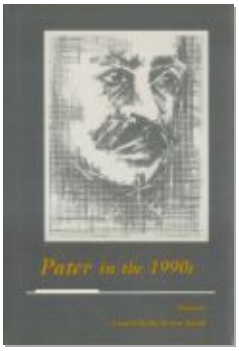
Pater and Architecture



Pater and Architecture

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ARCHITECTURE was not the most important of the arts for Pater because, for the most part, it was not figurative. Nevertheless it is an aspect of his taste that cannot be ignored, and it is one of the last remaining areas in Pater studies awaiting detailed research. This essay concentrates on Pater's view of Gothic architecture, since, by a strange paradox, this was the style to which he was principally drawn. Classical and neo-classical buildings had their appeal for him, but it was the works of the Middle Ages that stimulated his imagination more forcefully.

Transition is the theme that dominates Pater's writing on architecture. Buildings seem to be stable, monolithic and immutable; in this sense they are at the other end of the spectrum from the evanescent and wayward subjective experiences of which Pater was a connoisseur, experiences which painting and literature are more adept at capturing. But although Pater is able to respond to the solidity and finality of buildings he is also able to see them as indicative of fluid historical movements. To the subtle and penetrative eye the transition from classic to gothic, from religious to secular, from gloomy to brilliant, from fantastic to rational, is detectable in buildings, so that they too exist in a continuum, admittedly moving in slow motion if one compares the process with psychological states. They are subject to patterns of

weaving and unweaving, thesis and antithesis. All this is only to be understood by the analytical and abstract mind, holding history in its head; but there is a more sensory version of the provisional nature of building, and this is observed when Pater lovingly records the varied lighting effects to which structures are subjected, so transforming as to make us question their absoluteness and their solidity. Pater's picture of transition and even fleetingness is the one I wish to concentrate on here.

It is in the study of Winckelmann that Pater considers the early evolution of architecture, and he realizes that it is not the most expressive of the arts:

> Architecture, which begins in a practical need, can only express by vague hint or symbol the spirit or mind of the artist. He closes his sadness over him, or wanders in the perplexed intricacies of things, or projects his purpose from him clean-cut and sincere, or bares himself to the sunlight. But these spiritualities, felt rather than seen, can but lurk about architectural form as volatile effects, to be gathered from it by reflexion. Their expression is, indeed, not really sensuous at all.[1]

And then, in an important passage, he reveals that architecture does not represent the human body, is not figurative, and so, by implication, will not appeal to him as much as the arts of sculpture and painting, which deal "immediately with man":

> As human form is not the subject with which it deals, architecture is the mode in which the artistic effort centres, when the thoughts of man concerning himself are still indistinct, when he is still little preoccupied with those harmonies, storms, victories, of the unseen and intellectual world, which, wrought out into the bodily form, give it an interest and significance communicable to it alone. The art of Egypt, with its supreme architectural effects, is, according to Hegel's beautiful comparison, a Memnon waiting for the day, the day of the Greek spirit, the humanistic, spirit, with its power of speech.[2]

Pater did not visit Egypt, but he would have known something about Egyptian architecture via works such as Owen Jones's *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856) and the various reproductions of Egyptian buildings

in international exhibitions and the like.[3] He would have known that the system of the classical "orders" did in part descend from Egyptian traditions.

I am not sure that Pater found classical architecture especially exciting, and in this sense he is a child of his time. His "Postscript" to *Appreciations*[4] is one of the nineteenth century's fullest and most interesting discussions of the difference between Classicism and Romanticism. Immediately we recognize a characteristic strategy in Pater, when he shows himself reluctant to use the labels as exclusive modes of identifying specific historical periods, since to do that would be to lay himself open to partiality for one or the other. He prefers to consider the terms as indicative of enduring and perennial principles in the artistic temperament, so that any one could surface at any time, and make the writing of architectural history a very flexible activity. In the "Preface" to *The Renaissance* Pater also expresses a reluctance to promote one mode in preference to another, since to do so would possibly limit the full range of aesthetic experience: the aesthetic critic "will remember always that beauty exists in many forms. To him all periods, types, schools of taste, are in themselves equal."[5] This statement is as far away from Ruskin's position of partiality and commitment to particular epochs and styles as it is possible to get. Still, Pater says much less about ancient architecture than about medieval, and he does quote Stendhal in the Postscript to *Appreciations*: "Romanticism is the art of presenting to people the literary works which, in the actual state of their habits and beliefs, are capable of giving them the greatest possible pleasure; classicism, on the contrary, of presenting them with that which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their grandfathers."[6] What Pater appreciated in romantic art was its "strangeness," its grotesqueness even, and it was summed up, in almost caricature form, by "that Germany which, in its quaint old towns, under the spire of Strasburg or the towers of Heidelberg, was always listening in rapt inaction to the melodious, fascinating voices of the Middle Age."[7]

