as I shall show in discussing *Marius the Epicurean*—and aware also that the projection of an overarching history is its necessary corollary. Throughout his work, Pater employs a transformed, secularized version of Bunyan's "House Beautiful" as an image of the transcendent place where disparate moments of individual and cultural time are gathered together and restored. Of course, this end point, the result of Pater's aesthetic dialectic, is Hegelian and sublationary—as is so much of Pater, including all the formal techniques explored in this brief section: his dialectical transvaluation of metaphor, the subsumption of distinct moments in their "passage," the notion of memory as the overarching re-collection of successive moments of self-division.

Pater's attempt to reread the figurative "distance" of self-consciousness as a difference between present and past should remind us that in the nineteenth century the notion of scientific objectivity was often conceived as historical distance. It is within the historical realm that the already-made thing, the work of art, becomes the exemplary instance of Pater's aesthetic solution. As the quintessential relic from the past, the work of art is effective because it is definitively and already "different" from the self in the present. Before turning to the historical dimension of Pater's method, however, I want to conclude the discussion of his aestheticism by asking how these strategies of self-consciousness are registered on the level of his style.

4 · Answerable Style

How does Pater's aestheticism present itself as an ironic, synthetic, and revisionary discourse? If his aestheticism was meant as a response to modern thought, how might the "style" of the prose (that is, its

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Pantheon, 1972], p. 12: "Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject—in the form of historical consciousness—will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode. Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are the two sides of the same system of thought." Derrida makes a similar argument toward the end of his "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 291: "It could be shown that the concept of *épistémé* has always called forth that of *historia*, if history is always the unity of a becoming, as the tradition of truth or the development of science or knowledge oriented toward the appropriation of truth in presence and self-presence, toward knowledge in consciousness-of-self."
particular rhetorical strategies) be seen as an “answerable style”? Several features of the Paterian text display the formal strategies of self-consciousness—the rhythms of “impression” and “disengagement,” mobility and fixation, experience and retrospection—that we have just been examining. In fact, Pater ends his representation of “modern thought,” and turns to begin his own conclusions, with the wistful image of the self as text:

It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off—that continual vanishing away, that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves. (R, 236)

Still a part of Pater’s representation of “modern thought,” the “passage” here refers to the stream of impressions passing uncontrolled through the mind and to the self dying and passing away, but the image of “that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves” hints too at the correlative, creative power which, as we have seen, is the key to Pater’s theory of aestheticism. The problematized notion of a stable, unified self will be replaced not by dissolution but by a rhythm of dispersal and gathering, and Pater’s analogy between self and text here suggests his powerful redefinition of the “passage” as a model of that rhythm, represented in the passages of language itself.

When, at the end of paragraph two, we read that “analysis leaves off,” those words remind us of Pater’s rhetorical strategy: not “Walter Pater” in propria persona, but the hypostatized, just-barely-personified figure of “analysis” had been conducting that train of thought. Pater “disengages” after having “identified” himself with “the tendency of modern thought,” and then, at the beginning of paragraph three, he turns toward his theory of aestheticism in an unusual way. He quotes, in German, a passage from Novalis, and then loosely translates it:

Philosophiren, says Novalis, ist dephlegmatisiren vivificiren. The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, toward the human spirit is to rouse, to startle it into sharp and eager observation. Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive for us,—for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. (R, 236)
By the end of this passage we are securely within the representation of Pater’s own discourse, but it is worth remarking just how we got there. Even before the explicit contextualizing tag (“says Novalis”), the italicized opacity of the word Philosophiren establishes a new position. It is recognizable, cognate in English, but still defamiliarized, projected into another voice, language, and national culture—in fact, a language and culture that is particularly associated with modern philosophy. As Pater translates the motto from Novalis into English, he also subtly interprets it, translating it closer to “himself,” appropriating it to his own particular rhetorical context even as he moves closer and closer toward the representation of his own voice.

