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An Anatomy of Melancholy, or The Strange Beauty in Walter Pater's *The Child in the House*

Abstract. The object of this paper is to offer a new understanding of Walter Pater's assessment of beauty as a process that contains within itself the pangs of melancholy; first, since Pater himself suggests in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* that beauty is to be investigated in its singular, relative appearance, I propose to examine his refusal of dogmatism to grasp the multifariousness of experience; second, I will turn to Pater's short story to provide an example of a perceiving subject whose appraisal of beauty is marred by a sense of melancholy. Employing Bourdieusian terminology, I will then argue that by positioning the appraisal of beauty as a Baudelarian practice that requires "a difficult initiation," Pater may also be aiming at legitimizing the role as a British aesthete as a nomothete of the autonomy of art. Lastly, I will consider some notions of Bachelard's *Poetics of Reverie*, as to explore the technique of imaginative recollection employed by Pater in *The Child in the House* is a crucial component in his effort to substantiate the far-reaching breadth of aesthetic perception as an experience that claims completeness in itself.

Keywords: beauty, aesthetic, perception, melancholy, autonomy of art, imaginative recollection

1. Introduction

Harold Bloom was quite right in affirming that the reader approaching Walter Pater for the first time can find most of his poetical creeds displayed in the short story entitled *The Child in the House*. First published in August 1878, it is the imaginary portrait of Florian, a typically Paterian protagonist, a sensitive young man, and it investigates the influence of his childhood experience upon the "process of brain-building," thus dramatizing the emergence of an aesthetic sensibility. Such a process begs for critical attention; Paterian aestheticism ought not to be prone to

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simplifications, so to avoid any crude, reductionist analysis, it is paramount that we discern the numerous implications that arise from his texts. With this objective in mind, I intend not merely to delineate the steps that lead Florian towards his aesthetic stance but also to qualify it, focusing on the Baudelarian ‘strange nature’ of beauty as it emerges from the story and positioning its oneiric nature in a comparative view with Bachelard’s philosophy of reverie. In order to explore the peculiar quality of assessing beauty as it arises in *The Child in The House*, it is first paramount to ponder on Pater’s thought of the relative, and therefore individualized, rendition of personal impression. Then, the short story will be analyzed in the context of the works of Charles Baudelaire, which will be interpreted in light of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of the ‘field.’ The purpose of my proceeding is to contend that the melancholic quality of beauty in Pater ought to be interpreted as his effort to validate aesthetic sensibility as a complex epistemological mechanism aiming to perceive experience in its multilayered features.

2. *The Relative Quality*

No analysis of Pater’s thought can proceed without an understanding of his championing the cause of the relative spirit, which he exalts for its capacity to “grasp the dynamism and the associative multiplicity of experience” (Iser 16). As experience is the only ground upon which any claim to knowledge can be proclaimed, Pater rejects all dogmatisms that posit the existence of any such thing as fixed and rigid. Yet his call for skepticism—intended, as Wolfgang Iser specifies, “in the old classical sense of ‘spying out, investigating, searching, examining’” (16)—is not an invitation to renounce the hopeful venture for epistemological reality; instead, it is a warning not to neglect the many forces at play around us,

It is the truth of these relations that experience gives us, not the truth of internal outlines ascertained once for all, but a world of fine gradations and subtly linked conditions, shifting intricately as we ourselves change—and bids us, by a constant clearing of the organs of observation and perfecting of analysis, to make what we can of these. To the intellect, the critical spirit, just these subtleties of effect are more precious than anything else. What is lost in precision of form is gained in intricacy of expression. It is no vague scholastic abstraction that will satisfy the speculative instinct in our modern minds. Who would change the colour or curve of a rose-leaf for ... that colourless, formless, intangible being—Plato put so high? For the true illustrations of the speculative temper is not the Hindoo mystic, lost to sense, understanding, individuality, but one such as Goethe, to whom every moment of life brought its contribution of experimental, individual knowledge; by whom no touch of the world of form, colour, and passion was disregarded. (Pater, *Appreciations* 68)

