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## DEFINING BEAUTY: THE PATERIAN YEATS

*Elizabeth Muller*

Yeats's commitment to beauty, physical or artistic, is referred to relatively early in his poems as "labour" ("Adam's Curse," *VP* 204–05) or a "secret discipline" ("In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," *VP* 323). For Yeats, "art is but a vision of reality" ("Ego Dominus Tuus," *VP* 367), or better still a recreation of reality: "If the real world is not altogether rejected, it is but touched here and there, and into the places we have left empty we summon rhythm, balance, pattern, images" (*E&I* 243). Consequently he derides realism, described in "Ego Dominus Tuus" as "the struggle of the fly in marmalade" (*VP* 367) and, elsewhere, as the parrots of mimesis, "those horrible green birds" ("On a Picture of a Black Centaur by Edmund Dulac," *VP* 442). He also quotes Goethe's famous statement: "Art is Art because it is not nature!" (*L* 440). Finally, Yeats argues, as morality plays no part in artistic creation, the artist should never presume to be didactic: "Only that which does not teach, which does not cry out, which does not persuade, which does not condescend, which does not explain, is irresistible" (*E&I* 341).

All these well-known precepts of Yeats's aesthetics underline the continuity and coherence of his remarkably stable views on art and, with the possible exception of the word "vision," all point to Aestheticism as a subjacent influence. Indeed, Yeats was particularly indebted to Walter Pater, since the two writers rejected utilitarian ugliness and upheld beauty and passion above thought while drawing upon Plato's metaphysics in very like manner. Yet, in spite of such pivotal similarities, Yeats's persistent connection with Pater's Aestheticism is often overlooked by scholarly literature or reduced to the early pre-Raphaelite phase.<sup>1</sup> Supposedly, Yeats's subsequent engagement with Modernism led him to dismiss Pater's style in order to acquire a much-needed asperity, what he called his new salty masculine poetry (*L* 397).<sup>2</sup> And in fact, citing Yeats's possibly disingenuous (and sporadic) dismissal of Pater, many biographers and critics seem to have overlooked the latter's considerable influence over Yeats's opus.<sup>3</sup> This appears to be a paradoxical gap in Yeatsian critique, since Pater is now fully acknowledged as "one of the forefathers of British Modernism."<sup>4</sup>

In this essay, I contend that Yeats's quest for beauty in art has far more in common with Pater's aesthetic views than is generally acknowledged. I shall particularly focus on Greek art, which provided both writers with paradigms with which to articulate their aesthetic theories. Indeed, Yeats made ample use of Pater's distinction between Ionian and Dorian art. This opposition may in fact lie at the root of Yeats's esoteric system, set down in *A Vision* and based

upon two contrary types of individuals, civilizations, and religions.<sup>5</sup> Both Pater and Yeats asserted the iconic power of art as a magical transformer of reality,<sup>6</sup> and it is perhaps only in the question of the finality of art for Yeats, in the eschatological and magical dimension he attributed to it, that his path diverged from Pater's.

Yeats's aesthetic theory rests upon a quest for beauty, which is envisaged as a long, painful inner struggle and can be considered an echo of Pater's *ekphrasis* on *Mona Lisa* in *The Renaissance*:<sup>7</sup>

What death? What discipline?  
 What bonds no man could unbind, [...]  
 What wounds, what bloody press,  
 Dragged into being  
 This loveliness? ("The Only Jealousy of Emer," *VP* 531)

The beauty, thus described, is that of Cuchulain's mistress Eithne, so it applies to the physical beauty of woman. Some critics have taken issue with Yeats's reductive views on women, who are generally advised to keep to "the heroic discipline of the looking glass" (*E&I* 270).<sup>8</sup> But for Yeats, who often laments the loss of his own "pretty plumage" ("Among School Children," *VP* 443) and deplores bodily deformity throughout his work,<sup>9</sup> the desire for beauty participates in the art of creation itself: "Is not beauty [...] one of the most difficult of all the arts?" (*E&I* 270).

This idea of beauty is thus firstly related to the worship of the body, a theme Pater expounds as part of the essential genius of the Greeks "bent on impressing everywhere in the products of the imagination, the definite, perfectly conceivable human form, as the only worthy subject of art."<sup>10</sup> In the last chapters of *Greek Studies*, Pater examines the evolution of Greek art from its heroic beginning to its apogee, which culminates in the reproduction of the perfect human body: "the veritable image of man in the full possession of his reasonable soul."<sup>11</sup>

It might be objected that Pater is particularly susceptible to male beauty, and Yeats to female beauty, but when harmony of proportion is in question, such distinctions are no longer paramount. As shall be analyzed in my last section, Yeats is quite capable of admiring the male beauty produced by Greek art (the warriors on the Parthenon frieze in particular) or Michelangelo's Adam, and dismissive of the elaborate curls of the *korai* with their archaic smile and elaborate draperies.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Pater devotes long panegyric pages to the Venus of Melos, various statues of Demeter in parallel with Michelangelo's *Pietàs*, as well as several Renaissance paintings representing women, such as his famous passage on Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Pater and

Yeats share a particular devotion to “the youths on horseback” of the Panathenaic frieze.<sup>14</sup>

But the well-proportioned human body is also a well-known *figura* for perfection in a work of art and harmony of proportion constitutes a universal criterion in classical art: the notion is well-attested in Renaissance Italy, but Plato had already used the metaphor for the well-appointed speech in the *Phaedrus*<sup>15</sup> and the same image appeared in Dante’s *Il Convito*<sup>16</sup> to illustrate unity of being, a seminal concept for Yeats and Pater.<sup>17</sup> The perfect human body is thus a metaphor for all types of artistic perfection but also for the well-balanced soul. Conversely, physical beauty has an ethical impact on the mind and soul of the beholder and perfection of form becomes spiritual and moral as well as material.<sup>18</sup> The idea behind this Platonic conception is fundamentally Greek: “all Greeks believed that the contemplation of beauty was a moral incentive to virtue and therefore, their devotion to physical beauty verged on the mystical.”<sup>19</sup> Pater quotes Winckelmann on the subject: “The general esteem for Beauty went so far, that the Spartan women set up in their bedchamber a Nireus, a Narcissus, or a Hyacinth that they might bear beautiful children.”<sup>20</sup> Such practices cast a new light on Plato’s *Symposium*, in which physical appearance is far from being despised. The love of physical beauty is the first step on Diotima’s ladder leading to perfection, and the soul’s improvement will proceed from that first rung. If we follow this reasoning to its logical conclusion, we must agree with Pater’s bold assessment of Plato as a philosopher for whom “the *visible* world really existed.”<sup>21</sup> Plato is aware of the dangerous appeal of sensuousness, but the fundamental aim of his education is not to reject the body but “to identify it in its utmost fairness with the fair soul.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Plato for Pater is “a lover, a great lover, somewhat after the manner of Dante [for whom] the material and the spiritual are blent and fused together,” “a seer who has a sort of sensuous love for the un-seen.”<sup>23</sup> In fact, had Plato been content to write verse all his life, he might have become “such a poet as [...] would have been ‘disfranchised in the Perfect City,’ that is expelled from his own *Republic*.”<sup>24</sup>