The quoted words of Novalis operate as a hinge, a pivot-point around which the essay turns in a new direction. The implicit sense of this turn around Novalis would go something like this: “But we should not use philosophy to analyze, annihilate, and ‘unweave’ the self. On the contrary, as Novalis says, philosophy has a function or ‘service,’ to rouse the human spirit, to startling and bring it to life.” But this is not exactly what “Novalis says.” Pater has generalized and extended his words quite a bit, as well as taken them out of context. “To rouse” is a good translation of dephlegmatisiren, as if philosophy could stir the phlegmatic spirit into mobility, energy, a livelier mood. But Philosophiren ist dephlegmatisiren vivificiren might be more literally rendered as “To philosophize is to unclog, to enliven.” Pater seems to associate the clogged or phlegmatic spirit with philosophical abstraction, and I hear in his use of Novalis a prophetic hint of the “quickened, multiplied consciousness” that is the end of this essay on aesthetic method. Indeed, a phlegmatic, “clogged” homogeneity is soon to be broken apart and reformed in the mobile discourse of aestheticism. Certainly in the simplest thematic sense, Pater “quickens” and enlivens the essay by turning it away from modern forms of death and moving it in a new direction.

As it turns in a new direction, the essay also takes a retrospective stance toward what has gone before. Just as “analysis leaves off” and the answering discourse of aestheticism begins, the quotation from Novalis serves as a fixed point from which the essay looks both before and after. Retrospectively understood, this rhetorical turn involves the revision of a discipline of thought: what we thought was philosophy turns out not to be “true” philosophy after all. Highlighted in

1. Inman shows that Pater takes both the quote from Novalis and the later quote from Hugo out of context (“The Intellectual Context of Walter Pater’s ‘Conclusion,’ ” pp. 21, 25–26; see also Inman, Walter Pater’s Reading, pp. 184–86).
German for a moment at the verge of the new paragraph, and framed by the two words in English ("says Novalis"), the word *Philosophiren* conjures an abstract, totalized, and semipersonified "Philosophy." The rhetorical turn taken here uses that generalized force not to repudiate but to redefine "Philosophy," as Pater disowns what had been called "analysis" and identifies with another, specifically aesthetic characterization. The new position taken toward philosophy has been "translated" through Novalis. His words have served somehow as an intermediate point between "modern thought" and Pater's own.

Pater now adopts a functional definition of philosophy, deciding how it should "serve" the human spirit, not what "truths" it might feel itself to "possess." Philosophy should yield "instruments of criticism" or "points of view":

> What we have to do is to be forever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of Comte, or of Hegel, or of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. (R, 237)

Here the resistance to Comte or Hegel recapitulates in small the larger movement of the "Conclusion" as it turns away from extremes both of positivism and subjectivism. But it is significant that Pater resists resting in any "facile orthodoxy" even "of our own," for the goal of primary importance is to keep the spirit moving. No view, no opinion, no idea should be conceived as a thing to "have" or "hold" for long. General theories can serve as nets to catch and gather what otherwise might slip through our grasp as it passes, but the "end" of their use is their yield in terms of concrete, particular experience, not their content in and of itself. As instruments specifically of "criticism" (from the Greek "to separate"), theories or ideas will serve as tools to differentiate between one thing and another:

> In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for . . . it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike. (R, 236–37)

2. Pater's biting challenge to "philosophy" for thinking it could "possess" truth occurs in the excised paragraph that originally introduced the "Conclusion" (Hill's notes, p. 272). See above, Part One, sec. 3, n. 3, for the passage.
A philosophical theory, then, may be used as an instrumental principle of difference or, in the case of Novalis’s little motto about philosophy, as a performative aid to disengagement, like a lever that opens up a “critical” distance and literally turns the essay around.