It is worth delineating a few concepts that arise from these words. Firstly, knowledge is impression individualized; secondly, it is susceptible to influences around us in as much as the changing patterns of associations alter our perception; lastly, no knowledge can be fixed since the observer

is always changing. It then follows that the only coherent way to perceive man's mind is through the Lockean image of the *tabula rasa*². The task of man is that of allowing for more experience to reach him so that he can ultimately learn to appreciate the choicer forms – “points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us” (Pater, *The Renaissance* 189). Amidst the flux of things there are some things which ought to be immortalised, because it is out of the appreciation of them that we might arrest for a moment the burdensome awareness of our own finiteness. Here is Pater at his most compelling:

Well! We are all condamnés, as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve ... we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among “the children of this world”; in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. (189)

Art and song, the ultimate forms of beauty, are then inevitably linked with time and gain their special status as distillations of a unique set of circumstances offered by experience. Thus, beauty is not to be categorized in broad terms; rather, it must be recognized and appraised in its own peculiar appearance—“Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaningful and useless in proportion to its abstractness. To define beauty, not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible, to find, not its universal formula, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of aesthetics” (xix).

Beauty ceases to be representative of anything other than itself; if, for Hegel, beauty was the embodiment of the idea sublimating physical reality, and for Ruskin, it served to vivify God's qualities in the world, for Pater beauty exists “only as a particular form of appearance” (Iser 63). Out of the relative stems the individual, for it is in the rendition of personal impression that beauty arises,

2 In particular I am referring to “Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it, with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from *experience*: in that, all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either about *external sensible objects*; or about the *internal operations of our minds*, perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that, which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring” (Locke 109).

The transcript of his sense of fact rather than the fact, as being preferable, pleasanter, more beautiful to the writer himself. In literature, as in every other product of human skill ... wherever this sense asserts itself, wherever the producer so modifies his work as, over and above its primary use or intention, to make it pleasing (to himself, of course, in the first instance), there 'fine as opposed to merely serviceable art, exists. Literary art, that is, like all art which is any way imitative or reproductive of fact—form, or colour, or incident—is the representation of such a fact as connected with a soul, of a specific personality, in its preferences, its volition and power. (Pater, *Appreciations* 10)

The artist's responsibility is not dissimilar to that of the critic; both have to infuse the raw, factual material of experience with their own peculiar sense of it, to work on it alchemically in order to alter it and color it with their perception.

If beauty is the result of the relative, therefore individual, imprinting of the artist's self onto the multifarious reality that surrounds them, it follows that a peculiar trait ascribable to that artist must be recognizable. Pater found that particular feature in style. Ian Fletcher affirms that Pater construed style "as a mode of perception, a total responsive gesture of the whole personality" (39). Aptly enough, Pater informs us that the painstaking work of the artist in search of the right word—*le mot juste*—must be carried out "with his peculiar sense of the world ever in view, in search of an instrument for the adequate expression of that", so that he can beget "a vocabulary faithful to the coloring of his own spirit, and in the strictest sense original" (*Appreciations* 15). The interplay between inward perception and outward perceptibility is given concrete form by the artist's expression, so that style becomes for Pater an appropriate site to track individuality. Hence by attentively selecting the minutest part according to his own imaginative sense of it, the artist does not properly create reality as much as he reshapes it according to his own taste. Wolfgang Iser argues that Pater tried to find the legitimation of a similar idea of beauty in history, more specifically in the transmutation of narrative concepts of "classicism" and "romanticism" into historical ones, out of which interplay comes art—classicism embodies a manner of writing striving toward indefinable perfection, whereas romanticism represents the avant-garde movement that looks forward to a future which will, in turn, render it classical in form. The main step of the process is that of self-curtailment—"there are the born romanticists, who start with an original, untried matter, still in fusion; who conceive this vividly, and hold by it as the essence of their work; who, by the very vividness and heat of their conception, purge away, sooner or later, all that is not organically appropriate to it, till the whole effect adjusts itself in clear, orderly, proportionate form; which form, after a very little time, becomes classical in its turn" (257–258).