Conversely, Yeats, the poet, defines artistic creation in Platonic terms from the beginning to the end of his career. In fact his aesthetic theory echoes Plato’s *Timaeus*.<sup>25</sup> A form or forms must be given to a world that is nothing but multiplicity or primeval chaos; reality for Yeats is often compared to shapeless dough, or clay that has to be molded. In an early poem, “The Lover Tells of the Rose in his Heart,” poetry is defined as a re-shaping of whatever is “unshapely” (a concept reminiscent of Plato’s *amorphos*).<sup>26</sup>

The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be told;  
I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green knoll apart,  
With the earth and the sky and the water, re-made, like a casket of gold. (*VP* 143)<sup>27</sup>

At the end of his career, when Yeats delivers his famous testament to Irish artists in “Under Ben Bulben,” the injunction partakes of the same vision:

Sing whatever is well made,  
Scorn the sort now growing up  
All out of shape from toe to top. (*VP* 639)<sup>28</sup>

“The Statues” extols the power of ratios and measurements, but this time Yeats invokes Plato’s alleged precursor, Pythagoras, whose theory of numbers was said to anticipate Platonic forms and thus make the achievement of sculptors like Phidias possible:

Pythagoras planned it. Why did the people stare?  
His numbers, though they moved or seemed to move  
In marble or in bronze, lacked character. (*VP* 610)<sup>29</sup>

Character for Yeats relates to our motley world of the here and now, the realm of comedy, whereas tragic heroes possess personality, and, like the Greek statues of the poem, rejoin the archetypal.<sup>30</sup> Thus, Yeats’s statues, duly endowed with “vague Grecian eyes gazing at nothing” partake of the universal, unlike Roman statues [*AVB* 201]. Yeats may have culled the idea from Pater: “The eyes [of Greek statues] are wide and directionless, not fixing anything with their gaze.”<sup>31</sup> Pater further contends that lack of character is precisely an essential feature of archetypal art: statues are “characterless so far as *character* involves subjection to the accidental influences of life.”<sup>32</sup> In Yeats’s poem, therefore, the young girls and boys of Greece are in love with the bodily perfection of the statues and undeterred by the characterless eyes:

But boys and girls, pale with imagined love  
Of solitary beds, knew what they were,  
That passion could bring character enough,  
And pressed at midnight in some public place  
Live lips upon a plummet-measured face. (*VP* 610)

Finally, since Pythagoras was credited with having found the golden number that creates life, the statues in the poem might be gods ready to become incarnate with one magic kiss. The practice of kissing statues was a well-attested ritual in ancient Greece and Pater also alludes to the statues of Greek gods “worn with kissing.”<sup>33</sup>

As Kathleen Raine points out, Yeats’s fascination with sculpture betokens an innate sympathy for the world of Platonic form: “Yeats tends towards

Platonic ideal forms, a sculptural stillness, ‘a marble or a bronze repose.’<sup>34</sup> In “Under Ben Bulben,” poet and sculptor are clearly equated:

Poet and Sculptor, do the work, [...]

Measurement began our might:  
Forms a stark Egyptian thought,  
Forms that gentler Phidias wrought. (*VP* 638)

Even Maud Gonne’s beauty participates in this world of measurements and seems to be an animated statue, devised by Scopas:

Her face, like the face of some Greek statue, showed little thought, her whole body seemed a master-work of long labouring thought, as though a Scopas had measured and calculated, consorted with Egyptian sages and mathematicians out of Babylon, that he might out-face even Artemisia’s sepulchral image with a living norm. (*Au* 364–65)

In short, the artist for Yeats is a kind of demiurge who measures and calculates while keeping his eyes upon the archetypes. Art “brings us near to the archetypal ideas themselves, and away from nature, which is but their looking-glass” (*E&I* 102).

In Pater’s essay “Winckelmann” we find the same appraisal of sculpture expounded in quasi-Platonic terms. For Pater, there is in sculpture an automatic purgation of emotion and complexity: the statue is “purged from the angry, bloodlike stain of action and passion, [and] reveals, not what is accidental in man, but the tranquil godship in him, as opposed to the restless accidents of life.”<sup>35</sup> Indeed, sculpture “keeps passion always below that degree of intensity at which it must necessarily be transitory.”<sup>36</sup> For Pater, sculpture also warrants perfect unity of being for there is no other art in which thought is so narrowly welded to form: in sculpture “the mind begins and ends with the finite image, yet loses no part of the spiritual motive.”<sup>37</sup> Finally, Pater, like Yeats, asserts a form of kinship between sculpture and literary composition, more particularly poetry: as Lene Østermark-Johansen notes, Pater draws “an analogy between language and the marble block.”<sup>38</sup>

In spite of these Platonic echoes, neither Pater nor Yeats likes to articulate clearly that Plato’s *nous* (intellect) provides the necessary pull towards archetypal unity. As Yeats in mid-career moves away from the traditional hierarchy between body and soul, he eulogizes “blossoming or dancing where / The body is not bruised to pleasure soul” (“Among School Children,” *VP* 445), and affirms that passion is the unifying principle that saves us from accidental complexities: “Emotion is always justified by time, thought hardly ever” (*Au* 472). In his

conclusion to *The Renaissance*, Pater anticipates Yeats's commitment to passion and, after his famous statement, "To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life,"<sup>39</sup> he asserts that "great passions may give us this quickened sense of life" and adds, "Only be sure it is passion."<sup>40</sup> Finally, he ranks "the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake" among the highest forms of wisdom.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Pater throughout *The Renaissance* rejects any philosophy or theory that would involve the sacrifice of a part of the individual man, and in his "Study of Dionysus" he develops the idea of spiritual form, a fusion of "the ethereal and the solid."<sup>42</sup> For both Yeats and Pater, however, the desire for passion needs to be qualified. When we recollect Yeats's dedication to thought<sup>43</sup> and Pater's ideal "image of man in the full possession of his reasonable soul,"<sup>44</sup> it appears that the intellect cannot be ruled out entirely from the creative process. Yeats brings his ailing soul to "monuments of unageing intellect" such as the Hagia Sophia (or Church of Holy Wisdom), when looking for "singing masters" ("Sailing to Byzantium," VP 407).<sup>45</sup> And he maintains that the "imagination must be carried beyond feeling into the aboriginal ice" in order to reach the universal (*E&I* 522–23).<sup>46</sup> Similarly, when Pater discourses upon "the history of the Greek mind," he praises "the spirit of a severe and wholly self-conscious intelligence."<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Platonic *nous* must play a part in aesthetic creation, although this is never wholly admitted. Despite this omission, we can observe that Pater and Yeats, while extolling passion, still advocate harmony and unity of being in order to conform to the universal.<sup>48</sup> Another quotation from Goethe, this time given by Pater, is an apt definition of this classical ideal: "balance, unity with one's self, consummate Greek modeling."<sup>49</sup>

Pater's essays about Greek myth and Greek sculpture, entitled *Greek Studies*, were published posthumously by Charles Lancelot Shadwell, his literary executor. Although they are controversial, their point of contact with Yeats's thought and esoteric system cannot be overemphasized.<sup>50</sup> In these essays, Pater uses a specific terminology to redefine the opposition between the multiplicity of sensations and desires which, following Plato, he calls *poikilia*, and the desirable unity within the soul or the work of art.<sup>51</sup> According to him the Ionian influence, paramount in heroic art, represents multiplicity; the Dorian betokens Platonic discipline, and the two must combine to ensure greatness of form. The Asiatic influence, defined as a centrifugal force, results in Ionian sensuousness and refinement while the Dorian tendency is a centripetal force representing a more austere discipline.<sup>52</sup> Pater did not invent this opposition, which is a favorite theme among Hellenists as well as art historians and seems as old at least as Aristophanes, who claimed that Ionian luxury was a prerequisite for true poetry.<sup>53</sup> Ionia was a name used to encompass the various Athenian colonies situated in Asia Minor and including parts of the mainland and several

islands. Moreover, Attic Greek was a form of Ionic, whereas Ionia's great rival Sparta, on the mainland, used Doric Greek. Pater gives a personal twist to this opposition, adding to the traditional linguistic, historical, and cultural features a religious and philosophical dimension: Homer, the worship of Apollo and Plato are considered Doric whereas Hesiod, Hephaestus, and the cult of Dionysus stand on behalf of Asiatic sensuousness.<sup>54</sup> Since we have lost many works of the period, Pater relies upon the descriptions made in antiquity, those for instance of Pausanias,<sup>55</sup> and also on the writings of Homer and Hesiod.