However, when we turn to *Marius the Epicurean* we discover that although the buildings are classical, there is actually no such thing as a monolithic classicism, and romantic strangeness and grotesqueness are to be detected even in this world, if one is sensitive enough to recognize it. Marius finds in Rome buildings which speak of "eariler ages" and are "immeasurably venerable." Pater is, I think, excited at the prospect of finding a tendency in any work of art opposite to the obvious or ostensible one, since when he perceives such a thing his originality, independence and perceptiveness as a critic are more on view.

In *Marius* a number of buildings, real and imaginary, are described. They are not there simply as background, but as part of the psychic geography of the novel, since for Pater buildings in which people lived were expressive of human agency and intention, and key factors in the moulding of personality and the provision of mental furniture. The buildings of the late Roman Empire, like other features of the cultural life, adumbrate, in some of their features, the Christian Middle Ages, especially when one regards them with the wisdom of hindsight. Pater is not particularly good at dealing with passionate interpersonal experience, but one of his fortes is establishing the intense interrelation between the inner and outer in a psychic life. The buildings in *Marius* take on a resonating symbolic and an atmospheric status, and some of the descriptions are very long and detailed, almost mini-essays. Chapter XI is an elaborate tour-guide evocation of Rome's palaces and shrines.

Pater is sensitive to the charms of classical architecture, and he evokes it well, but he was, after all, a child of the nineteenth century, a century dominated by the Gothic revival, and he must have found it difficult not to be influenced, in some measure, by Ruskin's influential chapter "The Nature of Gothic" (originally published in Volume II of *The Stones of Venice,* 1853). It has often been claimed as one of the most important and persuasive pieces of Victorian prose. Ruskin urges the case for Gothic as an architecture developing from liberal and enlightened social conditions, expressive of freedom and individual vision, flexible and responsive to human demands. Classicism, on the other

hand, is overdetermined and inflexible, and requires not the intelligence and initiative of the individual artisan, but his subservience and manual skill. It is, so Ruskin thinks, "helot architecture," and symptomatic of illiberal regimes. Pater did not subscribe to all aspects of this thesis, but when he describes Romanesque architecture the influence of Ruskin's interpretation is felt, and he suggests that Gothic is only able to develop when the yoke is shaken off. It was because the process could actually be observed in operation in the monastic church at Vézelay in Burgundy that he devoted so much attention to that building in the second of his essays "Some Great Churches in France" (1894), reprinted in *Miscellaneous Studies*:

> It is . . . the grandest Romanesque interior in France, perhaps in the world. In its mortified light the very soul of monasticism, Roman and half-military, as the completest outcome of a religion of threats, seems to descend upon one. . . . [I]t is here at Vézelay, in this iron place, that monasticism in its central, its historically most significant purpose, presents itself as most completely at home. There is no triforium. The monotonous cloistral length of wall above the long-drawn series of stately round arches, is unbroken save by a plain small window in each bay, placed as high as possible just below the cornice, as a mere afterthought, you might fancy.[8]

Pater was born into a century that was obsessed by Gothic architecture, and in the "Battle of Styles," which occurred in his childhood, it was Gothic that took the field. Insofar as the Victorian period attempted to evolve a style of its own the basic originating matrix, as J. Mordaunt Crook has shown, was Gothic.[9] Pater drunk this in, as any child of the age would. There was, it seemed, something natural and inevitable and admirable about the emergence of Gothic architecture. A key statement is to be found in chapter XXII of *Marius*, "The Minor Peace of the Church":