To understand more about the way Pater uses bits of philosophy as “instruments of criticism,” I want to emphasize, in addition to the argumentative value of their content, the material, textual effect of quoted words from another writer and another language. The words perform a disengagement as well as signifying one; they mark a dividing-place, a transition as a translation across to a new position, in this case outside or beyond the claustrophobic discourse of modern thought. They visibly establish a new position and also a new kind of position, for the very notion of a “position” has been redefined in aestheticism as a stance rather than a stand. The sense of held beliefs has yielded to the sense of places strategically taken in order to get a critical distance or perspective. Likewise, the notion of “views” as opinions or ideas has yielded to a perspectival sense of viewpoints, or points of vantage.

This shift to regard theories or ideas functionally or instrumentally reflects again the crisis I mentioned in the notion of “content,” which is no longer something “held” in the mind but something that passes through it. Pater’s early essays are full of petulant, witty endorsements of what one might call an anti-idealist theory of ideas. This difficult and often contradictory reworking of the notion of content is perhaps the most refined—or even rarefied—instance of the aesthetic turn away from the utilitarian, practical evaluation of experience. (And we would want to note here the revisionary imitation of the utilitarian, as a part of that turn away: since, according to the aesthetic point of view, nothing should be valued because of its practical use, this functional approach to ideas appears as a subtle revision of the notion of utility itself.) The polemical rallying cry to “art for art’s sake” highlights this aesthetic goal of divesting the aesthetic of its duties toward society, religion, or practical utility. And though it may be

3. “Plato, as we remember him, a true humanist, holds his theories lightly, glances with a somewhat blithe and naive inconsequence from one view to another, not anticipating the burden of importance ‘views’ will one day have for men” (A, 69–70). “There is a violence, an impossibility about men who have ideas, which makes one suspect they could never be the type of any widespread life” (MS, 254).


5. On this signal phrase, see L. M. Findlay, “The Introduction of the Phrase ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ into English,” Notes and Queries, n.s. 20 (July 1973), 248; and Hill’s
difficult, it is not impossible to imagine what it would mean for art also “to get rid of its responsibilities to its subject,” to become a matter of pure form (R, 138). When Pater writes in his essay on Giorgione that “all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music,” one thing he has in mind is this perfect assimilation of content into form (R, 135).

But musical form—or the “play” of light or water, analogous examples also from “The School of Giorgione”—is crucially defined not as objective structure or even rudimentary reference, but as sheer movement or passage in time. In terms of experience, or “life in the spirit of art,” the adjustment of form to content is somewhat more difficult. Here art itself is instrumental in lending “the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake.” Here again, content—and similarly, belief—is refused in favor of aesthetic “passage”; the “end” of experience is further experience, not a certain content that can be internalized as a possession. In attempting to find a place for ideas in aestheticism, Pater shifts them away from being valued as content and toward being valued as part of temporal form. No conclusions should be conclusive; no conclusions should be held for long, not even “our own.”

It is evident that Pater’s recharacterization of philosophy at the beginning of paragraph three is related to the transvaluation of scientific objectivity we have already observed in Pater’s “Preface.” In both cases, Pater translates a whole modern discourse into a new context, an ironic, self-differentiated whole that then seems “higher” or “larger” by virtue of the inclusion and revision of subordinated parts. With a technique like the “anti-metaphysical metaphysic” that he later writes into Marius’s character, Pater turns both philosophy and science against themselves, not to obliterate them but to subsume them within another discourse, the ironic, synthetic, and self-consciously revisionary discourse of aestheticism.6

To call attention to Pater’s frequent practice of characterizing disciplines of thought as generalized wholes, I have consistently been using the word “discourse” to refer to Pater’s representations of modern science and philosophy. This is a representational technique and should be appreciated as such.7 Several important studies show that