For Pater, the Ionian or Asiatic influence is characterized by lovely objects of refinement, with much insistence on women's ornaments. We find in such art an extensive use of precious metals or combinations of metal and ivory, as in the famous chryselephantine statues. Pater also draws upon what we know of Mycenaean architecture, such as the habit to line stone walls with metal (preferably gold), and mentions "the lining of stone walls with burnished metal, of which the house of Alcinous in the *Odyssey* is the ideal picture."<sup>56</sup> Troy, as described by Homer, is "essentially a Greek city [but]... with an element of languid Ionian voluptuousness," as is made manifest in the description of the chamber of Paris in the *Iliad*.<sup>57</sup> Pater tells of "the ways in which brass, gold, silver or paler gold go into the chariots and armor and women's dress, or cling to the walls,"<sup>58</sup> and calls this moment in history "the age of the hero as smith."<sup>59</sup> As a contrast, the first true school of sculptors who use Parian marble emerges with the Pisis-tratids<sup>60</sup> and develops until we reach the period of the Aegina marbles.<sup>61</sup> These are reckoned to be contemporary with the battles of Marathon and Salamis and represent the emergence of Greek classical style, although we still find traces of archaism. The human body, freer of motion, is no longer hieratic and rigid. It is liberated from its trappings and represented naked except for the implements of war, since the marbles illustrate episodes of the Trojan War. However, the shadow of the archaic profile can still be traced on their faces and the bodily proportions are not perfect, the arms and legs for instance being too short for the rest of the body.<sup>62</sup> We have to wait for the period of the Olympic Games, shortly preceding that of the Peloponnesian Wars and corresponding to Pindar in literature, before reaching absolute harmony of proportion in works such as Myron's *Discobulus*.<sup>63</sup> All this is supposed to pave the way for the great Phidias, but since the essays are unfinished, we must leave it to Yeats to complete Pater's thesis: in Phidias "the Ionic and Doric influence unite" (*AVB* 196). The whole of Pater's argument, however, impresses the reader with the superiority of Dorian Greece over the Ionian influence. One of the most perfect expressions of Doric art for Pater concerns itself with dance: Dorian art "early brought to its perfection that most characteristic of Greek institutions, the sacred dance [...] a living sculpture which developed, perhaps beyond everything else in the Greek mind [...] a sense of the beauty and significance of the human body."<sup>64</sup>



This whole movement—from the feminine and ornate to the stark nakedness of the human body—is of course reminiscent of Yeats's own aesthetic evolution. As Elizabeth Loizeaux notes, in his later poetry Yeats “turned more frequently to Renaissance and ancient Greek art than he did to Byzantium,”<sup>65</sup> as he increasingly favored an art of the body: “Are we prepared to exclude such art [Titian's sensuousness] from Ireland and to sail in a ship of fools, fools that dressed bodies Michael Angelo left naked, Town Councillors of Montreal who hid the Discobolus in the cellar?” (*UP2* 479). Thus, in Yeats's imagination, the “hammered gold and gold enamelling” and the “glory of changeless metal,” which pertain to “the age of the hero as smith” in the Byzantium poems, (*VP* 407, 497) were replaced by the rhythm of Michelangelo's bodies and Phidias' flowing lines.<sup>66</sup>

Besides illustrating Pater's dichotomy in his own artistic development, Yeats appropriated Pater's own terminology of Dorian/Ionian so completely throughout his work that I can give but a few illustrations here. If we return to the last stanza of “The Statues,” we note it ends with an evocation of the Easter Rising, which Yeats implicitly compares to the battle of Salamis; Pater had earlier compared Salamis to the fight against the Spanish Armada.<sup>67</sup> To Yeats, both Salamis and the Easter Rising are double victories which are not to be reduced to mere military exploits—indeed in those terms the Easter Rising is more defeat than victory—for a battle is first won on the plane of culture. The Greek victory at Salamis represents the triumph of form over what Yeats calls “All Asiatic vague immensities” (*VP* 610) and it was won “when the Doric studios sent out those broad-backed marble statues against the multiform, vague, expressive Asiatic sea” (*Ex* 451). In Yeats's poem the sea is a Platonic one, the sea of generation or the sea of time and space, the *poikilia* that both frightens and fascinates, exactly like Pater's Asia: “barbaric, splendid, hardly known, yet haunting.”<sup>68</sup> In Ireland, the unequal fight at the Rising announced the final victory to come and demonstrated that the Irish idealism of Berkeley had proven superior to the English materialism of Hobbes, Newton, and Locke. In short, the Easter Rising is “the Salamis of the Irish intellect” (*Ex* 348) and in “The Statues,” therefore, the Irish, fighting the formless tide of modernity, are worthy of belonging to the ancient sect of the Pythagoreans:

We Irish, born into that ancient sect  
 But thrown upon this filthy modern tide  
 And by its formless spawning fury wrecked,  
 Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace  
 The lineaments of a plummet-measured face. (*VP* 611)

The dichotomy between the Ionian and the Dorian also informs the theological argument which lies at the core of Yeats's play *The Resurrection*. In this

play, the three main protagonists, former disciples of Christ, are in the same house as the apostles, but in a different room. They have no names but represent types: the Greek, the Hebrew, and the Syrian. Since rumors of Christ's resurrection are about, they discuss the possibility while, in the streets outside, unseen by the audience but described by the Greek, a Dionysian retinue of the more debauched variety is approaching the house. In the course of the argument, only the Syrian shows any capacity of apprehending Christ's resurrection, whereas neither the Greek nor the Hebrew can conceive of such a thing; the Hebrew is sure Christ was killed, therefore He cannot be God; the Greek thinks that Christ is God, therefore the whole crucifixion must be a sham. The Dorian Greek who represents the epitome of classical rationale can no more accept the noisy ecstasy of the Dionysian *thiasus* (a religious cortege, usually in honor of Dionysus) than he can believe in Christ's resurrection. He rejects the crudity of the Dionysian cult as Asian: the Dionysian worshippers are "Asiatic Greeks, the dregs of the population" (*VPI* 915). He also disapproves of the feeling of *entheos*, etymologically "at one with the god," which is characteristic of Dionysian worship (and later of Christian worship). His notion of the ideal intercourse between men and gods is the Homeric one: "When the goddess came to Achilles in the battle, she did not interfere with his soul; she took him by his yellow hair" (*VPI* 917). He favors the Olympians and their "eternal possession of themselves" which must be duplicated by man: "Man, too, remains separate. He does not surrender his soul. He keeps his privacy" (*VPI* 919). At the end of the play, however, the masked figure of Christ appears and this shatters the Greek's certainties. He knows that such a miracle, like the Dionysian *thiasus*, calls rationality into question and signifies the end of civilization and human knowledge: "the human knowledge that keeps the road from here to Persia free from robbers, that has built the beautiful humane cities, [...] that stands between us and the barbarian" (*VPI* 925). This world of rational achievement is now jeopardized and, at the end of the play, the Greek exclaims: "O Athens, Alexandria, Rome, something has come to destroy you" (*VPI* 931). A similar assertion is taken up by the final chorus:

Odour of blood when Christ was slain  
 Made all Platonic tolerance vain  
 And vain all Doric discipline. (*VPI* 931)<sup>69</sup>

It must be said, however, that Yeats accepts Pater's dichotomy with a reservation: if both thinkers favor the Dorian influence, Yeats sometimes turns to Asia for a corrective. Speaking of the realistic staging of plays during Victorian times, he states: "Had we been Greeks, and so but half-European, an honourable mob would have martyred the first man who set up a painted scene" (*E&I*

225–26). And, for his plays inspired by the Ulster Cycle, Yeats describes the ideal mask for his Cuchulain as “this noble half-Greek, half-Asiatic face [...] like an image seen in reverie by some Orphic worshipper” (*E&I* 221). So it seems that for Yeats, the perfect balance between the Asiatic and the Doric can be slightly tipped in favor of Asia, which might explain that Byzantium still ranks high in the poet’s estimate in *A Vision*.<sup>70</sup> At crucial times Yeats even favors the Ionian. In *The Player Queen*, the choice of Ionian music is indeed pivotal and comes as an ironical echo of Plato’s *Republic*. In this play, which is about the defeat of the Christian era and the coming of the next pagan civilization, the aim is to encourage the begetting of a new “Messiah” on a hopelessly chaste unicorn. The latter has to be cajoled, put in the right mood for procreation, and thus made to listen to lascivious Ionian cadences: “You will make Ionian music—music with its eye upon voluptuous Asia [...] One Dorian note might undo us” (*VPI* 750). As Østermark-Johansen remarks, however, Pater, too, is sometimes seduced by the Ionic tenderness of Praxiteles.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, Yeats’s system, developed in *A Vision*, exhibits the full significance of his debt to Pater. Yeats articulates an extensive theory based on the twenty-eight phases of the moon that sets up an opposition between two types of individuals, civilizations, and religions. Individuals or eras associated with the dark phases of the moon, called primary or objective, only seek to serve the world. Conversely, individuals or eras associated with the bright phases of the moon, called antithetical or subjective, only serve themselves and are free of the world. The primary spells out self-sacrifice and dispersion (the centrifugal) whereas the antithetical entails a recreation of the self and unity of being (the centripetal).<sup>72</sup> The two concepts are contrary but in Yeats’s system they constantly alternate: each antithetical civilization arising during the brightly lit phases of the moon is succeeded by a primary civilization arising in the dark phases, and the latter is in turn followed by another antithetical civilization. Of these two conflicting tendencies, the antithetical is superior and, therefore, antithetical eras will be golden moments of culture—Greece at the time of Phidias, Byzantium at the time of Justinian and the Italian Renaissance—the same highlights identified by Pater, with the addition of Byzantium.<sup>73</sup> Each age, religious or historical, is preceded by its annunciation in Yeats’s system: Leda heralds the glorious antithetical era of Greek paganism and Mary the less prestigious Christian cycle, which is considered primary.<sup>74</sup> As we shall see, Pater must have paved the way for Yeats’s emblematic use of Leda, for the myth of Leda and the Swan appears severally in *The Renaissance*: it is first discussed as Michelangelo’s “favorite pagan subject, the delight of the world breaking from the egg of a bird;”<sup>75</sup> then it is put on the same plane as Mary’s annunciation in the enigmatic meditation on *Mona Lisa*.<sup>76</sup>

In Book V in *AVB*, Yeats elaborates upon the alternation between various highlights of civilizations and the formless darkness that separates them; the distinctions he draws owe much to Pater. In fact, one particular paragraph on Greek art shows Yeats's complete appropriation of Pater's thesis in *Greek Studies*:

Side by side with Ionic elegance there comes after the Persian wars a Doric vigour, and the light-limbed dandy of the potters, the Parisian-looking young woman of the sculptors, her hair elaborately curled, gives place to the athlete. One suspects a deliberate turning away from all that is Eastern, or a moral propaganda like that which turned the poets out of Plato's Republic. [...] Then in Phidias Ionic and Doric influence unite and all is transformed by the full moon, and all abounds and flows [...] With Callimachus pure Ionic revives again, [...] a momentary dip into ebbing Asia. (*AVB* 196–97)<sup>77</sup>

In brief, the Asian mode delights in ornaments and the expression of personality (the archaic smile) whereas the Dorian influence glorifies the human body and movement—both ideas culled from Pater.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, Yeats, like Pater, deems that the dance is the most perfect expression of art: “Those riders upon the Parthenon had all the world's power in their moving bodies and in a movement that seemed, so were the hearts of man and beast set upon it, that of a dance” (*AVB* 201). In the next gloss of civilization, Byzantium, Yeats differentiates the two trends in Byzantine art, the Graeco-Roman and the Graeco-Egyptian, the former representing Christ as a man, the latter using symbols and ornaments precisely to avoid the man: “a bare Cross and all the rest is bird and beast and tree [...] an Asiatic art dear to those who thought Christ contained nothing human” (*AVB* 204).<sup>79</sup> Yeats further adds: “the destruction of images [is] but a destruction of what was Greek in decoration, accompanied perhaps by a renewed splendour in all that came down from the ancient Persian Paradise” (*AVB* 205). In an article published in 1928, Yeats develops this view further by deriding Byzantine religious art, which too often presents us with “a Christ with face of pitiless intellect or a pinched, flat-breasted virgin holding a child like a wooden doll” and concludes: “Nobody can stray into that little Byzantium chapel at Palermo [...] without for an instant renouncing the body and all its works” (*UP2* 478). The Italian Renaissance of course restores the kind of “bodily beauty Castiglione called ‘the spoil or monument of the victory of the soul’” (*AVB* 212–13).<sup>80</sup> Yeats's undoubted master here is Michelangelo: “His ‘Morning’ and his ‘Night’ disclose / How sinew that has been pulled tight, / Or it may be loosened in repose, / Can rule by supernatural right” (“Michael Robartes and the Dancer,” *VP* 386).<sup>81</sup> Thus, throughout his analysis, Yeats voices the Paterian contention that the eradication of the human body in artistic representation corresponds to the rejection of the intellect and

a decline in civilization. In this consideration lies perhaps the main reason for the sway of sculpture above all other art forms: "one of the most striking facts about sculpture [is] that nine tenths of it depicts the human body."<sup>82</sup>

On the personal plane, Yeats's dichotomy reads like a horoscope, for each phase of the moon can be ascribed to an individual type, and that places the individual either in the primary or in the antithetical orb. The primary phases are those of the saint or reformer who are ruled by the world and give it all their love while the antithetical phases are those of heroes and artists, intent upon achieving perfect unity within themselves and in their work. Yeats illustrates the distinction with a famous lapidary formula: "We make out of the quarrel with others rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry" (*Myth* (1959) 331).