> The aesthetic charm of the Catholic church, her evocative power over all that is eloquent and expressive in the better mind of man, her outward comeliness, her dignifying convictions about human nature:—all this, as abundantly realised centuries later by Dante and Giotto, by the great medieval church-builders, by the great ritualists like Saint Gregory, and the masters of the sacred music in the

> middle age—we may see already, in dim anticipation, in those charmed moments towards the end of the second century.[10]

But the evolution of a humanized and relatively cheerful Gothic did not come overnight, and there were "those troublous intervening centuries" known as "the Dark Ages."[11]

Pater was always inclined to take an ambitious overview of the sweep of history. We see evidence of this in his earliest important work, *The Renaissance.* Whenever he looks in detail at a particular epoch he cannot but help register the adumbrations of a following one. It is an almost instinctive reaction in him to consider a style, whether in literature, painting or architecture, both as a quintessential absolute and as something that will eventually modulate into its opposite. Buildings are the most significant and large-scale cultural statements available, and for a interpreter such as Pater they cry out to be noticed and analyzed. The Gothic, for the Victorians, was not a single monolithic style but the combination of a number of styles, ranging from the primitive and austere to the sophisticated and elaborate, and whenever Pater considers a building he first of all instinctively tends to place it fairly precisely on some kind of stylistic spectrum. So in "Denys l'Auxerrois" Sens is grave, severe and northern, "cool and composed, with an almost English austerity,"[12] whereas Troyes is more strange and florid: it has an impressive "breadth of proportions internally," and the porch, with its "surprising height and lightness," is a "kind of wildly elegant Gothic-on-stilts."[13] Auxerre, appropriately for the story in which the culture of the south meets that of the north, is the "perfect type of that happy mean between northern earnestness and the luxury of the south," both in its architecture and its surrounding countryside. In *Plato and Platonism* he thinks that Doric architecture might be compared with chaste Cistercian.[14] One of the most sensitive pieces of writing on the differences between the various types of Gothic must be his essay on Vézelay. It is a Cluniac building, and hence representative of an austere form of monasticism. Pater likes to believe that the religious and architectural tradition of Cistercianism is "a reaction against monasti-

cism itself,"[15] and though chaste and austere, emanating from a state of mind almost aesthetic: asceticism for asceticism's sake one might describe it as. He may not approve altogether of Vézelay, certainly it represents a repression of spirit from which the Renaissance freed Western man, but he responds to it in fine and evocative prose. Vézelay, like so many Gothic buildings, was not built all at once to a single unified design; it was modified through the ages. So that at the east and west ends of the church a dramatic stylistic change takes place; the process of evolution and transition that so intrigued Pater is actually visible:

> [T]he Pointed style, determined yet discreet, makes itself felt—makes itself felt by appearing, if not for the first time, yet for the first time in the organic or systematic development of French architecture. Not in the unambitious *facade* of Saint-Denis, nor in the austere aisles of Sens, but at Vézelay, in this grandiose fabric, so worthy of the event, Viollet-le-Duc would fain see the birthplace of the Pointed style. Here at last, with no sense of contrast, but by way of veritable "transition," and as if by its own matured strength, the round arch breaks into the noble curve, *les arcs brises*, with a wonderful access of grace. And the imaginative effect is forthwith enlarged.[16]

He responds to the drama and contrast in the interior of Vézelay very well, and it is as if the transition from one mode of the human spirit to another is accomplished within the building:

> [T]he long, tunnel-like, military work of the Romanesque nave opens wide into the exhilarating daylight of choir and transepts, . . . with a vault rising now high above the roof-line of the body of the church, *sicut lilium excelsum*. The simple flowers, the *flora*, of the early Pointed style, which could never have looked at home as an element in the half-savage decoration of the nave, seem to be growing here upon the sheaves of slender, reedy pillars, as if naturally in the carved stone.[17]

The transition is compared to the dramatic progress in the great church of Assisi from the dark crypt, "through the gloomy 'lower' church, into the height and breadth, the physical and symbolic 'illumination,' of the church above."[18] This architectural sequence speaks of the passage of time, of the distinctiveness of periodicity, but at other instances Pater

responds to concepts of timelessness, as at Vézelay: "[I]n strictly monastic Vézelay you have a sense of freshness, such as, in spite of their ruin, we perceive in the buildings of Greece. We enjoy here not so much, as at Amiens, the sentiment of antiquity, but that of eternal duration."[19] The difference alluded to here is between a diachronic and a synchronic experience of architecture, with the latter finding favour for the moment.