The crucial word here is 'original.' In fact, as Pater's scepticism prevents any kind of a priori definition of beauty, its appearance in a world of phenomenality is signalled by a deviation from its surroundings, thus betraying the lingering presence of the grotesque—"With a passionate care for beauty, the romantic spirit refuses to have it, unless the condition of strangeness be first

fulfilled. Its desire for a beauty born of unlikely elements, by a profound alchemy, by a difficult initiation, by the charm which wrings it even out of terrible things; and a trace of distortion, of the grotesque, may perhaps linger, as an additional element of expression, about its ultimate grace” (247–248).

One feels compelled to wonder what sort of pleasure the appraisal of such beauty could convey. As often happens with Pater, some of the issues emerging from his critical writings are addressed, however tentatively, in his fiction.

3. *The Short Story*

Enter now *The Child in the House*, succinctly deemed by Harold Bloom as “the largest clue to his [Pater’s] work, criticism and imaginary portraits alike” (15). The story in itself is pretty straightforward, as the reader is presented with the reminiscence of Florian Deleal’s early years spent in his childhood home. As a “reward” for assisting an old man in the street, he chances to hear the name of the place where he grew up, and so he begins a recollection of his childhood home. At first recollected in a dream, which presents the object of memory to mind “raised a little above itself, and above ordinary retrospect,” his life in his old red-brick house appears to have been primarily an education in aesthetic sentiment; the young boy sat daily at the window absorbing the scent of the golden-rod outside (Pater, *Miscellaneous* 172).

Nevertheless, above the house, positioned near a great city, would often arrive some banks of rolling cloud and smoke, which Florian did not actually hate—a child’s sense of beauty, the narrator tells us, is not dependent on any fineness surrounding them, because earlier in life “we see inwardly” (175). This is a cardinal concept for Pater: grasping beauty implies a transformation of the perceived object by the inward vision, capable of preserving it long after its appearance to the senses—“How insignificant, at the moment, seem the influences of the sensible things which are tossed and fall and lie about us, so, or so, in the environment of early childhood. How indelibly, as we afterwards discover, they affect us” (177). The tranquility of his old home has led him to a preference for the “comeliness and dignity, an urbanity literally, in modes of life, which he connected with the pale people of towns, and which made him susceptible to a kind of exquisite satisfaction in the trimness and well-considered grace of certain things and persons he afterwards met with” (176–177). Therefore, a sort of dialectic seems to be at play, where the outward stimuli impact heavily on the inward sensations which in turn determine the privileging of choicer forms in the outside world. Man’s mind being a white paper upon which experience must inscribe its drawings, its own identity is indelibly affected by it to the point of dependence. At this point, perhaps quite surprisingly, one is asked to ponder on the implications that derive from Florian’s education. While it could be expected that the predilection for outward forms may merely result in a perennial longing for innocuous prettiness, it turns out that the submission to the sensuousness without comes at its cost, since Florian sees enhanced, by his perceptibility, the awareness that in the “visible, tangible, audible loveliness of things” lies “a very real and somewhat tyrannous element,” first and foremost caused by the recognition of living beings

in sorrow, and ultimately augmented by the dreadful finiteness of all things (181). One is then called back to the “profound alchemy” and “difficult initiation” Pater mentioned in the “Post-script” of *Appreciations*, which are enacted here in *The Child in the House*. What emerges is that the crucial practice of ‘grasping beauty’ ought to be conceived as the sustained effort to cope with the intrinsic melancholy that is generated by a refining of the perceptive powers.

4. Assessing difficult beauty: Pater, Swinburne, Baudelaire

“The bitterness of pleasure” is perfectly captured by Catherine Maxwell in her essay *Swinburne, Pater, and the Cult of Strange Beauty*, where she affirms that “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” (10).