In an ambiguous text, entitled "Diaphaneité" (from the Greek *diaphainō*, to shine through or to cast a limpid light) and added as an appendix to *The Renaissance*,<sup>83</sup> Pater seems to anticipate Yeats's idea of a perfect human type, characterized by wholeness of being. Pater explains that some rare individuals have reached a perfect point of balance between body and soul and perfect peace within themselves: the example he gives of such natures is the luminous perfection of Dante's Beatrice. Pater calls such a personality "that fine edge of light, where the elements of our moral nature refine themselves to the burning point."<sup>84</sup> This is achieved, Pater tells us, through a happy simplicity of nature combined with an innate sense of taste. The ideas or convictions of such beings are never violent or sharply defined, for everything in their nature is subjected to this fundamental unity; yet, they are capable of heroism, insight, and passion.<sup>85</sup> However, this ideal state can only be achieved with difficulty: in order to reach the perfect point, the "thread of pure white light,"<sup>86</sup> we must manage to fuse our inner dissensions, and this is why such natures are extremely rare. The simplicity achieved by such individuals recalls the statue praised by Pater, since the body and what Pater calls the "spiritual motive"<sup>87</sup> are totally one: "as (the artist) becomes nearer and nearer to perfection, the veil of an outer life not simply expressive of the inward becomes thinner and thinner."<sup>88</sup>

Because of the examples chosen by Pater (Beatrice, and later Charlotte Corday),<sup>89</sup> one is tempted to relate this ideal nature to Yeats's friend and patron, Lady Gregory, the embodiment of aristocratic grace and learning who indeed seems to fit Pater's description: this type of ideal character represents "the mental attitude, the intellectual manner of perfect culture, assumed by a happy instinct."<sup>90</sup> Yeats's eulogium of lost order and ceremony in "A Prayer for My Daughter" (*VP* 403) makes clear that Lady Gregory's life is paradigmatic of everything the poet wishes for his daughter: "O may she live like some green laurel / Rooted in one dear perpetual place" (*VP* 405). Amusingly, the contrary of this perfection for Pater is the revolutionist, whom he denounces in retrospectively Yeatsian tones: "What makes revolutionists is either self pity,

or indignation for the sake of others [...] They who prosecute revolution have to violate again and again the instinct of reverence."<sup>91</sup> Thus, Georges Danton is fittingly opposed to Charlotte Corday.<sup>92</sup> One is reminded of Yeats's more vituperative poetry, his rejection of social reformers, rhetorical politicians, and of course revolutionary women: "A Helen of social welfare dream / Climb on a wagonette to scream" ("Why should not Old Men be Mad," *VP* 626).<sup>93</sup> However, the notion of a perfectly unified personality also finds direct application in *A Vision* since such a quest is the object of the antithetical artist's life, equally at variance with that of reformers or revolutionists. Throughout his work, Yeats expounds the extraordinary fulfillment of the antithetical personality that has achieved unity: "what sweetness, what rhythmic movement, there is in those that have become the joy that is themselves" (*E&I* 271). Other allusions to the same blessed state of self-sufficiency can be read in many of Yeats's poems: "Nothing but stillness can remain when hearts are full / Of their own sweetness, bodies of their loveliness" ("Meditations in Time of Civil War," *VP* 426). Even though the fight for unity sounds less strenuous in Pater than in Yeats, for whom the antithetical artist must "set his chisel to the hardest stone" ("Ego Dominus Tuus," *VP* 369), this ideal of a unified sensibility should, I think, be traced back to Pater.<sup>94</sup> However the struggle for unity is not always viewed as tragic, as Yeats's humorous definition of the poetic figure testifies: "The poet is never the bundle of accidents and incoherence that sits down at breakfast. He has been reborn as an idea, something intended, complete" (*E&I* 509).

Beauty is the main attribute of the brightly lit phases of the moon, the antithetical phases, while deformity rules the darker or primary phases. Phase fourteen, immediately before the full moon, for instance is that of Helen of Troy, and one of the last primary phases is that of the hunchback. Out of the twenty-eight phases of the moon, only twenty-six admit a definite human type. The two extreme phases—phase one, that of complete darkness, and phase fifteen, that of perfect light—are pure principles and thus beyond the natural world. The description of phase one runs thus: "Deformed, beyond deformity, unformed, / Insipid as the dough before it is baked" ("The Phases of the Moon," *VP* 376). Life can only begin phase two when this formless dough can be molded into something definite:

When all the dough has been so kneaded up  
That it can take what form cook Nature fancies  
The first thin crescent is wheeled round once more. (*VP* 377)

These are the characteristics of matter for Plato and Pater's *poikilia*. If we turn to the other extreme, phase fifteen, the description of that perfect discarnate phase sounds like an aesthete's dream: "All thought becomes an image and

the soul / Becomes a body" ("The Phases of the Moon," *VP* 214). In another poem, this phase fifteen will be symbolized by a supernatural dancing girl, one who "had out-danced thought" ("The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," *VP* 383). The dancing body allying perfection of proportion to absolute freedom of movement, like the riders on the Parthenon, or Pater's Dorian dancers, has become Yeats's new symbol for perfect unity of being: "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance / How can we know the dancer from the dance?" ("Among School Children," *VP* 446). Placed as this is at the end of a poem haunted by Maud Gonine, the reader is impelled to see her as the ideal dancer—the *Bacchante*, sculpted by Scopas—which haunts Yeats's work.<sup>95</sup> The dancer also embodies the acme of the fight against abstraction and the supreme exaltation of the human body because of rhythm: "Rhythm implies a living body, a breast to rise and fall, or limbs that dance, while the abstract is incompatible with life" (*L* 608).

It seems that for both Pater and Yeats, the material and the spiritual closely intersect and that the artist who is in touch with a higher reality can produce art that is magical or iconic. In "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone I," Pater contends that "they [symbolical representations] seem to be something more than mere symbolism, and to be connected with some peculiarly sympathetic penetration, on the part of the artist, into the subjects he is intended to depict."<sup>96</sup> In the same manner, beauty is more than physical for Pater and his statement about *Mona Lisa* refers us to Yeats's concept of beauty as a long, painstaking process: "It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions."<sup>97</sup> In the 1936 *OBMV*, Yeats was to pay a final tribute to Pater by resetting the rest of this famous prose paragraph on the *Mona Lisa* into free verse and claiming for it "revolutionary importance:"

She is older than the rocks among which she sits;  
 Like the vampire,  
 She has been dead many times,  
 And learned the secrets of the grave;  
 And has been a diver in deep seas,  
 And keeps their fallen day about her;  
 And trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants:  
 And as Leda,  
 Was the mother of Helen of Troy,  
 And as Saint Anne,  
 The mother of Mary;  
 And all this has been to her as the sound of lyres and flutes,  
 And lives



Only in the delicacy  
 With which it has moulded the changing lineaments,  
 And tinged the eyelids and hands. (*OBMV*, viii)