As Gothic developed it became lighter and airier, and there was an almost inevitable logic in the reduction of the wall and the enlargement of the window. Pater's knowledge of actual Gothic buildings was accurate and extensive enough, so that he had no difficulty, when the need arose, of creating imaginary buildings, such as the church in *Gaston de Latour*, a church which undergoes, as many actual buildings did, a gradual transformation in time. When Gaston as a youth enters the chapel of Saint Hubert, his heart sinks, since it is so dark and sepulchral within, and the light is like that in Chartres, with "only an almost angry ray of purple or crimson, here or there," crossing "the dark roomy spaces."[20] When he alters and grows older he changes it all, and banishes the Gothic darkness and heaviness, to produce something that sounds like flamboyant architecture:

> A thicket of airy spires rose above the sanctuary; the blind triforium broke into one continuous window; the heavy masses of stone were pared down with wonderful dexterity of hand, till not a hand's-breadth remained uncovered by delicate tracery, as from the fair white roof, touched sparingly with gold, down to the subterranean chapel of Saint Taurin, where the peasants of La Beauce came to pray for rain, not a space was left unsearched by cheerful daylight.[21]

Pater finds it natural and inevitable, in writing fiction, to provide appropriate architectural settings. These settings are not "background," since in their intensely realized characters they represent the psychic history of the actors; indeed, to a large extent they are that history. Pater's entry into the states of mind of people who lived in previous centuries is principally made by sharing in experiences available to both past and present, experiences of natural phenomena, of sculpture and

painting, of literature and of building. Hence in *Gaston de Latour* a whole chapter, entitled "Our Lady's Church," is devoted to Chartres, not just as Gaston knows it in its full glory, but as *we* know it, ravaged and despoiled.

Amiens was of course also an important building for nineteenth-century architectural writing, since Ruskin devoted a complete book to it, *The Bible of Amiens*, and Pater a whole essay. It is interesting that Pater boldly follows a thesis about the secularity of medieval cathedrals whereas Ruskin preferred such an idea to remain implicit. In the early 1850s Ruskin still retained his religious faith, but in "The Nature of Gothic" he tends to weaken the effect of Gothic architecture as an exclusively religious statement, since he encourages us to read Gothic buildings as evidence of the freedom and untrammelled expressiveness of the societies and the workmen that produced them. He is encouraging, whether he is aware of it or not, a certain secular interpretative mode. Pater lost his religious faith at an earlier age than Ruskin, and maintained an essentially secular outlook on life (which does not mean he is axiomatically unsympathetic to the contribution made by the religious spirit). This cast of mind causes him to stress the secularization in thirteenth-century France, and to interpret Amiens cathedral, in his essay of 1894, as a secular building, built on the human scale and indicative of humanistic tendencies in the age: "The great and purest of Gothic churches, Notre-Dame d'Amiens, illustrates, by its fine qualities, a characteristic secular movement of the beginning of the thirteenth century."[22] It "concurred . . . with certain novel humanistic moments of religion itself."[23] There is "no mystery" in the design, and it reassures the intelligence and keeps "one's curiosity . . . continually on the alert."[24] Here he does not see eye to eye with the Ruskin of *The Bible of Amiens*, even though Ruskin is aware that there might be secular and humanistic elements entering into the construction of a work as religious as a cathedral.

Often, the awe Pater feels in the presence of Amiens is not religious exactly, but technical: he is excited by it as a civil engineering problem

solved, as an architectural feat worth achieving, architecture for architecture's sake one might call it:

> Here . . . you are conscious restlessly of that sustained equilibrium of oblique pressure on all sides, which is the essence of the hazardous Gothic construction, a construction of which the "flying buttress" is the most significant feature. Across the clear glass of the great windows of the triforium you see it, feel it, at its Atlas-work audaciously. . . . Those who built it might have had for their one and only purpose to enclose as large a space as possible with the given material.[25]

One cannot imagine Ruskin writing that; he would have wished to stress the symbolic importance of admitting the light of God into the interior, and would have been most reluctant to encourage the view that a cathedral may be viewed as the successful solution of civil engineering problems.