While it is perfectly true that a fascination with “curious beauty” will prove widely influential for the successive generations of decadents, it is also correct to remark (as Maxwell readily does) that the mutual suggestiveness active between Pater and Swinburne is largely dependent on Charles Baudelaire’s influence on both. Indeed, the first English review of Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal* appears in *The Spectator* in 1862 and is written by Swinburne himself, and it is almost certain that Pater must have got his hands on it³. Maxwell also highlights the influence of Swinburne’s *Ave atque Vale* on Pater’s *Poems by William Morris* and persuasively connects the “gardener of strange flowers” as it appears in the former to the “strange flowers” in the latter.

Not only do I accept Maxwell’s suggestion to connect Swinburne and Pater’s fascination with strange beauty to Baudelaire, but I would also propose to expand it to a Bourdieusian extent to argue that their usage of the French poet is also to be understood as a means to fashion their trajectory in the British literary field⁴. If, as Patricia Clements argues, “the two ... are Baudelaire’s earliest English appreciators, and their two quite different styles of appreciation were equally consequential,” it is also logical to presume that in their maneuvers lies, however latently, the intention to position themselves in continuity with (part of) the poetical

3 To learn more on the interplay between Pater’s and Swinburne’s essays in the 1860s, see Morgan, Thaïs E. “Reimagining Masculinity in Victorian Criticism: Swinburne and Pater.” *Victorian Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1993, pp. 315–32.

4 Rodney Benson successfully sums up the concept of ‘field’ as such—“Drawing on and modifying Weber’s sociology of religion, Bourdieu sees society as differentiated into a number of semi-autonomous fields (e.g., fields of politics, economics, religion, cultural production, etc.) governed by their own ‘rules of the game’ and offering their own particular economy of exchange and reward, yet whose basic oppositions and general structures parallel each other” (464). I argue that to regard the British literary market of the later decades of the 19th century as a field struggling for autonomy could lead to a more nuanced understanding of the transnational dynamics between French and British ‘aesthetic’ texts. See Benson, Rodney. “Field Theory in Comparative Context: A New Paradigm for Media Studies.” *Theory and Society*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1999, pp. 463–98. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3108557>.

creeds of Baudelaire (29). In this reasoning, I am indebted to Carlo Martinez and his article ‘*Le più pure regole dell’Arte: Poe, Baudelaire e la genesi transnazionale del campo letterario*, where he convincingly demonstrates that Baudelaire’s discovery and translations of Poe are not only motivated by exclusively aesthetic reasons, but also by his desire to subvert the orthodoxies of the Parisian literary market. In fact, as Martinez argues, by introducing the American writer to the French public Baudelaire also aimed at appropriating some of his American colleague’s stances and strategic maneuvers. Sharing Martinez’s wish to emphasize the broader roster of literary agents at play in the literary field, I propose that Swinburne’s and Pater’s contrasting references to Baudelaire ought to be remarked on so as to reach a better understanding of their oeuvre. Let us consider this extract from Baudelaire’s *Mon cœur mis à nu*:

J’ai trouvé la définition du Beau, de mon Beau. — C’est quelque chose d’ardent et de triste, quelque chose d’un peu vague, laissant carrière à la conjecture. ... Une tête séduisante et belle, une tête de femme, veux-je dire, c’est une tête qui fait rêver à la fois, — mais d’une manière confuse, — de volupté et de tristesse ; qui comporte une idée de mélancolie, de lassitude, même de satiété, — soit une idée contraire, c’est-à-dire une ardeur, un désir de vivre, associés avec une amertume refluyente, comme venant de privation ou de désespérance. Le mystère, le regret sont aussi des caractères du Beau.⁵ (79)

And compare it with *The Child in the House*;

Also then, for the first time, he seemed to experience a passionateness in his relation to fair outward objects, an inexplicable excitement in their presence, which disturbed him, and from which he half longed to be free. A touch of regret or desire mingled all night with the remembered presence of the red flowers, and their perfume in the darkness about him; and the longing for some undivined, entire possession of them was the beginning of a revelation to him, growing ever clearer, with the coming of the gracious summer guise of fields and trees and persons in each succeeding year, of a certain, at times seemingly exclusive, predominance in his interests, of beautiful physical things, a kind of tyranny of the senses over him. (Pater, *Miscellaneous* 178)