As Jeffrey Meyers notes, “Yeats never directly acknowledged this debt (to Pater), but there is sufficient evidence in his writings to believe that the extremely odd choice of Pater’s prose sentence as the first poem in an anthology of modern verse was itself an indirect acknowledgment.”<sup>98</sup> Indeed, beyond the obvious parallel between Leda and Saint Anne which corresponds to the two opposed annunciations in Yeats’s system, Pater seems to touch upon the possibility of metempsychosis—a theory dear to Yeats, who had followed Plato into its arcane mysteries. As the passage on the *Mona Lisa* suggests, beauty comes from eons of past lives, seemingly spent in tribulations and secret, painful trafficking:

Those that we have loved got their long fingers  
 From death and wounds, or on Sinai’s top,  
 Or from those whips in their own hands. (“The Phases of the Moon,” *VP* 375)

If Pater merely glances at the possibility of metempsychosis and art as sympathetic magic, Yeats’s view is that of the true believer. For him, the poet as priest is to be taken literally and art is nothing but a potent magic spell which can re-create reality. Yeats had been trained in the reproduction of images for magical purposes early:

I had seen MacGregor Mathers paint little pictures combining the forms of men, animals and birds, according to a rule which provided a combination for every possible mental condition and I had heard him say [...] that citizens of ancient Egypt assumed when in contemplation, the images of their gods. (*Au* 270)

Thus, the notion of a constant interaction between the ideal and the real is central to Yeats’s production:

Nineveh was built by [its poets’] sighing; and I am certainly never sure when I hear of some war, or of some religious excitement [...] that it has not all happened because of something that a boy piped in Thessaly. (*E&I* 158)

At the end of “The Statues,” Yeats suggests a concrete example of this interaction. Battles such as the Easter Rising or Salamis require preternatural agency: at Salamis, it was whispered that gods and heroes like Athena or Ajax were seen spurring the Athenians on to the fight;<sup>99</sup> in Dublin Pearse, a devotee of Cuchulain, had, as Yeats supposed, summoned the help of the Irish hero, who might



have taken form and appeared among the rebels.<sup>100</sup> Yeats, however, keeps the mystery intact and in the last stanza raises a question to which there is seemingly no answer:

When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side,  
 What stalked through the post office? What intellect,  
 What calculation, number, measurement, replied? (*VP* 611)

### Notes

1. As Roy Foster avers, Yeats probably first read Pater when he was involved in the Rhymers Club around 1889–93, also a time when he saw Wilde frequently; *Life* 1, 108–09, 131–32. „According to Joseph Hone, Yeats particularly “devoted himself” to Lionel Johnson, who was the “disciple of Walter Pater;” Hone, *W. B. Yeats* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 80.
2. It is usually the task of the iconoclastic character Michael Robartes to deride Pater’s influence in Yeats’s work: “He wrote of me in that extravagant style / He learned of Pater;” “The Phases of the Moon,” *VP*, 372. See also “The Prologue,” in *AVB*.
3. There are exceptions to this of course: Foster consistently refers to the importance of Pater’s work in Yeats’s life and remarks that Yeats is reported to have repeatedly expressed his admiration for Pater’s sentence structure and style in *Marius the Epicurean*, a work he re-read in 1916; *Life* 2, 71. Foster further notes traces of Pater’s style in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* as well as in the earlier *Discoveries*; *Life* 2, 75. Furthermore, two critics at least have clearly set out Pater’s role in Yeats’s inspiration: see Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux, *Yeats and the Visual Arts* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003) and Edward Engelberg, *The Vast Design: Patterns in W. B. Yeats’s Aesthetics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964).
4. Mark Jeffreys, “The Mona Lisa and the Symbols of Ideas: Pater’s Leda as Mother to Yeats’s Helen,” *Colby Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (March 1993), 20. For Pater as an essential link between Victorianism and Modernism, see Michael Levinson, *Genealogy of Modernism* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 1985) and James Longenbach, *Modernist Poetics of History: Pound, Eliot and the Sense of the Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).
5. I am basing these distinctions on the development found in *AVB*.
6. As Foster recalls, “the idea of ‘the poet as priest’ was a pervasive Paterian notion in the Rhymers Club;” *Life* 1, 109, 132.
7. Walter Pater, *The Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 80.
8. See Elizabeth Cullingford, “Yeats and Women: *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*,” *YA* 4, 32; more generally, see Cullingford, *Gender and History in Yeats’s Love Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). See also the special issue on “Yeats and Women,” *YA* 9, ed. Deirdre Toomey (London: Macmillan, 1992).
9. One case in point is the poem “The Saint and the Hunchback,” *VP*, 379, which ends with the hunchback praising Alcibiades for his beauty.
10. Pater, “A Study of Dionysus,” in *Greek Studies: A Series of Essays* (1895). (Charleston, S. C.: BiblioBazaar, 2008), 26.
11. Pater, “The Age of Graven Images,” in *Greek Studies*, 141.
12. *A Vision*, 276 for the riders and 270 for “the Parisian looking” woman of Minoan art. Michelangelo’s Adam is mentioned in the poem “Long-legged Fly,” *VP*, 617. One can also point to the statue of Mausolus, the paradigmatic figure of unity of being for Yeats; see *Au*, 150, 191, 321.

13. As Lene Østermark-Johansen contends, “an exclusively gendered approach to Pater and sculpture would result in a very reductive reading”; Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 9. On the androgynous character of canonical beauty see 119–22; for the various types of Paterian *ekphrasis* regarding women, see 34, 97, 233–38.
14. Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 16, 77. The quotation is from Pater, “Winckelmann,” in *The Renaissance*, 218.
15. Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), 265e–66a.
16. Dante Alighieri, *Il Convito, The Banquet of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Elizabeth Price Sayer (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1887), 23.
17. Perfect oneness characterizes the well-appointed speech for Pater, as we know from Pater, “Style,” *Fortnightly Review* 44 new series (December 1888), 728–43. This concept, which is clearly derived from Neo-Platonic philosophy, is discussed severally in Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 25, 44, 104, 312,. As for Yeats, “Unity of Being” is compared “to a perfectly proportioned human body,” *Au*, 190, 246, 291, 293, 355. One early representation of this perfect human body, found in Vitruvius’ *De Architectura* (1521), is reproduced in Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 162. In it, we see the perfect figure of a man inscribed in a circle and a square.
18. This explains the fusion between the artist and his work, which lies at the basis of creation for both Yeats and Pater. In Yeats this is quite a leitmotif: poetic creation is a reworking of oneself: “Myself I must remake,” “An Acre of Grass,” *VP*, 575. In his later work, the poet will increasingly become one with his artifact, the golden bird in “Sailing to Byzantium,” *VP* 408, being a case in point. Pater, for whom “the conduct of life cannot be separated from art,” also advocated “the radicalization of the aesthetic ideal into a way of life;” Stefano Evangelista, *British Aestheticism and Ancient Greece: Hellenism, Reception, Gods in Exile* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 47–48. See also Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 73, 312.
19. R. Hackforth, “Introduction to the *Phaedrus*,” in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, 475.
20. Pater, *The Renaissance*, 134.
21. Pater, “The Genius of Plato,” in *Plato and Platonism* (London: Macmillan, 1893), 114; Pater’s italics. The expression is in fact taken from Théophile Gautier, who had described himself as “*un homme pour qui le monde visible existe.*” Pater has added the adverb “really” and applied the phrase to Plato; see Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 125.
22. Pater, “The Genius of Plato,” 131.
23. Pater, “The Genius of Plato,” 122, 130.
24. Pater, “The Genius of Plato,” 125. The reason I insist on this appraisal of Plato by Pater is not only that it is shared by Yeats, but also largely at variance with our common conception of Platonic thought, especially during Victorian times. See Østermark-Johansen, who argues that Pater’s essays were written in defiance of Jowett’s more conventional and Christianized interpretation of Plato; *Walter Pater*, 218.
25. Plato, *Timaieus*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, 29e–30a.
26. Plato, *Timaieus*, 50b–51a.
27. The poet’s interest in sculpture is generally thought to be a later development: “the chisel appeared with the pen as the tools of the trade [...] and ‘mould’ became a favorite word for creative activity;” Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 172. In his early works Yeats’s appreciation for sculpture, no doubt inspired by Platonic forms, lies dormant.
28. For the evolution of Yeats’s inspiration from painting to sculpture, see the chapter on Yeats’s sculptural poetry in Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 170–92.
29. This incipit is directly related to Yeats’s famous statement on Greek measurement: “There are moments when I am certain that art must once again accept those Greek proportions