Ruskin and Pater are both struck by the expressive naturalism of the choir stalls at Amiens, but whereas Ruskin surrounds the woodwork with a religiose aura, Pater prefers to believe that such naturalism grows from lay traditions, from confederated labour and from "communistic sentiment."[26] He takes the view that "older cloistral workmen" "had but fed their imagination in an embarrassed, imprisoned, and really decadent manner, or mere reminiscence of, or prescriptions about, things visible."[27] In his essay on Vézelay Pater devotes considerable attention to the sculptures: "The minds of those who worked thus seem to have been almost insanely preoccupied just then with the human countenance, but by no means exclusively in its pleasantness or dignity. Bold, crude, original, their works indicates delight in the power of reproducing fact, curiosity in it, but little or no sense of beauty."[28] He seems to believe that the sense of beauty and the exercise of primitive faith are not quite reconcilable. It requires more sophisticated minds to introduce notions of style and treatment into the exercise of art—perhaps of religious practices too.

Pater was fascinated by the later evolutions of Gothic architecture, in which classical motifs are starting to appear. It was particularly visible in the Loire Valley. He lends his perceptions to Gaston as he travels

south from La Beauce: "Frequently, along the great historic stream, as along some vast street, contemporary genius was visible . . . in a novel and seductive architecture, which, by its engrafting of exotic grace on homely native forms, spoke of a certain aspiration to be what was not but might become—the old Gaulish desire to be refined, to be mentally enfranchised by the sprightlier genius of Italy."[29] This passage is typical of the movement of Pater's mind; even as the hero looks at what might appear to be solid and unchangeable buildings he has a view of cultural journeys in time and space: transitions.

Pater had alluded years earlier, in his essay on Giorgione, to the charm of the chateau architecture of the Loire, which is capable of modulating into poetry, so that solid architecture is transformed to something more flexible: "Architecture . . . often finds a true poetry, as in those strangely twisted staircases of the chateaux of the country of the Loire, as if it were intended that among their odd turnings the actor in a theatrical mode of life might pass each other unseen; there being a poetry also of memory and of the mere effect of time, by which architecture often profits greatly."[30] This is a case of where an apparently solid art proves to be fluid and flexible by aspiring "out of the hard limitation" of its form.

There are two areas worth considering in which Pater is different from Ruskin. First, he is more concerned with the function of buildings in everyday life; and secondly, he is more responsive to lighting effects. He is aware that buildings are for men and women to live in, to worship in, and that they are the indicators of freedom or restriction, optimism or pessimism, acceptance or rejection:

> Our susceptibilities, the discovery of our powers, manifold experiences—our various experiences of the coming and going of bodily pain, for instance—belong to this or that other well-remembered place in the material habitation—that little white room with the window across which the heavy blossoms could beat so peevishly in the wind, with just that particular catch or throb, such a sense of teasing in it, on gusty mornings; and the early habitation thus gradually becomes a sort of material shrine or sanctuary of sentiment; a system of visible symbolism interweaves itself through all our thoughts and passions; and irresistibly, little shapes, voices, accidents—the angle at which the sun in the

> morning fell on the pillow—become parts of the great chain wherewith we are bound.[31]

A chain of necessity, yes, but of potentially pleasurable necessity, in which architectural surroundings are capable of administering to the sense of pleasure. Merely to move in well-lit space is, for Pater, entrancing experience which is capable of counteracting the tragedy of life. Imagination needs and responds to its local habitation.