The similarities between the two passages are luminously evident. I propose that any reference should serve to affirm the practice of grasping beauty as an autonomous pursuit—one which embraces the intricate balance of wonder and melancholy. In particular, the tyranny of the

5 “I have found the definition of Beauty, of my Beauty—It is something ardent and sad, something a bit vague, which allows for speculation ... A beautiful and seductive face, a woman’s face, I mean, is a face that spurs simultaneously— though in a confused manner — dreams of voluptuousness and sadness; which involves an idea of melancholy, of weariness, even of satiety,—either a contrary idea, that is to say an ardor, a desire to live, associated with an ebbing bitterness, as if coming from privation or despair. Mystery, regret are also characteristic of Beauty” (Baudelaire 79, my trans.).

senses may be viewed as a source of power by which one could less reluctantly abide, compared to the laws that govern society as such. As Bourdieu affirms,

Rather than a ready-made position which only has to be taken up, like those founded in the very logic of social functioning, through the social functions they fulfil or lay claim to, 'art for art's sake' is a position to be made, devoid of any equivalent in the field of power and which might not or wasn't necessarily supposed to exist. Even though it is inscribed in a potential state in the very space of positions already in existence, and even though certain of the Romantic poets had already foreshadowed the need for it, those who would take up that position cannot make it exist except by making the field in which a place could be found for it, that is, by revolutionizing an art world that excludes it, in fact and in law. They must therefore Invent, against established positions and their occupants. (76)

For this reason, it is arguable that Baudelaire's influence is not uniquely that of 'the gardener of strange flowers,' but also of the nomothete of the autonomy of art.

What Pater masterfully adds to an appraisal of beauty which at once exalts and subjugates is the formulation of an aesthetically-grounded empathy traceable in "a sympathetic link between himself and actual feeling, living objects ... fastening those who suffered in anywise to his affections by a kind of sensible attachments" (*Miscellaneous* 187). William E. Buckler's fine intuition that a link between aesthetic perception and empathy represented an enduring concern for Pater is wholly convincing—"The specific passage out of which *The Child in the House* grew occurs just two-thirds of the way through the essay originally entitled 'Romanticism' and reads, in briefest part, as follows: 'The habit of noting and distinguishing one's own most intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds'" (283). If one is persuaded that, as I have tried to suggest, the strange beauty as depicted in the short story functions as a means to substantiate the autonomy of perception through a complex, multifaceted characterisation of sensorial stimuli, it still remains necessary to explain how the effect is ultimately brought about through form.

5. *The Oneiric Quality of the Tale*

One of the finest features of *The Child in the House* is the veil of half-reality that permeates the text as a whole; what is even more remarkable is that the entrance into a similar realm is granted as a 'reward' for an act of kindness performed at the very beginning by Florian. As has already been stated, Florian chances to hear the name of the place where he grew up while helping an older man, and the sound of the name itself spurs him to embark, that night, on a dreamy recollection of his childhood abode. Immediately, the text delineates a connection between piteousness and aesthetic apprehension—Florian's dream serves him wonderfully because it did for him "the office of the finer sort of memory, bringing its object to mind with a great

clearness, yet, as sometimes happens in dreams, raised a little above itself, and above ordinary retrospect” (Pater, *Miscellaneous* 172).