- which carry into plastic art the Pythagorean numbers, those faces that are divine because all there is empty and measured," *Ex*, 451.
30. *Au*, 470–71. The poet also makes subtle use of this distinction at the beginning of "Easter, 1916," in which the motley actors of comedy and everyday life are transformed into tragic personalities by the rebellion: "He, too, has resigned his part / In the casual comedy," *VP*, 303.
  31. Pater, "Winckelmann," in *The Renaissance*, 140.
  32. Pater, "Winckelmann," 140; Pater's italics.
  33. Pater, "Winckelmann," 131. The habit of kissing statues is also mentioned in Brian Arkins, *Builders of My Soul: Greek and Roman Themes in Yeats* (Savage, Md.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1990), 163–64. Beyond the desire for beauty, the kiss given to statues to make them come to life substantiates many legends such as the Pygmalion and Galatea myth, and might be Pythagorean in origin. It might also be related to the Cretan myth of Dionysus Zagreus. For a detailed discussion, see Elizabeth Muller, "The Cult of Dionysus in the work of W. B. Yeats," in *Re-Embroidering the Robe: Faith, Myth and Literary Creation since 1850*, eds. Suzanne Bray, Adrienne E. Gavin and Peter Merchant (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 210–27.
  34. Kathleen Raine, *Yeats, the Initiate* (Savage, Md: Barnes and Noble Books, 1990), 98. The quotation comes from Yeats's poem "Among School Children," *VP*, 445.
  35. Pater, "Winckelmann," 137.
  36. Pater, "Winckelmann," 139.
  37. Pater, "Winckelmann," 132.
  38. Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 105; see also 44, 55, 286.
  39. Pater, "Conclusion," in *The Renaissance*, 152.
  40. Pater, "Conclusion," 153.
  41. Pater, "Conclusion," 153.
  42. Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 220; on the rejection of sacrifice, see also 88.
  43. The ideal life is one "where passion and thought are one," *L*, 360. See also *Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 174.
  44. Pater, "The Age of Graven Images," 141.
  45. For the connotation of permanence attached to the word "monument" in Yeats's work, see Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 143.
  46. Hence the use of oxymora which recur again and again in his poetry, like the famous "cold and passionate" in "The Fisherman," *VP*, 348.
  47. Pater, "A Study of Dionysus: The Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew," in *Greek Studies*, 26.
  48. Interestingly, this places Yeats and Pater in a similar position regarding Aestheticism. As Loizeaux notes (123): "Aestheticism had, in other words, helped bring about the very fragmentation that Yeats, with his desires for unity of thought and a popular theatre, had been struggling against. It violated one of the ideals that Pater had held up: the integration of all aspects of life and thought that had existed before the Renaissance." In addition to unity of being as a pre-requisite for great art, Yeats had another contention with Aestheticism: he believed in "the dependence [...] of all great art and literature upon conviction and upon heroic life [...] literature must be the expression of conviction, and be the garment of noble emotion and not an end in itself," *UPI*, 248–49. In spite of Pater's famous phrase "art for its own sake," *The Renaissance*, 153, he would concur with Yeats that "no art could be free of ideas," Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 123.
  49. Quoted in Pater, *The Renaissance*, 146.
  50. They are considered controversial because the collection was somewhat arbitrarily put together by Shadwell; Evangelista, *British Aestheticism*, 42–5. Their literary merit is not always up to Pater's usual standard since they were taken from lectures; Østermark-Johansen,

- Walter Pater, 214. Furthermore, the study on Greek art is unfinished since it ends before Phidias, “before thought enters Greek sculpture;” Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 266.
51. Plato uses the adjective *poikilos* many times in the *Republic*, 493, d, 558, c and the English translation is “motley,” *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (1961), eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, (New York: Pantheon Books, rev. 1963), translation by Paul Shorey, 729, 786.
  52. Pater, “The Heroic Age of Greek Art,” in *Greek Studies*, 112–31 and Pater, “The Marbles of Aegina,” in *Greek Studies*, 149–52.
  53. Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *Greek Epic, Lyric and Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 235.
  54. Pater, “A Study of Dionysus,” 18–19, 26–27; Pater, “The Myth of Demeter and Persephone II,” in *Greek Studies*, 74.
  55. Pausanias (c. AD 110–c. 180) was a Greek geographer and traveller, famous for his *Description of Greece*.
  56. Pater, “The Heroic Age,” 122. Pater writes about the palace of Alcinoos in the *Odyssey*, which is both gold and silver, sun and moon.
  57. See Pater, *Greek Studies*, 128.
  58. Pater, “The Heroic Age,” 118.
  59. Pater, “The Heroic Age,” 115.
  60. Pater, “The Age of Graven Images,” 138.
  61. Pater, “The Marbles of Aegina,” in *Greek Studies*, 152. The statues used to ornament the temple of Aphaia in Aegina, but are now found in Munich.
  62. Pater, “The Marbles of Aegina,” 158.
  63. Pater, “The Age of the Athletic Prizemen,” in *Greek Studies*, 167–75.
  64. Pater, “The Marbles of Aegina,” 151. The Dorian slant accounts for the importance of Sparta in Pater’s work: see Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 219–20. As Østermark-Johansen points out (179), Pater even includes a chapter on “Lacedaemon” in *Plato and Platonism*. Yeats also favors Sparta in musical matters, for Sparta was renowned for its taste in music, as he knew from Plutarch who mentions the simplicity of this Dorian music, earlier commended by Plato: “they use three notes, and are simple, but they are superior to compositions that are complex and use many notes;” David. A Campbell, ed. and trans., *Greek Lyric*, vol. 2, *Anacreon, Anacreontea, Choral Lyric from Olympus to Alcman* (Harvard: Loeb Classical Library, 2001), 307. Plato’s views on music can be found in the *Republic*, 398–403. Yeats, who was delighted when his poetry or choric parts were sung or chanted, also seems to favor Doric music in his recommendations: “a musician who would give me pleasure should not repeat a line, or put more than one note to one syllable,” *VP*, 844. Yeats was also a staunch admirer of Leonidas’ heroism at Thermopylae, which he extols severally in his work: “Test art, morality, custom, thought by Thermopylae,” *A Vision*, 52. Thermopylae is also alluded to in the poem “Crazy Jane on God,” *The Poems*, *VP* 512.
  65. Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 152.
  66. For a complete study of Yeats’s evolving preferences from Byzantium to the Renaissance and Greek art, see Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 152–57. Ironically, one could argue a case in favor of Yeats’s early pre-Raphaelitism as Ionic and his later sculptural poetry as Doric, thus in fact asserting a movement towards Pater rather than away from him.
  67. Pater, “Hippolytus Veiled: A Study from Euripides,” in *Greek Studies*, 96.
  68. Pater, “Hippolytus Veiled,” 96.
  69. Yeats usually sides with the Apollonian/Dorian principle; see F. A. C. Wilson, *W. B. Yeats and Tradition* (London: Macmillan, 1958), 58–62. Unlike Wilson, however, I think this choice precludes his having culled the idea from Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*, for in Nietzsche the Dionysian principle is exalted and found superior to the Apollonian. Yeats undoubtedly knew of Nietzsche’s distinction (*L* 402), there is no reason to suppose he