notes, pp. 457–58. Pater was variously influenced in the doctrine of “art for art’s sake” by Gautier and Swinburne (above all), Baudelaire, Goethe, and Hegel.
6. ME I, 142.
7. One early critic to have recognized this was Helen Hawthorne Young, in The Writings of Walter Pater: A Reflection of British Philosophical Opinion from 1860 to 1890 (Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Press, 1933), p. 45.
the discourses of science and philosophy from the beginning of the "Conclusion" are both carefully constructed composites. But Pater himself tacitly insists on the constructed nature of both, as we have seen. "Let us begin . . . fix upon it . . . or if we begin"—these rhetorical directions announce the procedures of scientific demonstration and at the same time underscore the hypothetical nature of the argument. The doubled, relativist argument of "modern thought" is of course not "given" but made, itself an aesthetic reconstruction. In hypostatizing, totalizing, composing, and reifying each disciplinary discourse to serve a function within an overarching textual strategy, Pater also historicizes them; by summing them up and subsuming them within the discourse of aestheticism, he also figuratively casts them into the past. His practice of "aesthetic criticism" first identifies with, then differentiates itself from these disciplinary discourses to constitute a synthetic discourse made up of mobile parts. And here, in writing of his "discourse" of aestheticism, I mean again to use the word carefully, for even though the theory of aestheticism is represented as his "own," it is still ostentatiously a "made" thing, a new discourse represented as such.

But the variety of textual strategies I have been examining in this section persistently reminds us not only that Pater's aestheticism is a "made" thing, but also that its novelty is in part a function of its composite form. Aestheticism is a new discourse made up of not-so-new parts, but its construction by means of the ironic sublation of other modern "discourses" is only one of a number of related strategies. The epigraph from Plato represents another, and the direct quotation from Novalis yet another. Pater's critical voice emerges in the texture of these other voices. I am not arguing here that Pater's voice is merely a pastiche of other voices; certainly to the extent that I do imply it, I mean to transvalue the notion of "pastiche" so that it may be seen as a positive strategy with its own comprehensive rationale. To avoid confusion, however, I generally use the word "composite" to refer to this set of related techniques. But Pater's critical voice is not only a composite of others. In Pater, intertextuality is highlighted rather than absorbed, and it takes its place as part of his systematic
preoccupation with the aesthetics of reception and transmission. I shall say more about this in relation to *Marius the Epicurean*. For now, it is important to see Pater's intertextual strategies always as part of a dynamic, in which a representation of his "own" voice periodically gives way to form the effaced but generative background within and against which these other voices rise and fall.

Pater frequently uses overt quotations from individual, historically identifiable sources to turn his essay away from an abstract passage of argument. Even when he does not name his source—as later in the "Conclusion" the epigrammatic idea from Hugo that "philosophy is the microscope of thought" is offered in quotation marks but without attribution—the effect of the quotation marks remains to separate one represented voice from the overarching passage. By fixing an idea momentarily in the register of a personal voice, he enacts a return from discursive generalization to a more concrete form of argumentation. For a moment, then, Pater's discourse relinquishes itself to the words of another, and when he resumes in his own voice, those other words appear transitional. Through them his essay has been translated into a new position. As in Montaigne, the quotation acts both as a fixed point around which to turn and as a hypothesis in an experimental genre like the "essay," in which judgment may be "suspended" rather than "concluded."11 And like Montaigne, Pater gestures in these quoted passages toward a notion of received authority which is primarily useful in generating further turns of his own reflective experience. Unlike Montaigne, however, he places the greater emphasis on the process of reception itself; his relation to the authority of the past is tellingly different, though the formal technique is much the same.

The rhetoric of Pater's essay does not remain disengaged long enough for it to be called "factual" or "historical" in style, and yet it is encrusted with data, report, and quotation. Neither does it remain in the "subjective" register long enough to be accurately called a "personal" style, and the use of the first-person "I" is rare indeed. Other essayists whose voices seem particularly "personal" or "subjective" own (or own up to) the personal "I,"12 whereas Pater conveys the sense of personality instead through these fluctuations of identifica-


12. I am thinking of Montaigne and Lamb, among the critical essayists Pater mentions often. Monsman aptly regards Marius as an "Elian figure" who both reveals and conceals the author, but the case is more difficult in the essays that present no fictional persona. See Gerald Monsman, "On Reading Pater," *Prose Studies* 4 (May 1981), 2.
tion and disengagement. His prose feels haunted, as if the spirits of the dead come out when no one else is home. The sense of a person behind the scenes is often conveyed primarily by the sense of aesthetic choices constantly being made about what the text will take in, represent, and then turn away from. In other words, the sense of a person behind the scenes of his prose is generated in large part as a textual effect.