We find many of Pater's characteristic attitudes to architecture in his treatment of the great barn in "Apollo in Picardy." It is almost classical, and it is associated with an Apollonian revival. Northern Europe and southern Europe are, once again, locked in an interesting contest with each other. This is, of course, an imagined building, and I do not know whether Pater saw anything exactly like it, but some of the magnificent Cistercian barns in France must have given him a suggestion. The Prior Saint-Jean goes to recuperate in a country district, which, Pater tells us, is something like "Prospero's enchanted island."[32] While he is there a barn is built, under the guidance of a mysterious figure who has come from the classical world, and whose presence is at once life-giving and baneful. Unlike a church it is set north and south, but it has aisles, and stone pillars reminiscent of ecclesiastical architecture:

> [It has] a sort of classical harmony in its broad, very simple proportions, with a certain suppression of Gothic emphasis, more especially in that peculiarly Gothic feature, the buttresses, scarcely marking the unbroken, windowless walls, which rise very straight, taking the sun placidly. . . . The great northern gable is almost a classic pediment. The horizontal lines of plinth and ridge and cornice are kept unbroken, the roof of sea-grey slates being pitched less angularly than is usual in this rainy clime. A welcome contrast, the Prior thought it, to the sort of architectural nightmare he came from.[33]

It is built to music played by Brother Apollyon, as if aspiring, in the fashion of the best art, to the state of music: "Mere audible music, certainly, had counted for something in the operations of an art, held at its best . . . to be a sort of music made visible. That ideal singer, one might fancy, by an art beyond art, had attracted beams and stones into

their fit places."[34] The spirit of these passages is very close to the chapter on "Plato's Aesthetics" in *Plato and Platonism*, where he thinks that Greek music is very like Gregorian, and both "call to mind the kind of architecture, military or monastic . . . , that must be built" to it. The stern and hieratic Doric architecture seems to him close in spirit to Cistercian Gothic, purged of the kind of barbaric ornament we saw on the capitals at Vézelay:

> It seems a long way from the Parthenon to Saint Ouen "of the aisles and arches," or Notre-Dame de Bourges; yet they illustrate almost equally the direction of the Platonic aesthetics. Those churches of the Middle Age have . . . their loveliness, yet of a stern sort, which fascinates while perhaps it repels us. We may try to like as well or better architecture of a more or less different kind, but coming back to them again find that the secret of final success is theirs. The rigid logic of their charm controls our taste, as logic proper binds the intelligence: we would have something of that quality, if we might, for ourselves, in what we do or make; feel, under its influence, very diffident of our own loose, or gaudy, or literally insignificant, decorations.[35]

In diminishing the importance of architectural decoration Pater has travelled further along the road to the abstract purity and formalism of effective architecture than Ruskin did.

The other principle governing the building is human proportion and human scale, versions of which take us into mystical mathematics of various kinds, both for Gothic and Classical buildings. The brooding narrative presence in "Apollo in Picardy" reflects: "And is not the human body, too, a building, with architectural laws, a structure, tending by the very forces which primarily held it together to drop asunder in time?"[36] As we saw at the outset of this essay Pater regarded architecture as non-figurative, and yet he has a tendency to keep introducing the human figure into architectural contexts.

Mention must be made of Pater's concentration on lighting effects. He is a votary of the ephemeral and the transient. To some extent the Heraclitean vision of the world in flux alarmed and perturbed him, but he managed to make himself psychologically at home in that vision, and although, in certain moods, the physicality, the materialism, the solidity

of a building are a satisfying antidote to evanescence, in other moods their inert identity weighs heavily on his soul. Varying effects of light flickering over a building have the result of making it seem more evanescent and ephemeral than it actually is, and reducing the impression it conveys to a state of fluctuation and uncertain visual identity. At this point it challenges the aesthetic consciousness to notice and record its rare epiphanic manifestation, and the response to that challenge is eminently satisfying. At the end of his essay on Du Bellay in *The Renaissance* Pater records the satisfaction of this kind of experience: "A sudden light transfigures some trivial thing, a weather-vane, a wind-mill, a winnowing fan, the dust in the barn door. A moment—and the thing has vanished, because it was pure effect; but it leaves a relish behind it, a longing that the accident may happen again."[37] "Sudden light" is an evocative phrase: it is the title of a Rossetti poem which expresses the magic of a visionary moment—a moment, though, in which human beings engage with each other rather than buildings.