The fact that this awarded élan of enhanced perception is enacted in an oneiric state is by and large associable with Bachelard’s famous statement in *The Poetics of Reverie* that “reverie is not a mind vacuum. It is rather the gift of an hour which knows the plenitude of the soul” (64). What ‘the gift of an hour’ brings Florian is a renewed encouragement to begin an old design of his, namely the noting of “some things in the story of his spirit” (64). At this juncture we must suppose that all further information in the text, such as “the staircase with carved balusters and shadowy angles,” or “the curtains, the couches, the paint on the walls with which the light and shadow played so delicately,” is recollected by him as “he fell to thinking of himself therein, and how his thoughts had grown up to him” (Pater, *Miscellaneous* 172–174). As readers, we are then gifted with the protagonist’s coloured remembrances of his time in the house, and it is important to keep in mind precisely this act of distancing between the time of narration and that of the action narrated. The great design of this short story is not just its portrayal of childhood experiences; rather, it purports to investigate the role of said instances in the development of the Paterian ‘imaginative sense of fact’.⁶ It is again fruitful to turn to Bachelard—“The recalled past is not simply a past of perception. Already, since one remembers, the past is designated in reverie as a value of image. Imagination colors from the very beginning the pictures it likes to review. To return to the archives of memory, one must go beyond facts to regain values.... Reveries are Impressionist paintings of our past” (qtd. in Kaplan 22). As Edward K. Kaplan argues, according to the French philosopher, “the imaginative coloration of a remembered value is especially creative because the union of memory and reverie restores the ideal aspect of these first impressions” (22). What Florian’s ideal first impressions amount to is the development in him of a distinctly Paterian characterisation of sensibility—“Sensibility—the desire of physical beauty—a strange biblical awe, which made any reference to the unseen act on him like solemn music” (Pater, *Miscellaneous* 195). No scholar of Pater could fail to perceive the ring of these words in the author’s corpus, but then it is also remarkable that they were composed in a work of fiction that, as Buckler maintains, reads “as self-verifying myth” (282). It is then reasonable to suppose that in such self-verifying myth the ultimate purpose is that of legitimising the all-compassing breadth of aesthetic apprehension, since, to put it like Bachelard,

thanks to the shadows, the intermediary region which separates man and the world is a full region, and a plenitude of light density. That intermediary zone softens the dialectic of being and non-being. Imagination does not know nonbeing. ... The man of reverie lives by his reverie in a world homogeneous with his being, with his half-being. He is always in the space of a volume. Truly occupying all the volume of his space, the man of reverie is everywhere in his world, in an inside

6 It should also be mentioned that this phrase is famously the title of Philipp Dodd’s collection of essays on Pater. See Dodd, Philip. *Walter Pater: An Imaginative Sense of Fact*. Frank Cass, 1981.

that has no outside. It is not for nothing that it is commonly said that the dreamer is plunged in his reverie. ... The world is no longer opposed to the world. In reverie, there is no more not-I. In reverie, the not no longer functions: all is welcome. (qtd. in Kaplan 23)

Pater's peculiar achievement here is to have assimilated sensorial perception to self-knowledge, to have offered his readers an arsenal of skeptical hyper-sensibility from which stems the question—"Was it some periodic moment in the expansion of soul within him, or mere trick of heat in the heavily-laden summer air?" (Pater, *Miscellaneous* 178).

6. Conclusion

Aiming to direct critical attention at the peculiar features of beauty as expressed in *The Child in the House*, it has been suggested that the Paterian notion of beauty as wrought out by "difficult initiation" and "profound alchemy" can be accounted for in a more complex and nuanced manner. Firstly, the importance to Pater's thought of relative and therefore individualised renditions of personal impressions has been recorded, with a particular focus on the addition of strangeness to beauty. Then, the short story is explored to note how the submissiveness to outward physical forms is joined by a more enhanced perception of their finiteness, with the inevitable addition of melancholy; it has later been argued that a similar conception of beauty may also have been influenced by the works of Charles Baudelaire and, making use of Bourdieusian terminology, I have contended that Pater's (like Swinburne's) references to Baudelaire may be understood as his desire to follow his trajectory as a representative of autonomous art. Some notions by Bachelard's *Poetics of Reverie* have also been brought to the fore to suggest that Walter Pater utilised the narrative technique of imaginative recollection in order to substantiate the far-reaching breadth of aesthetic apprehension.

I have ventured to persuade that the strangeness of Paterian beauty does not merely denote openness of mind; it also signifies the conscious effort to consecrate aesthetic sensibility as a complex, multifarious experience that claims completeness in itself.

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