Like the discourse of aestheticism which asserts itself as "new" by passionately identifying with and then standing back at a critical distance from a collection of relatively old parts, Pater's "voice" as a representation of personal identity is also the result of a sublationary construction. It is useful to see that "strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves" as one of Pater's recreative textual effects. As another facet of his answerable style (answering "modern thought" in its own terms), he surrenders to the dissolution of "unweaving" before restoring the structure of compositional "weaving." Here—in the self-effacement of his "own" voice, in the textual dissolution he admits before reasserting structure—he is at his most radical and modern. His gestures of "recontainment" stabilize the prose momentarily, taking a retrospective position toward what has gone before and asserting the sense of an overarching personal identity, but strategies of stability always yield again to mobility, displacement, and the effect of temporality.

In another sense, however, Pater's strategies of voice are quintessentially romantic and lyrical. Like Shelley's passion of inspired instrumentality in the service of a higher power ("not I but the wind that blows through me!") or Wordsworth's genial sense of an internal, "correspondent breeze," Pater opens his prose to the forces of the other. But Pater makes himself the Aeolian lyre not of the "naked and sleeping beauty" of transcendent forms, nor of the conjugal reciprocity between the mind and nature, but of the historical past of his own culture. In fact, his strategy of quotation should be seen in part as a lyric dynamic of apostrophe and prosopopoiea, calling upon and taking on the voice of the other, as a way of reflexively generating the power of poetically original voice for one's own work.¹³

In this sense, Pater's pivotal use of Novalis amounts to a subdued lyric cry: "O Novalis, lend me your power for a moment, that I might

renew philosophy!" And it may be seen in part as a fundamentally
dramatic strategy, like the negative capability of Keats's Shakespeare.
Perhaps Pater's prose technique can best be specified as late romantic
and post-Victorian by placing it between Browning's dramatic mono­
logues and Wilde's critical dialogues: the one represents the lyric "I"
completely inhabited by the voice of a fictive persona, usually from
another age and culture; the other represents the "I" divided among
different "views" or opinions, each of which is represented by a differ­
ent personal voice and all of which are reunified only on the level of
the work as a whole. Pater's style and strategies of voice arise from
his determination to recover a sense of unity that can still be expressed
in personal form. And in order to do this, he makes himself a medium
to the voices of the dead, a lyre to the winds of change. Pater's prose
stages the achievement of modern voice as the medium of historical
re-collection.

5 · Historicism

The scandal provoked by Pater's manifesto of aestheticism has been
well rehearsed. His suppression of the offending "Conclusion" in the
second edition, and his eventual reinstatement of it in the third after
he had "dealt more fully in Marius the Epicurean with the thoughts
suggested by it," seem to testify to Pater's deep concern at the charges
against his work. As we shall see, the strategy he develops in Marius
to "deal more fully" with the issues raised by the "Conclusion" is one
of painstaking historical inclusiveness. Yet one of the best of the post-
"Conclusion" anecdotes suggests that Pater had already achieved that
careful sense of self-possession through summing up the entire history
of his culture in an individualized yet representative critical voice.
That is the story of his scrupulously peevish remark to Edmund Gosse:
"I wish they wouldn't call me 'a hedonist'; it produces such a bad
effect on the minds of people who don't know Greek."2

But when Studies in the History of the Renaissance was published
in 1873, it was attacked on grounds other than the supposed hedonism

1. Excellent discussions may be found in Hill's notes, pp. 443–51; in the introduc­
and in Michael Levey, The Case of Walter Pater [Plymouth: Thames and Hudson, 1978],
pp. 141–44.