone' (*GS*, pp. 79–155), published the same year as 'Romanticism', emphasizes 'that "the worship of sorrow" was not without its function in Greek religion', the legend of these two chthonian goddesses being 'a legend made by and for sorrowful, wistful, anxious people' (*GS*, p. 111). Moreover, he sees the romantic hallmark of mingled beauty and strangeness already latent in the myth:

> The most important artistic monuments of that legend sufficiently prove that the Romantic spirit was really at work in the minds of Greek artists, extracting by a kind of subtle alchemy, a beauty, not without the elements of tranquillity, of dignity and order, out of a matter, at first painful and strange. (*GS*, pp. 111–12)

Pater's fascination with Dionysus, Demeter, and Persephone and their cults is arguably generated by their 'strange beauty', a response to the magnetism and pathos of their challenging yet alluring dual presentations, their complex, self-conscious, emotional natures, and the heightened range of feelings they inspire in their followers.

Although Swinburne implied that Solomon's attribution of melancholy self-consciousness to his classical subjects was 'modern', this may have been a strategic ploy that emphasized his friend's innovative capacity rather than something he wholly believed. After all, his own portrayals of Sappho have that strong 'bittersweet' mixed charge, while he, too, was deeply attracted to the sombre chthonian deities Persephone (Proserpine) and Demeter. His early monologue 'At Eleusis' (*PB1*, pp. 165–71), heavily

[44] See Solomon's letter of October 1871, in *Swinburne Letters*, ed. by Lang, II, 149.

influenced by the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, has Demeter, bereaved of her daughter, describe her unrelenting self-consuming grief and its effects on the earth — 'Yea so my flame burnt up the grass and stones, | [...] | Distempered all the gracious work, and made | Sick change' — although she finally promises to heed the prayers of her worshippers, having sworn by her daughter's 'sad-tressed' hair 'And by the sorrow in her lips, and death | Her dumb and mournful-mouthèd minister' (*PB1*, pp. 168, 171). Similarly, in 'The Garden of Proserpine' (*PB1*, pp. 136–39), the speaker, 'weary of days and hours [...] | And everything but sleep', imagines the goddess's tenebrous allure in the tones of a deathly lullaby:

> Pale, beyond porch and portal,
> Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
> Who gathers all things mortal
> With cold immortal hands;
> Her languid lips are sweeter
> Than love's who fears to greet her
> To men that mix and meet her
> From many times and lands. (*PB1*, p. 137)

In this depiction of Proserpine Pater must have noted the 'subtle alchemy', the extraction of 'a beauty, not without the elements of tranquillity, of dignity and order, out of a matter, at first painful and strange', and Swinburne's poem may well inform his own subsequent vision of Persephone:

> From being the goddess of summer and the flowers, she becomes the goddess of night and sleep and death [...]. A duality, an inherent opposition in the very conception of Persephone, runs through all her story, and is part of her ghostly power. There is ever something in her of a divided or ambiguous identity. (*GS*, p. 110)

Certainly, such multifarious Swinburnean influences seep into Pater's own masterly reformulations of 'strangeness and beauty', a combination that permeates the style, subject matter, and the emotional charge of his work.

And it is this combination that men and women as varied as Arthur Symons, Oscar Wilde, Vernon Lee, and Michael Field will meet, absorb, and remix for themselves as an essential part of their aesthetic and decadent inheritance. Arthur Symons infamously defines literary decadence as 'a new and beautiful and interesting disease'.[45] The

[45] Arthur Symons, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, November 1893, pp. 858–67 (p. 859).

poet Eugene Lee-Hamilton, author of several poems inspired by Pater's fascinating Medusa, in his sonnet 'Baudelaire' associates the French father of decadence with 'The gorgeous iridescence of decay'.[46] In a novel haunted by the rhythms of Pater's *Renaissance*, Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray is himself seduced by a 'wonderful novel', the 'poisonous' decadent 'yellow book' with its 'curious jewelled style' given him by Lord Henry.[47] And while Dorian's immortal beauty is that of 'unspotted', 'exquisite youth', it becomes more curious and sinister as he ages when 'his strangely young-looking face' is partnered by 'his strange and dangerous charm' (pp. 27, 159, 158, 107). Wilde's 'strangely picturesque' Lady Alroy, though ultimately pronounced 'a Sphinx without a secret' by the pompous narrator, is also a 'Gioconda in sables', with 'a beauty moulded out of many mysteries'.[48] Pater's combination also permeates Lee's strange, beautiful, haunting femmes fatales — Medea da Carpi, Dionea, and Alice Oke — as well as her ambiguous homme fatal Zaffirino, who evokes memories of reading 'Swinburne and Baudelaire' and is 'almost beautiful, with an odd smile'. Typically, Lee's characters also evoke Pater's Mona Lisa with their strange enigmatic smiles — Dionea, for instance, has 'a still odder smile tortuous, serpentine, like that of Leonardo da Vinci's women'.[49] Like Mona Lisa, the 'stranger-woman' of Rosamund Marriott Watson's autumnal, twilit 'Vespertilia' has also 'learned the secrets of the grave' (*SR*, p. 70). A revenant from Roman times, dressed in decaying raiment, she is another figure of fascination, with 'Her fair face glimmering like a white wood-flower', her 'mists of cloudy hair', 'strange eyes', flower-red mouth, and 'slow, sweet smile'.[50] Decadent strangeness and beauty even permeate the poetic representation of natural phenomena as in Mathilde Blind's 'The Evening of the Year' in which 'all the moorland seems to breathe | The hectic beauty of decay'; while in poems by Katharine Bradley (one half of Michael Field) the absorbed speaker takes pleasure in the spectacular disintegration of flowers, observing 'the magic power to die' of camellias and — 'Majestic in recession' — the demise of the Grand Mogul rose.[51] Stylized, sexualized, and sometimes predatory, stranger

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[46] Eugene Lee-Hamilton, 'Baudelaire', in *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours* (London: Elliot Stock, 1894), p. 102.

[47] 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, intro. by Merlin Holland (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2003), pp. 17–159 (pp. 108, 96).

[48] 'The Sphinx Without a Secret', in *Complete Works*, pp. 205–08 (pp. 205, 208, 206, 205).

[49] Vernon Lee, *Hauntings and Other Fantastic Tales*, ed. by Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham (Plymouth, ON: Broadview, 2006), pp. 162, 84. For more on this, see my *Second Sight*, pp. 124–25.

[50] Rosamund Marriott Watson, 'Vespertilia', in *Vespertilia and Other Verses* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head; Chicago: Way and Williams, 1895), pp. 1–6 (pp. 2, 3, 5).

[51] Mathilde Blind, 'The Evening of the Year', in *Songs and Sonnets* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1893), p. 117; Michael Field, 'Camellias', in *Wild Honey from Various Thyme* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1908), p. 80; Michael Field, 'Your rose is dead' (also known as 'The Grand Mogul'), in *Underneath the Bough: A Book of Verses* (Portland, ME: Mosher, 1898), pp. 85–86 (p. 86).

and — in some cases definitely queer — poetic blossoms break forth in the verse of John Addington Symonds, Mark André Raffalovich, A. E. Housman, Michael Field, Amy Levy, A. Mary F. Robinson, Arthur Symons, Theodore Wratislaw, and Laurence Binyon. While Pater's Leonardo produced his 'strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown' 'out of the secret places of a unique temperament' (*SR*, p. 66), the legacy of Swinburne and Pater's 'strangeness and beauty' is the cultivation and efflorescence of the decadent temperament in a startling number of very different personalities and places.