Finally we have to consider whether Pater's knowledge of and interest in architecture influenced his style and his theories of style. It seems to me always difficult to make sound analogies between architectural construction and prose style, though many people have tried to do so. The critical rhetoric of such exercises always sounds plausible and impressive, but it does not always bear close scrutiny. Pater's best known venture into this parallelistic rhetoric is in his essay "Style" (1888):

> For the literary architecture, if it is to be rich and expressive, involves not only foresight of the end in the beginning, but also development or growth of design, in the process of execution, with many irregularities, surprises, and afterthoughts; the contingent as well as the necessary being subsumed under the unity of the whole. As truly, to the lack of such architectural design, of a single, almost visual, image, vigorously informing an entire, perhaps very intricate, composition, which shall be austere, ornate, argumentative, fanciful, yet true from first to last to that vision within, may be attributed those weaknesses of conscious or unconscious repetition of word, phrase, motive, or member of the whole matter, indicating, as Flaubert was aware, an original structure in thought not organically complete.[38]

This elaborate parallel between text and building is very suggestive, but it does bring problems in its train, since very few literary artists actually find that they have much "foresight" of what the completed work will be like, when they begin. But Pater does recognize that "surprises" and contingencies will occur as the work progresses. He does not state it here, but the kind of building he has in mind seems to be more Gothic than Classic, since much more foresight is required to erect a classical building, and once the ground plan is established almost everything follows with a kind of preordained inevitability. Not so with a Gothic building, which can develop with much more flexibility, and even accommodate a new style of architecture once it has been begun. Most Gothic buildings give some impression of unity, but on closer investigation many elements are difficult to reconcile with each other, or with any overall concept.

Pater, almost instinctively reached for art analogies when he described the process of producing prose. In the "Postscript" to *Appreciations* he makes his famous plea for eclecticism:

> [T]he scholar will still remember that if "the style is the man" it is also the age: that the nineteenth century too will be found to have had its style, justified by necessity—a style very different, alike from the baldness of an impossible "Queen Anne" revival, and an incorrect, incondite exuberance, after the mode of Elizabeth: that we can only return to either at the price of an impoverishment of form or matter, or both, although, an intellectually rich age such as ours being necessarily an eclectic one, we may well cultivate some of the excellences of literary types so different as those: that in literature as in other matters it is well to unite as many diverse elements as may be: that the individual writer or artist, certainly, is to be estimated by the number of graces he combines, and his power of interpenetrating them in a given work.[39]

What is interesting about this passage is that Pater readily assumes, in the phrase "in literature as in other matters," that there will be parallels between the arts. There was a desire in the nineteenth century to find styles unique to the time, and it applied to all the arts. J. Mordaunt Crook has told the story of architecture in *The Dilemma of Style*, and indeed, he quotes this passage.[40] Interestingly the Elizbathan revival was

"incorrect, incondite and exuberant" whether in architectural contexts—one thinks of Anthony Salvin's Harlaxton, Lincolnshire (1831-37) and Thoresby, Nottinghamshire (1864-75), Edward Blore's Merevale, Warwickshire (1838-44), Lewis Vulliamy's Westonbirt, Gloucestershire (1863-70) and G. F. Bodley and Thomas Garner's Hewell Grange, Worcestershire (1884-89)—or literary (predominantly Browning). But however "bald" the Queen Anne Revival might have been in Austin Dobson's *Proverbs in Porcelain* (1877), only a certain amount of Queen Anne Revival building is "bald." One thinks of Norman Shaw's Bedford Park, Philip Webb's Clouds, Wiltshire (1879-91), E. W. Godwin's houses in Tite Street, Chelsea and J. J. Stevenson's 27 Banbury Road, Oxford (built for T. H. Green in 1881); generally it was more likely to be flamboyant and generously decorated, as in Norman Shaw's New Zealand Chambers in Leadenhall Hall Street, London (1871-73, now demolished) or Lowther Lodge, Kenginston Gore (1872-75).[41]

One needs a little caution in pursuing parallels between Pater's theory of prose style and his architectural tastes. Pater is anxious for literary works to have structural design and "constructive intelligence," but there are a number of ways in which, attractive as the architectural parallels seem to be, they do not function particularly well. They gave Pater a kind of moral support, but finally his prose style had to be evolved without the detailed help and suggestivity that architecture seemed to offer.