espoused Nietzsche's position, since his work seems to counter it. Besides, the very terminology Yeats favors points to Pater rather than Nietzsche: he rarely employs Apollonian and Dionysian but prefers Ionian and Dorian. In fact the two forces, centripetal and centrifugal, are far more pivotal in this study of two opposite tendencies in civilization than the imagined rivalry between two gods in Nietzsche's invention. Indeed, in antiquity as well as in Rosicrucian doctrine, Apollo and Dionysus are but two sides of the same coin, as Yeats well knew; see Muller, "The Figure of Dionysus in the Work of W. B. Yeats" in *Re-Embroidering the Robe*, 210–27. The kinship between the two gods is well-attested throughout history and Pater, like Plato, acknowledges both Apollo and Dionysus as "inspirers and rulers over music;" Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 227.

70. Yeats's position fluctuates between Ionic and Doric, since he remains partial to Callimachus and the Ionic trend whenever he longs for anti-realistic or anti-naturalistic tendencies; see Arkins, *Builders*, 159–60. Added to this, Asia in Yeats's late career came to mean the far east of India and China, which fascinated him as "our common mother" (*E&I*, 432), and was no longer restricted to the Hellenist perspective that Asia referred to the Persian Empire.
71. Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 236.
72. Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 189 notes the similarity of Yeats's and Pater's dichotomy: "both Pater and Yeats saw [...] the genius of Greek and Renaissance art [as] the centrifugal pulling against the centripetal."
73. In spite of his occasional criticism of Byzantine art, Yeats still eulogizes the Byzantium of Justinian in *AVB*, 279–80, because, as I shall demonstrate, he follows Josef Strzygowski's distinction between the Greek and the eastern trends in Byzantine art. For the influence of Strzygowski, see Arkins, *Builders*, 182–83.
74. Leda is the object of many references in Yeats's work and she is mentioned in *A Vision* at the beginning of "her" cycle, "2000 B. C. to A. D. 1," *AVB* 267–68. Mary is rarely named although her existence is implied in the cycle beginning at 1 AD; *AVB* 273. She is mostly referred to as "His Mother," *AVB*, 285, or as the Mother of God in the poem of that name, *VP*, 499, or the Virgin in the play *The Resurrection*, *VPI*, 903—but only in parallel with the other virgins, Athena and Astraea. Her name "Mary" appears mostly in Yeats's early work (before *A Vision*), such as in the poem "The Unappeasable Host," *VP*, 147, because then she is primarily the Virgin Mary of the Catholic Irish.
75. Pater, "Michelangelo," in *The Renaissance*, 49.
76. Pater, "Leonardo da Vinci," in *The Renaissance*, 80.
77. In this summary, the elaborately curly hair of the *korai* might be set in parallel to the abundance of women's hair in pre-Raphaelite portraits and Yeats's early poems.
78. Loizeaux refers to Edward Engelberg's argument that Yeats's desire for movement could be traced back to Pater's critical essays on Greek art; Loizeaux, *The Vast Design; Yeats*, 70. For the link between rhythm and Greek sculpture, see 156–57.
79. Pater compares the Asiatic *poikilia* of early Greek art to the "exquisite art of Japan:" "Carrying a delicacy like that of nature itself [...]—leaf and flower, fish and bird, reed and water—and failing only when it touches the sacred human form, that art of Japan is not unlike the earliest stages of Greek art as might at first sight be supposed;" Pater, "The Heroic Age," 130.
80. The quotation comes from Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby. (London: J. M. Dent, 1956), 311.
81. We may recall that Michelangelo for Pater was "a master of live stone;" Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater*, 36.
82. Loizeaux, *Yeats*, 178.

83. The text was written to be read for an undergraduate essay club at Oxford in 1864, and never intended for publication; nevertheless Shadwell added it to *The Renaissance*; see Pater, *The Renaissance*, 159.
84. Pater, "Diaphaneitè," in *The Renaissance*, 154.
85. Pater, "Diaphaneitè," 158.
86. Pater, "Diaphaneitè," 158.
87. Pater, "Winckelmann," 132.
88. Pater, "Diaphaneitè," 155.
89. Pater, "Diaphaneitè," 158.
90. Pater, "Diaphaneitè," 156.
91. Pater, "Diaphaneitè," 157.
92. Pater, "Diaphaneitè," 158.
93. Yeats derides rhetoricians and sentimentalists in "Ego Dominus Tuus," *VP*, 367, rejects statesmen and journalists in "The Old Stone Cross" *VP*, 598, and scoffs at revolution in "The Great Day," *VP*, 590. Indeed, in Yeats's philosophy, pity and humanitarian concerns are denounced as primary. Throughout Yeats's work Maud Gonne is decried as "pity-crazed" in "The Circus Animals' Desertion," and compared to Ezra Pound in the "Prologue" to *AVB* 5–6, in which they are both dismissed as would-be "reformers."
94. There are of course differences: for instance, Pater, unlike Yeats, admits the saint and the speculative thinker as well as the artist among the putative "happy few" (*AVB* 155), but in his choice of examples, he obviously favors the artist since Luther and Spinoza have to yield precedence to Raphael (*AVB* 157). Conversely, Lady Gregory, whom I compared to Beatrice, is not admitted among the better circle of antithetical personalities in *A Vision* and her phase on the wheel is a primary one, phase twenty-four; see *AVB*, 169.
95. Norman Jeffares and A.S. Knowland point out that Aoife in *On Baile's Strand* bears a strong resemblance to many of Yeats's descriptions of Maud Gonne: "that high laughing turbulent head of hers;" Jeffares and Knowland, *A Commentary on the Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 103. Indeed, in *Autobiographies*, we read: "she (Maud Gonne) walks with her laughing head thrown back" (*Au*, 368), and, in "Beautiful Lofty Things," she has "an arrogant head"; *VP*, 578. This is the traditional deportment of Maenads, as Yeats's friend, the Hellenist E. R. Dodds; see Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 273: "We see this back-flung head and upturned throat in ancient works of art."
96. Pater, "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone I," in *Greek Studies*, 62. Pater is here discoursing upon Giotto and his symbolical representations of virtues and vices.
97. Pater, "Leonardo da Vinci," 80. See page two of this essay for the quotation from "The Only Jealousy of Emer."
98. Jefferys, "Mona Lisa," 20–21.
99. Herodotus, *l'Enquête*, Book VI (117), Book VIII (84), edited and translated by Andrée Barget (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 157, 335.
100. Cuchulain is presented as an avatar of Apollo in an early draft of the poem; see Arkins, *Builders*, 168.